Volume 22 Issue 45
Originally issued as G9



Global Journal of human-social science: G
Linguistics & Education
Volume 22 Issue 9 Version 1.0 Year 2022
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals
Online ISSN: 2249-460X & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

Construction of the THEME System of Myanmar

By Dr. Lai Yee Win
Sittwe University

Abstract- The primary purpose of this paper is to construct the THEME system of Myanmar following the system network for THEME in English proposed by Halliday (1985, 1994; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004, 2014) within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics. It is found that the THEME system of Myanmar consists of two sub-systems: THEME STATUS and THEME COMPOSITION. For the former, there are two major types: unmarked and enhanced Themes, while for the latter, Themes can be presented in two ways: simple and multiple Themes. Unmarked Themes in Myanmar clauses are Subject, Complement, Adjunct, hypotactic clause, Predicator (only in imperative), and Ba-element (only in interrogative). The enhanced Theme in Myanmar contains two major types: thematic equatives and preposed attributes. A multiple Theme includes textual, interpersonal, and topical Themes, which can be chosen as a point of departure of the clause. The findings may shed light on the realization of the textual metafunction of the Myanmar language.

Keywords: *Theme, Systemic Functional Linguistics, Myanmar.*

GJHSS-G Classification: *FOR Code: 200499*



Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:



© 2022. Dr. Lai Yee Win. This research/ review article is distributed under the terms of the Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0). You must give appropriate credit to authors and reference this article if parts of the article are reproduced in any manner. Applicable licensing terms are at https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/.

Construction of the THEME System of Myanmar

Dr. Lai Yee Win

Abstract- The primary purpose of this paper is to construct the THEME system of Myanmar following the system network for THEME in English proposed by Halliday (1985, 1994; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004, 2014) within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics. It is found that the THEME system of Myanmar consists of two sub-systems: THEME STATUS and THEME COMPOSITION. For the former, there are two major types: unmarked and enhanced Themes, while for the latter, Themes can be presented in two ways: simple and multiple Themes. Unmarked Themes in Myanmar clauses are Subject, Complement, Adjunct, hypotactic clause, Predicator (only in imperative), and Ba-element (only in interrogative). The enhanced Theme in Myanmar contains two major types: thematic equatives and preposed attributes. A multiple Theme includes textual, interpersonal, and topical Themes, which can be chosen as a point of departure of the clause. The findings may shed light on the realization of the textual metafunction of the Myanmar language.

Keywords: Theme, Systemic Functional Linguistics, Myanmar.

I. Introduction

According to Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL, hereafter), language serves three metafunctions: experiential, interpersonal, and textual (Halliday 1985, 1994; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004, 2014; Fawcett 2000, 2008, forthcoming). Based on the textual metafunction of language, the concept of the THEME system is considered. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 64), the THEME system construes organizing messages relevantly to the other notes around them and to the broader context in speaking or writing. The textual meaning of the clause is realized by a thematic structure consisting of two parts: Theme and Rheme. The Theme is the element that serves as the starting point of the message, while the remaining part is the Rheme that gives further information about the Theme. From a Systemic Functional approach, the studies of Theme[1] are based on Halliday's thematic structure (see Caffarel et al. 2004).

Research on Theme in Myanmar from a Systemic Functional approach is surprisingly scant (e.g., Hopple 2002; Rattanapitak 2009; Ozerov 2014). Rattanapitak (2009) studies the THEME system and its realizations in Myanmar from the perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics. However, Rattanapitak's (2009) study of Theme in Myanmar does not cover interrogative and exclamative clauses. Moreover, bias in the data collection also exists because it relies on only five Burmese religious tales extracted from Min Yu Wai's (1999) book entitled "38 Welfare Tales," containing 38 stories about Buddhist teachings. To meet this literature gap, this paper aims to develop the THEME system of Myanmar by supplementing it with the enhanced Theme based on the thematic analysis of different genres of Myanmar text from a Systemic Functional perspective.

In the THEME system of Myanmar proposed in this study, two sub-systems: THEME STATUS and THEME COMPOSITION are presented in order to show the flow of information in Myanmar text. For the former, unmarked and enhanced Themes are presented, while for the latter, simple and multiple Themes are presented. Theme in Myanmar typically functions as a Subject, Complement, Adjunct, or hypotactic clause. It can also function as a Ba-element in interrogative, and a Predicator in imperative. Two major types of special thematic structures, such as thematic equatives and preposed attributes are found in Myanmar. Thompson (2004/2008: 164) characterizes them as enhanced Theme in his THEMATIC systems of English. The typical organization of a multiple Theme in Myanmar is textual ^ interpersonal ^ experiential. This study contributes to the understanding of how Myanmar people organize their messages relevantly to the context. The result makes an important contribution to a contrastive study of THEME systems between Myanmar and foreign languages.

II. Previous Studies of THEME in Myanmar

Based on the THEME system of English devised by Halliday (1985, 1994) and Matthiessen (1995), many linguists have constructed the THEME systems of human languages within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (e.g., French by Caffarel 2004; German by Steiner and Teich 2004; Japanese by Teruya 2004; Chinese by Halliday and McDonald 2004).There are a few studies on Theme in Myanmar (see Hopple 2002; Rattanapitak 2009; Ozerov 2014). Hopple (2002) studies Topicalization in Burmese expository discourse, focusing on the topicalizing and thematic functions of the three postpositional particles: သည် /the/, က /ga/ and ကို /go/ from a discourse point of

Author: Professor and Head of Department of English, Sittwe University, Rakhine State, Myanmar. e-mail: laiyeewin18@gmail.com

[1] Theme (with capitalized initial) refers to the function; THEME (all letters in capitals) is used as the system's name.

© 2022 Global Journals

view. Rattanapitak (2009) presents a system network of textual resources in Burmese religious tales from a Systemic Functional approach. Since Rattanapitak's (2009) study is limited to expository discourse, it does not offer a satisfactory explanation of the textual metafunction of the Myanmar language. Based on Jacobs' (1999) concepts of informational autonomy, Ozerov (2014) investigates the grammatical means used for expressing information structure in standard colloquial Burmese by analyzing its morphosyntactic and prosodic devices. Ozerov's (2014) study is beyond the scope of Systemic Functional Linguistics. It reveals a grammatical system of informational PACKAGING in Burmese. Therefore, further research on constructing a new model of the THEME system of Myanmar, which can realize the textual meaning of Myanmar clauses, is necessary for Systemic Functional Linguistics.

To meet this need, this study aims to develop the THEME system of Myanmar based on the network presented by Halliday (1985, 1994; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004, 2014). It is of great significance that findings are based on the thematic analysis of different genres of Myanmar text. In this study, the elaborations of unmarked Themes in different clauses and special thematic structures of Myanmar are supported with data from authentic materials, such as literature, news articles, and databases such as SEAlang Library Burmese corpus[2]. The thematic compositions of simple and multiple Themes in Myanmar are also presented in this study. The results of this study will form part of a more extensive study of the Systemic Functional Grammar of Myanmar.This study will also make a significant contribution to a contrastive analysis of THEME systems between Myanmar and foreign languages.

III. Construction of the THEME System of Myanmar

The THEME system is a grammatical resource for the organization of the clause as a message. It realizes the textual mode of meaning concerning the creation of text relevantly to the preceding text and context, which is intrinsic to language. The clause in any language has the character of a message, or quantum of information in the flow of discourse; therefore, every language has some form of organization contributing to the flow of discourse (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 88). Like other world languages, Myanmar clause is also organized as a message by having a special thematic status assigned to one part of it. This element is enunciated as the theme, and then it combines with the remainder to constitute a message. In spoken and written Myanmar, textual prominence (i.e., the thematic status) is given to an item by putting it first in the clause. The Theme is the first element functioning as the point of departure of the message, which locates and orients the clause within its context. In contrast, the remainder of the message (i.e., the part in which the Theme is developed) is known as the Rheme (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 89). Following Halliday's (1985, 1994, 2004, 2014) Theme-Rheme structure, this study explores thematic choices in different clause types in Myanmar, including simple clauses, clause complexes, and reported clauses. It also explores enhanced Themes or special thematic structures of Myanmar, such as thematic equatives and preposed attributes.

a) Theme and Mood

The choice of Theme in Myanmar clause depends on Mood choice. MOOD, the primary interpersonal system of the clause, provides interactants with the resources for giving or demanding a commodity such as information and goods-&-services – in other words, with the resources for enacting speech functions (speech acts) through the grammar of the clause: statements (giving information), questions (demanding information), offers (giving goods-&- services), and commands (demanding goods-&-services). This study focuses on major clauses of Myanmar. Minor clauses like ကောင်းပြီ /kaunnbye/ "ok", ဟုတ်ကဲ့ /hokekèt/ "yes" have no Mood choice and thematic structure, and so they are left out of account in this study. A major clause in Myanmar can be either indicative or imperative. Indicative has two options: declarative and interrogative. Exclamative is a subtype of declarative. The following will present thematic structures in each Mood type of Myanmar from the perspective of a textual metafunction.

i. *Theme in indicative clauses*

The Theme in Myanmar declarative functions as Subject, Complement, and Adjunct. The Theme functioning as a Subject or Complement is generally realized by a nominal group, nominal group complex, and clause. The Theme functioning as an Adjunct is typically realized by a prepositional phrase or an adverbial group. See Examples (1)-(3).

[2] http://sealang.net/burmese/corpus.htm

© 2022 Global Journals

(1) ဆိုင်မှ ကောင်လေးက သံပုရာရည်နှစ်ခွက် လာချပေးသည်။

sain-hma *kaunlaye:-ga* *thanpayar-yay-hna-khwet* *larchapaye:-the.*

shop-from.ABLMARK boy-SBJMARK lemon-juice-two-CLF bring.PFV-DECL.SENTSUF

Theme	Rheme

'The boy from the shop brought two glasses of lemon juice.'

(Journal Kyaw Ma Ma Lay 1957: 9)

(2) စည်းလုံးမှ အင်အား ဖြစ်မည်ဆိုသည်မှာ အမှန် ဖြစ်ပါသည်။

seelonn=hma *inarr* *phyitmye-sothehmar* *ahman* *phyit-par-the.*

unite=COND strength COP-SBJMARK truth COP-POLMARK-PRS.DECL.SENTSUF

Theme	Rheme

'It is true that unity is strength.'

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

(3) မြစ်တစ်ဖက်ကမ်းဆီသို့ ကျွန်တော် လှမ်းကြည့်လိုက်သည်။

myit-taphetkannsethot *kyanor* *hlannkyi-laik-the.*

river-ALL 1SG.M.NOM glance-PFV-DECL.SENTSUF

Theme	Rheme

'I glanced towards the river.'

(Lae Twin Thar Saw Chit 2004: 11)

Exclamative, a subtype of declarative, is a small group of clauses. It functions to express the speaker's intense emotions. It is structured in the form of Subject ^ Predicator, which is the same as Myanmar declarative. The clause-final particle: /-laiktar/ distinguishes exclamative from declarative in Myanmar. The unmarked Theme in Myanmar exclamative is the Subject realized by a nominal group, as shown in Example (4).

(4) အိမ်ကြီးက ကျက်သရေရှိလိုက်တာ။

ein-gyee-ga *kyetthayayshi-laiktar.*

house-AUG-SBJMARK splendid-EXCL

Theme	Rheme

'How splendid the house is!'

(Journal Kyaw Ma Ma Lay 1957: 120)

In Myanmar, the unmarked Theme in WH-interrogative is Ba-element, analogous to the WH-element representing the missing information that the speaker wants to know from other person. Thematization of Ba-element can function as Subject, Complement, or Adjunct, as shown in Examples (5a)-(5c).

© 2022 Global Journals

(5) a. Thematization of Ba-element functioning as Subject

ဘယ်သူ	မင်းကို	ပြောခဲ့တာလဲ။
béthue	*minn-go*	*pyaw-khèt-darlè.*
who	2SG-OBJMARK	tell-PST-INT.SENTSUF

Theme	Rheme

'Who told you?'

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

b. Thematization of Ba-element functioning as Complement

ဘယ်သူ့ကို	တွေ့ချင်လို့လဲ။
béthu-go	*twayt-chin-lotlè.*
who-OBJMARK	meet-OPT-PRS.INT.SENTSUF

Theme	Rheme

'Whom do you want to meet?'

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

c. Thematization of Ba-element functioning as Adjunct

ဘယ်အချိန်	ပြန်လာမှာလဲ။
bé-achein	*pyanlar-hmar-lè.*
which-time	come.back-IRR-INT.SENTSUF

Theme	Rheme

'Which time will you come back?'

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

Other Theme choices in WH-interrogative in Myanmar are Subject, Complement, and Adjunct, as shown in Examples (6a)-(6c).

(6) a. Subject as Theme

သူက	ဒီကို	ဘာ	လာ	လုပ်တာလဲ။
thue-ga	*dego*	*bar*	*lar*	*loke-tarlè.*
3SG-SBJMARK	here	what	come	do-PRS.INT.SENTSUF

Theme	Rheme

'What does she come here for?'

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

© 2022 Global Journals

b. Complement as Theme

ဒီပန်းအိုးကို		ဘယ်နေရာမှာ	ထားမလဲ။
de-pannoe-go		*bénayyarhmar*	*htarr-malè.*
this.DEM-vase-OBJMARK		where	put-IRR.INT.SENTSUF
Theme		Rheme	

'Where will you put this vase?'

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

c. Adjunct as Theme

အပေါ်မှာ	အိပ်ခန်း	ဘယ်နှစ်ခန်း	ရှိပါသလဲ။
aporhmar	*eikkhann*	*béhnakhann*	*shi-bar-thalè.*
upstairs	bedroom	how.many	exist-POLMARK-PRS.INT.SENTSUF
Theme	Rheme		

'How many bedrooms are there upstairs?'

(Journal Kyaw Ma Ma Lay 1957: 72)

Yes/no interrogatives function to ask for the polarity of the clause between "yes" and "no". The unmarked Themes in Myanmar yes/no interrogatives are the Subject, Complement, Adjunct, and hypotactic clause. The clause-final interrogator, such as /-larr/ and /-lè/) marks the end of the Myanmar yes/no interrogative. See Examples (7a)-(7c).

(7) a. Subject as Theme

သူတို့	လာမှာလား။
thuedot	*lar-hmar-larr.*
3PL.NOM	come-IRR-INT.SENTSUF
Theme	Rheme

'Will they come?'

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

b. Complement as Theme

သူတို့ကို	ဖိတ်ပြီးပြီလား။
thuedot-go	*pheik-pyeebye-larr.*
3PL-OBJMARK	invite-PFV-INT.SENTSUF
Theme	Rheme

'Have they been invited?'

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

© 2022 Global Journals

c. Adjunct as Theme

ဒီနေ့	အတန်း	ရှိလား။
denayt	*atann*	*shi-larr.*
today	class	have-PRS.INT.SENTSUF

Theme	Rheme

'Is there any class today?'

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

Figure 1 illustrates a system network of THEME in three major types of indicative clauses in Myanmar, such as declarative, interrogative, and exclamative.

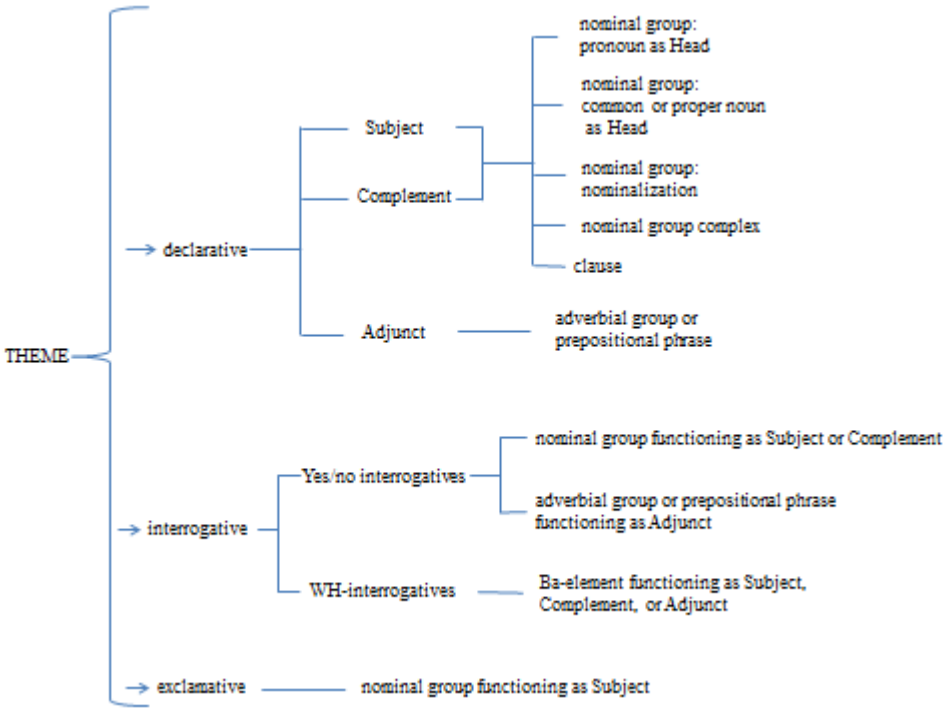


Figure 1: A system network of THEME in indicative clauses in Myanmar.

ii. *Theme in imperative clauses*

The communicative purpose of the imperative is to ask the other person to perform the action. In Myanmar, the unmarked Theme in the positive imperative is the Predicator realized by the verbal group expressing the action to be performed by the addressee, while the one in the negative imperative is the Predicator along with the pre-verbal negator /ma-/ and the post-verbal particle /-nèt/ (cf. Examples 8 and 9). As Examples (8) and (9) show, there is no Rheme in thematic structures of Myanmar imperatives whose unmarked Theme is the Predicator.

(8) ဝင်လာပါ။

winlar-bar.

come.in-POLMARK

Theme

'Come in!'

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

© 2022 Global Journals

(9) မသွားနဲ့။

ma-thwarr-nèt.

NEG-go-NEGIMP.SENTSUF

Theme

'Don't go!'

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

When there is Rheme in the thematic structure of Myanmar imperative, the unmarked Theme can be Subject, Complement, or Adjunct, as shown in Examples (10a)-(10c).

(10) a. Subject as Theme

ဘယ်သူမှ	မလှုပ်ကြနဲ့။
béthuehma	*ma-hloke-kya-nèt.*
anyone	NEG-move-PLMARK-NEGIMP.SENTSUF

Theme	Rheme

'Anyone, don't move!'

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

b. Complement as Theme

သူ့ကို	ဖမ်းလိုက်ကြစမ်း။
thu-go	*phann-laikkyasann.*
3SG-OBJMARK	arrest-IMP.SENTSUF

Theme	Rheme

'Arrest him!'

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

c. Adjunct as Theme

ချက်ချင်း	သူ့ကို	ဖမ်းလိုက်ကြစမ်း။
chetchinn	*thu-go*	*phann-laik-kya-sann.*
immediately	3SG-OBJMARK	arrest-IMP.SENTSUF

Theme	Rheme

'Arrest him immediately!'

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

© 2022 Global Journals

The Theme in "let's" type of Myanmar imperative is the Subject, Complement, or Adjunct, as shown in Examples (11a)-(11c).

(11) a. Subject as Theme

ငါတို့	ရုပ်ရှင်	သွား	ကြည့်ရအောင်။
ngardot	*yokeshin*	*thwarr*	*kyi-yaaun.*
1PL.NOM	film	go	see-SUGMARK

Theme	Rheme

'We let's go and see the film!'

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

b. Complement as Theme

ရုပ်ရှင်	သွား	ကြည့်ရအောင်။
yokeshin	*thwarr*	*kyi-yaaun.*
film	go	see-SUGMARK

Theme	Rheme

'Let's go and see the film!'

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

c. Adjunct as Theme

ဒီနေ့	ရုပ်ရှင်	သွား	ကြည့်ရအောင်။
denayt	*yokeshin*	*thwarr*	*kyi-yaaun.*
today	film	go	see-SUGMARK

Theme	Rheme

'Let's go and see the film today!'

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

Another sub-category of the imperative is precative (i.e., a polite request for goods-&- services). The unmarked Theme in precative type is Subject or Complement, as shown in Examples (12a) and (12b).

(12) a. Subject as Theme

သက်သက်	သွားပါရစေ။
thetthet	*thwarr-bayazay.*
Thet.Thet	go-REQMARK

Theme	Rheme

'Let me go!'

(Journal Kyaw Ma Ma Lay 1957: 205)

© 2022 Global Journals

b. Complement as Theme

ကျွန်မ	နေဖို့	အခန်းကို	တဆိတ်	ကြည့်ခွင့်ပေးပါ။
kyama	*nay=phot*	*akhann-go*	*taseik*	*kyi-khwintpaye:-bar.*
1SG.F	stay=REL	room-OBJMARK	moment	look-let-POLMARK
Theme	Rheme			

'Let me have a look at my room!'

(Journal Kyaw Ma Ma Lay 1957: 71)

Figure 2 illustrates a system network of THEME in imperative clauses including suggestive and precative types.

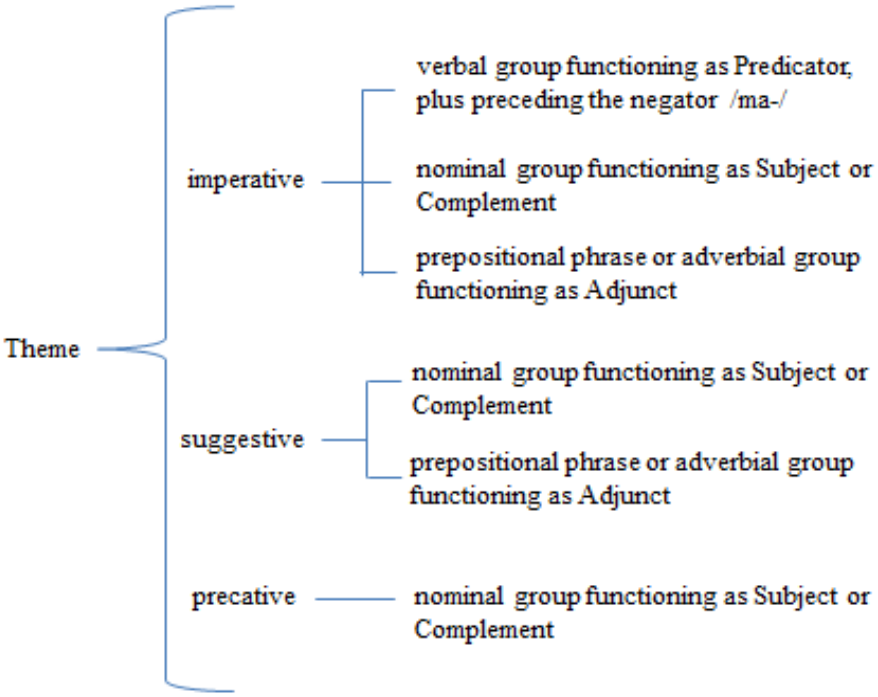


Figure 2: A network of Theme in imperative clauses.

b) Multiple Theme

According to Halliday (1994: 52-54), every major clause has an experiential Theme (i.e., the first element with the experiential meaning of the clause). The thematic experiential constituent is labeled as the "topical Theme," which is closely associated with the topic of the clause in topic-comment analysis. It is also possible to have a purely interpersonal Theme (e.g., vocative, modal Adjuncts, and mood-marking) or textual Theme (e.g., continuative, structural, and conjunctive Adjuncts) before the experiential Theme. In this case, everything up to the experiential Theme is included in the Theme of the clause. The typical ordering of elements in a multiple Theme is textual ^ interpersonal ^ experiential, as shown in Example (13).

(13)	အို	သက်သက်ရယ်	နင့်	ကားကို	ရောင်းမလို့လား။
	o	*thetthet-yé*	*nint*	*karr-go*	*yaunn-malotlarr.*
	Oh	Thet.Thet-APPEL	2SG.GEN	car-OBJMARK	sell-IRR.INT.SENTSUF

© 2022 Global Journals

continuative	vocative	topical	
textual	interpersonal	experiential	
Theme			Rheme

'Oh Thet Thet, will you sell your car?'

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

c) Theme in clause complexes and reported clauses

Thematic choices in Myanmar clause complexes and reported clauses are investigated in this study following Halliday (1985, 1994, 2004, 2014). In a Myanmar clause complex, the dependent clause always precedes the clause on which it depends. In such case, the dependent clause is analyzed as the Theme for the whole clause complex. As every clause has a Theme, the dependent clause and the dominant clause are further analyzed into Theme-Rheme structure as in Example (14).

(14) သူတကာ နံနက်စာ စားပြီးမှ ထမင်းစားပွဲသို့ ရောက်၏။

thuedagar nannetsar sarr=pyeehma htaminnzabwe-thot yauk-i.

everyone breakfast eat=after.CONJ dining.table-ALL arrive-PRS.DECL.SENTSUF

Theme-1		Rheme-1	
topical		topical	
Theme-2	Rheme-2	Theme-3	Rheme-3

'After everyone has eaten breakfast, he arrives at the dining table.'

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

According to Thompson (2004/2008: 161), "Reporting or projection has a different kind of relationship between clauses than other types of clause complex; this is reflected in the uncertain status of projected Themes in the text; and in the case of quotes, the analysis is usually straightforward in such a way that the reporter makes a thematic choice in the projecting or reporting clause and also recycles the original speaker's thematic choice in the quote." Both Themes typically play an essential role in the development of the text, and they are analyzed separately in the reporting clause and quote, as shown in Examples (15) and (16).

(15) ဟွမ်တောမတ်က 'ဘယ်သူက တိုက်ခိုက်တာလဲ'ဟု အရေးတကြီး မေးလိုက်၏။

hwantawmat-ga 'bethuega taikkhaik-tarle'=hu ayaye:dagyee maye:-laiki.

Juan.Tomas-SBJMARK who attack-PFV.INT.SENTSUF=COMP quickly ask-PFV.DECL.SENTSUF

Theme-1	Rheme-1		
	topical		
	Theme-2	Rheme-2	

'"Who attacked?" asked Juan Tomas quickly.'

(Htin Lin 1999: 126)

© 2022 Global Journals

(16)	'ဒါ	တန်ဖိုးသိပ်ကြီးတဲ့	ပုလဲဗျ'ဟု	ကီနိုက	ဆိုသည်။
	'dar	*tanphoe-theikkyee=det*	*palebya'=hu*	*keno-ga*	*so-the.*
	this.DEM	value-AUG=REL	pearl=COMP	Kino-SBJMARK	say-DECL.SENTSUF

Theme-1	Rheme-1	Theme-2	Rheme-2

'"It is a pearl of great value," Kino said.'

(Htin Lin 1999: 97)

In both direct speech and indirect speech in Myanmar, the reported clause comes after the Subject of the reporting clause. Each of them has its Theme. The Theme of the reported clause links in with the topic of the text, while the Theme of the reporting clause primarily develops the information by identifying the source (Thompson 2004/2008: 161). Both Themes, therefore, serve different functions in the development of the text, and they are identified separately, as illustrated in Example (17).

(17)	ရှေးဦးစွာ	ပညာရေးဝန်ကြီးဌာန	ပြည်ထောင်စုဝန်ကြီးက	လက်ရှိကာလတွင်	နိုင်ငံတော်အစိုးရအနေဖြင့်	e-Government စနစ်ကို	အားပေး	ဆောင်ရွက်လျှက်ရှိပါကြောင်း	ပြောကြားသည်။
	shaye:u e:zwar	*pyinnyaryaye:wingyeehtarna*	*pyehtaunsuwingyee-ga*	*letshikarlatwin*	*nainngandorasoeya-anayphyint*	*e-Government-sanit-go*	*arrpaye:*	*saunywet-lyetshi-bar=gyaun*	*pyawkyarr-the.*
	firstly	Ministry.of.Education	Union.Minister-SBJMARK	at.present	government-SBJMARK	e-Government-system-OBJMARK	encourage	carry.out-PROG-POLMARK=COMP	say-DECL.SENTSUF

conjunctive	topical		
textual	experiential		
Theme-1		Rheme-1	
		topical	
		Theme-2	Rheme-2

'Firstly, the Minister of Education said that the government is encouraging e-Government system at present.' (*Myanma Alinn Daily Newspaper* 2019: 8)[3]

[3] https://www.burmalibrary.org/sites/burmalibrary.org/files/obl/mal_28.6.19.pdf

© 2022 Global Journals

d) Special thematic structures of Myanmar

Special thematic structures of Myanmar (i.e., enhanced Theme) cover thematic equatives and preposed attributes (see Figure 3). In a thematic equative, Theme and Rheme are in the same status, which is pointed out by the verb to be, as shown in Example (18).

(18) ငါတို့ လွတ်လပ်ရေး ရခဲ့တဲ့ နှစ်ဟာ ၁၉၄၈ခုနှစ် ဖြစ်တယ်။

ngardot	*lutlatyaye:*	*ya-khet=det*	*hnit-har*	*htauntkoeyarlaye:zetshit-khuhnit*	*phyit-te.*
1PL.NOM	independence	get-PST=REL	year-SBJMARK	1948-year	COP-PRS.DECL.SENTSUF

Theme	Rheme

'The year when we got independence is 1948.'

(SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus)

The second type of special thematic structure is the preposed attribute. It is a part of the Theme that introduces the quality of the following nominal group functioning as the starting point of the clause (Thompson 2004/2008: 163). The preposed attribute plus the following nominal group as Theme in Myanmar is shown in Example (19).

(19) a. ပညာရေးဝန်ကြီးဌာန *pyinnyaryaye:wingyeehtarna* | ပြည်ထောင်စုဝန်ကြီး *pyidaunzu-wingyee* | ဒေါက်တာညွန့်ဖေသည် *dauktarnyuntphay-the* | ယနေ့ *yanayt* | နံနက် *nannet* | ၁၁နာရီခွဲတွင် *settanainyekhwe-twin* | သံတွဲ့ပြို *thandwe-myot* | အမှတ်(၁)အခြေခံပညာ အထက်တန်းကျောင်းသို့ *ahmattit-achaykhanpyinnyarahtettannkyaunn-thot* | သွားရောက်၍ *thwarryauk=ywayt*

Ministry.of.Education	Union-Minister	Dr. Nyunt.Pe-SBJMARK	today	morning	11:30-ABLMARK	Thandwe-town	No.1-Basic.Education.High.School-ALL	go=and.CONJ

Theme-1	Rheme-1

'The Minister of Education, Dr. Nyunt Pe went to No. (1) Basic Education High School, Thandwe at 11:30 this morning and…'

b. ကျောင်းသားကျောင်းသူများ *kyaunntharrkyaunnthue-myarr* | အေးချမ်းသာယာစွာ *aye:channtharyarzwar* | ပညာသင်ကြားနေမှုမျဉ်းကို *pyinnyarthinkyar-nayhmu-myarr-go* | ကြည့်ရှု *kyishu* | အားပေးသည်။ *arrpaye:-the.*

student-PLMARK	peacefully	learn-NMLZ-PLMARK-OBJMARK	inspect	encourage-DECL.SENTSUF

© 2022 Global Journals

Theme-2	Rheme-2

'…inspected the learning of the students in peace.'
(*Myanma Alinn Daily Newspaper* 2021: 7)[4]

Based on the findings of thematic analyses on Myanmar's declarative, exclamative, interrogative, and imperative clauses, the THEME system of Myanmar is demonstrated in Figure 3.

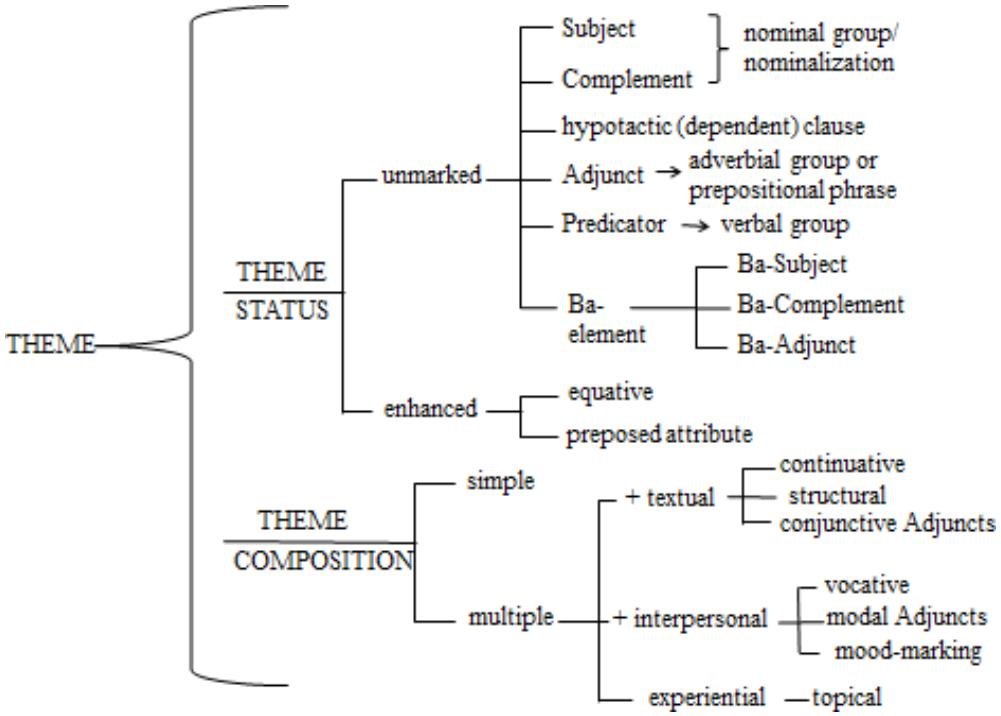


Figure 3: The THEME system of Myanmar.

IV. Conclusion

This paper presents the THEME system of Myanmar from the Systemic Functional perspective. In section 2, the previous studies on Theme in Myanmar have been reviewed. There are very few studies of Theme in Myanmar from the Systemic Functional perspective. Their analysis is based on the restricted data collection; consequently, they do not offer satisfactory answers to the organization of messages in different genres of Myanmar text. To meet this need, the present study has developed a system network for THEME in Myanmar based on the findings from the thematic analysis of different clauses: declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamative in Myanmar by using Halliday's (1985, 1994) Theme-Rheme structure in section 3.

Findings show that the THEME system of Myanmar consists of two sub-systems: THEME STATUS and THEME COMPOSITION. The former contains two major types: unmarked and enhanced Themes, while the latter contains simple and multiple Themes. Unmarked Theme in Myanmar clauses can be Subject, Complement, Adjunct, hypotactic clause, Predicator (only in imperative), and Ba-element (only in interrogative). Enhanced Theme contains two major types: thematic equatives and preposed attributes. A multiple Theme includes textual (e.g., continuative, structural, and conjunctive Adjuncts), interpersonal (e.g., vocative, modal Adjuncts, and mood-marking), and experiential/topical Themes.

In conclusion, this study is of great significance in investigating how Myanmar speakers organize their messages coherently to the other messages around them and in the broader context of spoken and written discourse. The findings of this study characterize the textual metafunction of the Myanmar language and contribute to the Systemic Functional Grammar of Myanmar. This study has clear implications for further research on a contrastive analysis of Theme in Myanmar and foreign languages.

[4] https://www.burmalibrary.org/sites/burmalibrary.org/files/obl/mal_18.12.21.pdf

© 2022 Global Journals

Abbreviations found in the Leipzig Glossing Rules

3PL	third person plural
1SG	first person singular
2SG	second person singular
3SG	third person singular
ABLMARK	ablative marker
ACC	accusative
ADDCONN	additive connective
AFFMARK	affectionate marker
ALL	allative
ANA	anaphoric
APPEL	appellative
ASSOC	associative
CAPAMOD	capability modality
CAUS	causative
CLF	classifier
CMPR	comparative
COM	comitative
COMP	complementizer
COMPA	compassion
CONJ	conjunction
CONN	connective
COP	copula
DAT	dative
DECL.SENTSUF	declarative sentence suffix
DET	determiner
DIM	diminutive
DU	dual
EMPMARK	emphatic marker
EXCL	exclusive
EXPER	experiential
F	female
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
INCL	inclusive
INF	infinitive
INS	instrumental
INT.SENTSUF	interrogative sentence suffix
LOC	locative
M	male
MOD	modifier

© 2022 Global Journals

NEG	negative
NEGDECL.SENTSUF	negative declarative sentence suffix
NOM	nominative
OBJMARK	object marker
OBLG	obligation
OPT	optative
PFV	perfective
PLMARK	plural marker
POLMARK	polite marker
POSTDECL.SENTSUF	positive declarative sentence suffix
PROG	progressive
PRS	present
PST	past
PURP	purposive
REFL	reflexive
REL	relative
SBJMARK	subject marker
SUP	superlative

Bibliographic References

1. Caffarel, A. (2004). Metafunctional profile of the grammar of French. In Alice Caffarel, James Robert Martin & Christian Matthias Ingemar Martin Matthiessen (eds.), *Language typology: A functional perspective,* 77–138. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
2. Caffarel, A., Martin, J. R., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (eds.). (2004). *Language typology: A functional perspective.* Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
3. Fawcett, R. P. (2000). *A theory of syntax for Systemic Functional Linguistics.* Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
4. Fawcett, R. P. (2008). *Invitation to Systemic Functional Linguistics through the Cardiff Grammar: Analyzing An extension and simplification of Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar.* London: Equinox.
5. Fawcett, R. P. (Forthcoming). *The functional semantics handbook: Analyzing English at the level of meaning.* London: Equinox.
6. Halliday, M. A. K. (1985). *An introduction to functional grammar.* London: Arnold.
7. Halliday, M. A. K. (1994). *An introduction to functional grammar,* 2nd edn. London: Arnold.
8. Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2004). *An introduction to functional grammar*, 3rd edn. London: Arnold.
9. Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2014). *Halliday's introduction to functional grammar*, 4th edn. London: Routledge.
10. Halliday, M. A. K., & McDonald, E. (2004). Metafunctional profile of the grammar of Chinese. In Alice Caffarel, James Robert Martin & Christian Matthias Ingemar Martin Matthiessen (eds.), *Language typology: A functional perspective,* 305–396. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
11. Hopple, P. (2005). Topicalization in Burmese expository discourse. In Justin Watkins (eds.), *Studies in Burmese linguistics,* 163-183. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.
12. Htin Lin. (1999). *Paletaye: than* [The Pearl]. Yangon: Pan Shwe Pyi Press.
13. Jacobs, J. (1999). Informational autonomy. In Peter Bosch & Rob van der Sandt (eds.), *Focus: linguistic, cognitive, and computational perspectives*, 56–81. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
14. Journal Kyaw Ma Ma Lay. (1957). *Thuema* [She]. Yangon: Shwe Lin Yone.

© 2022 Global Journals

15. Lae Twin Thar Saw Chit. (2004). *Kyanoramonnzonnkyanor* [The person I hate most is me]. http://www.myanmar bookshop.com/MyanmarBooks/BookDetails/19951. (accessed 17 April 2020)
16. Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (1995). *Lexicogrammatical cartography: English systems.* Tokyo: International Language Sciences Publishers.
17. Min Yu Wai. (1999). *Thonnsetshit* [38 Welfare Tales], 3rd edn. Yangon: Mingala Yaungche.
18. Ozerov, P. (2014). *The system of information packaging in colloquial Burmese.* MA Thesis. Bundoora: La Trobe University.
19. Rattanapitak, A. (2009). An analysis of textual meaning in some selected Burmese religious tales. *Journal of Language and Culture* 28(2): 57-88.
20. Steiner, E., & Teich, E. (2004). Metafunctional profile of the grammar of German. In Alice Caffarel, James Robert Martin & Christian Matthias Ingemar Martin Matthiessen (eds.), *Language typology: A functional perspective,* 139–184. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
21. Teruya, K. (2004). Metafunctional profile of the grammar of Japanese. In Alice Caffarel, James Robert Martin & Christian Matthias Ingemar Martin Matthiessen (eds.), *Language typology: A functional perspective*, 185–254. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
22. Thompson, G. (2004/2008). *Introducing functional grammar,* 2nd edn. London: Hodder Arnold/Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.

© 2022 Global Journals