

Thematicization and Aspects of the Verbal Morphology in Burmese:
The Principles of Organization

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Thematicization and aspects of the verbal morphology in Burmese: the principles of organization.*

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1.0 Introduction. Burmese is one of the Tibeto-Burman languages of Burma. Its structure has been described in some depth by several quite competent scholars¹ so that a good description of much of it already exists. However a thoroughly satisfying description of its topic/comment system was still lacking. This paper describes this thematicization process in Burmese in terms of two primitive semantic oppositions: a dynamic/static opposition such as one often finds between verbs and nouns and a continuing state/changed state opposition. The usefulness of these two basic semantic oppositions for the description of the Burmese thematicization system coupled with their prevalence elsewhere suggests that these oppositions are not solely artifacts of a linguistic description but that native speakers use analogues of these distinctions as basic organizing principles in the language. Further, an examination of part of the verbal morphology reveals that one of these semantic distinctions---the continuing state/changed state opposition---is also the basic organizing principle behind the use of a set of verb particles (se:/ʔum: and tau?).² Support for this analysis is found in the fact that the formative tau? marks a changed condition in both the thematicization system and in the verbal morphology. Further, in English, the distribution of yet/still and anymore not only parallels the use of se:/ʔum: and tau? in Burmese but is similarly organized on a continuing state/changed state basis.

2.0 Thematicization. The distinction between clause level (intra-sentential) and discourse level (intersentential) organization must be emphasized prior to any discussion of thematicization in Burmese. Many of the particles found marking the thematicization processes in Burmese (ka?, kui, tau?) may be analyzed as taking part in two distinct systems; that is, a single particle plays one role at the clause level and another role at the discourse level.³ Once this distinction between levels is made, the clause level functions can be described easily and then the thematicization process can be described in terms of the two basic semantic oppositions which form the basis for its organization: the dynamic/static opposition and a continued state/changed state opposition.

2.1 Clause level case marking. Case marking in Burmese is done by means of the particles ka? and kui.⁴ For want of better terms I shall describe ka? as designating subjects and kui as designating objects. It is of some importance to note that these particles are not invariably present but instead are used primarily when their omission would result in ambiguity. Thus consider the following sentence (Okeil 1969:323):

kyup	kui	tau?	bha	hma	məprau	bhu
I	<u>KUI</u>	<u>TAU?</u>	what-even	not	say-	BHU

'(She) dīdn't tell me anything'

Since no subject noun phrase occurs in the above sentence, the case role of kyup 'I' would be unclear were it not for the object marker kui. Here the absence of an overt subject required the presence of the object marker kui on the remaining noun phrase to avoid ambiguity. Another common context requiring the presence of a marked noun phrase involves object preposing. When an object is thematized or topicalized, it is moved to sentence-initial position. In such cases the expected subject/object word order is no longer useful for sorting out intrasentential case relationships and thus both the object and the subject tend to be overtly marked with kui and ka?, respectively. Thus, consider the following example (Lehman 1973:7):

<u>kui</u> ?e:	<u>kui</u>	<u>su</u> <u>ka?</u>	<u>sak</u> <u>tay</u>
Ko Aye	KUI	he-KA?	kill-TAY
'He killed Ko Aye'			

Notice that here the ka?/kui case marking system serves two functions: not only do ka? and kui sort out the intrasentential case relationships but, they allow preposing which signals information about intersentential themes. The case markers and the word order combine to show a double contrast: a contrastive theme is marked by the preposing of the object kui ?e: 'Ko Aye' and the intrasentential object and subject are marked by the kui after kui ?e: 'Ko Aye'(object) and the ka? after su 'he'(subject).

2.2 Discourse level thematization. Having discussed the intrasentential roles of the case markers ka? and kui, we will turn to the marking of thematization⁵ in Burmese. The basic opposition is between the continuation of old topics (marked with ∅ or ha) and the introduction of new⁶ themes or topics (marked most frequently with ka?, kui, or tau?). Continuing topics are most accurately viewed as being signalled by ∅ as well as ha since more often than not retained topics are omitted altogether in Burmese, a process not uncommon to zero-anaphora languages. The use of zero-anaphora contrasts with English where old topics are most typically reduced to pronouns instead of being completely deleted. Consider the following sentence:

The old man with the tattered coat staggered before he fell.

In this example, the new subject/topic introduced in the first clause is subsequently reduced to a pronoun when it reappears as an old, non-contrastive topic in the second clause; in a comparable Burmese example the old non-contrastive topic would usually be omitted completely.

The basic oppositions distinguished by the topic markers are sketched briefly in the chart below. At the risk of oversimplifying, the distribution can be stated succinctly. The first contrast is between ∅/ha, marking the continuation of an already established topic, and ka?/kui and tau?, marking the presence of a new topic. Within the set of new topic markers a basic difference is found between ka? and kui which mark the more static, nominal themes and tau? which marks the

more dynamic, verbal themes. Within the class of nominal topic markers a further distinction is made between kui which, intrasententially, marks objects and ka? which, intrasententially, marks subjects. More specifically, the formatives ka?, kui, and tau? mark the following:

- ka? 1. topicalized subjects 2. subjects, 'source' time and place adverbials, subjective sentential complements
- kui 2. topicalized objects 2. objects, 'goal' time and place adverbials, and emphatically rather than thematically preposed constituents
- tau? 1. topic marker usually found with verbs and with constituents which indicate temporal ordering, that is, the tau? marked constituent was completed before the following constituent. Thus tau? is found with bay tau? 'when', nauk tau? 'afterwards', and di tau? kha 'then'.
2. tau? is also found in the verbal morphology indicating a changed condition.⁷

Schematically the basic distribution of the topic markers discussed above can be represented in the following chart:

	<u>Changed Topic</u>	<u>Continued Topic</u>
nominals and static entities	<u>ka?</u> (subjects) <u>kui</u> (objects)	<u>∅</u> and <u>ha</u>
verbals and dynamic entities	<u>tau?</u>	

2.2.1 The use of ha. Cornyn and Roop (1968:233) describe ha as "a general particle which emphasizes a noun expression and marks it as the topic of the sentence." An examination of the dialogue that the ha-marked phrase occurred in makes it clear that the ha is being used with an already established topic (228,233):

- (1) ?ay: di ?im bhay lui ?im myui: lay:
this house what house kind wh-Q
'What kind of house is this one?'
- (2) sau ?im ha ?akhan: khrauk khan: hri? ba tay
Oh house-HA room six room exist BA TAY
'Oh, the house has six rooms'

Thus ?im 'house' is already established as the topic in the first sentence and continued as the topic in the second (?im ha 'house HA').⁸

A clue to understanding why ha is sometimes used to mark an established topics while at other times nothing is used can be found in the following examples (1968:223):

- (1) ?aiñ? khan: bhay hma lay:
 living room what place wh-Q
 'Where is the living room (emphasized)?'
- (2) ?aiñ? khan: (ha) ?auk thap hma hri? tay
 living room HA downstairs HMA exist TAY
 'The living room (emphasized) is downstairs'

Cornyn and Roop note that the answer to a question with ha in it may also contain a ha or else ha may be completely omitted. More interesting is the fact that when ha is included, its noun phrase is, in their words, 'emphasized'. This emphasis is not and should not be confused with a contrastive topic status. Instead the presence of a ha-marked topic, at least in those cases where it does not primarily serve to mark the first linguistic introduction of a deictically established topic, seems to be a stylistic device to place more focus on the topic, in contrast to the unmarked emphasis on the new information in the comment which would be present if the topic were either unmarked or omitted entirely.

In English, a parallel stylistic alternation in emphasis is achieved through the retention or non-retention of the subjects of conjoined clauses in the second clause (examples and analysis from Ennis 1977:Chapter 4):⁹

- (1) a. But she had paid the rent until the end of the month,
 and could not afford to move.
 b. But she had paid the rent till the end of the month, and she
could not afford to move. (92)
- (2) a. She spoke carefully, with controlled vowels, and moved
 with care...
 b. She spoke carefully, with controlled vowels, she moved
 with care...(153)
- (3) a. He was short, squat, and pale...
 b. He was short, he was squat, he was pale...(84)

With the deletion of the identical noun phrase, the emphasis is clearly on the verbal action; with the retention of the identical noun phrase, the emphasis in these clauses moves away from the verbal element and falls, instead, on the identical noun phrase. The alternation in Burmese between \emptyset and the retention of a ha-marked noun phrase works in a precisely parallel way; the non-retention (\emptyset) leaves the expected emphasis on the verbal element and the ha-marked retention shifts the emphasis away from the verbal element onto the subject.

The use of ha is illustrated in the following sentence (Okell 1969:260):

di hywe chuiñ: ha tautau ?əphui tan tay? pac cañ bhay
 this gold leaf-HA pretty much price be worth-TAY?-object-BHAY
 'This gold leaf is an object of considerable value'

The topic di hywe chuŋ: 'this gold leaf' represents the discussion of a topic that has already been established deictically by di 'this'. Similarly in the following example from Okell that Lehman discusses at some length, the topic is one that has already been established prior to the discourse, although not deictically (Okell 1969:260; Lehman 1973:2):

tauŋ su twe ha lay: tap mətau ha hram:-pəde saraz tve-nay?
 Taungthus-HA-also army-HA Shan rulers with

tway: pi: hnim may lui? thaŋ kra? tay
 join-and oppress-MAY-quoted think all TAY

'And the Taungthus thought that the army was going to join up with the Shan rulers and oppress them'

Lehman's discussion of this particular sentence is quite instructive. He (1973:2) notes that the presence of ha marking two different phrases was acceptable just in case one had been previously speaking about both subjects; that is, the sentence was acceptable to his informants just in case "one had been speaking previously not only of the Taungthus but also about what they thought about the army." Lehman goes on to establish that the ha marked material is clearly not in any sense being contrasted with any other material. It is important to note that ha is largely restricted to use with nominals. In part this restriction is an expected outgrowth of its historical descent from the noun ha 'thing'.

2.2.2 The new topic marker ka?. English often has a clear distinction between a contrastive and a new theme. A contrastive topic is illustrated by the following example:

It was Bill who ate the radishes.¹⁰
 (=Bill ate the radishes.)

Bill is the contrastive theme; he has been picked out of some set and made the topic of the sentence. A new, non-contrastive topic is illustrated by the following example:

The police finally recovered our stolen car; it had only minor damage done to it.

In this example, our stolen car introduces the new information and, in the second clause, our stolen car, now pronominalized as it, is the new topic. In both the above examples, the newly topicalized element was a definite noun phrase.

In contrast to \emptyset and ha, which mark old topics, ka?, kui, and tau? mark new topics, including contrastive topics. More specifically ka? is used to mark new topics and, as Delancey (1977:9) has observed it is only used with definite noun phrases.¹¹ Consider the following sentence from Okell (1969:318):

ṅa ka? maṅ: kui cit məkauṅ: ?auṅ lup səla:
 I-KA? you-KUI mind not be good so that act-Sə-question
 '(Do you mean that) I am making you unhappy?'

Okell translates this sentence using italics to indicate what, in English, would be conveyed by contrastive stress. In Burmese, the contrastive nature of the phrase ṅa ka? 'I-KA?' is indicated by the retention of the pronoun ṅa 'I'. In a verb-final language like Burmese where zero-anaphora is the rule not the exception, a retained pronoun must be an emphatic pronoun. The very existence of the surface pronoun establishes its contrastive nature. The ka? in ṅa ka? simply labels the phrase as containing a new topic or, at least, an unexpected topic. The new topic is marked by ka? but other markers elaborate by indicating whether the theme is also contrastive or simply a new topic. Thus (Okell 1969: 318):

su ka? lay: bhay: chaṅ: ray: lwan: lui?
 he-KA?-also-emphatic be poor-exceedingly-because

kui sa pe: lui bhay: cit pyak ne ta
 Ko Tha Bay-manner-emphatic mind destroy-stay-TA

'He too, just like Ko Tha Bay, was miserable because he was so poor'

Here, in the first phrase su ka? lay: bhay: 'he too', ka? alone, lay: alone, or the very presence of su 'he' would be sufficient to establish the new topicality of su 'he'; the presence of all three certainly does the job.

The use of ka? as a new topic marker is consistent with another use of ka? in 'source' time and place adverbials (Okell 1969:316):

cəne ne? ka? twe? tay
 Saturday-KA? meet-TAY
 '(We) met on Saturday'

Here a specific time has been chosen from a known set of times and topicalized. In a similar vein, but this time with a place setting, consider a parallel example (Lehman 1973:9):

man:təle: ran kun mrui ka? we: tay
 Mandalay Rangoon-city-KA? far-TAY
 'Mandalay is far from Rangoon'

Lehman's analysis (Ibid.) is both instructive and pertinent here:

It is necessarily the case that Mandalay is not inherently and in itself far or near; starting from Rangóon, however, one can plausibly claim that it is far. That is, one must specify a particular (contrastively marked) reference point, and this is the case wherever the meaning 'from' is to be expressed.

Notice that in English a very similar use of adverbial preposing puts the preposed phrase into contrastive focus. Compare the following pair of English sentences:

I watched the bullfights in Spain.
In Spain, I watched the bullfights...
in Portugal, I visited by friend...

In the first sentence in Spain is a piece of information given in the least marked informational context. In the second sentence in Spain has been topicalized and is clearly in contrastive focus; the contrast with another place or other places is at least implied although not always actually stated. The Burmese functional equivalent of this type of preposed, contrastively topicalized 'source' place and time adverbial is the ka? marked phrase.¹³

Thus far only the distinction between \emptyset /ha and ka? has been discussed. In the sections below the thematic particles found in (near) complementary distribution with ka?, and which together with ka? stand in opposition to \emptyset /ha, will be discussed. Other topicalization devices exist which play more specialized and restricted roles. These will also be discussed.

In addition to kui used as an object marker (discussed in section 2.1 above), Okell (1969:324-7) discusses a now synchronically quite distinct use of kui as an 'emphatic' marker. Later Okell suggests that this emphatic use of kui came from the object marking function of kui, a theme which I shall develop further. Then I shall argue that, just as the object-marking kui is in complementary distribution with the subject marking ka?, the emphatic-marking kui is still in near complementary distribution with the new-theme marking ka? and both particles serve the same basic function---marking new topics. Consider an example from Lehman (1973:7):

su ka?	kui ?e: <u>kui</u>	sak tay
he-KA?	Ko Aye KUI	kill-TAY
'He killed Ko Aye'		

In this example kui solely and unambiguously serves to mark the object; it has no apparent emphatic or thematic functions. At this point however, it is pertinent to remember that the object-marking kui is not typically present unless its omission would result in some ambiguity. Bearing this in mind, consider the next example, discussed earlier but repeated here for convenience:

kui ?e: <u>kui</u>	su ka?	sak tay
Ko Aye KUI	he-KA?	kill-TAY
'He killed Ko Aye'		

Because the object phrase kui ?e: 'Ko Aye' has been preposed due to its thematization, the particle kui, which was probably unnecessary for the understanding of the sentence before preposing, is now mandatory! Without this object-marking kui and/or the subject/marking ka? the

subject and object cannot be readily identified. Since the preposing due to thematization requires the presence of kui to disambiguate the case relationships, kui becomes almost mandatorily present on thematized objects. Since, as I have pointed out before, the object marking kui is not typically present unless its omission would result in some ambiguity, kui is going to occur with a high frequency in a specific environment characterized by its thematicity and contrastiveness; it is not surprising that the highly marked topics in this environment can be described as 'emphatic'.¹⁴ This use of kui, which is now more inter-sentential than intrasentential in many cases, is now found in virtual complementary distribution with another set of contrastively marked topics labelled with ka?.

Throughout this discussion I have been using the term 'near complementary distribution' to describe the relationship between the topic marking particles kui and ka?. It is now appropriate to discuss some examples of overlap between these two particles (Okell 1969:326):

saŋ ra? tay? ?əkhyin tun: kui ka?
 learn-must-TAY?-time-during-KUI-KA?
 'even during the time (we) were learning'

?ay: da kui ka? hma: ta bhay:
 that-KUI-KA? be wrong-TA-BHAY:
 'That's where (they) went wrong'

In these two examples picked from Okell kui seems to have lost its former association with the object slot to the point where it can cooccur with ka?. Thus, in the first sentence, ka? is used primarily in a deictic sense while the kui marks the contrastive topicality of the phrase and, in the second sentence, ka? seems to mark the intrasentential subject role while kui again marks its contrastive topicality.

2.2.3 The topic marker tau?. The particle tau? is used in two contrastive senses: (1) it is used to mark the first of two temporally or causally order events and/or (2) it is used not only to state that a contrasting (=new) topic is being used but it also indicates that the contrast is with a previous statement or assumption. That is, it often announces more than just a change of topic; frequently and more importantly a partial or total disagreement with either explicitly or implicitly announced information is being expressed. A quite parallel use of tau? is found in the verbal morphology (see section 3).

2.2.4 The use of kau:. kau:, nicely glossed as 'how about?' by Okell, is described as (1969:322) "usually taking up some information already given or mentioned and asking about its application to other topics" e.g.,

khyak kau: khyak tat se: səla:
 cook-KAU: cook-know how-SE:-Sə-question
 'How about cooking-can (she) do (that) too?'
 (e.g. after hearing about her other accomplishments)

This is a specialized contrastive topic marker with the only new information being the newly picked topic and the only question being whether or not it fits into an already mentioned class. This marker

contrasts with the ka? marked topics in that after a ka? marked topic there is frequently new information introduced about the topic; there is no such new information introduced after a kau: marked topic.¹⁵ Cornyn and Roop (1969:233) discuss kau: in similar terms:

kau: asks for a comparison with an earlier topic; the answer to a question with -kau: indicates either that the second topic also (-lay:) is like the first topic, or that the second topic, by contrast (-tau?), is different.

3.0 The verbal morphology. Modern Burmese has a pair of particles in the verbal morphology which are set up in a nice paradigmatic opposition to each other: se:/?uṃ: and tau?. Allott (1965) has insightfully characterized these particles as 'cumulative' (se:/?uṃ:) and 'culminative' (tau?); Okell (1973) made the contrast between them even more explicit. The particles se: and ?uṃ: are in complementary distribution and function as a single unit in their semantic opposition to tau?; ?uṃ: cooccurs with the clause final markers may, nay, and ∅ 'imperative' while se: occurs elsewhere. Thus what we are dealing with is a semantic opposition between se:/?uṃ: and tau?.

Following the lead of Okell (1973) I will discuss the se:/?uṃ: versus tau? opposition in terms of the continuity or an action (or state) between two different points in time (time¹ and time²). Thus consider the following chart:

<u>time¹</u>	<u>time²</u>	<u>particle choice</u>
+action/state	+action/state	<u>se:/</u>
-action/state	-action/state	<u>?uṃ:</u>
-action/state	+action/state	
+action/state	-action/state	<u>tau?</u>

In short, se:/?uṃ: implies the continuation of a previous state, condition, or action while tau? implies a change in a previous state, condition, or action. Okell gives a set of examples which correspond to the above chart:

	<u>time¹:time²</u>	
pat təla: ti: <u>?uṃ:</u> may	++	'(I) will go on playing the x.'
pat təla: məti: <u>se:</u> bhu:	--	'(I) won't play the x. yet'
pat təla: məti: <u>tau?</u> bhu:	+-	'(I) won't play the x. anymore'
pat təla: ti: <u>tau?</u> may	-+	'(I) will play the xylophone at last'

It should be noted that se:/?uṃ: and tau? do not just relate two times for a single event, state, condition, or action but also they may relate two quite different events, states, conditions, or actions

(Okell 1973:13):

pat təla: ti:se:tay +: ' (I) also played the xylophone '

As Okell points out, although one possible reading of se: is that the xylophone playing occurred in the past and is continuing, the se: could alternatively be used in case a flute was being played and now the person has switched to playing the xylophone or, in case the person had made a speech earlier and now was playing the xylophone. In short, while se: and ʔuṃ: imply continuation, the continuation need not be restricted to the same state, condition, or action; similarly, while tau? implies discontinuation, the discontinuation need not be restricted to the same vein. The implications of this last observation for a general characterization of tau?, which also occurs as a new, contrastive topic marker are obvious.

Interestingly, a certain well-defined set of examples exists where both ʔuṃ: and tau? occur next to each other (Okell 1973:17):

ʔəhku? məlup (nay?) ʔuṃ: tau? lup kyaŋ ra? lup may
'Even though (he) doesn't do it now, (he) may well do it later'

chaya?ci la mətwe? (nay?) ʔuṃ: tau? ʔəcaŋ sadi? ra? tay
'(I) always remember you, even though (I) don't come and see you'

tat nui ʔuṃ: tau? swa: kui məswa: kyaŋ bhu:
'Even if (I) could afford to, (I) simply don't want to go'

An analysis of the three examples using both ʔuṃ: and tau? reveals two pertinent characteristics of the semantics: the continuation (ʔuṃ:) of some state, condition, or action is juxtaposed to the actual or potential change (tau?) of the state, condition, or action. Given that all the cited examples contain both a continued component and a changed component the presence of both ʔuṃ: and tau? should be somewhat less than disturbing.

Finally, it should be noted that the paradigmatic semantic oppositions expressed by these Burmese particles are closely paralleled by the set of semantic oppositions expressed by yet/still and anymore in English. In fact, the so-called anymore-dialect of English expresses a strikingly similar set of oppositions. The anymore-dialect is the general cover term for that set of American dialects where sentences like the following are found:¹⁶

Liver costs a lot anymore.
Films are so boring anymore.
Food is very expensive anymore.

Notice that in this sentence, anymore does not mean 'nowadays'; instead, anymore is used for a state that was not true in the past, but which is true now. All the oppositions found in the use of the Burmese particles se:/ʔuṃ: and tau? can also be found in this dialect of English:

time¹:time²

The work is still difficult. +:+ still (positive)/
 The work isn't difficult yet. -:- yet (negative)
 (=The work still isn't difficult)

The work isn't difficult anymore. +:- anymore
 The work is difficult anymore. -:+ anymore

The parallel with Burmese is perfect. Identical distinctions are being coded in both languages in similar ways.

4.0 Conclusion. Two basic semantic oppositions underlie the use and distribution of the topic particles ka?, kui, ha, and \emptyset : a dynamic/static distinction and a continued/changed state opposition. The second of these distinctions is the basis for the organization of the verb particles se:/?u:m: and tau?. In the Burmese topicalization system and within part of the verbal morphology, the first distinction is between those particles found only with nominals and static entities (ka?/kui/ha) and those found with verbals and dynamic entities (se:/?u:m:/tau?). The second distinction separates particles found with a changed condition (ka?/kui/tau?) from particles found with a continued condition (se:/?u:m:/ha/ \emptyset); a perfect parallel for this second distinction is found in the use of anymore in certain dialects of American English. The following chart summarizes both distinctions:

	<u>changed condition</u>	<u>continued condition</u>
nominals and static entities	<u>ka?/ kui</u>	<u>\emptyset/ ha</u>
verbals and dynamic entities	<u>tau?</u>	<u>se:/ ?u:m:</u>

Because ka?, kui, \emptyset , and ha only occur with static or at least statically viewed nominals, these particles do not occur as a part of the verbal morphology. However, because both the verbal morphology and the thematic system contain dynamic entities tau? can and does occur as a part of both systems. This prevalence of the dynamic/static opposition and the continuing state/changed state opposition not just in the Burmese thematization system but also in other languages suggests that these distinctions are not just products of a linguistic description or even just principles underlying the organization of Burmese grammar but are basic organizing principles of language.

Footnotes:

*I shall be surprised if all my errors should prove minor and I will be grateful for corrections from readers.

1

O'kell (1969,1973), Lehman (1973), Becker (1975), Allott (1965), Cornyn (1944), and Cornyn and Roop (1968).

2

I am using a transliteration scheme for all the examples. Although it is fairly obvious, those interested in looking it up can find it in Thurgood (1976).

3

This dual functioning of various particles provides part of the mechanism for the change from the original ergative/nominative system found in the earliest Lolo-Burmese texts to the essentially nominative/accusative system found in Modern Burmese.

In fact, in many languages formatives exist which are susceptible to one analysis at the clause level and another at the discourse level. And, since it is not just the linguist that is faced with alternate possibilities for the interpretation of these particles, this discourse level/clause level indeterminacy undoubtedly provides one mechanism by which topic/comment systems become nominative/accusative systems and vice versa.

4

In fact, the prime use of ka? and kui is as intrasentential case markers; as intersentential topicalization markers, they have a much lighter functional load.

5

I am making no distinction between the terms thematicization and topicalization in this paper. Also elsewhere in the literature many of the markers which I will be calling topic markers have been called subject markers. Throughout this paper I will reserve the term subject (and object) to refer to intrasentential case relationships or role relationships and I will use the terms theme and topic interchangeably to refer to intersentential thematicization patterns.

6

While the markers ka?, kau:, and tau? mark new topics it must be noted that what is new is the topicality of the phrase in question. Apparently only old information can be topicalized in Burmese.

7

See section 3.

8

Just after their discussion of ha referred to above, Cornyn and Roop somewhat surprisingly state (1968:233): "-ha marks a topic introduced for the first time." The example just discussed provides a clear counterexample to the claim that "-ha marks a topic introduced for the first time." There is a sense however in which Cornyn and Roop are correct in their observation; ha frequently marks a topic that has already been established extralinguistically e.g., deictically, but which is being introduced for the first time linguistically.

9

The numbers in parenthesis refer to pages in Martha Quest from which the quotations were taken.

10

Since stress is not indicated in writing there are obvious advantages to the use of the cleft sentence in writing. In spoken English either structure would be quite functional.

11

English contrasts with Burmese in this regard. In the sentence There's a man standing near the curb the noun phrase a man is both the topic and new information. (The word there is the grammatical subject).

12

'Source' is used in the sense of Fillmore (1968).

13

It is clear, of course, that the Burmese ka? marked phrase is far more restricted in its range of uses.

14

No major or even minor realignments are necessary to equate Okell's category 'emphatic' with my category 'new topic'.

15

The essential minimal difference between a kau: marked and a ka? marked topic is that the kau: marked sentence asks about the contrastively marked topic while the ka? marked topic has some sort of new information about the topic in the sentence. In general ka? is used for a much, much broader range of things than the highly restricted, almost totally old information based kau:.

16

In standard American English, anymore is a negative polarity item; that is, anymore only occurs in negative environments---never in a positive one. This contrasts with its use in the so-called anymore-dialect where it occurs in both positive and negative environments.

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