

subject marker (literary *ði*). *Ko* is an object or directional marker, *hma* is a locative, *né* an instrumental marker: e.g. *eiŋ.hma* 'in the house'; *dou'.né* 'with a stick' (literary *hniŋ*).

#### POSSESSION

Literary *i* = colloquial *yé*; Y of X is expressed as X *i/yé* Y. This particle can be omitted; if it is, X changes tone: e.g. *θu.yé.eiŋ* = *θú.eiŋ* 'his house'. If omitted, the objective marker *ko* induces similar tonal change.

There are several numerical coefficients, e.g. *yau'*, *ù* for people; *kauŋ* for animals; *lòuŋ*, *chàuŋ* for objects according to shape, size, and so on. *Khú* is an all-purpose classifier which can replace any other (cf. Chinese ↑ /ge/).

#### Pronoun

The independent personal pronouns are:

##### *Singular*

- 1 *cuŋ.də* (masc.), *cuŋ.má* (fem.)
- 2 *khìŋ.bya* (formal), *mìŋ* (general)
- 3 *θu*

Plural markers are added to make the plural series. Possessives are made by adding *i/yé*. Again, if this is omitted, the tone of the pronoun changes: *cuŋ.də.yé* = *cuŋ.dó* 'mine'.

#### DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUN

*dí* 'this'; *hó* 'that'

#### INTERROGATIVE PRONOUN

These are based on the particle *bé* + modulators: *bé.ðu* 'who?'; *ba.go* 'what?'.

#### Numerals

1–10: *tí'*, *hni'*, *θòuŋ*, *lè*, *ŋà*, *chau'*, *khú.ní'*, *ší'*, *kò*, *təs<sup>h</sup>ə/təse*; 20 *hni'she*; 100 *təya*.

#### Verb

Verbs in Burmese may be simple, e.g. *θwà* 'to go', *sà* 'to eat'; or compound, i.e. root + root, e.g. *twé.myiŋ* 'to meet' ('meet' + 'see'). There is no inflection for person. The general predicative marker is *ði* (coll.)/*i* (lit.). This marker is further amplified by several specific markers for tense and mood: e.g. *me* (future), *ge* (perfective), *ne* (progressive), *pyi* (inceptive). E.g.

*təne.θə.hnai maŋ.lu.e youŋ.hma sə.zə shiŋ.la.ge.i*

'One day, Maung Lu E came home from work early'

(*təne.θə.hnai* 'one day', 'once'; *youŋ* 'place of work'; *hma* 'from' (postposition); *sə.zə* 'early'; *shiŋ.la* 'to return'; *ge* perfective particle; *i* predicative marker)

təne.θə.hnai maun.lu.e youŋ.hma sɔ.zɔ shiŋ.la.gɛ.i

‘One day, Maung Lu E came home from work early’

(*təne.θə.hnai* ‘one day’, ‘once’; *youŋ* ‘place of work’; *hma* ‘from’ (postposition); *sɔ.zɔ* ‘early’; *shiŋ.la* ‘to return’; *gɛ* perfective particle; *i* predicative marker)

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*kélkouŋ/pi*: these are used to express perfective aspect.

#### NEGATION

The negative marker is *mə*... *phù*: e.g. *mə human phù* ‘not true’.

#### IMPERATIVE

Command is made more polite by addition of *pa*: e.g. *θwà.ba* ‘please go’. An interrogative marker is *la*.

#### MODAL VERBS

Desiderative *chiŋ*; potential *ta’/hnain*; necessitative *yá*; conditional *yih*: e.g. *twé.yih* ‘if... meet(s)’; *θwa.yá.me* ‘... must go’. A verbal noun is made with the *ə*-prefix (written **ဒ** = *a*, reduced to /ə/): e.g. *lou* ‘to work’ – *ə.lou* ‘work’ (noun); *hlá* ‘to be pretty’ – *ə.hlá* ‘beauty’.

Many verbs occur in *functive–stative* pairs (active–passive in Indo-European terms); the *functive* member has an aspirate initial which is dropped in the *stative*:

<i>Functive</i>	<i>Stative</i>
hcij ‘to make narrow’	cij ‘to be narrow’
hcwá ‘to raise’	cwá ‘to be lifted’
hnòu ‘to waken’	nòu ‘to be awake’
hlu’ ‘to set free’	lu’ ‘to be free’

As in Chinese, there are many four-syllable set phrases, which may be extended to six members. These often consist of formant + rhyming word, reduplicated: e.g. *kə.pya.kə.ya* ‘hurriedly’.

#### RELATIVE CLAUSES

May be made with the particle *tɔ*:

θwà.dð.lu ‘the man who is going’

θwà.gé.dð.lu ‘the man who went’ (with perfective marker *kɛ* → *gɛ*)

θwa.mə.dð.lu ‘the man who will go’ (with future marker *mɛ*)

Subjectless sentences proliferate, as in Chinese: e.g. *Pyɔ.pyɔ.ne ðe.gè.ði* ‘Live well, die miserably.’

## Compounding

Burmese has a very large stock of polysyllables built up by compounding from various parts of speech. An example shows two nouns and a verb forming a third polysyllabic noun: *nyá* 'night' + *ne* 'sun' + *sàuy* 'to lean' → *nyá.ne.zàuy* 'afternoon'.

## Word order

SOV is normal.