

The Relation between the Use of Modern Burmese Prose as the Standard Language and Nation-Building in British Burma*

Myo Oo**

I. Introduction

This article aims to analyze the meaning of the transition of modern Burmese prose from a common language to an official language with attention to the prevailing political, social and administrative conditions. This article historically traces how Burmese¹⁾ extended its role in British Burma through media, education and administration throughout colonial period. In other words, it closely traces the progress of modern Burmese prose from a common language to an official language during the colonial period.²⁾

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** HK Research Professor, Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, Busan University of Foreign Studies.

1) Due to this article emphasis on colonial Burma, I generally use the term "Burma" throughout this article for current Myanmar, "Burmese" is for Burmese language.

2) Burmese was both a common and official language, officially claim or not, in Burmese kingdom since Pagan period and continued to be so throughout its history. However,

Regarding the nation-building of British Burma, some scholars have greatly emphasized the rationalization and social concept of British Burma which formed during the colonial period from the political and historical aspects. On the rationalization of British Burma, Professor Robert H. Taylor made adequate accounts on the rationalization of modern Burma in his authentic work, *The State in Myanmar*, and depicts the political history of Burma till the 2008 (Taylor 2009). Though this is a successful research on the rationalization of British Burma, it does not stress enough on the role of nation-building in transitional Burma. Research on the social concept, J. S. Furnivall's *Colonial Policy and Practice* can be evaluated. Professor Furnivall is the one who laid enough stress on the formation of modern Burmese society. His seminal work, *Colonial Policy and Practice: A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India*, is a successful research providing "The Plural Society", has been widely known. Furnivall analysis on the diversity of local tropical society of Netherlands India and British Burma provides his famous theory, the plural society (Furnivall 1956). Therefore, this work paved the way for the understanding of Burmese society formed since the colonial period.

A part from that, there are three researches on the nation-building of Burma: Taylor (2005), Tin Maung Maung Than (1999) and Chessman (2003). Professor Taylor considers the nation-building of Burma from the aspect of national consolidation (Taylor 2005) and Tin Maung Maung Than analysis it on the social, cultural and religious aspect of the independence

this article focuses on the use of modern Burmese prose which had been politicized and used by people as a tool for both inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic communication in order to emphasis its role on the nation-building of British Burma.

Burma (Tin Maung Maung Than 1999). The nation-building of Burma especially in the terms of Buddhism can be seen in Chessman (2003). Chessman primarily considers the nation-building of Burma by monastery education (Chessman 2003).

On the relation of nationalism and literature, there are three articles: Tin Htway (1972), Aung San Suu Kyi (1987) and Thein Naing (1979). Tin Htway made a brief account on the emergence and development of the political writings in Burmese literature from the beginning of it to the eve of the Second World War (Tin Htway 1972). Aung San Suu Kyi emphasis on the socio-political currents in Burmese literature published between 1910 and 1940 (Aung San Suu Kyi 1987). Thein Naing describes the relation between the motivation of national sentiment and Burmese literature (Thein Naing 1979). This article under study has found greatly on significant of the nation-building of Burma form the viewpoint on the evolvement of modern Burmese prose.

In addition, there are three valuable researches on the language policy of independent Burma: Callahan (2003; 2004) and Kyaw Yin Hlaing (2007). These researches throw light on the nation-building of independent Burma by the language policy of respective independent Burmese governments and resistances from frontier Burma in which other ethnic minorities live.

"The Nation is an imagined political community" (Anderson 1991: 6). The details of nation-building by Benedict Anderson can be seen in the "Concept and Definition" chapter of *Imagined Communities* (Anderson 1991). Following the idea of "homogeneous, empty time" that Walter Benjamin proposed, Anderson explains the concept of "nation-building by means of language" by showing how secular views emerged through

the proliferation of modern short stories and newspapers in 18th century Europe (Anderson 1991: 24-25). According to Anderson, short stories and newspapers were published in standard language as print capitalism, and the standard language became stabilized and transformed into "National Language" (Anderson 1991: 24-25). As a result, a person who uses this language imaged himself as a member of "Nation" and the basis of a nation and nationalism emerged.

Along with the changes in social, economic, political and administrative conditions, printing enterprises grew in British Burma immediately after the First Anglo-Burmese War (1824-1826) and Burmese became one of the common language in the media. With the development of print media, Burmese came out in various literary forms in newspapers, journals and magazines in British Burma. During the First Student Strike (1920), national schools were founded in many parts of the country. Due to the lack of textbooks for vernacular schools and Anglo-vernacular schools, most of the newly initiated textbooks were translated into Burmese and Burmese employed as the educational language in those schools. On the one hand, modern Burmese prose was born in the first half of 1930s and became prosperous in the second half when Burmese nationalist movement had reached its peak. Then Burmese was acknowledged as an official language of Burma emerged as a modern nation-state during the Second World War. Continuously, modern Burmese prose was acknowledged as the official language in the Union of Burma by the 1947 Constitution, as mentioned later.

As we have seen from the Benedict Anderson's study, it was an important fact that the emergency and popularization of modern Burmese which was based on the development of presswork had played

a leading role in the nation-building of British Burma. With this concept of Anderson --nation-building by language-- as a basic idea, this article aims to analyze the meaning of the transition of the modern Burmese prose from a common language to an official language with attention to the prevailing political, social and administrative conditions. It focuses on the nation-building by language in British Burma, which was centered ethnic Burman in Burma proper. Finally, the connection of this process with the admission of Burmese as the official language in Burma, consisted of Burma proper and frontier areas, will be explored.³⁾

This article, unlike the former researches, aims to analyze the meaning of the transition of modern Burmese prose from a common language to an official language with attention to the prevailing political, social and administrative conditions. In doing so, it can be said that the use of modern Burmese prose as the standard language played a central role in the process of the nation-building in Burma during the colonial period.

To clarify the purpose of this article, a historical analysis is made of the emergence of modern Burmese prose which had been used by people as a tool for both inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic communication during the colonial period. This article consists of five sections. The next section briefly surveys how Burmese was widely used in print media in various literary forms in British Burma. The third section traces how Burmese extended its role in education. The fourth section discusses the process of the use of modern Burmese prose as an official language. The final

3) Despite this article studies the nation-building of British Burma, in practice, it focuses on that of Burma proper in which nationalist movements led by the ethnic Burman occurred throughout the colonial period.

section reviews the discussions.

II. The Initiation of Print Enterprises and Its Effect on Vernacular Languages

In order to know how Burmese was used as a common language in print media in British Burma, in this section, the historic evolution of the newspapers, journals and magazines will be presented first.⁴⁾ This is followed by a description of the development of printing enterprise using modern Burmese as a medium and the emergence of modern Burmese as a common language through the use of media.

Along with the changes in social, economic, political and administrative conditions, printing enterprises grew in British Burma after the First Anglo-Burmese War. The newspaper is the first and foremost form of modern print media which was conveyed to the public in British Burma. Newspaper publishing started in the colonial period in Rakhine and Taninthari.⁵⁾ The newspaper developed with the support of Christian missionary in the early part of the colonial period (Ba Than 1978: 1). This is a brief introduction how the newspaper publishing started in British Burma.

The first Burmese language newspaper published in British Burma was "Dhamma" (The Religious Herald) (Ba Than 1978: 22-24).⁶⁾ After

4) For the history of newspaper, journal and magazine see Ba Than (1978) and Htin Gyi (1992).

5) Immediately after the First Anglo-Burmese War, Rakhine, western coastal area of Burma, and Taninthari, southern coastal area, were captured by the British.

6) According to Blundel's report, there was a Burmese newspaper first issued in 1836.

"Dhamma", "Satugou" (Morning Star), a Kayin language newspaper, began publication in September, 1842 and Rev. Bennett published a newspaper in S'gaw Kayin language by the Kayin Mission Press in 1837 (Htin Gyi 1992: 17). In practice, however, the number of English language newspapers was greater than that of the Burmese language newspapers in the early part of the colonial period. In Mawlamyaing, Mr. T. Whittan began publication of an English language newspaper, named "Moulmein Adviser", on July 1, 1848. Other English language newspapers published in Mawlamyaing included the "Moulmein Almanac", first issued in 1844, and "Moulmein Free Press", founded in 1846 (Ba Than 1978: 15). In Rakhine, an English language newspaper called "The Arakan News" was published at the same time (Ba Than 1978: 9). At this juncture, the Burmese language papers were not so great in number.

From these origins, the Burmese language newspaper enterprise developed after the Second Anglo-Burmese War (1852). As the result of the war, lower Burma came under the British administration, and telegraph communication with Britain was established in the post-1870 period. The development of more efficient telegraph communication system and the subsequent increase in the speed of the transmission of news from Britain contributed to the growth of the Burmese language newspapers. But, in Yangon, after the war, English language newspapers were still more popular than Burmese language newspapers. Examples of the latter include "The Englishman" and "The Statesman" (Kolkata) and "The Rangoon Times" and "The Rangoon Gazette" (Yangon) (Ba Than 1978: 6-9).

Unfortunately, its title was not uncovered (Ba Than 1978: 21).

The increase in the number of newspapers published in Burma included not only those of private sector, but also those of political entities. Both authorities of Burmese --the Burmese monarch in upper Burma and the British colonial government in lower Burma-- published newspapers. The colonial government published the first issue of "Lawkithutapyinnya" (The Modern Knowledge) newspaper on January 11, 1873 (Ba Than 1978: 35). On the other hand, "Yadanabon Naypyidaw Thadinza" (The Mandalay Gazette) began publication in Mandalay, the seat of Burmese monarch, on March 20, 1885 (Ba Than 1978: 37). The growth of the Burmese newspaper industry, however, accelerated after the Third Anglo-Burmese War (1885).

After the Third Anglo-Burmese War (1885), the publication of Burmese language newspapers spread to many parts of the country. For example, the "Athuyein Thadinza" (The Sun), "Myanma Taya Thadinza" (The Star of Burma) were published in Mandalay, "Myanmarpyi Time Thadinza" in Mawlamyaing and "Zabyumingala Thadinza" (The Zabyumingala Adviser) and "Myanmar Thandaw-sint" (The Burma Herald) in Patheingyi (Ba Than 1978: 35; Htin Gyi 1992: 107).

No one can deny that although newspapers were published in various languages,⁷⁾ most of them were Burmese language newspaper. The main cause of newspaper boom stems from the impact of the First World War. The increased demand for timely news of the war caused the increase in the number of newspapers and newspaper circulation. The total circulation of Burmese language newspapers amounted to over 10,000 issues (Ba Than 1978: 52). Newspapers publication rates increased from

7) Examples included "The Daw Kale News", established by Mr. L. D. Attaiades, printed in S'gaw Kayin and published in Patheingyi since 1919 (Ba Than 1978: 76-77).

twice or thrice a week to daily. After 1920, a series of new newspapers emerged such as "Liberty", "De Dode", "Bandoola", "Zeya", "Thissawady", "Aung Myanmar", "Tai Chit Myanmar", "The Burma Observer", and "The New Burma" (Ngwe U Dawn 1978: 80). As a result, the increase of Burmese language newspaper helped contribute to the wider use of the Burmese language in British Burma.

During the First World War, weekly journals, which were printed in Burmese, also appeared in Burma beginning in 1919. Journals were usually issued once a week and, unlike newspaper, covered important news and articles and comics at that time (Ngwe U Dawn 1978: 80-81). Journals became more popular than newspapers, because they covered diverse topics such as political critics, rumors, poems and rhetoric writing. The factor that made journal become more popular than newspapers was that newspaper no longer carried big news stories and journal became of great interest to the readers of Burma (Ngwe U Dawn 1978: 82).

In contrast to newspapers, journals clearly mirrored the political context of the period. Many journals served to propagate the view of a particular political party. Some journals, however, carried only news. These exceptions include "Myanma Byuha" (Burma Strategy) and "Zeya" (The Success) (Ngwe U Dawn 1978: 82). Basically, only two political groups existed in Burma --the 21-Member Party and the General Council of Burmese Associations (GCBA). The former was a party that separated from GCBA. But, as more factions also left it, they established themselves as new parties. Then, journals became a place where parties could interpret their opinions (Ngwe U Dawn 1978: 83-84). In the newspaper sector, the 21-Member Party held influence

over "The Sun" and the "Light of Burma", whereas the GCBA dominated "Pyinnya Alin" (Ngwe U Dawn 1978: 83-84). The former also served as patrons for the "Bandoola" and "Dee Dode" journals. With the rise in the demand for "home rule" from the British colonial government, the journal industry also grew, and as a result, its birth and increasingly important role in the promotion of Burmese language more widely.

The magazine, which was printed in Burmese, part of the print media, also assumed a main role in giving birth to the modern Burmese prose during the colonial era. Magazines, unlike newspapers and journals, emerged with the support of backers from the economic sector. Most of the magazines in those days were established to serve as a forum for advertising their products in general. For example, "Myanma Magazine" was published by U Maung Maung Drug Store, "Kyet Magazine" by Kyet (Chicken) Trade Mark, "Ko Tun Baya Magazine" by Ko Tun Vernacular Medicine, "Bombay Burma Magazine" by Bombay-Burma Furniture, "Manalay Shwe Let Wah Magazine" by Mandalay Shwe Letwah (Golden Palm) Drug Store, "Kawza Thit" (New Age) by Watson and David Co. and "Thet Saunt" (Life Guard) by Desuza Medicine (Ngwe U Dawn 1978: 81-83).

Although magazines initially gave priority to news articles, short stories and poems gradually began to appear more often during the colonial period. "Yadanabon Magazine", the oldest one founded in 1911, was a leading publication, which published poems together with news stories (Min Yu Wai 1978: 101). Afterwards, some Burmese short stories, such as "Maung Thaw Ka Innmet" (Dream of Maung Thaw Ka, the boy), "Thakonnala", translated from Sanskrit, and "Trader from

Venice", a story by William Shakespeare (1564-1616), appeared in magazines (Min Yu Wai 1978: 103).

After 1917, in tandem with the growing popularity of the short stories in British Burma, magazines increased in number. One reason for this is demonstrated by an advertisement in "The Sun" magazine, which invited the submission of short stories (Min Yu Wai 1978: 103). According to this advertisement, the best short story would be selected and its writer awarded a prize. After this advertisement, many writers of short stories came out. Since then, it appears that even average readers tried their hand at writing short stories and novels (Min Yu Wai 1978: 104). That is to say that magazines industry came into an era of boom with short stories and aroused the people's interest. It can, however, be noticed that Burmese had not yet been established as a standard language in the early times of short stories. Moreover, most of the short stories in those days were just for entertainment and their authors did not aim at the kindling of nationalism. This can be discovered in the oldest modern Burmese novels (Zaw Gyi 1994: 27-36). In this way, magazines made modern Burmese prosperous among the people during the colonial period.

One can see, from the list of magazines published in the colonial time that magazines appeared from 1905 to 1942. The magazines dealt with a diversity of topics--news, politics, social, literature, science, rumor, short stories, painting, cinema, sports, astrology, youth and faith--and one magazine after another was brought out successively (Min Yu Wai 1978: 100-101).

As mentioned above, in the early times, missionaries supported newspapers, politicians established journals and businessmen run

magazines. Short stories which appeared in the later period had not moved beyond the trend of the traditional Burmese. Thus, print media held diverse styles and played the crucial role in the emergence of modern Burmese as a common language and Burmese performed in various literary styles in media with the development of print industry during the colonial period.

III. The Role of National Education on the Boom of Burmese

In order to know the role of national education on the boom of modern Burmese, this section will deal with the use of Burmese as a language of instruction in education and founding of national schools which constituted a crucial role in the emergence of modern Burmese prose.

The First Student Strike gave birth to national schools. The strike was staged on December 5, 1920, by students protesting against the Rangoon University Act (1920).⁸⁾ Because the authorities did not respond immediately to their demands, the strike was prolonged (*The Thuriya Newspaper*, June 11, 1921). Mr. J. C. Wedgewood, British Labor party representative, visited Shwe Dagon Pagoda, where the strikers camped, in December 12, 1920, and met student leaders and gave some advice. Since then, the leaders of the strike started the national education by senior students teaching their juniors (Hmine 1960: 325-328). In this way, national education came into existence in British Burma during the

8) See Aye Kyaw (1970) for the First Student Strike (1920) and the foundation of national schools in British Burma.

colonial period. The emergence of national schools, as described in next paragraph, had a tremendous impact on the development of modern Burmese prose.

According to the support of GCBA, national schools were built in many parts of the country. After the First Student Strike, about 70-80 national primary schools emerged within 3-4 months in British Burma. In this way, national education emerged in British Burma under the colonial government through the efforts of the nationalists (*The Thuria Newspaper*, September 17, 1921).

The objectives of establishing national schools led to an increase in the use of Burmese prose in British Burma. The objectives were laid down by the members of the National Education Council (NEC),⁹⁾ and were aimed at using Burmese as an academic language, teaching vocational skills for the development of the state, upgrading the living status of people, and designating a place where people could study Burmese culture and history. The objective to use Burmese as an educational language, as laid down by NEC member, was one of the factors supporting the increase in the number of Burmese language books published in British Burma.

As a result of the NEC's decision, the texts of national schools were published in Burmese language. On the other hand, as described above, national schools were built in many parts of the country soon after the First Student Strike. According to the objective of NEC, Burmese language texts books, except for the subject of English, were required to

9) NEC, composed of Burmese nationalist, was a council which administered the national schools. It, however, protected the national schools from the disturbances of colonial government (Aye Kyaw 1970: 204). For the activities of NEC see Aye Kyaw (1970).

be used in national schools. The textbooks for national schools were selected by the NEC and approved by the Text Book Committee (TBC) which consisted of 29 members in 1929. The duty of TBC was not only to select the text but also to translate suitable books for national schools (*The Thuria Newspaper*, November 26, 1921; Aye Kyaw 1970: 203). In this way, the textbook requirements for national schools constituted an important part in the increase of Burmese books in British Burma.

The movement for the establishment of national school system not only supported an increase in new books, but also revived the study of Burmese literature. To revive the old Burmese literature, national schools started teaching Burmese language, which had never been prescribed in schools and invited teachers who could teach old Burmese texts. Old Burmese literature emerged into a book and students of national schools became interested in this subject (Khin Soe 1967: 31). Finally, national schools started to teach Burmese in two subjects: compulsory Burmese and optional Burmese (Aye Kyaw 1970: 255). It can be seen that activities of the national schools contributed to the revival of Burmese literature and texts in British Burma.

These activities of national schools led to the coordination of NEC with other educational associations. At that time in British Burma, Anglo-vernacular schools, supported by the colonial government, used both English and Burmese and taught all subjects in English except for Burmese literature. Given the concern that the use of English text delayed student's development, the NEC and the Teachers Association demanded the colonial government to use Burmese as the language of instruction for all subjects, except English literature (Aye Kyaw 1970: 256). As a result of the attempts of both associations, the government

approved the use of Burmese as a language of instruction from some subjects. These subjects included engineering, forestry, medicine and agriculture. To teach subjects in Burmese language, some texts needed to be translated into Burmese language. Therefore, to fulfill the need of studying modern education, NEC attempted to publish some textbooks in Burmese language such as science, medicine, philosophy, and mathematics (Aye Kyaw 1970: 257). It can be said that this was a factor for the increase of Burmese books during the colonial period.

With the emergence of Burmese as a medium in national schools, the study of old Burmese literature --both poem and prose-- became widespread and most of them were printed in those days. In 1928, the Department of Education under the colonial government announced that books published within one year from June 30, 1930, would be selected and awarded prizes, because of the increased demand of texts in Burmese to be used in schools (Aye Kyaw 1970: 256). This announcement also contributed to increase Burmese books in British Burma. During the first half of 1930, newspapers, journals, and magazines were published more often than before because of the increase of readers (Aye Kyaw 1970: 257-261). From 1915 to 1934, within 19 years, 43 kinds of books were published in British Burma, Pali, Mon, Kayin, Kachin, Chin, Bengali, Urdu, Shan, Tamil, Gujarati, Hindustani, etc. The total amounted to 3,927 books and among those books, 2,314 were in Burmese (Myint Swe 1972: 48).

As seen above, the founding of national schools and the demand for texts in Burmese for Burmese schools resulted in the increase of books in Burmese during the colonial period.

IV. The Emergence of Modern Burmese Prose and Its Politics

How modern Burmese was created, and how it was recognized as an official language during the Second World War and in independent Burma will be discussed in this section.

The birth of modern Burmese¹⁰⁾ was a result of the efforts of the educated Burmese writers in the colonial period. As described above, through the attempt of national schools, Burmese was spot-lighted and the study of Burmese language became widespread in British Burma. In this trend, some of Yangon University students became interested in Burmese literature and it was a trigger for the emergence and growth of modern Burmese prose. Reading clubs emerged and some university clubs used Burmese language in their communication (Aye Kyaw 1970: 260-261). In this way, the enthusiasm of university students had a positive influence on the Burmese Department of Yangon University.

The interest of the university students in Burmese literature was aroused by U Pe Maung Tin, Professor of the Burmese Department, Yangon University. By the attempt of U Pe Maung Tin, old Burmese literature was taught in the classes of the university. After that, some Burmese scholars were invited to deliver lectures in the university. Later, a master's degree course was opened in the university. Before the Second World War, an attempt to teach all subjects, except English, in Burmese was underway. Although university clubs used English in

10) Modern Burmese means the language which had been used in Burma from 1930s to the present.

communication before, it later changed to Burmese language (Aye Kyaw 1970: 261). In this way, the Department of Burmese also played an important role in the emergence of modern Burmese language.

In the emergence of *Khit San Sarpay*¹¹⁾ (Experimental Literature), Yangon University and "Gandaloka Magazine" provided introduction of *Khit San Sarpay* for readers who has not been familiar with it. Contributors, both students and the faculty, of Yangon University initiated *Khit San Sarpay* in *Gandaloka Magazine* with poems and short stories. This magazine also carried analysis of old Burmese literature and modern poems, prose and articles which approximately held the writing style of modern Burmese. Unfortunately, it did not go beyond Yangon University because of a small circulation (Min Yu Wai 1978: 106).

As mentioned above, *Khit San Sarpay* was initiated in the university and was relayed to the public through "Dagon Magazine" which wielded great influence on the Burmese media in those days. Editor of the *Dagon Magazine*, who was interested in *Khit San Sarpay*, invited the authors of Yangon University to submit their work. Finally, a section for their work was opened in the same magazine. The section was called "university section" included both *Khit San* poems and short stories. *Dagon Magazine* was the springboard for *Khit San Sarpay* to penetrate out of the university to a wider population for the first time (Min Yu Wai 1978: 106).

In 1938, 18 *Khit San* short stories were published in a book titled

11) U Pe Maung Tin, one of the pioneers of the *Khit San Sarpay* movement, had defined *Khit San Sarpay* as an invention of new writing style in conformity with the age. The aim of *Khit San Sarpay* was to pass message to the reader clearly by using colloquial expressions (Wa et al. 1966: h).

"Khit San Ponbyin-mya 1" by a group of scholars called Myanmar Nainggan and "Khit San Ponbyin-mya 2" was published soon thereafter. Thus, it is assumed that Khit San Sarpay, modern Burmese, emerged in the 1930s (Min Yu Wai 1978: 142-143).

Burmese literature had changes not only in writing but also in content since the colonial period.¹²⁾ In the early period of the print media industry, newspapers, journals and magazines covered world news, stories, culture and Buddhist literature. These contents, however, gradually changed to health, psychology, community development, independence, freedom from colonial rule and escape from poverty for the development and prosperity of the public of British Burma. For example, "Dagon Magazine", well known as literary magazine before, eventually began carrying political articles. Some magazines reproduced short political novels most and some changed themselves into political magazines (Min Yu Wai 1978: 113).

Although magazines published fiction most in the early times, it turned to running short stories dealing with economic and social problems. Some magazine editors aimed to kindle nationalism by raising social problems confronted under the British colonial administration. Some short stories which highlighted the struggle of a poor hero against the capitalist came into vogue in those days (Min Yu Wai 1978: 113-114). In this way, a person who read modern Burmese short stories imaged himself as a member of nation, community composed by people and who were different from administrators in Burma proper since 1930s.

As mentioned above, modern Burmese had deviated from old

12) For the elements of traditional Burmese literature see Thaw Kaung (2007).

Burmese and came more closed with colloquial usages. Moreover, it came to cover more diverse content, such as social, political, and economic issues and motivated the growth of nationalism. Authors with advanced political views made modern Burmese luxuriant and well known in those days.¹³⁾

Before going on to the emergence of official language in Burma, a short historical background of politic is to be dealt with. After the annexation of Burmese kingdom, the British colonial government established two administrative areas in Burma: Burma proper, the central area inhabited by ethnic-majority Burman and small numbers of ethnic minorities; frontier areas, the regions inhabited by ethnic minorities. According to the language policy of colonial government, indigenous people were allowed to speak their respective languages. In frontier area, some ethnic written languages such as Kachin, Chin and Lahu were invented by Christian missionaries in the colonial period (Kyaw Yin Hlaing 2007: 151). On the other hand, in Burma proper, the nationalist movements had occurred throughout the colonial period by the leadership of Burmese nationalist associations such as Young Men's Buddhist Association (1906-1920) (YMBA), General Council of Burmese Associations (1920-1930) (GCBA) and Dobamar Asiayon (We, Burman Association) (1930-1938). Never had these nationalist associations neglected the Burmese language. YMBA served the standard bearer of the Burmese nationalist movement and one of the slogans of the YMBA was "Batha-go-Layza-ba" (to respect the Burmese language) (Mya Han 1991: 76). GCBA took the main role in the

13) See Thein Naing (1979) in order to know how Burmese national sentiment was motivated by the Burmese literature in British Burma during the 1930s.

emergence of national schools, as mentioned above. Moreover, it is possible to see slogans of Dobamar Asiayon, which was formed by a group of politically conscious and educated young people, in the Reform Series No.1:

The Burma country is our country
Burmese literature is our literature
Burmese language is our language
Love our country
Praise our literature
Respect our language (Dobamar Asiayon 1976: 127).

The politics of language reached its zenith after the formation of Dobamar Asiayon and it took a crucial role in the Burmese nationalist movement throughout the colonial period. When Burma proper and frontier areas were integrated into a state since the Second World War, Burmese, used as a common language and transformed into standard language by Khit San Sarpay movement, became educational and official language of Burma, as mentioned in the next paragraphs.

These two administrative areas were, however, consolidated by Japanese military administration during the Second World War and Burma was recognized as an independent state by the Burmese Administration Law promulgated on August 1, 1943. Then Burmese government emerged with the agreement of the Japanese colonialists and Burmese was prescribed as an official language in the new nation created by the Japanese army (Toru 1975: 230). Burmese, which became an official language for the first time, was later used not only in

administration but also in education.

One of the reason why Burmese was recognized as an official language in the war time is that the Japanese government attempted to eliminate English in education. Instruction No. 41 of No. 15 Army, issued in August, 1942, stated that teaching of subjects opposing the Japanese and favoring the British and the American were to be terminated. Japanese was to be taught instead of English. Moreover, it was mentioned in the same regulation called for the termination of educational activities that favored the British and the American, the establishment of the Greater East Asia Co-operative Sphere, and the implementation of an education system that give birth to youths who are diligent and persevering (Toru 1975: 233). Under this policy, Burmese began to play a greater role in the field of education and politics.

Although the former education system allowed to use English as a medium of instruction, in primary, middle and high schools, the policy of Japanese military government promoted Burmese as an instructional language in schools. After that, Japanese became as a subject taught at schools. To eliminate English and subjects related to British and America, the Department of Education was formed under the Administration Office (Burmese Government) in November, 1942. This office inspected some subjects such as Burmese, history, and geography strictly and altered parts of the curriculum deemed unsuitable (Toru 1975: 239). In this way, Burmese became an official and educational language during the Second World War. After that, Burmese was most luxuriant language in Burma at that time. In other words, nation-building through Burmese literature initiated during the war time continued up to the independence period.

After the Second World War, Burma gained her independence and built the "Union of Burma" by the unification of Burma proper and frontier areas. Although there had some language-related issues in the discussions drafting the constitution (Maung Maung 1961: 204), Burmese language was admitted as the official language by the "1947 Constitution".¹⁴⁾

V. Conclusion

Under the British colonial administration, economic, social, administrative and political conditions changed and modern print media such as newspapers, journals and magazines emerged. As a common language, Burmese was printed in various literary forms in print media. After the foundation of national schools, due to the lack of textbooks for Burmese schools and Anglo-vernacular schools, most of the newly initiated textbooks were translated into Burmese and Burmese employed in those schools as the educational language wider than before. Modern Burmese prose was born in the first half of 1930s and used as a standard language since then. During the Second World War, it was dramatically acknowledged as the official language of Burma, consisted of Burma proper and frontier areas. Continuously, modern Burmese prose was enacted as official language in Union of Burma by the 1947 Constitution and applied as a medium in the state schools again.

14) Immediately after the independence, the nation-building of independence Burma has been faced resistances from the frontier areas where ethnic minorities live, to the present. For language policies of the respective Burmese governments and resistances from the ethnic minorities see Callahan (2003; 2004) and Kyaw Yin Hlaing (2007).

According to Anderson, short stories and newspapers were published in standard language as print capitalism, and the standard language became stabilized and transformed into "National Language". As a result, a person who uses this language imaged himself as a member of "Nation" and the basis of a nation and nationalism emerged.

In the case of Burma, Burmese took the crucial role in nation-building of British Burma, specifically in Burma proper, and organized its people throughout nationalist movement. On the other hand, modern Burmese was created in early 1930s and became prosperous in late 1930s in Burma proper, and, dramatically, it was enacted as an official language in Burma, consisted of Burma proper and frontier areas, which was consolidated by Japanese military administration during the Second World War and integrated into a state by the 1947 Constitution.

However, there has long term conflicts between respective independent governments and some major ethnic groups since the first half of 1948, immediate after the independence of the Union of Burma.

Based on the discussion so far, therefore, it could be conclude that the use of modern Burmese prose as the standard language played a crucial role in the process of nation-building during the colonial period. In doing so, it is hope that this study will help to realize basically the meaning of the transition of the modern Burmese prose from a common language to official language in the colonial Burma. The preceding discussion in this paper tends to focus on the nation-building by the modern Burmese in Burma proper of British Burma by the modern Burmese prose. In order to portray the fully mature pattern of nation-building in British Burma by the modern Burmese prose, it is necessitated to conduct another article focus on the nation-building of

British Burma consisted of Burma proper where majority-ethnic Burman live, and frontier areas in which other ethnic minorities does.

Key Words: Nation-building, modern Burmese prose, Burma proper, common language, official language.

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<국문요약>

식민시기 버마어 산문의 대중화와 버마 민족 형성의 상관성

묘 우

(부산외국어대학교)

이 논문은 근대 민족국가 형성과 민족 공용어의 창출의 상관성을 염두에 두고 식민지기 버마에서 버마어가 어떠한 정치적, 사회적 환경 하에서 어떻게 공용어의 지위를 획득해나갔는지에 대해 주로 버마어 산문의 대중화라는 각도에서 분석한 것이다.

베네딕트 앤더슨의 연구가 시사하는 것처럼 근대적 인쇄매체의 출현과 더불어 근대 버마어의 등장 및 대중화는 버마의 근대적 민족 형성에 큰 영향을 미쳤다. 제1차 영국-버마 전쟁 종결 후, 정치, 사회, 경제적 상황 변화와 함께 인쇄산업의 발달과 더불어 버마어는 대중매체에서 공용어로서의 지위를 획득해갔다. 식민시기에 버마 내 여러 지역에 어학원이 설립되었고 버마인이 어학교육 담당자로 고용되었다. 1930년대 초반에 근대 버마어 산문이 많은 지자들에 의해 집필되었으며, 1930년대 후반에 들어서서 독자들 사이에서 널리 읽히는 호황을 누렸다. 일본군 점령 후에는 일본군 당국의 허가 하에 버마어는 제2차 세계대전 중에 공식적 언어로서 인정되었다. 이러한 바탕 위에 근대 버마어는 1947년 헌법에 버마의 공식 언어로 명기되었다.

이러한 과정에 대한 분석을 통해 이 논문에서는 버마어가 식민지

기에 표준어로서의 지위를 획득하고 그 버마어로 작성된 근대 버마어 산문의 사용이 버마의 민족 형성과정에서 결정적인 역할을 하였다는 점을 부각시켰다.

주제어: 민족국가 형성, 버마어, 근대 버마어 산문, 공용어, 공식어

