THEMATIC PROGRESSION OF THAI SONG DAM FOLKTALES[1]

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Abstract

This paper reports on an investigation of Thai Song Dam folktales which is a linguistic part of *Textual data management of Thai Song Dam Ethnic Group*. It draws on Systemic Functional Linguistics to investigate the discourse structure of ten Thai Song Dam folktales. The paper explores thematic progression patterns in Thai Song Dam folktales spoken in Thailand. The thematic progression is associated with the method of text development which is based on the typical thematic selection realized by unmarked and marked topical Themes (cf. Fries, 1981/1983, 1995a, 1995b). In this current study, patterns of thematic progression are explored as a way of revealing the textual organization of the folktales and the local progression achieved by the thematic selection of successive clauses (cf. Daneš (1974)). The data for this study were drawn from ten Thai Song Dam folktales. They were taken from secondary sources (e.g., folklore researches' appendices, Thai Song Dan folktale collections). Based on Daneš's notion of thematic progression, patterns of Theme selection were explored. The study revealed that the most frequent pattern of thematic progression selected in the ten folktales was the continuous or constant Theme expressed by unmarked topical Themes. Both ellipsed and non-ellipsed unmarked topical Themes were selected and repeated as the point of departure of each clause. The second most frequent pattern is linear Theme pattern. The study also revealed that the primary methods of folktale development are those of temporal and spatial organizations.

Keywords: Folktales, Thematic progression, Thematic development
ISO 693-3 language codes:: soa, blt

1. Introduction

Folktales, as one variety of traditional narrative inherited in all societies, are texts that are created as a form of traditional story that tries to explain or understand the world. Imagination is vividly woven around talking animals, mythical creatures, supernatural beings, and magical objects (cf. Thompson, 1946). Folktales usually have no identified author and are orally passed down from generation to generation. In all societies, folktales are considered treasures of mankind. Telling folktales is a traditionally subtle method of teaching valuable lessons and mirror the values and culture of a society. In terms of medium, they can be either spoken or written. The nature of the narrative focused on folktales in particular which are a combination of

character orientation and a series of events that unfold through chronological succession. The folktales usually involve first or third person. First person accounts tend to be more formal. As for third person accounts, there is an interesting matter of narrator viewpoint versus character viewpoint. Chronological linage is an important feature of folktales. In folktales, sequential events are told by using chronological resources of temporal conjunctions and temporal words. These resources are deployed to specify time when the folktales take place and develop chronologically. The folktales are told and retold through accomplished time encoding as past and present time (Longacre 1974; Martin 1992; Ochs 1997).

In discourse studies over the past two decades, there have been numerous studies on discourse, both spoken and in written texts, in a number of registers/genres: Halliday and Hasan (1985), Martin (1985), Ghadessy (1993, 1995b). The underlying assumptions in all these studies have been: (a) there are patterns of organization above the sentence — method of text development — and (b) these patterns influence the production and the comprehension of the texts concerned (cf. Ghadessy, 1995b). However, there is no research on ethnic languages spoken in Thailand in general or research on ethnic folktales in particular. If the notion of 'method of development' plays an important role in the organization of information in discourse, it would be of interest to explore how the thematic development is manifested in Thai Song Dam folktales.

2. Thai Song Dam and its affiliation

The Thai Song Dam are one of the numerous ethnic groups residing in Thailand. The original place of settlement of Thai Song Dam people in Thailand was Phetchaburi province. Later on, they moved to other provinces including Kanchanaburi, Ratchaburi, Nakornpathom, Samut Sakorn, Samut Songkhram, Suphanburi, Nakhonsawan, and Phitsanulok provinces. The Thai Song Dam have been known by various names such as Song, Lao Song, Tai Song, Thai Song Dam, Tai Dam or Black Tai[2] (see also Burusphat, 2012).

The Thai Song Dam language belongs to the Upper Southwestern Tai sub-branch of the Southwestern branch of the Tai-Kadai language family (cf. Li 1960, Hartmann, 1980). In the western regions of Thailand, Thai Song Dam is spoken widely in Phetchaburi, Nakornpathom, Ratchaburi, Kanchanaburi, Suphanburi, Samut Songkhram, and Samut Sakorn provinces (Somsonge, et al. 2010).

The goal of the present research is to explore thematic progression of Thai Song Dam folktales by applying Daneš's notion of thematic progression (cf. Daneš, 1974). In the later part of the paper, the method of text development of the Thai Song Dam folktales will be discussed.

3. Theoretical framework

3.1 Thematic selection: The system of Theme

Based on a metafunction perspective, language is interpreted as having meaning potential, diversified functionally into three simultaneous metafunctions/modes of meaning: ideational, interpersonal and textual. As this research deals with the textual organization of Thai Song Dam folktales, a textual analysis is used in this study.

Textual metafunction/meaning is a resource for presenting interpersonal and ideational meanings as the organized flow of information of a text in its local context. This textual resource creates the flow of information, involving two simultaneous orientations in text development — guiding, and enabling, both text producers (speakers/writers), and text receivers (listeners/readers) (Halliday, 1978; Matthiessen 1992, 1995a, 1995b). In the guiding orientation, the textual resources are utilized in a way that guides speakers (writers) in the process of creating texts, by providing them with the method for moving from one message to another. At the same time, in the enabling orientation, the textual resource is used to structurally direct the listeners (readers) in the process of interpreting the text as it unfolds. These two orientations of text development operate simultaneously.

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2   The term "Tai" is distinguished from "Thai". "Tai" refers to any speakers of the Tai language family residing outside the Kingdom of Thailand. "Thai" refers to speakers of Tai language family residing in the Kingdom of Thailand (Suriya Ratanakul, Khunying 1994).

One of the principle grammatical systems of textual metafunction is the Theme system. An analysis of the Theme system shows how clauses are organized as messages — as quanta of information in the flow of information created as a text unfolds. Theme serves as the point of departure of the clause as message, and it is typically realized by its initial position. What follows the Theme is known as the Rheme. Rheme is what is presented in the local context set by the Theme. The clause as a message is thus a configuration of the two thematic status, Theme + Rheme constituting 'thematic structure' or 'Theme-Rheme structure' (cf. Martin, Matthiessen, and Painter, 2010; Matthiessen, 1995a).

Halliday and Matthiessen provide characteristics of Theme and Rheme as follows:

> The **Theme** is the element which serves as the point of departure of the message; it is that which locates and orients the clause within its context. The remainder of the message, the part in which the Theme is developed, is called in the Prague school terminology the **Rheme**. As a message structure, therefore, a clause consists of a Theme accompanied by a Rheme; and the structure is expressed by the order — whatever is chosen as the Theme is put first.
> (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 64-65)

In order to explore the thematic structure, one needs to determine where the boundary between Theme and Rheme is located: i.e. Where does the Theme end and where does the Rheme begin? (i.e., identifying Theme-Rheme structure).

Matthiessen (1995a) notes that a clause can be contextualized in terms of all three of its metafunctional perspectives. The Theme of a clause can thus have textual, interpersonal, and ideational phases (the ideational stage is known as topical Theme). This research uses the term "topical Theme" to refer to one type of Theme.

As mentioned earlier, Theme serves as the point of departure of the clause. It is typically realized by its initial position. Matthiessen (1995a: 587-588) provides a typological discussion on the system of Theme. He states that many languages do have a category of Theme; for example, there is such a category related to the method of development in Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Tagalog and so on. Theme is often realized by initial position, as it is in e.g., Chinese, French and German (Li & Thompson (1976, 1981) refer to Chinese as topic prominent language.). In English, Theme is typically realized by its initial position; that is the Theme–Rheme structure is expressed by position in sequence. Theme is realized by initial position and Rheme is realized by non-initial position. However, this notion does not apply to Japanese. Theme in Japanese is achieved by means of a particle. For example, there is a special postposition *–wa*, which signifying that whatever immediately precedes it is thematic (further discussion see, Teruya, 2006). In Tagalog, topical Theme is indicated by the preposition *ang* and comes towards the end of the clause s unmarked Theme (further discussion see, Martin, 1996).

However, Thai, Thai Song Dam and Chinese systems of Theme differ from the English one in that the unmarked Theme of an indicative clause is not selected according to mood types or mood selection (see Patpong, 2006 and Halliday and Edward, 2004). That is, mood realizations do not occur in thematic position; rather, the end of the clause is interpersonal crucial and it is the final position of a clause that polar interrogative clauses are distinguished from declarative clauses by means of the interpersonal particle *maj*[5] in Thai, *le*[4] in Thai Song Dam, and *ma* in Chinese.

In this research, the Theme system at clause level will be explored in terms of thematic selection (Section 5). Textual resources expressed by the distribution of thematic selection will be briefly investigated in order to explore the system of Theme as it contributes to "the method of development of texts".

3.2 Thematic progression and method of thematic development

3.2.1 Thematic progression

Based on the Functional Sentence Perspective (FSP) work of Daneš (1974) and others, thematic progression means "the choice and ordering of utterance theme, their mutual concatenation and hierarchy, their relationship to the hyperthemes of the superior text units (such as paragraph, chapter, …), to the whole text, and to the situation. Thematic progression, thus, is viewed as the skeleton of the plot" (Daneš, 1974: 114). In other words, the thematic progression structurally reflects the internal organization of the given text. It is

concerned with the way in which the text develops. Thematic progression is concerned with where Themes come from — how they relate to other Themes and Rhemes in the text. Fries (1995c: 320) states that "Patterns of thematic progression are formed by a systemic relation between the Theme-Rheme selections and experiential selections in a text. Thematic progression may be investigated by exploring the cohesive ties which occur within the various Themes within a text and the locations of the items the locative ties presume". This process is confirmed by Daneš (1974: 114) who characterizes text connexity as being represented by thematic progression (TP).

In this current research, the method of text analysis is essentially based on Daneš's thematic progression. Daneš (1974) describes three typical types of thematic progression based on scientific and other professional texts in Czech, German and English. In the following section, each type of thematic progression is detailed. They are accompanied by graphical representations and text examples as illustrated by Daneš.

❶ **Simple linear thematic progression** (or thematic progression with linear thematization of rhemes, zigzag thematic pattern or Rheme → Theme progression)
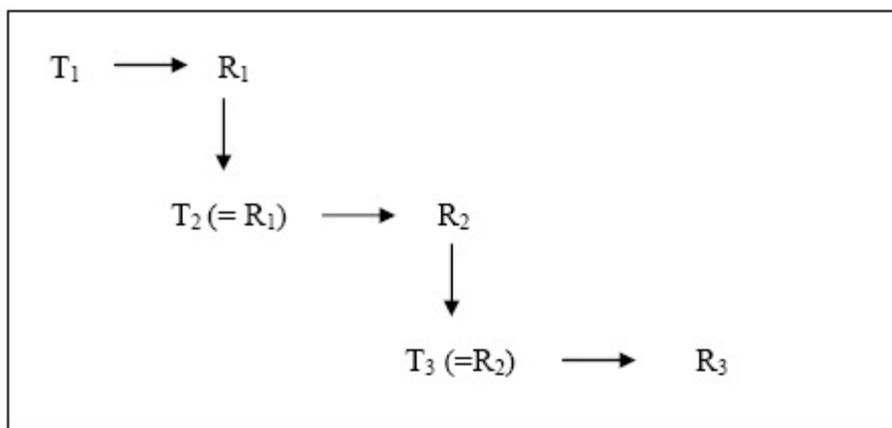
Figure 1: Simple linear Theme pattern

In a single linear thematic progression, the content of the Theme of the second clause (Theme 2) derives from the content of the previous Rheme (Rheme 1); the content of Theme 3 derives from Rheme 2 etc. In other words, the Rheme of one clause is taken up as the Theme of the subsequent clause. This thematic progression is termed "Rheme → Theme progression" (cf. Matthiessen, 1995a).

❷ Thematic progression with constant (continuous) theme (or theme iteration):
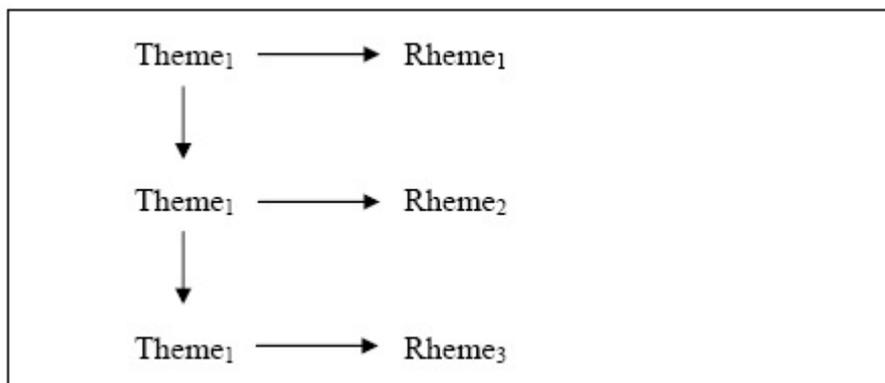
Figure 2: Constant (continuous) Theme pattern

In this type, the same Theme appears in a series of utterances, to which different Rhemes are linked up. This thematic pattern is known as "Theme → Theme progression" (cf. Matthiessen, 1995a). In this

pattern, the Themes in the text constitute a chain of (typically) co-referential items which extends through a sequence of clauses.

❸ Thematic progression with derived themes
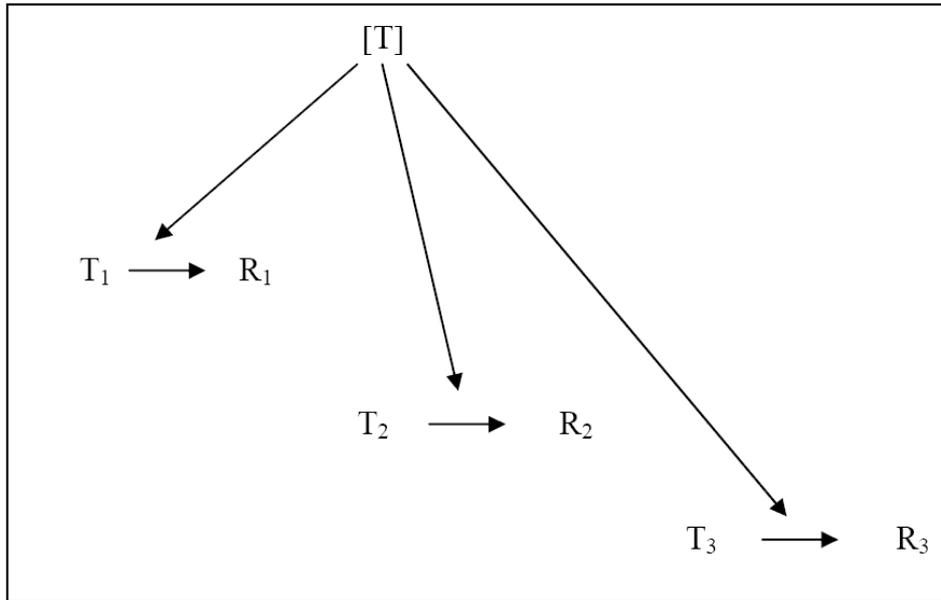
Figure 3: Derived Theme pattern

In this pattern, the passage as a whole concerns a single general notion (known as hypertheme), and the Themes of the various constituent clauses all derive from that general notion. This derived Theme pattern serves as a way of introducing New information which is taken up as the Theme of the subsequent clause (cf. Bloor and Bloor, 1995).

In the organization of the text, especially in long texts, it is possible that the three main patterns of thematic progression can be found combined within the same text because they can achieve several proposes. The combined thematic pattern is illustrated below.
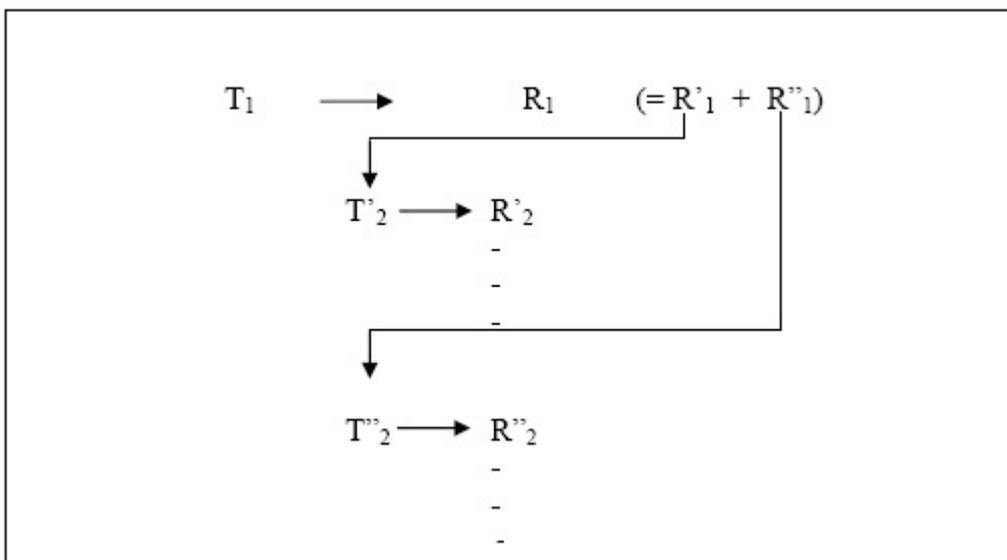
❹ **The split Rheme**

Figure 4: Split Rheme pattern

In cases of complex text structures, the thematic patterns can be combined and manifested in the organization of the text. The first and the second thematic progressions are combined and called a split Rheme. This pattern occurs when the Rheme of a clause has two or more components, each of which is taken in turn as the Theme of a subsequent clause. An example of split Rheme taken from Matthiessen (1995a: 582-583) is given below.

> The fuels of the body are **carbohydrates**, **fats** and **proteins**. These are taken in the diets. … **Carbohydrates** are the principle source of energy in most diets. … **Fats** make up the second largest source of energy in most diets. … **Proteins** are essential for the growth and rebuilding of tissue.

From the example above, the body fuels are composed of three sources of energy: carbohydrates, fats and proteins. Each of them is given thematic status one by one in subsequent clauses.

As pointed out by Daneš (1974), the organization of information in texts is determined by the progression in the ordering of utterance Themes and their Rhemes. The relationship between successive Themes and their Rhemes in the course of thematic selection provides an account of the 'method of development' of the text.

3.2.2 Methods of thematic development

The notion of "method of development" was introduced by Fries (1981/1983: 119). Method of thematic development, or thematic development, means that the choice of Theme for any individual clause will relate to the way in which information is developed over the course of the whole text (Martin, Matthiessen, Painter, 2010: 22).

Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 98-99) state that, as a general principle of clause interpretation, the Theme of a clause extends up to the first element that has some representational function in the clause (i.e., the 'topical' Theme). The importance of the thematic pattern of a text reflects the importance of the Theme of the clause in the overall development of the text (cf. Fries, 1981/1983). Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 99) emphasize that the choice of clause Themes plays a fundamental part in the way discourse is organized; it is this, in fact, which constitutes what has been called the 'method of development' of the text (see Ghadessy (1995b)'s contributions).

Method of development deals with the lexico-semantic content of Themes. Thematic content correlates with the method of development of a text and the nature of the text. In text analysis, the thematic context is illustrated by thematic selection. In Fries's further research on method of text development, he shows that thematic content correlates with different genres and with different generic structures within a text (cf. Fries, 1995c). There are a number of studies on thematic development in various English registers.

These previous researches include scientific texts (Hutchins, 1977); news reports, editorials, and letters of complaint (Francis, 1989, 1990); telephone conversation (Bäcklund, 1992); recipes and fables (Xiao, 1991); guide books (Long, 1991, Matthiessen, 1999b); advertisements (Fries, 1993); sports commentaries (Ghadessy, 1995a); and academic texts in relation to translation studies (Jalilifar, 2009). For further detailed discussion see Fries (1995c), Ghadessy (1995b).

According to the previous researches mentioned, to date, no research has been undertaken on methods of folktale development in ethnic languages spoken in Thailand in general, nor research on Thai Song Dam folktales in particular. Therefore, it is of interest to explore what strategies are deployed in Thai Song Dam folktales.

4. Data and text selection

In this paper, ten Thai Song Dam folktales were selected for analysis. Based on an index of folktale types (Thompson, 1946), folktales can be classified into two main types — simple, and complex. Simple tales are those with one motif, while complex tales are those with multiple motifs which involve multiple protagonists. For this study, all folktales selected were simple Thai Song Dam folktales taken from secondary sources (e.g., theses appendices, independent study appendices, field notes). The main sources for these folktales were Reyrai et al (1980), Sunant (1985), and Sootawee (2009). Table 1 lists the corpus of Thai Song Dam folktales used in this research, along with their folktale type, the name of the story teller and

where they live. Table 2 provides details of the number of complex and simplex clauses, found in each folktale.

Table 1: A corpus of ten Thai Song Dam folktales used in this research

No.	Folktale type	Folktales	Story teller (source)	Residence location
1.	Explanatory tales	The elephant and the ant	Mrs. Bunruan Bunnoy (Sootawee, 2009)	Yangyong Sub-district, Thayang District
2.	Explanatory tales	The dog and the cat	Mr. Sawing Loyceng (Sootawee, 2009)	Yangyong Sub-district, Thayang District
3.	Animal tales	Python	Miss Daeng Yaemmun (Reyrai et. al, 1980)	Nongprong Sub-district, Khaoyoy District
4.	Animal tales	Four friends	Miss Daeng Yaemmun (Reyrai et. al, 1980)	Nongprong Sub-district, Khaoyoy District
5.	Fables	Wishing crystal	Miss Saythip Chuenin (Sootawee, 2009)	Yangyong Sub-district, Thayang District
6.	Fables	Became rich because of us	Mrs. Sombun Thuanhit (Sootawee, 2009)	Yangyong Sub-district, Thayang District
7.	Jests & anecdotes	Father in law wanted a claver son in law	Mrs Or Caengcat (Sootawee, 2009)	Yangyong Sub-district, Thayang District
8.	Jests & anecdotes	The red duck	Mr. Sawing Loyceng (Sootawee, 2009)	Yangyong Sub-district, Thayang District
9.	Legends	The number 7 legend	Miss Saythip Chuenin (Sootawee, 2009)	Yangyong Sub-district, Thayang District
10.	Legends	The rice grain legend	Mrs. Sombun Thuanhit (Sootawee, 2009)	Yangyong Sub-district, Thayang District

Table 2: Number of complex clauses and simplex clauses of the selected folktales

No.	Folktale type	Folktales / Motifs	Complex clause	Simplex clause
1.	Explanatory tales	The elephant and the ant	22	65
2.	Explanatory tales	The dog and the cat	29	102
3.	Animal tales	Python	19	67
4.	Animal tales	Four friends	54	160
5.	Fables	Wishing crystal	56	236
6.	Fables	Became rich because of us	23	97
7.	Jests & anecdotes	Father in law wanted a claver son in law	12	38
8.	Jests & anecdotes	The red duck	47	141
9.	Legends	The number 7 legend	9	34
10.	Legends	The rice grain legend	12	38
		Total	283	992

In the following sections, thematic selection which manifests thematic organization of Thai Song Dam folktales is investigated. The selected Thai Song Dam folktales are annalysed clause by clause. Theme in each simplex clause is identified and profiled according to its type – textual, interpersonal and topical.

5. Thematic selection in the Thai Song Dam folktales
A mentioned above, the method of development is explored as a way of revealing the organization of the folktales and the local development achieved by the thematic organization of successive clauses which can

be explored through the thematic selection. In this section, the corpus of the ten Thai Song Dam folktales is explored in terms of lexcogrammatical analysis at the clause level. The Theme-Rheme structure of each clause is identified; the Theme of a clause may include elements from all three metafunctions: textual, interpersonal and ideational (topical) Themes. In the following sub-sections, three different types of Theme are discussed.

5.1 Textual Theme selection

Textual Theme includes three possible textual choices: continuative; relative element; and conjunction, used to express semantic progression (see Hutchins's discussion on thematic and semantic progressions in text organization (Hutchins, 1977)).

✦ *Continuatives*

Continuatives are discourse markers which signal that a new move is beginning: a response in dialogue, or a move to the next point if the same speaker is continuing (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 81). The continuatives in Thai Song Dam folktales were found in the dialogic passages between two protagonists. An example is given below[3].

(1) Fable: Text 2 [4.1-4.2]

Theme			Rheme			
$Pan^1ta:^1fa:j^3$	$se:t^3thi:^1$	nan^6	$wa:^4 ci:^4$	$lo?^4$		
as for	millionaire that		say	Fp.		
$wa:^4 \ Pa:^3 \ haw^2 \ na?^4$			$caŋ^2 \ la:j^5$	$luaj^2$	$ləj^6$	
that well we part.			FUT. get	be rich	Fp.	

'That millionaire said that we would be rich.'

✦ *Relative elements*

Relative elements link the clause in which they occur to another clause forming an embedded clause. They are thematic in nature and, therefore, tend to occur in the initial position. Two specific relative items were found in the ten folktales under study: $thi:^4$ 'that, which', and $to:^1$ 'who, that'. Among these relative elements, $thi:^4$ was the most commonly used in these Thai Song Dam folktales.

• $thi:^4$ 'that' as a marker of an embedded clause

(2) Explanatory tale: Text 2 [18.3-18.4]

Theme	Rheme				
$(\varnothing = man^2)$	$hau^5 \ paj^1$	$ŋom^2$	$Paw^1 \ kæ:w^5$		
(3SG)	get go	dive for	take crystal		
$thi:^4$	tok^3	nam^6	paj^1		
that	fall	river	go		

'… (the cat) made (the cormorant) dive for the crystal that fell into the river…'

✦ *Conjunctions*

Conjunctions are words indicating a logico-semantic relationship between clauses in a clause nexus (structural conjunctions) or between a clause sond some parts of the preceding discourse (cohesive conjunctions). Structural conjunctions can be divided into two sub-types: linkers (i.e., clauses linked

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[3] The phonetic transcription of the illustrating examples is based on Orapin Maneewong (1987) and Somsonge Burusphat (2012).

paratactically) and binders (i.e., clauses linked hypotactically) (cf. Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: Chapter 9, Section 9.3).

A linker relates two independent clauses in a paratactic clause nexus. It is used when the logico-semantic relation is one of expansion (e.g. *læʔ⁴* 'and', *lɯː¹* 'or', *tɛː³* 'but').

A binder relates a dependent clause to the independent clause in a hypotactic clause nexus. Binders can be divided into three subtypes based on their logico-semantic relationship: elaboration (for example: *kɔː⁵kɯː²* 'that is'); extension (for example: *læʔ⁴* 'and'); and enhancement (for examples: *lɛːw⁶kɔː⁵* 'and then', *poː⁶* 'because').

Besides being used to link two clauses in the hypotactic status, binders are also used to link second clauses, projected by either verbal or mental lexical verbs, to the proceeding clause. From the selected corpus, one clause binder was found: *wa⁴* 'that'.

• binder '*waː⁴*' in verbal projection clause

(3) Explanatory: Text 2 [9.8-9.9]

Theme		Rheme
toː¹nuː¹	*kɔː⁵*	*bɔʔ³*
rat	conj.	say
waː⁴ (∅ = *man²*)		*ɲɔːm² pen¹*
that (∅ = it)		be alive

'The rat then said that (it) would like to live.'

• binder '*waː⁴*' in mental projection clause

(4) Animal: Text 1 [15.4-15.7]

Theme		Rheme			
ŋuː²lɯam¹	*nan⁶*	*maː²*	*nɔːn²*	*khwaːŋ¹*	
python	that	come	lay down	obstruct	
(∅ = *man²*)		*pəːn¹*	*kan²kuː²*	*hauˬ⁵*	*saw²*
(∅ = it)		cover	ditch	give	them
(∅ = *man²*)		*bɔʔ³*	*huː⁶*		
(∅ = it)		NEG.	know		
waː⁴	*saw²*	*laːj⁵*	*nok⁴*	*kan¹*	
that	they	chase	bird	together	

'That python laid there and blocked (the ditch), (it) covered the ditch for them. (It) did not know that he chased birds.'

5.2 Interpersonal Theme selection
An interpersonal Theme foregrounds the speaker's judgment or comments. It might include one or more of the following components: vocative; exclamatory element; and wh-interrogative. All of these interpersonal Themes were found in dialogic passages between protagonists.

✦ *Vocatives*
Vocative elements are used to directly address the listener in a dialogic passage. They can be expressed by personal names, kinship terms, occupational terms, or pronouns. Example 5 below illustrates a vocative element which is expressed by the kinship term 'grandma'.

(5) Jest and anecdote tale: Text 2: [20.1]

Theme	Rheme						
ʔem¹ thaw⁵	_kuː¹_	_paj¹_	_pɔ:¹_	_to:¹faːn¹_	_khaw⁵_	_to:¹_	_nuuŋ³_
grandma	I	go	find	barking deer	enter	CLF	one

'Grandma! I found a barking deer.'

・*Exclamatory elements*

Exclamatory elements occur at the beginning of clauses with thematic status. Functionally, they are used to express the interactant's emotion such as happiness, sadness, fear, surprise, or amusement. Exclamatory elements are expressed by exclamatory particles.

(6) Explanatory tale: Text 2: [5.2-5.3]

Theme				Rheme		
mot⁴dœ:ŋ¹				_khuəŋ²_		
red ant				be angry		
_wa:⁴_	_huː⁶_	_ca:ŋ⁶_	_man²_	_su:ŋ¹_	_ni:⁴_	_wa:³_
that	aha	elephant	3SG	be tall	this	NEGOTIATOR

'"Aha" he said. "The elephant is tall."'

・*Wh-interrogatives*

Wh-interrogatives or Wh-items signal that an 'answer' is required from the addressee. Wh-interrogatives function as the unmarked Themes of Wh-interrogative clauses. These items have a twofold thematic value: they are at the same time both interpersonal and topical — interpersonal because they construe the mood, and topical because they represent the participant or circumstance (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004:85). Examples of wh-interrogatives are _sin⁵_ and _ʔan¹_ meaning 'why'.

(7) Jest and anecdote tale: Text 2: [9.1]

Theme	Rheme				
sin⁵	_maʔ⁴_	_hɔ:³_	_pha:⁵_	_ma:²_	_lə:j⁶_
Wh-element: why	NEG	wrap	cloth	come	NEGOTIATOR

'Why did not (you) wrap it with a piece of cloth?'

5.3 Topical (ideational) Theme selection

Topical (ideational) Themes are concerned with Theme selection — the selection between unmarked and marked Themes. The topical Theme is selected from one of the transitivity elements in the clause — a participant, a circumstance and / or a process.

5.3.1 Unmarked Themes

▪ Theme in declarative clauses

In a declarative clause, the unmarked Theme is the Subject. It is expressed by a nominal group, as in example 8, or a personal pronoun as in example 9.

(8) Explanatory: Text 1 [17.3]

Theme			Rheme			
caːŋ⁶	_kɔː⁵_	_ləːj²_	_muːn²_	_taː¹_	_maʔ⁴_	_khɯn⁵_
elephant	conj.	conj.	open	eye	NEG.	ascend

'The elephant could not open its eyes.'

(9) Animal: Text 2 [48.5]

Theme		Rheme			
saw²	_kɔː⁵_	_kaː⁵_	_toː¹ sɯa¹_	_nan⁶_	_taːj¹_
he	conj.	kill	tiger	that	die

'He then killed that tiger.'

▪ Theme in interrogative clauses

There are two main types of interrogative clauses: elemental interrogatives and polar, or yes/no interrogatives. Like Thai, Thai Song Dam interrogative clauses have no direct link between Theme selection and the nature of mood type since the realization of mood choice does not involve changes in the word order of the clause (cf. Patpong, 2006).

　　In this current research, only instances of Themes in elemental interrogative clauses were found. An example is shown below.

Wh/Subject/Theme

(10) Animal: Text 1 [7.5]

Theme	Rheme					
phaw⁴	_ʔiʔ³_	_maː²_	_waː⁴ kwaːm²_	_hau⁵_	_ʔaj⁵_	_nok⁴ caw⁵_
wh. interrogative: who	FUT.	come	judge a case	give	title	heron

'Who will judge the heron's case?'

▪ Theme in imperative clauses
In an imperative clause, the unmarked Theme is the Predicator realized by a lexical verb of command. An example is provided below.

(11) Animal: Text 1 [5.1-5.2]

Theme			Rheme	
ʔan¹	_mæːw²_	_kɔː⁵_	_waː⁴_	
as for	cat	conj.	say	
jaː³ _ʔet³_			_cen⁴_	_nœʔ⁴_
don't do			like that	Fp.

'As for the cat, it said not to do (like) that.'

　　Apart from unmarked Theme, existential clauses are a type of clause typically found at the beginning of folktale structure. Existential clauses are used to introduce the protagonists into the Placement Event of folktales (See Patpong, 2011 for lexicogrammatical realizations of the Placement Event or folktale setting). The unmarked Theme in an existential clause is realized by the lexical verb "_miː²_" meaning exist/have.

(12) Fable: Text 1 [1.1]

Theme	Rheme			
miː²	*phua¹*	*mia²*	*kuː⁴*	*nɯŋ³*
exist/have	husband	wife	CL.	one

'There was a couple.'

5.3.2 Marked Themes

The marked Theme leads to the system of Theme Matter. The choice in the system of Theme Matter is concerned with the status of the Theme in the other metafunctional layers of the clause (Matthiessen, 1995a: 549). In a declarative clause, the marked Theme is concerned with thematic selection where elements other than the Subject are given thematic status. The marked Themes can be assigned either as transitivity role or as theme matter (also known as absolute theme). If the transitivity role is selected, the Theme is conflated with a participant, circumstance or process in the clause; if the theme matter or absolute theme is selected, the Theme is not structurally integrated through conflation with other elements of the clause (Matthiessen, 1995a: 549).

❶ Marked Theme: in transitivity role

Marked Themes in "indicative" or "bound" clauses (i.e. a non-imperative clause) are any element other than the Subject. This includes a (non-subject) participant (as Complement), and a circumstance (as Adjunct): the Theme is conflated with Complement, and/or Adjunct.

In Thai Song Dam, there is no process (or Predicator) functioning as a "marked" Theme as in English. That is, in indicative clauses (i.e. declarative and interrogative) with implicit Subject, although the Predicator/Process usually occurs in the clause-initial position, it is interpreted as a Rheme. In this research, both circumstance Themes and (non-subject) participant Themes were found. Examples are given below. Marked Themes are underlined.

(1) Marked Theme selection: non-subject (complement) participant Themes

A marked Theme can be a participant which does not serve as a Subject — instead it serves as a Complement. This participant is likely to be textually recoverable from the preceding discourse.

(13) Joke and Anecdote: Text 2 [7.1-7.2]

Theme	Rheme			
pet¹ dœːŋ¹	*kuː¹*	*cap³*	*laːj⁵*	
duck red	I	catch	ASP.:pfv.	
lœːw⁶ kuː¹	*phuʔ³*	*phak³boŋ⁵*	*sau³*	
conj. I	tie	morning glory	put	
	haːŋ¹	*man²*	*maː²*	
	tail	it	come	

'I caught a red duck, and I tied it with a piece of morning glory.'

(2) Marked Theme selection: circumstance Themes

In Thai Song dam folktales, marked circumstantial Themes are typically location, in time and space, since these relate to the method of narrative development. In this research, folktales are organized by a series of events that unfold through chronological succession. This chronological sequence is expressed by marked circumstantial Themes, especially temporal locations. They are used to foreground a temporal sequence in

the discourse, and they are exploited to indicate a rhetorical break in the discourse. They are essential for introducing new episodes relating to the development of the text.

- marked circumstantial Theme: temporal location

(14) Animal: Text 2 [15.2]

Theme		Rheme			
kam⁴	**_niː⁶_**	_saʔ³maːj¹_	_kin¹_	_lœːŋ²_	_haŋ² kua¹_
evening	this	they	eat	dinner	Wh: what

'This evening, what will we have for dinner?'

- marked circumstantial Theme: spatial location

(15) Fable: Text 1 [3.2]

Theme			Rheme			
pɔʔ³waː⁴	_haŋ⁵_	_ta⁶leː²_	_ʔaʔ³_	_miː²_	_paː¹_	_ʔeː¹_
because	in	sea	part.	exist/have	fish	many

'... because in the sea, there were many fish.'

❷ Marked Theme: in theme matter (or absolute themes)

Theme matters play a role in the textual structure of the clause only. They are not structurally integrated with other elements of the clause through conflation (Matthiessen, 1995a: 552). The theme matter is specified as a textual "subject matter" and in Thai Song Dam, the marking of a theme matter is typically made apparent by two resources: (i) a set of prepositions (e.g. _faːj³_ and _ʔan¹_, 'as for'), occurring at the beginning of the clause; and/or (ii) a thematic particle (e.g. _ʔaʔ³, naʔ⁴_). An example of theme matter marked by a thematic particle is given below.

(16) Animal: Text 1 [8.1]

Theme			Rheme				
ʔaj⁵	_mœːw²_	_naʔ⁴_	_kɔː⁵_	_paj¹_	_haː¹_	_ʔaj⁵_	_fon¹ lom²_
title	cat	thematic part.	conj.	go	see	title	rain wind

'The cat then went to see the Rain and the Wind.'

Table 3 presents the total frequency and percentage of topical Themes in the ten Thai Song Dam folktales.

Table 3: Topical Themes in the ten Thai Song Dam folktales

Topical types	Participant role	instances	Percentage
Unmarked (86.90 %)	Subject as Theme in a declarative clause (non-ellipsed – 434 instances; ellipsed – 386 instances)	820	82.66 %
	Process as Theme in a declarative clause	16	1.61 %
	'existential' verb in an existential clause	26	2.62 %
	Total	862	100
Marked (13.10 %)	Theme Matter or Absolute Theme	20	2.02 %
	Non-subject (complement) participant	6	0.61%
	Circumstantial marked Theme	104	10.48 %
	Total	130	100

Table 3 summarizes the Theme selection of the ten Thai Song Dam folktales. Unmarked Themes were selected in 86.90 % of instances, whereas marked Themes were selected in 13.10 %. Among the unmarked Themes selected, Subjects/ Participants serving as Themes in declarative clauses were found in 82.66 % of instances. Processes serving as Themes in imperative clauses were selected in 1.61 % of instances and 2.62 % of all selections were existential verbs serving as Themes in existential clauses. Selection of unmarked Themes is highly favoured in constructing and organizing folktales, as this method of folktale development is constructed and developed around the protagonists. Structurally, folktales are organized by systemically selecting the Theme which is realized by Subjects/Participants as unmarked Themes.

6. Thematic progression

As far as the method of development is concerned, the flow of textual information is achieved by typical thematic selection which in turn contextualizes the thematic progression of the given text (cf. Daneš, 1974, Fries 1981/1983). Table 4 presents the frequency of occurrence of various types of text progression and their percentages, as found in this research.

Table 4: Thematic progressions in the ten Thai Song Dam folktales

No	Tale types	Text	Thematic progression			Frequency of occurrence of types of text progression
			Constant Theme	**Simple Linear Theme**	**Split Rheme**	
1	Explanatory tales	Text 1	9	8	—	17
		Text 2	20	5	—	25
2	Animal tales	Text 1	10	6	1	17
		Text 2	33	11	—	44
3	Fables	Text 1	40	21	1	62
		Text 2	16	4	—	20
4	Jests & anecdotes	Text 1	5	4	—	9
		Text 2	13	20	—	33
5	Legends	Text 1	3	4	—	7
		Text 2	7	5	—	12
		Total	156 (63.41 %)	88 (35.78%)	2 (0.81%)	246 (100%)

Based on Table 4, three types of thematic progression are revealed: constant Theme, linear Theme and split Rheme. An analysis of thematic progression reveals that the constant Theme progression pattern was

dominant in this current study (63.41 percent), whereas the simple linear Theme progression pattern was less frequently found (35.78 percent). Split Rhemes occurred with the lowest frequency (0.81 percent). The high frequency selection of constant and simple linear Theme progression patterns was expected given that Daneš (1974) refers to them as the basic thematic patterns.

In the constant Theme pattern, the same Theme is picked up and repeated at the beginning of each subsequent clause. These repeated Themes are realized by zero references in Thai Song Dam. This signals that each of the clauses focuses on the same protagonist, until the focus of the tales is shifted to either other protagonists or other points of interest. The constant Theme progression is associated with a key motif of folktale text development — actor orientation (cf. Longacre, 1974; Martin 1992; Ochs 1997). Actor or protagonist orientation is the vital feature of folktales as folktales are organized around the protagonists and protagonists' activities.

The simple linear Theme pattern occurs when the subject matter in the Rheme of one clause is taken up in the Theme of a following clause. In this research, this thematic pattern is used to provide a wide variety of actions performed by the protagonists that have been identified in the Rheme. Later, it is structurally picked up in the subsequent Theme. In addition, an object located in the Rheme part is given a thematic status in the subsequent clause.

A split Rheme occurs when the Rheme of a clause has two or more components, each of which is selected in turn as the Theme of a subsequent clause rendering split Rhemes comparatively rare. This study found split Rhemes at the beginning of folktales and they were used to introduce two protagonists into the folktale setting.
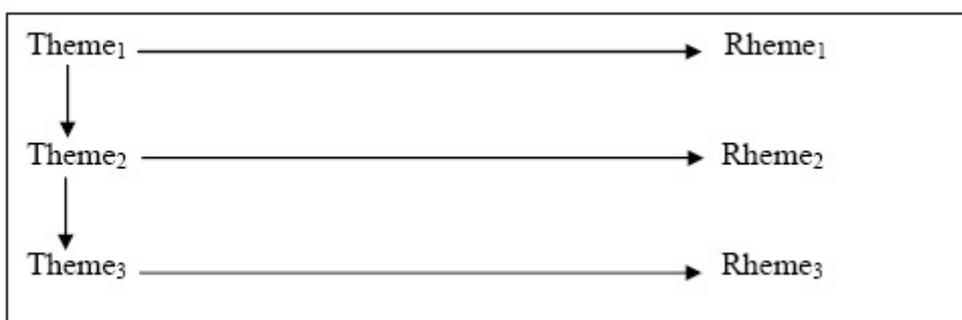
In this study, the spilt Rheme was found after the main protagonists were introduced into the folktale setting. During the Sequent Event, the folktales got complicated (see Patpong, 2011 for a detailed discussion on Generic Structural Potential of Thai Song Dam folktales). The complications that the protagonists mentioned encountered were further elaborated in the successive clauses. In this research, the Rheme of a clause consisted of two groups of protagonists (as in Fable 1, two couples) and the two protagonists mentioned (as in Animal tale 1, Fish and Heron). In the course of folktale development, the actions of each protagonist were elaborated in turn in the following Themes.

It is interesting to note that the number of folktale texts used in analyzing the thematic progression may account for the low frequency of the split Rheme (0.81 %). Moreover, this research is based on an analysis of the simple tale type, which has one motif and involves only a few key protagonists, so it is possible that only a few instances of the split Rheme are found.

As shown by the analysis of the ten Thai Song Dam folktales, Theme selection reflects the flow of information in the unfolding text. There are three possible types of thematic progression in an unfolding text: constant Theme (i.e. Theme → Theme progression), simple linear Theme (i.e. Rheme → Theme progression), and split Rheme.

Following, are examples of thematic progressions based on the frequency of progression patterns: constant Theme, simple linear Theme and split Rheme respectively.

(i) Constant Theme progression pattern (Theme to Theme progression)

(17) Joke and Anecdote: Text 2 [2.1-2.3]

Theme		Rheme			

laːn¹caːj²
grandson → *pen¹* *kon²* *cɔːp⁴* *tiaw⁴*
be person like travel

(∅ = saw²)
(he) → *pen¹* *kon²* *cɔːp⁴* *tiaw⁴*
be person like travel

(∅ = saw²)
(he) → *paj¹* *tiaw⁴* *paː³*
go travel forest
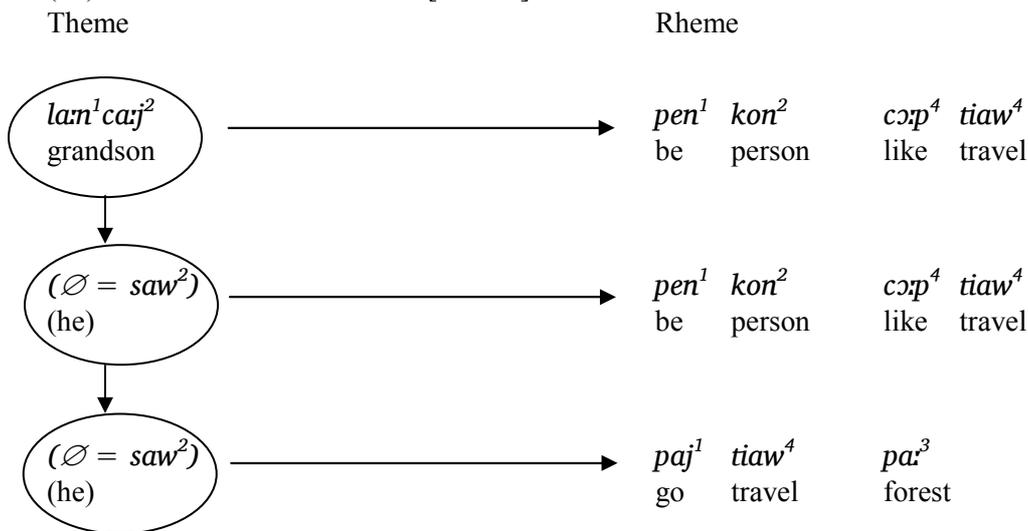
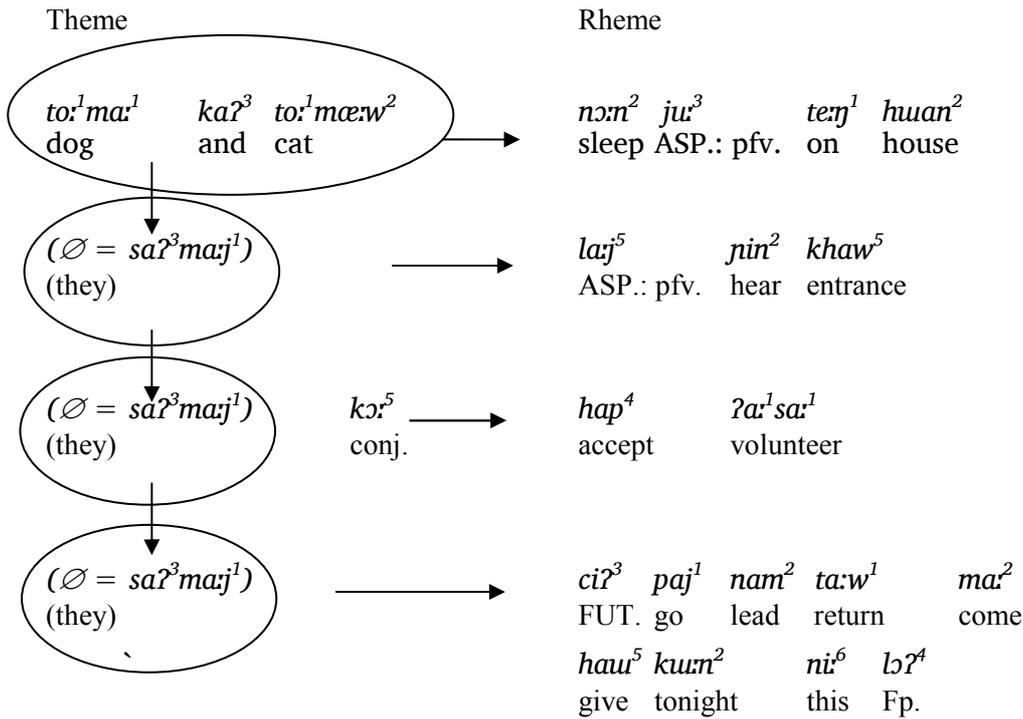'Grandson was a person who liked to travel, (he) travelled in a forest.'

Example 17 illustrates that, after the main protoganist is introduced into the folktale setting, the folktale progresses by selecting the zero pronoun Themes or zero reference Themes 'saw²' meaning 'he' serving as Themes (as in clauses 2.2-2.3). It is typical for folktales to be constantly developed by the selection of the main protogonists functioning as Themes in subsequent clauses.

In realizing a zero reference in folktales, and especially in clause complexes, hypotactic interdependency with the first clause can be constructed without mentioning the Subject of the clause. The same Subject from the previous discourse still exists, unless a new Subject is introduced into the discourse. Thus, if the Subject is elided, it will then be presumed in the following clause.

In folktales, one can track a referent from the context of the discourse. The referent is presumed by implicit anaphora and serves as Subject. What follows in a referencing chain will thus also be an implicit Subject. That is, if the Subject remains the same in successive clauses, it will be implicit; if a new Subject is introduced, the explicit new Subject will take over.

In terms of thematic progression, Explanatory Text 2 is developed mainly by the constant Theme progression pattern. This instance confirms that the constant Theme progression or iteration Theme progression is the key method of text development; the protagonists of the folktale are given thematic prominence. When they are introduced in a given folktale, they are further given the Theme positions in the subsequent clauses. Successive Themes are typically established by way of ellipsed personal pronouns (or zero pronouns) which are represented by '∅' symbol.

(18) Explanatory: Text 2 [7.1-7.4]

Theme   Rheme

to:¹ma:¹   ka?³ to:¹mœ:w²   *nɔ:n² ju:³   te:ŋ¹ huan²*
dog   and cat   sleep ASP.: pfv. on   house

(∅ = sa?³ma:j¹)   *la:j⁵   ɲin² khaw⁵*
(they)   ASP.: pfv. hear entrance

(∅ = sa?³ma:j¹)   *kɔ:⁵*   *hap⁴   ?a:¹sa:¹*
(they)   conj.   accept   volunteer

(∅ = sa?³ma:j¹)   *ci?³ paj¹ nam² ta:w¹   ma:²*
(they)   FUT. go   lead return   come
`   *hau⁵ kɯ:n²   ni:⁶ lɔ?⁴*
                                              give   tonight   this Fp.

'The dog and the cat slept in the house, (they) heard (what the owner complained) and (they) volunteered to return the crystal glass tonight.'
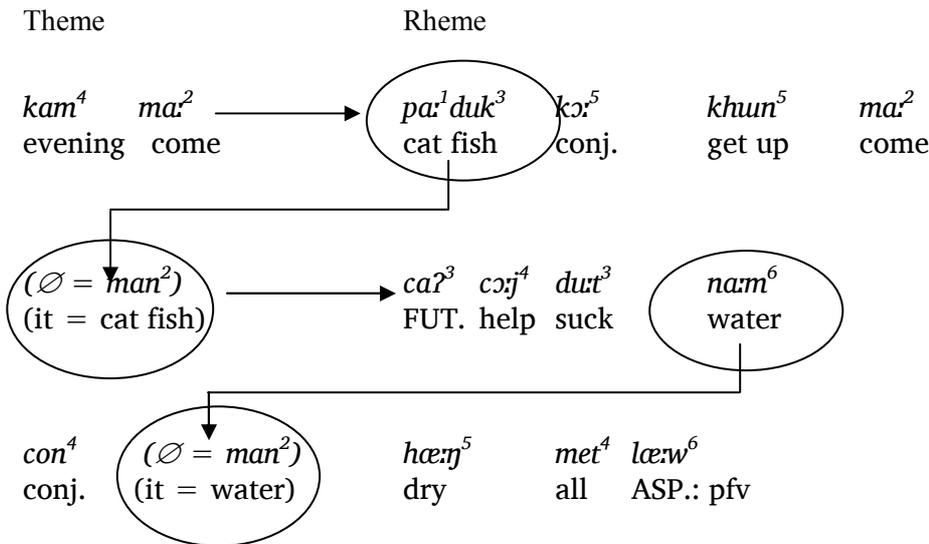
(ii) Simple linear Theme progression pattern (Rheme to Theme progression)
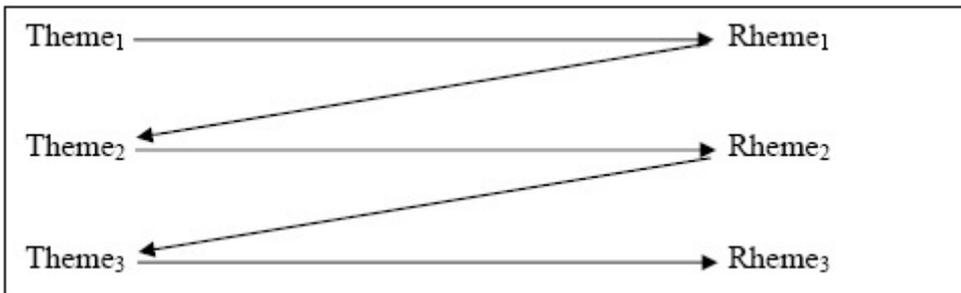
As mentioned above, in the second type of progression, the Theme of a new clause is picked up from the Rheme of the previous clause. Here, either a Subject or a Complement within the Rheme of one clause can be picked up by the Theme of the next clause.

• Subject within Rheme is picked up by the new Theme
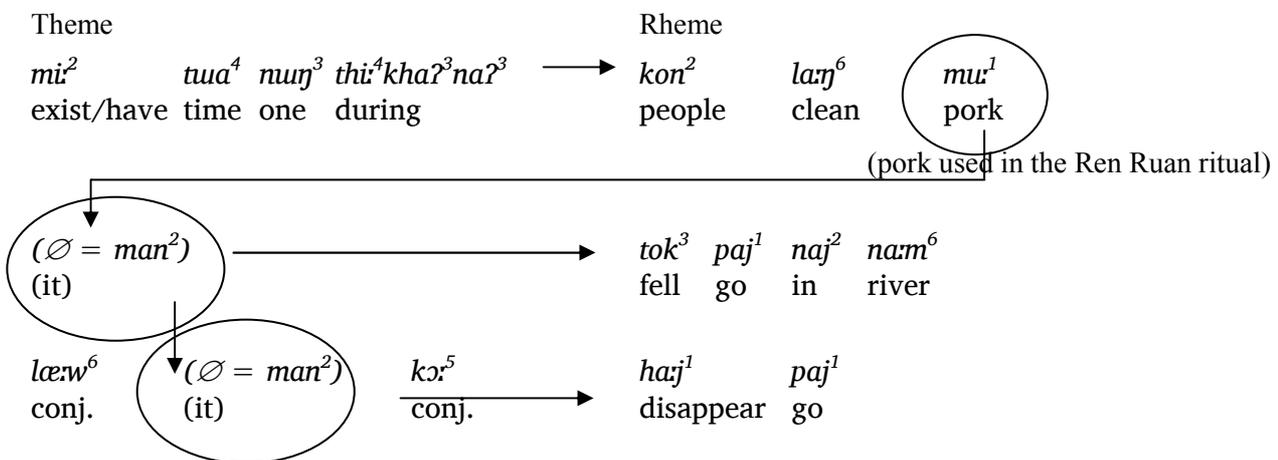
(19) Explanatory: Text 1 [12.1-12.3]

Theme   Rheme

kam⁴   ma:² ——————→ *pa:¹duk³   kɔ:⁵   khɯn⁵   ma:²*
evening   come   cat fish   conj.   get up   come

(∅ = man²)   ——→ *caʔ³ cɔ:j⁴ du:t³*   *na:m⁶*
(it = cat fish)   FUT. help suck   water

con⁴   *(∅ = man²)*   *hœ:ŋ⁵*   *met⁴ lœ:w⁶*
conj.   *(it = water)*   dry   all ASP.: pfv

'In the evening the cat fish surfaced. (It) helped to suck the water (out of the pool), until the water was all gone.'

In example 19, the subject (a cat fish) in the Rheme part was selected as a Theme in the following clause (clause 12.2). At the same time, the object (water) of clause 12.2 was picked as a Theme in the successive clause (clause 12.3). Both Themes of clauses 12.2 and 12.3 are realized by zero pronouns.

• Complement within Rheme is picked up by the new Theme
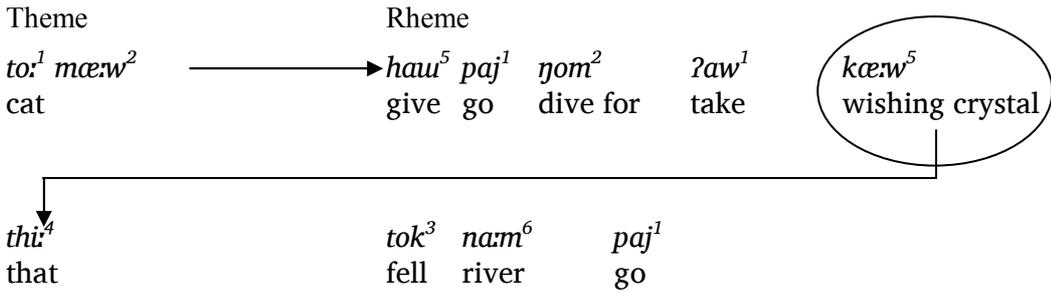
(20) Legend: Text 1 [3.1-3.3]

Theme   Rheme

mi:²   tua⁴ nɯŋ³ thi:⁴khaʔ³naʔ³ ——→ *kon²   la:ŋ⁶   mu:¹*
exist/have time one   during   people   clean   pork

                                              (pork used in the Ren Ruan ritual)

(∅ = man²) ——————————————→ *tok³ paj¹ naj² na:m⁶*
(it)   fell   go   in   river

lœ:w⁶ *(∅ = man²)*   *kɔ:⁵* ——→ *ha:j¹*   *paj¹*
conj.   *(it)*   conj.   disappear   go

'Once, while people were cleaning pork, (it) fell into the river and disappeared.'

Example 20 illustrates that the object (pork) in clause 3.1 was selected as a Theme in clause 3.2 which is realized by a zero pronoun.
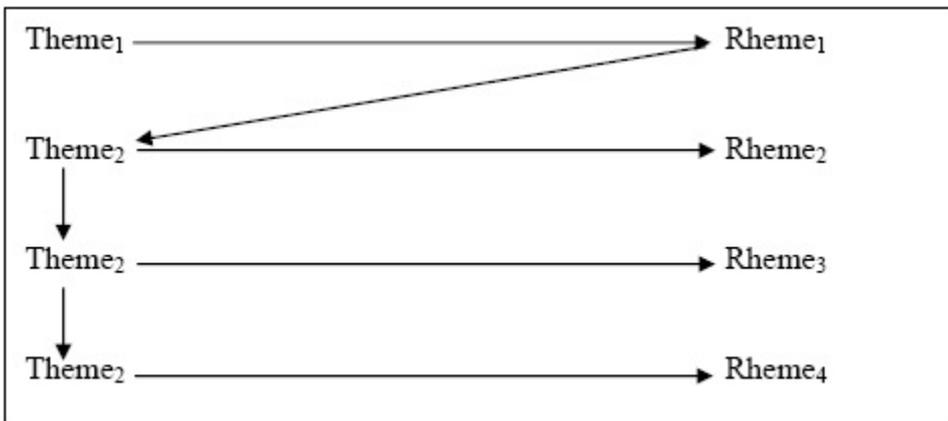
In addition, this type of thematic progression may also operate locally in the form of an embedded clause. A Rheme, which is embedded by an embedded clause, is picked up by the Theme of the successive clause.
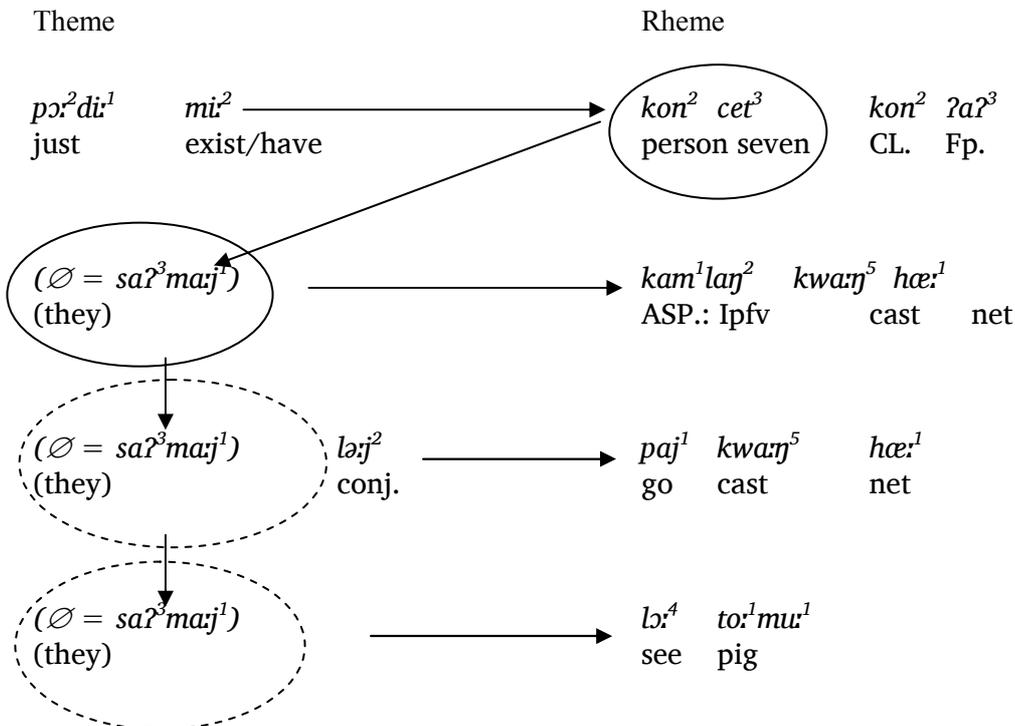
(21) Explanatory: Text 2 [18.3-18.4]

Theme   Rheme

toː¹ mæːw² ──────────▶ *hau⁵ paj¹   ŋom²   ʔaw¹*   *kæːw⁵*
cat   give go   dive for take   wishing crystal

thiː⁴   *tok³   naːm⁶*   *paj¹*
that   fell   river   go

'The cat dived for the wishing crystal that fell into the river.'

From the corpus of folktales under study, it was common to observe an extension of the simple linear Theme progression pattern (19.92 percent of linear cases). That is, once the simple linear Theme pattern was instantiated in the first clause, the following clause was extended by the constant Theme progression pattern, as illustrated in example 22 below.


(22) Legend: Text 1 [4.1-4.4]

Theme   Rheme

pɔː²diː¹   miː² ──────────────▶ *kon² cet³*   *kon² ʔaʔ³*
just   exist/have   person seven   CL.   Fp.

(∅ = saʔ³maːj¹) ──────────▶ *kam¹laŋ²   kwaːŋ⁵ hæː¹*
(they)   ASP.: Ipfv   cast   net

(∅ = saʔ³maːj¹)   ləːj² ──────────▶ *paj¹   kwaːŋ⁵   hæː¹*
(they)   conj.   go   cast   net

(∅ = saʔ³maːj¹) ──────────▶ *lɔː⁴   toː¹mu¹*
(they)   see   pig

'There were seven people. (They) cast a net. (They) saw a pig.'

In terms of the flow of information, most of the folktales began by relating a new Theme to the previous Rheme (Rheme → Theme progression). The selection of this thematic progression is highly motivated as it is thematically used to introduce a protagonist who is made apparent in an existential clause. Later, the folktales change and relate a new Theme to the previous one (Theme → Theme progression). Within the Theme-Rheme structure, this extended thematic pattern is expressed by either explicit or implicit unmarked topical Themes functioning as subject of the clauses. In addition, the constant Theme progression pattern, as the extended segment of the thematic pattern, is used to provide various routines and activities/performances done by the protagonists (as shown in example 23) or characteristics of the mentioned protagonist (as shown in example 24).

• The simple linear Theme progression pattern with an extended constant Theme pattern describing the protagonists'acts.
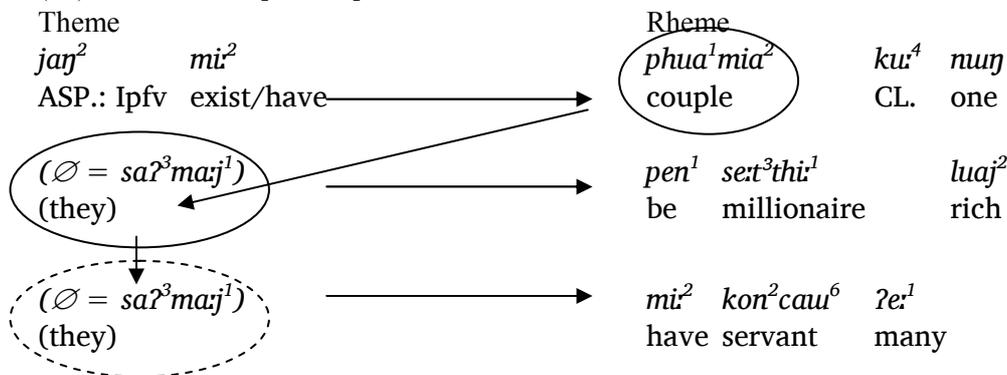
(23) Fable: Text 1 [1.1-1.4]
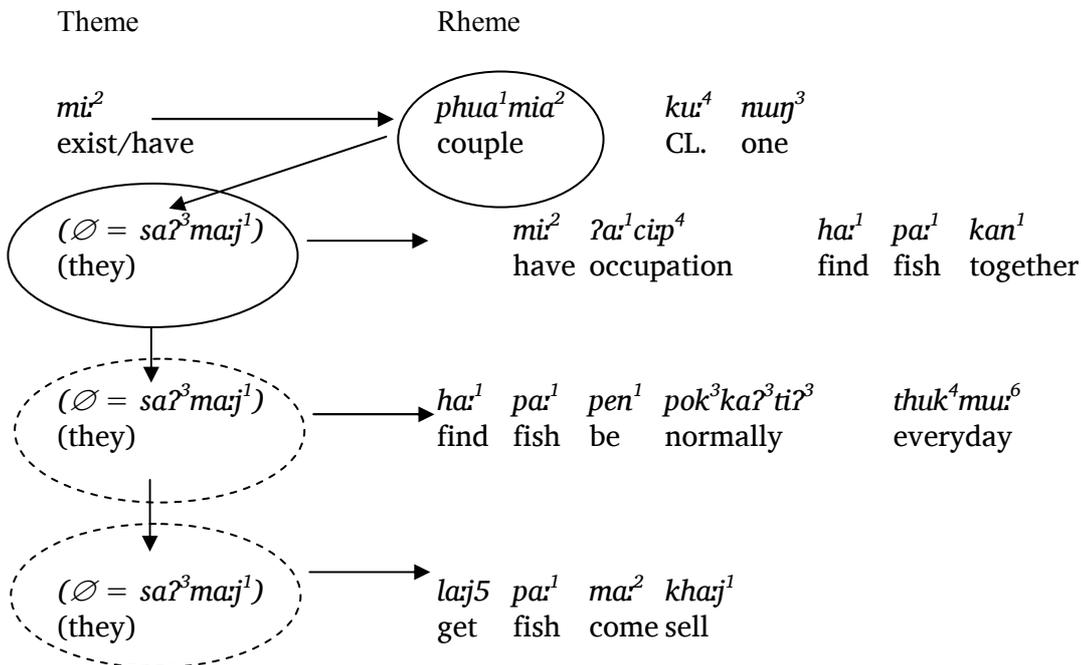
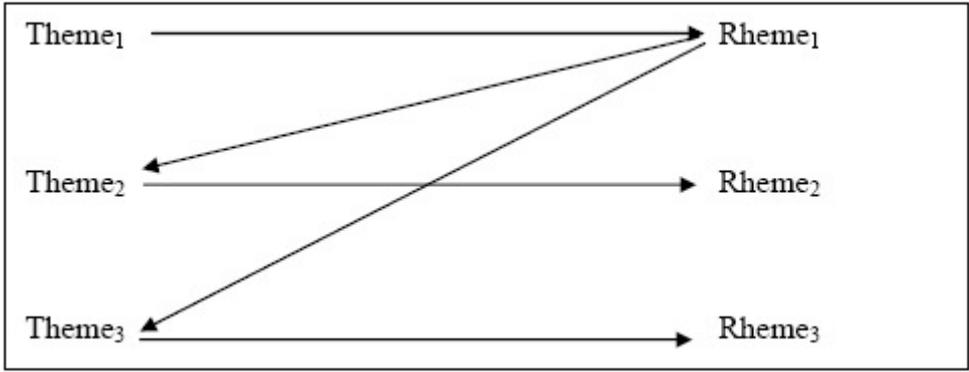'There was a couple. (They) earned their living by fishing. (They) fished everyday and sold them.'

• The simple linear Theme progression pattern with an extended constant Theme pattern describing the protagonists' characteristics
(24) Fable: Text 2 [1.1-1.3]

'There was a couple. (They) were millionaires. (They) had many servants.'

(iii) Split Rheme progression pattern

In the split Rheme progression, the Rheme of a clause has two or more components, each of which is taken in turn as the Theme of a subsequent clause (See the illustrating example in Section 3.2.1).

(25) Fable: Text 1 [38.1-38.4]

Theme   Rheme

'The god then thought that (he) saw two couples, (and thought to himself) "I gave the wishing crystal to the first couple. I did the same with the second couple".'

Example 25 illustrates a split Rheme progression pattern. In this fable, the god imagined and saw two couples (clauses 38.1- 38.2). Then, each couple is futher mentioned in the following clauses (clauses 38.3-38.4). The first couple is the couple to whom the god gave a wishing crystal (clause 38.3). The second couple comes to see the god and wishes the god to give them the wishing crystal since he gave it to the first couple (clause 38.4).

In addition, because the study sample size (10 simple folktales) was rather small, the occurrence of split Rheme progression was, accordingly, constrained. Therefore, a study of thematic progression of a larger corpus of folktales is required in order to confirm the results of this study.

An exploration of the distribution of the thematic progression patterns of the ten Thai Song Dam folktales revealed that constant and simple linear thematic progressions occurred frequently in all the selected folktales. This finding was expected given that Daneš (1974) refers to them as basic thematic patterns. Only two instances of the split Rheme progression were found and they were constrained by location in which they appeared in the text organization. The thematic progression patterns initiated in Thai Song Dam folktales clearly show the relationship between the method of folktale development and a key characteristic of narrative discourse — actor orientation.

Focusing on Generic Structure Potential or text structure, two thematic progression patterns (i.e., the constant and the simple linear thematic progressions) occurred with the greatest distribution. These two patterns were found in all the folktales under study (see Patpong 2011 for a discussion on Generic Structure Potential of Thai Song Dam folktales). However, there were some differences in terms of distribution in the course of text development. The constant thematic pattern dominated at all generic stages of the folktale organization in this study, whereas the simple linear pattern, including the extended linear thematic progression, occurred with greater frequency in the Sequent Event (or the Body stage of the folktales) than at other generic stages. The argument presented here is that this tendency is prompted and common in that one particular pattern is preferred over another. This may account for the conventionally schematic structure of the folktales analysed; folktales are oriented and developed by the protagonists (cf. Longacre, 1974).

7. Methods of folktale development

In the course of text analysis, Themes are selected, clause by clause, to indicate the development of the given text in question. This thematic development, manifested over the course of a text, is referred to as the text's method of development (cf. Fries 1981/1983). Therefore, the contribution of the method of development can be determined by an analysis of the thematic structure of independent clauses — Theme-Rheme structure.

Theme is selected in such a way that it relates the clause to the method by means of which the text is being developed. This well-constructed environment is referred to as the method of development of the text. Thus, in a particular discourse, there is an interrelationship between the thematic selection and the method of development. Theme is selected to reflect and establish the method of development (Fries, 1981/1983, 1993).

With respect to methods of text development, textual resources are concerned with enhancing resources as episode knowledge. Matthieesen (1995b: 39-40) characterizes narratives as being different from expository texts in that they depend on the process of ideational knowledge construction in instantial systems, and the textual resources of Theme play an important role in constructing narratives. The kind of knowledge that is constructed in a narrative is episodic. Episodic construction is achieved by two textual resources: temporal sequence and enhancing temporal motif. The temporal sequence is typically used to construct episodes. It is made up of sequences of events where the main characters take on different participant roles. These sequential events are made apparent by temporal marked Themes. The enhancing temporal motif is realized by conjunction resources, that is: 'and then, and then, and then'. Examples are provided below.

▪ Temporal sequence of episodic knowledge realized by temporal marked Themes (Temporal marked Themes are underlined.)

(26) Fable: Text 1 [14.1-14.3]

Theme		Rheme				
muː⁶niː⁶	*ləːj⁶*	*naːm⁶*	*jaŋ²*	*maʔ⁴*	*hœːŋ⁵*	*lɔʔ⁴*
today	conj.	river	ASP.: Ipfv.	NEG.	dry	Fp.
puʔ⁴niː⁶		*kɔːj⁴*	*maː²*	*mau³*		
tomorrow		just	come	again		

puʔ⁴niː⁶	*paj¹*	*lɔʔ⁴*
tomorrow	come	Fp.

'Today the river is not dry. Tomorrow (we) will come back (here). Tomorrow (we) will go (there) again.'

(27) Fable: Text 1 [32.1-32.8]

Theme	Rheme			
ʔan¹dap³lœːk⁴	*soːŋ¹*	*kon²*	*phua¹*	*mia² jaʔ³*
first (wish)	two	CL.	husband	wife want

laːj⁵	*kœːw⁵*	*wœːn¹*	*ŋəːn²*	*tɔːŋ²*
get	crystal	ring	money	gold

(∅ = saʔ³maːj¹)	*kɔː⁵*	*jaʔ³*	*laːj⁵*	*ŋəːn²*	*tɔːŋ² ʔaʔ³*	*naʔ³*
(∅ = they)	conj.	want	get	money	gold Fp.	Fp.

jaːŋ³thiː⁴sɔːŋ¹	*kɔː⁵*	*jaʔ³*	*laːj⁵*	*huan²*
second (wish)	conj.	want	get	house

(∅ = saʔ³maːj¹)	*jaʔ³*	*laːj⁵*	*huan²*
(∅ = they)	want	get	house

(∅ = saʔ³maːj¹)	*jaʔ³*	*laːj⁵*	*thiː⁴juː³ʔaː¹saj¹*	*naʔ³*
(∅ = they)	want	get	residency	Fp.

lœʔ⁴kɔː⁵pɔː² jaːŋ³thiː⁴saːm¹	*(∅ = saʔ³maːj¹)*	*kɔː⁵*	*nuk⁴*	
conj. third (wish)	(∅ = they)	conj.	think of	

(∅ = saʔ³maːj¹)	*jaʔ³*	*laːj⁵*	*kon²cau⁶*
(∅ = they)	want	get	servant

(∅ = saʔ³maːj¹)	*jaʔ³*	*laːj⁵*	*kon²cau⁶*	*baːw³paj⁴*
(∅ = they)	want	get	servant	servant

'Firstly, the husband and the wife wanted to have money and gold. (They) wanted to have money and gold. Secondly, they wanted to have a house. (They) wanted to have a house. (They) wanted to have a house to live in. And thirdly, (they) thought, (they) wanted to have servants. (They) wanted to have servants.'

▪ Enhancing temporal motif realized by conjunctions (Conjunctions are underlined.)

(28) Joke and Anecdote: Text 2 [24.1-24.3]

Theme		Rheme					
saw²	*kɔː⁵*	*kwaː⁶*	*maːj⁶*	*lœːm¹*			
he	conj.	grab	stick	sharp			

(∅ = saw²)	*jɔːŋ⁴*	*paj¹*	*tœːŋ²*	*bɔː⁵*	*cek⁴*	*thaw⁵*
(∅ = he)	walk	go	stab	person	Chinese	old

lœːw⁶ (∅ = saw²)	*kɔː⁵*	*bœʔ³*	*ʔaw¹*	*maː²*	*huan²*	
conj. (∅ = he)	conj.	carry	bring	come	house	

'He then grabbed a sharp stick, (he) walked stealthly and stabbed that old Chinese man, and then (he) carried him back home.'

As shown in the above examples, the textual resources of the Theme selection are instantiated through temporal topical marked Themes construed in folktales together with temporal textual Themes. The marked topical Themes are all temporal and locative. The temporal topical Themes are marked and highly selected in Thai Song Dam folktales. They are commonly used to construct the folktales' episodes. Locative or spatial marked Themes are selected to set the scene for the folktales to be developed chronologically.

8. Conclusion

This paper has explored thematic selection and thematic development in a corpus of ten Thai Song Dam folktales. Thematic selection is textually analysed by lexicogrammatical realization of the Theme through the Theme system. Theme is viewed as a point of departure for the discourse and is seen as a means of systemic linkage to previous discourse. The method of thematic development of folktales is achieved by systemic patterns of thematic selection. The study also reveals the relationship between thematic selection and the method of text development.

This study also illustrates that thematic selection in discourse plays a significant role in organizing folktales. Themes are selected to guide the audience/addressee in interpretation of a clause as a message, by relating it to the method for developing the text. In this research, the method of development of Thai Song Dam folktales were thematically organized and developed through the semantic motif of time which is a means used to construct the folktale temporal sequence. It is given thematic status both as a textual Theme, expressed by conjunction resources, and as a marked topical Theme, expressed by circumstantial location of time. In folktales, the unmarked (topical) Themes are selected from among the participants or protagonists. These protagonists can be either main or associated characters, animate or inanimate. In terms of themaization, the Theme is often also the topic or subject of the course of text development. Each Theme indicates the point of the rhetorical development of the folktale text. In addition, different stages (Generic Structural Potential) within folktales may also vary in selecting favoured types of Theme, because they exploit different methods of text development.

Focusing on the distribution of thematic progressions, the study reveals that all the selected folktales show a frequent use of the constant Theme or iteration Theme progression (Theme → Theme progression) (63.41 percent) over the simple linear thematic progression (Rheme → Theme progression) (35.78 percent). There are some instances of extended linear thematic progression instantiated in the selected folktales. There are two instances of split Rheme progression found in this research (0.81 percent).

The Theme constant progression, the thematic progression with the highest frequency, was selected and organized around the protagonists doing and acting different activities, whereas the simple linear thematic progression was organized and based on new information located in the Rheme, which the content of the Theme of the second clause (Theme 2) derived from the content of the previous Rheme (Rheme 1).

The present study is based on a very modest sized folktale corpus. It represents only one subtype of Thai Song Dam folktale — simple tales. Nevertheless, the text analysis shows that even a small corpus embodies a number of interesting issues on thematic organization of folktale text type at the discourse level. For comparative purposes, this thematic progression approach is potentially applicable to other similar corpora in the Southeast Asian region. For further research, the current folktale corpus could be enlarged and investigated to include an exploration of methods of text development of complex Thai Song Dam folktales and/or a comparative study of methods of text development of oral and written Thai Song Dam folktales.

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