An analysis of textual meaning
in some selected Burmese religious tales[*]
การวิเคราะห์หน้าที่ทางความหมายจากความสัมพันธ์ของข้อความในนิทานศาสนาภาษาพม่า

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate textual resources in some selected Burmese religious tales by using a Systemic Functional Grammar approach focusing on the Theme system. In Burmese, the Theme system consists of Theme choices, Theme selection, and Theme types. There are textual, interpersonal and topical Themes which can be chosen as a point of departure of the clause. Textual elements which function to connect the meaning of the clauses are found in Theme position, while those which function to link simple clauses into a clause complex appear in Rheme. Therefore, the profiles of textual Theme in Burmese include only the textual elements which appear in the Theme position but do not cover the other which appear in Rheme position. Topical Theme can be either marked or unmarked. Unmarked Theme is the most selected Theme, functioning as the participants of the tales whose story is developed through them. Most of the instances of marked Theme are temporal and spatial circumstances which function to set the scene of the tales. Marked Themes in Burmese, which is an SOV language, are the effects of moving focused elements, to pre-verbal position. Theme can be presented either in single or multiple types. The realization of Theme system in textual meaning reflects some of the characteristics of both Burmese and narrative discourse.

Keywords: Burmese, Systemic Functional Grammar, textual metafunction, religious tale

บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษานี้ มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาหน้าที่ของการแสดงความหมายจาก
ความสัมพันธ์ของข้อความในนิทานศาสนาภาษาพม่าโดยใช้ทฤษฎีไวยากรณ์ระบบและ
หน้าที่ ซึ่งเน้นศึกษาเฉพาะระบบข้อความหลัก (Theme system) ผลการศึกษาพบว่าระบบ
ข้อความหลักในภาษาพม่าประกอบด้วย ตัวเลือกข้อความหลัก (Theme choices) การเลือก
ข้อความหลัก (Theme selection) และ ประเภทข้อความหลัก (Theme types) โดย ข้อความ
หลัก (Theme) ที่ปรากฏในตำแหน่งจุดเริ่มต้นของประโยค คือ textual Themes, interpersonal
Themes และ topical Themes ในภาษาพม่า หน่วยเชื่อมที่ทำหน้าที่เชื่อมโยงความหมายของ
ประโยคปรากฏในตำแหน่งของ Theme ในขณะที่หน่วยเชื่อมที่ทำหน้าที่เชื่อมประโยคความ
เดียวให้เป็นประโยคซับซ้อนปรากฏในตำแหน่งของ Rheme ดังนั้น ภาพของ textual Theme
ในภาษาพม่าครอบคลุมเพียงหน่วยเชื่อมที่ปรากฏในตำแหน่งของ Theme หรือตำแหน่งต้น
ประโยคเท่านั้น โดยไม่รวมถึงหน่วยเชื่อมที่ปรากฏในตำแหน่งของ Rheme หรือตำแหน่งท้าย
ประโยค สำหรับ topical Theme ที่พบในการศึกษานี้ ปรากฏทั้งในฐานะที่เป็น marked และ
unmarked จากข้อมูล unmarked Themes ถูกเลือกมากที่สุดและเป็นตัวละครผู้ดำเนินเรื่องของ
นิทาน ส่วน marked Themes นั้น มักเป็นหน่วยที่แสดงเวลาและสถานที่ซึ่งเป็นฉากของนิทาน
การปรากฏของ marked Themes ในภาษาพม่าซึ่งเป็นภาษาที่มีโครงสร้างประโยคเป็นแบบ
ประธาน-กรรม-กริยา นั้นเป็นผลมาจากการย้ายหน่วยที่ถูกเน้นของประโยคไปไว้ในตำแหน่ง
หน้าและติดกริยา นอกจากนี้ Theme ยังสามารถปรากฏทั้งในแบบเดี่ยวและแบบที่สามารถ
ปรากฏร่วมกันได้ ระบบโครงสร้างแสดงข้อความหลักในการแสดงความหมายจาก
ความสัมพันธ์ในข้อความสะท้อนให้เห็นลักษณะบางอย่างของทั้งภาษาพม่าและตัวบท
ประเภทเรื่องเล่า

คำสำคัญ: ภาษาพม่า, ทฤษฎีไวยากรณ์ระบบและหน้าที่, หน้าที่แสดงความหมายจาก
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1. Introduction

This study aims to explore the textual meaning, particularly, the Theme system and its realizations in Burmese religious tales by using Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG). SFG focuses on the development of grammatical systems as a means for people to interact with each other (Martin, Matthiessen & Painter, 1997: 1). Language which we use in interaction is functionally diversified in different modes of meaning: construing our experience, establishing or maintaining relationship between participants and organizing the messages. In SFG, these three meanings are called ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions respectively. Additionally, analyzing Burmese tales by using SFG provides more information about the systemic functional descriptions of other languages than those previously studied, such as English, German, Japanese, Tagalog, Chinese, Vietnamese (Caffarel, Martin & Matthiessen, 2003), and contributes to the understanding of Burmese text patterns. It is also a resource for anyone who is interested in Burmese.

Although there are many studies on Burmese, studies on Burmese discourse are very rare. The study on Topicalization in Burmese expository discourse by Hopple (2005) seemes to be the first one. She examined only one text, 'National Day', and reported that the National Day text follows the typical discourse units proposed as universal for Expository text described by Longacre (Hopple, 2005: 177). She also described the functions of the three postpositional particles, သည် /θì/, က /ka̰/ and ကို /kò/, in the text which function in different meanings. Another study related to Burmese discourse is the study on discourse particles in Burmese by San San Hnin Tun (2005) which is a corpus-based approach within the framework of discourse analysis. The discourse features of two particles, လည်း /lέ/, and ပေါ့ /pɔ̰/, were examined. The use of these particles is found to be context-dependent, topic-sensitive, and genre-specific. Since there are few studies on Burmese discourse, it is hoped that this present study might be useful for further studies on Burmese discourse, particularly, by using SFG.

This paper will report the results of the investigation of some Burmese religious tales. After selecting the data for the analysis as shown in the data selection

part, some characteristics of Burmese will be presented as a background to Burmese. Then, the system of Theme will be presented. In this part, Theme choices, Theme selections and Theme types found in this study will be described in order to show the organization of Burmese religious tales.

2. Data Selection

The data for this study have been selected from five Burmese religious tales from the book titled "*38 Welfare Tales* (၃၈ ဖြာမင်္ဂလာပုံပင်များ)" which contains 38 stories about Buddhist teachings. All the tales in this book are derived from various sources which the author, Min Yu Way, has rewritten in his own style for easier reading and understanding. All tales aim to encourage people in making merit. Min Yu Way (1999: 185) points out, about practicing welfares, that practicing and following the Buddhist teachings will lead to having peace and good life in the secular world, to gain morality, to be saved from any dangers, to have prosperity, to succeed and so on. Five tales were selected and then segmented into clause complexes and clause simplexes. The embedded clauses were extracted out of the main clauses in order to examine how they were connected. There are 252 clause complexes and 466 clause simplexes for analyzing as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of clauses in five tales

Tales			Clause complexes	Clause simplexes
T. 1 ပန်းပဲလုလင်	/bəbɛ́lu̩lìɴ/	'The young blacksmith'	65	128
T. 2 သုဇာတာ၏ သစ္စာ	/θṵzàtà?i̩θi?sà/	'The royalty of Thuzata'	48	101
T. 3 မာဃလုလင်	/màga̩lu̩lìɴ/	'The young Maga'	59	99
T. 4 စံပြလုလင်	/sàɴpja̩lu̩lìɴ/	'Model of the young man'	32	44
T. 5 ဥဂ္ဂသေန	/?a̩ga̩θèna̩/	'Aggathena'	48	94
Total			**252**	**466**

3. Some Characteristics of Burmese

Before showing the results of the investigation of some types of Burmese textual meaning, it will be useful to note some characteristics of Burmese as a

background to an understanding of Burmese. Burmese belongs to the Burmish sub-branch of the Lolo-Burmese branch of the Tibeto-Burman language family (Wheatley, 1987: 834). There are two different styles of Burmese; "Colloquial" which is used for informal talking, and "Literary" which is used for formal writing (Okell, 1994). These two styles mostly differ in vocabulary, especially the suffixes or words attached to nouns and verbs to convey meanings like 'of', 'to', 'at' and so on. The data in this study is of a literary style, even in the reported speech sentences.

As Okell and Allot (2001: vii) point out "almost all the grammatical information in a Burmese sentence– that is, the relations between constituents of the sentence and between one sentence and the next– is conveyed by means of 'particles'." The particles or suffixes are attached to nouns and verbs and carry different meanings such as 'if', 'for', 'because' and so on. Pe Muang Tin (1956: 193) also notes that Burmese nouns and verbs need the help of suffixes or particles[1] to show grammatical relation as shown in Example 1.

Example 1. ခွေးသည် ကြောင်ကို ကိုက်၏။
k^hwé-θì   tɕaùɴ-gò   kaiʔ-ʔì̠
dog-Suf.   cat- Suf.   bite -Suf.   'The dog bites the cat.'

(adapted from Pe Maung Tin, 1956)

The suffix သည် /θì/ shows that ခွေး / k^hwé/ 'dog' is the subject, the suffix ကို /gò/ shows that ကြောင် /tɕaùɴ/ 'cat' is the object and the suffix ၏ /ʔì̠/ shows that ကိုက် /kaiʔ/ 'bite' is the verb of the sentence. There are also other suffixes or particles attached to nouns in Burmese with such functions as locative suffix, ablative suffix, instrumentive suffix, and so on.

A descriptive adjective may be found by putting a verb directly after a noun (2 a.), or the verb may be put before the noun with a relative element သော /θɔ́/ which is a variant of the verb-suffix သည် /θì/ (2 b.):

Example 2.   a.   လူ   ဆိုး   b.   ဆိုး –   သော   လူ

               lù   sʰó   sʰó -   θɔ́   lù

               man   bad   bad -   Rel.   man

               'bad   man'   'the man that is bad.'

<div align="right">(adapted fromPe Maung Tin, 1956)</div>

The form of the descriptive adjective in (2b.) is similar to an adjectival clause which is also placed သော /θɔ́/ before the noun. A clause with a relative pronoun is turned into an adjectival clause. Pe Maung Tin (1956: 197) says that "we would not know precisely what is being described until we come to the end of the last clause", because a descriptive clause precedes the noun described which is in contrast to English.

Example 3.

သည်ရွာမှာ   ကျွမ်းကျင်– **သော**– ပန်းပဲသမား– များ   နေထိုင်–သည်။

θì jwà m̥à   tɕùNtɕìN-   *θɔ́*-   bəbɛ́θəmà-   mjà   nétʰáiN-θí

This village at   skillful -   ***Rel.***-   blacksmith-   Plu.   to live -Sent.Suf.

                          relative Pronoun

'The blacksmiths **who** are skillful live in this village.'   (T. 1)

Burmese is an SOV language. It displays most of the implicational universals proposed by Greenberg (1996) for the SOV language group, i.e. postpositional, the adjective follows the noun, no alternative basic order (only OSV), all adverbial modifiers of the verb precede the verb, and so on.

The study of Burmese syntax by Artnonla (2003) reported that a Burmese clause can be described as consisting of nuclear: Subject, Indirect object, Direct object, and Verb, and peripheral elements: Temporal, Location, Manner, Instrument, Beneficiary, Accompanying actor/recipient and Final particle. Except for the Final particle, the other elements precede the Verb and their positions are changeable for emphasis. Simpson and Watkins (2005: 32) proposed the neutral surface word order in Burmese:

      Subj.   Adv./PP$_{(time/place)}$ IO   DO   V .

Their experiment with the focused element in Burmese proved that the focused element is placed immediately before the verb (Simpson & Watkins, 2005). A greater information focus is given to the elements placed in position next to the verb, leftwards (Hopple, 2005). It can be said that in many languages, the other elements, such as Object, are placed at the beginning of the clause for emphasis, but not in Burmese. Pe Maung Tin (1956: 193) contends that the object is placed at the beginning of the clause because the subject has gone over to the side of the verb. Example 4 shows that the Subject is placed before the verb for emphasis.

Example 4.   Subject focus in response of the question 'Who helped you?'

ကျွန်တော့်–ကို   *ဂျွန်–က*   ကူညီ–တာ–ပါ။

tɕənɔ̣-kò   dʑùN-kạ   kừɲì-dà-bà

I-Obj.   ***John-Subj.***   help-REAL^{NOM}-Pol.

'***John*** helped me.'

(adapted from Simpson & Watkins, 2005)

From Example 4, the Subject is the focus element 'John' because it is the answer to the question 'Who helped you?' which asked about the person who did the action of helping. The order of this sentence is OSV. When the object is the focus element, it is also placed in the pre-verbal position as shown in Example 5.

Example 5.   Object focus in response of the question 'What did John buy?'

ဂျွန်   ***DVD-ကို***   ဝယ်–တာ။

dʑùN   dìbìdì-gò   wɛ́-dà

John   ***DVD-Obj.***   buy- REAL^{NOM}

'John bought a ***DVD.***'

(adapted from Simpson & Watkins, 2005)

As for the clause complex in Burmese, to combine clauses using a conjunction, the conjunction will be attached at the end of the dependent clause. A comparison between English and Burmese can be seen in Example 6.

Example 6.

    1. English   a)   I did not go to school   (independent clause)

                b)   ***because*** I was sick.   (dependent clause)

    2. Burmese   a)   ကျွန်မ – နေမကောင်း – *သောကြောင့်* (dependent clause)

                    tɕəm̱ - nèməkáuɴ   - *θɔ́tɕau̱ɴ*

                    I   - sick   **- *because***

               b)   ကျောင်း –မ – သွား – ပါ။   (independent clause)

                    tɕaúɴ -mə - θwá - bà

                    school -not - go   - polite Marker

        Both clause 1 and 2, in Example 6, are the combination of two clauses; *'I did not go to school'* and *'I was sick'* connected by a conjunction 'because'. Clause 2 a) shows that သောကြောင့် /θɔ́tɕau̱ɴ/ 'because' was attached at the end of the dependent clause ကျွန်မ နေမကောင်း /tɕəm̱-nèməkáuɴ/ 'I was sick', while in sentence 1 b), it was put at the beginning of the dependent clause 'I was sick'.

        An interesting thing about Burmese syntax is the tendency to omit the Subject. This is an aerial feature for Southeast Asia. When the Subject of a sentence is also the Subject of a number of following sentences, it is generally mentioned only in the first sentence and omitted in the following sentences (Pe Maung Tin, 1956: 198). Sometimes, when the clauses are linked by a conjunction, the Object of the preceding clause is picked to be the Subject of the following clause. In this case, the Subject can be omitted. However, the context will help in interpreting the meaning of the clause as shown in Example 7.

Example 7.

အခါတပါး   *မောရိယပြည်–ကို*   ရန်သူတပါး   နှိပ်စက်–လတုံ–၍

ʔəkʰàtəpá   mɔɾi̱japjì-gò   jàɴθùtəpá   ŋei̱ʔsɛʔ- la̱tòuɴ-jwe̱

sometime in the past *Morija state-Obj.*   enemy(Subj.)   torture- Emp.-Conj.(then)

     ø   ပျက်–ခဲ့၏ ။

          pjɛʔ-kʰɛ̱ʔi̱

(Morija state) destroy-Sent.Suf.

'Sometime in the past, the enemy tortured Morija state, then *(ø = Morija state)* was destroyed.'

(adapted from Pe Maung Tin, 1961)

4. A Brief Description of Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG)

Systemic Functional Grammar was chosen as the theoretical framework for this study. Within this framework, language is viewed as a resource for making meaning and used to construe meaning. There are three main functions of language: ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions[2] which simultaneously occur in the text (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

The ideational metafunction uses language to represent experience, and the interpersonal metafunction uses language to encode intersection, ideas about obligation and inclination or our attitudes. The textual metafunction uses language to organize our experiential and interpersonal meanings into a coherent whole (Butt, Fahey, Feez, Spinks & Yallop, 2000).

This study explored only the textual metafunction which views clause as message and shows how text is organized. Although, there are two key systems expressing textual meaning in the clause, the system of Theme and the system of Information structure (Eggins, 2004: 298), and this study focuses on the Theme system only.

Broadly, Theme is viewed as being of two types: 'matter' and 'place'. The former is what is being talk about, while the latter is the point of departure of the message (Thompson, 2007: 677). However, in SFG, the main definition of Theme is the point of departure of the clause (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 64). A clause consists of a Theme accompanied by a Rheme. In other words, Theme is the point of departure of the clause and the rest of the clause is Rheme.

5. The System of Theme in Burmese Religious Tales

The system of Theme is the realization of the textual metafunction of language, which shows how text is organized or the organization of experiential and interpersonal meanings into a linear and coherent whole (Butt et al., 2000: 134). Theme system consists of Theme choices, Theme selections and Theme types which will be discussed in the following sections. The Theme is the element which the speaker or the writer uses to signal what the message is about, to signpost the development of the texts, and to give the ground of the message. The realization of the THEME system is **Theme ^ Rheme** (i.e. Theme followed by Rheme).

5.1 Theme Choices

There are three elements of clause structure that can function as Theme: topical (or experiential), interpersonal and textual, which reflect the three dimensional metafunctions of the clause (Eggins, 2004: 301). Therefore, there are three kinds of Theme: topical, interpersonal and textual. The topical Theme contains one of the experiential elements, which are participant, circumstance or process. The interpersonal Theme is the element which functions as interpersonal meaning, and the textual Theme is the element which functions as textual meaning. The topical Theme is obligatory, but the other two are optional and usually precede the topical Theme (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

In this study all three types of Theme are found. Each type of Theme provides linguistic resources to construe meaning in different ways.

5.1.1 Textual Theme

The textual Theme functions to connect the message of the clause with a neighboring clause. In this study, there are three types of textual elements which function as Theme: conjunctive Adjuncts, Conjunctions and Continuatives.

Conjunctive Adjuncts function to relate the clause to preceding text. In English, it can be an adverbial group or a prepositional phrase (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 81). There were 12 conjunctive Adjuncts found in this study, such as သို့ရာတွင် /θ̥ʛjàtwìɴ/ 'however', and ထို့ကြောင့် /tʰ̥ʛtɕaṵɴ/ 'so'.

Example 8. Conjunctive Adjunct as Textual Theme

T.4	Theme			Rheme
	textual: Conj. Adjunct	inter.: Vocative	topical	
21		'ဆရာ၊ sʰəjà 'teacher,	အကျွန်ုပ်-သည် ʔətɕənouʔ-θì I- Subj.	ဆရာ -၏ -သမီး -ပျို -ကို sʰəjà -ʔḭ -θəmí -pjò -gò teacher -of -daughter -young -Obj. စုံမက် -ပါ -သည်။ soùɴmɛʔ -bà -θì love -Pol. -sent.Suf.
22	သို့ရာတွင် θ̱ɡ̱jàtwìɴ however		ø = I	အိမ်-မှ အဝတ် -တန်ဆာ-တို့-ကို-မှ ʔeìɴ-m̱a ʔəwuʔ -tàɴsʰà -ḏo-kò-mù house-Post. cloth-ornament -Plu.-Obj. -Emp.(from). ခိုး -ယူ-ခြင်း မ -ပြု-လို-ပါ။ kʰó-jù-tɕʰíɴ mə -pj̱u-lò-bà steal-take-Nom. Neg. -do-want-Pol.
21. 'Teacher, I love your daughter.				
22. *However*, (I) don't want to steal anything from my house.'				

Example 8, သို့ရာတွင် /θ̱ɡ̱jàtwìɴ/ 'however' links clause 21 to clause 22. It derives from the word သို့ /θ̱ɡ̱/ then attaches to noun suffixes ရာတွင်/jàtwìɴ/ which are used to link sentences in the connected discourse (Okell & Allott, 2001: 244).

Conjunctions: by definition, Conjunction is the element used to link or combine a clause to another clause structurally. It also sets up a relationship of expansion or projection of the clause, semantically (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 81). In Burmese, most of such elements appear in Rheme. However, three conjunctions found in this study appear in Theme. But, they serve to connect the meaning of two clauses, not link them to the clause. They are လည်း /lέ/ 'also',

မူ /mù/ 'however', and ကား /ká/ 'but'. These conjunctions, however, immediately follow the topical Theme (as well as conjunctions ก็ /kɔ³/, จึง /cɔŋ¹/, in Thai (Patpong, 2002)). The conjunction လည်း /lέ/ functions in two ways, either extending or enhancing the meaning of the clause, while the other two conjunctions function as enhancing conjunction. The following example shows the extending function of လည်း /lέ/.

Example 9. Extending conjunction/ additive

T.3	Theme			Rheme
	inter: Vocative	topical: verbal group	textual: Conjunction	
31	အဆွေ–တို့ ʔəsʰwè-dɔ̰ friend-Plu.	မ–ကြောက်–ကြ–လင့်॥ mə-tɕauʔ-tɕa̰-li̱N Neg.-afraid-Plu.-Suf.		-
32		ဒေါသ dɔ́θa̰ anger	လည်း lέ also	မ–ထွက် –ကြ–နှင့်॥ mə-tʰwɛʔ-tɕa̰-n̥i̱N neg.-leave-Plu.-Neg.
31. Friends, don't be afraid.			32. *Also*, don't be angry.	

In Example 9, when the main participant and his friends were about to be killed, he told his friends not to be afraid in clause 31. Additionally, he also told them not to be angry in clause 32 by using the conjunction လည်း /lέ/.

Notably, textual elements which function to connect simple clauses to a clause complex appear in Rheme, while textual elements which function to connect the meaning of the clause with the previous clause are the point of departure. Textual elements which appear in Rheme are conjunctions, relative elements, and clause binders. It is a characteristic of Burmese, a Verb-final language, that some textual elements will be attached at the end of dependent clause as already previewed in Section 3.

Continuative: "A continuative is the element that functions to signal a move in the discourse: a response in dialogue or a new move to the next point if the same speaker is continuing" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 81). There is only one

instance of using a Continuative in these Burmese religious tales. It occurs in a conversation. The speaker uses a continuative ဟယ် /hɛ̀/ to signal listeners that he will move to the next point, he then uses a vocative to draw the attention of listeners to the point he wants to make as shown in Example 10.

Example 10. Continuative as textual Theme and Conjunction in Rheme

T.2	Theme			Rheme
	textual: Continu.	inter: Vocative	topical	
45.2	ဟယ် *hɛ̀* *well*	မှူးမတ် – ပြည်သူ–တို့၊ m̥úmaʔ -pjìθù -dǫ counselor-people -Plu.,	[[45.3]] မင်း-ကို mɪ́N-gò king-Obj.	ငါ ဖယ်ရှား –ရွေ့... ŋà pʰɛ̀ʃá -jwḛ,… I remove -*Conj.* *(then),...*
45.3			မ –တရား mə -təjá Neg. -fair	သော θɔ́ -Rel
'*Well*, counselors, people, I have removed the king [[who was unjust]], *then…*'				

In Example 10, when the God Indra knew that the bad king maligned a man and was about to kill him because he wanted to take his wife, he came to the city to punish that king. After that, Indra spoke to all the people by starting with a Continuative ဟယ် /hɛ̀/ to signal that he was going to say another thing. Its meaning is similar to the word 'well' which functions as a Continuative in English.

5.1.2 Interpersonal Theme

The interpersonal meaning realizes a relation between participants in an interaction. It views the clause as an exchange. This is also the function of the interpersonal part of the Theme. The interpersonal Theme shows the relationship between the interactants, their attitudes and judgments to the content of the message.

In this data, only Vocative functions as an interpersonal Theme. They only occur in conversation. A Vocative is any item used to identify the person who is addressed, to call for attention, to mark the interpersonal relationship (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 134), such as names, kinship terms, and status terms. There are

10 instances of Vocatives found in this study. The realizations of Vocatives in this study are kinship terms such as ဖခင် /pʰa̰kʰìN/ 'father', status term ဆရာ /sʰəjà/ 'teacher' and nominal groups such as အဆွေ /ʔəsʰwè/ 'friend'. These elements may be attached by a politeness markers, plural markers or adjectives. Most of the vocatives used in Burmese religious tales are kinship terms. In Burmese society, kinship terms can be used to address a person who is not a real kin of the speaker as in Thai.

Example 11. Vocative with politeness marker as interpersonal Theme

T. 1	Theme		Rheme	
	inter: Vocative + Pol. Mk.	topical		
25.1	ʼမောင်ကြီး-ရှင် ၊ maùNdʑí-ʃìN elder brother- Pol.,	ø= you	[[25.2]] မ-သိ-ပါ-သလော॥ mə-θḭ-bà-θəlɔ́ Neg.-know-Pol.-QW.	
25.2		သည်-ရွာ-သည် θì-jwà-θì this-village-Subj.	ပန်းပဲ-ရွာ bəbɛ́-jwà blacksmith -village	ဖြစ်-သည်-ကို pʰjiʔ-θì-gò be-sent.Suf.-Obj.
'*Brother,* don't you know [[this is a blacksmith's village]]'				

Example 11 shows the interpersonal Theme, which is realized by a Vocative, မောင်ကြီး /maùNdʑí/ 'elder brother' in clause 25.1, accompanying a politeness particle ရှင် /ʃìN/ which, normally, is used by a female speaker when talking with a senior or a person who is higher in status. In this example, the speaker used this particle with a stranger in order to show respect.

5.1.3 Topical Theme

Butt et al. (2000: 136) state that "Because the Theme is the starting point from which experiences are unfolded in a clause, it must include the whole of the first item in the experiential meanings." Therefore, the topical Theme is mapped onto a role in the transitivity structure of the clause: participant (Subject, Complement), circumstance or process.

(a) Subject as Theme

The participant, which is a topical Theme, functions as a Subject of the clause. Its realization can be a nominal group with or without an embedded clause. In Burmese, the Subject can be marked or not marked by a particle to indicate the Subject of the clause: သည် /θì/, က /kạ/, or ဟာ /hà/. Normally, သည် /θì/ is used to mark Subject or Topic in written style, while က /kạ/ and ဟာ /hà/ are used in spoken style. က /kạ/ is used for emphasis or contrast, or to distinguish the agent from the patient, and ဟာ /hà/ is used in more various proposes - to emphasize, to suggest, to mark a pause while the speaker finds the right words (Okell & Allott, 2001). Example 12 shows a topical Theme which is realized by a nominal group functioning as a Subject of the clause.

Example 12. Nominal group with Subject marker

T.4	topical Theme			Rheme		
	nominal gp.					
13	*တပည့်*	*-တို့*	*-သည်*	ဆရာ-ကြီး-၏	သမီး-က	စုံမက်-ကြ-သည်॥
	təbɛ	*-dọ*	*-θì*	sʰəjà-dʑí-ʔi	θəmí-gò	soùNmɛʔ-tɕạ-θì
	pupil	*- Plu.*	*-Subj.*	teacher-big-of	daughter-Obj.	love-Plu.-sent.Suf.
'The pupils love the daughter of the great teacher.'						

A nominal group which functions as a Subject of the clause in Example 12 is a combination of a noun တပည့် /təbɛ/ 'pupil' followed by a plural suffix တို့ /dọ/ and a Subject marker သည် /θì/. Some Subject elements are marked by particles, such as တွင် /twìN/, ၌ /ṇaiʔ/, မှာ /m̥à/, which are normally used to indicate time or place in Burmese. They are called *Postpositions* since they function like prepositions in English but have a different position in the phrase.

Ex*ample 13*. Nominal group with postposition as topical Theme

T.4	topical Theme nominal gp. + Post.	Rheme			
5.1	*ဆရာ-ကြီး-တွင်* sʰəjà-dʑí-*dwìN* *teacher-big-**Post.***	[[5.2]] သမီး- ပျို-ကလေး; θəmi-pjò-kəlé daughter-young-litle	 tə-ʔú one classs.	 ʃḭ-θì have-sent.	 Suf.
5.2	လှပ-ယဉ်ကျေး l̥a̰pa̰-jìNdʑé beautiful- polite	သော -θɔ́ - Rel. Pron.			
'*The great teacher* has a young daughter [[who is beautiful and polite]].'					

The realization of the topical Theme in Example 13 is a nominal group ဆရာကြီး /sʰəjàdʑí/ 'great teacher' with a postposition တွင် /twìN/. The process of the clause is a relational process ရှိ /ʃḭ/ 'to have', which carries a sense of possession. According to Okell and Allott (2001: 97), the postposition တွင် /twìN/ is a noun marker meaning 'in, at, on, among' equivalent to Pali locative case meaning 'among'. Since this type of particle (တွင် /twìN/, ၌ /n̥aiʔ/, မှာ /m̥à/) is usually used to indicate the place and time, when they mark Subject of the clause, which is the human, it can be said that the Subject is metaphorically viewed as a container with something in it.

(b) Process as Theme

Processes which appear in the starting point of the clauses are identified as Theme in SFG. In this study, they were found in imperative clauses and in embedded clauses.

Imperative clause is normally used to get the other person to carry out an action. To express the required action, the process or the predicate is usually placed in the first position of the clause. The addressee is understood to be the person who will carry out that action, and is naturally omitted in the clause (Thompson, 2004: 147-148).

In this study, there are five of eight imperative clauses which begin with the process, and the rest begin with the Object. Burmese imperative clause may

be marked by a particle indicating an imperative sense, for example ပါ /bà/, or လော့ /lɔ̰/ as shown in Example 14, or just only a verb without any particle.

Example 14. Process in imperative clause as Theme

| T.5 | Theme | Rheme |
	unmarked topical: process in imp. cl.	
44.2	‘လာ–လော့ *là-lɔ̰* *‘come-Part. (imperative sense)*	ရဟန်း’ ဟု jəháɴ hṵ monk’ binder
‘Come on, the monk.’		

      In order to examine how the clauses are linked, the selected texts are segmented into simple clauses. Also, the embedded (or relative) clauses are extracted out of the main clauses to examine the relationship between the embedded clause and the noun it modifies. An embedded clause in Burmese functions to identify the noun and precedes the noun modified (Pe Maung Tin, 1956). It has the typical structure of an OV language in that when a relative clause comes before a noun, it is modified as observed in Japanese (Kuno, 1981). There were 13 embedded clauses which begin with a verbal group, found in this study. Most of them are relational processes, while some are material processes. Relational process shows the relationship between two participants, or characterizes/identifies things, acts, and facts (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 210-214).

Example 15. Relational process in embedded clause as Theme

T.1	topical Theme process in emb. cl.	Rheme		
13.1	သူ-သည် θù-θì he-Subj.	[[13.2]] သံ-ဖြင့်[[13.3]] θàɴ-pʰjɪ̰ɴ iron-by	အပ်-တစ်-ချောင်း-ကို ʔaʔ-tə-tɕʰaúɴ-gò needle-one-Class.-Obj.	ပြုလုပ်-သည်॥ pjṵlouʔ-θì make-sent.Suf.
13.2	အလွန် ကောင်း ʔəloùɴ gaúɴ very good	သော θɔ́ -Rel. (= iron)		
13.3	အလွန် သေးငယ် ʔəloùɴ θéŋɛ̀ very small	သော θɔ́ -Rel. (= needle)		
'He makes a needle [[which *is very small*]] by the iron [[which *is very good*]]'				

    Processes in 13.2 and 13.3 (Example 15) would be glossed as adjectives in English. In Burmese, this kind of process is interpreted as a relational process which functions to describe or to identify the subject of the clause. They are adjectival verbs. The example above shows that 13.2 and 13.3 begin with the verbal group which consists of an adverb (very) followed by an adjectival verb (be good, be small), and are attached by a relative pronoun သော /θɔ́/, which is a noun attribute marker used to show the adjectival status of numerals and other adjectives (Okell & Allott , 2001: 240). Relative pronoun is a representative of the noun it modifies. In Example 15, relative pronoun သော /θɔ́/ represents a noun, 'iron' and 'needle' in clause 13.2 and 13.3 respectively. Such relative clauses indicate the attribute of the noun in clause 13.1 to show *how the iron is* and *how the needle is*.

    (c) Complement as Theme

    The word 'Complement' is used to label any nominal group not functioning as Subject. It covers what are 'Object' and 'Complement' in traditional grammar (Halliday & Matthiessen , 2004: 123). The complement which functions as Theme in the clause occurs in either declarative or imperative mood types. There are nine instances of complements in declarative clauses which are Theme. They are followed by their Subject and Predicate respectively. The imperative clause,

normally, starts with a verbal group, since Burmese is a verb-final language in which every constituent of the clause is placed before the verb. The object/ complement of the imperative clause must precede the verb. From this study, there are only three instances of complement of imperative clauses functioning as Theme.

Most complement Themes are realized by a nominal group with or without an object marker 'ကို' /kò/. These nominal groups can be either embedded or non-embedded. Example 16 shows a complement Theme which realized by a nominal group without an embedded clause. Example 17 shows the realization of complement Theme as an embedded noun group in imperative clause.

Example 16. Nominal group without embedded clause in declarative clause

T.5	topical Theme	Rheme		
	Complement			
15	*ထို-အဆို-ကို*	ဥဂ္ဂသေန-၏	မိဘ-များ-က	လက်-မ-ခံ-ပေ။
	t^hò-ʔəs^hò-gò	ʔagaθèna-ʔḭ	miba -mjá -ga̰	lɛʔ -mə -k^hàɴ -pè
	that word -Obj.	Aggathena-of	parent-Plu.-Subj.	accept-Neg.-accept -Emp.
'Aggathena's parents did not accept *these words*'				

Example 17. Nominal group with embedded clause in imperative clause

T.3	topical Theme		Subject	Rheme
	Complement			
35.1	[[35.2]] *ကောင်းမှု* *ကုသိုလ်* *နှင့်* *သီလ-ကို*			ဆင်ခြင်-ကြ။
	kaúɴmṵ *kṵθò* *ɲiɴ* *θìla̰-kò*			s^hìɴdzìɴ-dʑa̰
	good deed merit and moral-Obj.			consider-Plu.
35.2			ငါ-တို့	ပြု-ခဲ့-သော
			ŋà-do̰	pjṵ-k^hɛ-θɔ́
			I-Plu.	make-Asp.-Rel.
'Consider *moral and good deed* [[which we have done]].'				

Additionally, the realization of complement Theme can be a clause marked by an object marker. There is only one instance of this found in this study as shown in Example 18.

Example 18. Clausal complement Theme

T.1	topical Theme		Rheme
	Complement		
33	*[[သူ-တို့-နှစ်-ဦး*	*အချီအချ ပြော-နေ-သည်]]- ကို*	ပန်းပဲဆရာ -ကြီး
	θù-dɔ̰-n̥ə-ʔú	*ʔətɕʰìʔətɕʰ a̰ pjɔ́-nè-θì -gò*	bəbésʰəjà -dʑí
	[[he-Plu -two-Calss	*by turns talk-Aux.-sent.Suf.]]-Obj.*	blacksmith -big
	[['They are talking turn by turn.']]		ကြား-သွား-သည်။
			hear-Aux.-sent.Suf.
'The blacksmith great teacher overheard [[*they are talking turn by turn*]].'			

(d) Circumstantial Themes

There were five kinds of circumstantial Themes found in this study. These are Temporal circumstantial Theme, Spatial circumstantial Theme, Manner circumstantial Theme, Cause circumstantial Theme, and Role circumstantial Theme. The Temporal circumstantial Theme was the most frequently found in this study followed by Spatial, Manner, Cause, and Role circumstantial Theme respectively.

Most Themes are realized by nominal groups with or without postpositions which indicate time, place, manner, cause, and role concerning the events in the tales. In all these texts, they start the story by expressing the time when the event took place. This is a discourse feature of opening the story world. Example 19 shows a Temporal circumstantial Theme which is realized by a nominal group with postposition marker.

Example 19. Temporal Theme

	topical Theme	Rheme
T.1	**temporal:** **nominal gp.+Post.**	**Rheme**
23	*ထို အချိန်-တွင်* *tʰòʔətɕʰeìɴ-dwìɴ* *that time-Post.*	ပန်းပဲဆရာ- ကြီး -၏-သမီး -ပျို-သည် bəbɛ́sʰəjà - dʑí -ʔi̠ -θəmí -pjò -θì blacksmith - big - of- daughter- young -Subj. ဖခင် ပန်းပဲဆရာ-ကြီး-ကို ယပ်ခတ်-ပေး-နေ-သည်॥ pʰa̠kʰìɴ bəbɛ́sʰəjà-dʑí-gò jaʔkʰaʔ-pé-nè-θì father blacksmith -big -Obj. fan-Aux.-Asp.-sent.Suf.
	'At that time, the great blacksmith's daughter was fanning for father.'	

There is also a combination of two circumstantial elements; Temporal circumstantial Theme followed by Spatial circumstantial Theme found in the first presentational sentence of each text to express the setting of the tale which is about when and where the story takes place as shown in the Example 20 below.

Example 20. Combination of Temporal and Spatial marked Theme

	Theme		Rheme
T.2	**temporal:** **nominal gp.**	**spatial:** **nominal gp.-Post.**	**Rheme**
1	*ရှေးသရောအခါ* *ʃéθəjɔ́ʔəkʰà* *Long time ago*	*ဗာရာဏသီ-ပြည်-ဝယ်* *bàrànəθì-pjì-wɛ̀* *Baranathi -State-Post.*	ဗြဟ္မဒတ်-မင်း-သည် မင်း-ပြု-၏॥ bjàmədaʔ-míɴ-θì míɴ-pju̠-ʔi̠ Brahmadat -king-Subj. king -make-Sent. Suf.
	'Long time ago, at Baranathi state*, Brahmadat was the king'*		

5.2. Theme Selection: Unmarked Topical and Marked Topical Themes

Theme selection is also concerned with the choice between unmarked and marked topical Theme. Applying the concept of Markedness from linguistics, by which the most expected, common and unmarkable case is called *unmarked*, while something that is unusual and should be noted is called *marked*, Theme Markedness depends on the choice of Mood. The element which typically occurs in the first

position of any Mood type is 'unmarked Theme', whereas, in the same Mood type, the other element placed in the first position for any reasons is 'marked Theme' (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Eggins, 2004). For example, in a declarative clause, the Subject is typically the element placed in the first position of the clause – it is 'unmarked Theme'. But if the Object is placed in the first position of a declarative clause, it would be considered a 'marked Theme'. In this study, Markedness of Theme is based on typical Burmese word order proposed by Simpson and Watkins (2005) as already presented in Section 3.

5.2.1 Unmarked Topical Themes

Typically, the unmarked Theme functions as the Subject in a declarative sentence. Some processes can be interpreted as unmarked topical Themes, especially, the process in an imperative clause. Additionally, this study also found that the process of embedded clauses can be unmarked topical Themes as well, especially relational processes, which characterizes and identifies things, acts, and facts, or shows the relationship between two participants.

Example 21. Relational embedded clause as unmarked Theme in embedded clause

T.3	topical Theme		Rheme		
	marked	**unmarked**			
25.1	ဤ၌တွင်	[[25.2]]ရွာစား-သည်	မာဃ	လုလင်-တို့	ပျက်စီး-ရန်
	ʔì dwìɴ	jwàsá θì	màgḁ	lṵlìɴ-dọ	pjɛʔsí-jàɴ
	at this point	headman-Subj.	Maga	young man-Plu.	destroy-Conj. (for)
25.2		ယုတ်မာ	သော		
		jouʔmà	θɔ́		
		despicable	Rel.		
25.3		ø= he	ကြံစည်–သည်။		
			tɕàɴsì -θì		
			plan-sent.Suf.		
'At this point, the village's leader [[who *is despicable*]] plans to destroy the young Maga.'					

A word ယုတ်မာ /jouʔmà/ 'despicable' in clause 25.2 might be translated as an adjective in other languages, but in Burmese, it is treated as a adjectival verb because it can be attached to a verb particle or sentence final suffix such as သည် /θì/, and ၏ /ʔi̠/. An adjectival verb is interpreted as a relational process because it identifies the subject of the clause.

In Burmese, like many other Southeast Asian languages such as Thai and Vietnamese, the unmarked topical Theme can be either explicit or implicit. In particular, when the clauses are linked, the subject of the following clause may be ellipsed. In this study, the ellipsed unmarked topical Theme is realized by either a zero Subject [ø] or an unidentified Subject [o]. The reader can refer to the Subject of the clause by considering the context or neighboring clauses which are connected by conjunctions. Example 22 shows the unmarked ellipsed topical Theme.

Example 22. Ellipsed unmarked topical Theme

| T.3 | Theme | | Rheme |
	marked	unmarked	
40.1	ထို-အကြောင်း-ကို thò-ʔətɕaúN-gò that - event-Obj.		မင်း - ကြီး ကြား-သော် míN-dʑí tɕá - θɔ́ King-big hear - Conj.(when)
40.2		*ø = they*	'ဆေး- စွမ်း - ကောင်း ရှိ-သောကြောင့် sʰé-súN-gaúN ʃi̠-θɔ́tɕau̠N medicine-quality-good have-Conj.(because)
40.3		*[o]*	ဖြစ်-တန်ရာ-၏' ဟု pʰjiʔ-tàN jà-ʔi̠ hṵ be-Suf.(may)- sent.Suf. cl.binder(that)
40.4		*ø = he (king)*	ဆို - ၍ sʰò -jwe̠ say - Conj.(then)

T.3	Theme		Rheme
	marked	unmarked	
40.5		ø = he (king)	မာဃ-လုလင်-တို့ ကိုယ်-တွင် màga̱-lu̱lìɴ-dọ kò-dwìɴ Maga-young man-Plu. body-Post. ရှာ-စေ-သည်။ ʃà-sè-θì search-order-sent.Suf.
41		[o]	မ-တွေ့။ mə-twẹ Neg.-meet.
(40) 'When the king heard this event, *(he)* said that '[it's] because *(they)* have good medicine', then *(he)* orders to search in Maga and friend's body. (41) '*[o]* did not found anything.'			

Typically, an imperative clause starts with a verb. If there is a complement in the imperative, the complement will be placed before a verb in verb-final languages such as Burmese. In this case, the complement will be interpreted as an unmarked Theme because it occurs regularly in the language. Also the complement of the relational or existential process in an embedded clause is interpreted as an unmarked topical Theme. As mentioned in Section 3, an embedded clause or relative clause in Burmese is placed before the noun modified. Therefore, the value or attribute of the relational process will precede the noun it modified as a nature of the language. Example 23 shows the complement in an imperative clause, and Example 24 shows the complement in the existential process as unmarked Theme.

Example 23. Complement in imperative clause as unmarked Theme

| T.1 | Theme | | Rheme |
---	inter.	topical unmarked	
35.2	အမောင်၊ ʔəmaùɴ brother	သင့်အပ်-ကို *θ i̯ɴʔaʔ-kò* *your needle-Obj.*	ပြ–ပါ’　ဟု pja̰ -pà　hṵ show-Request. 'that.'
35.3		ø=he (the great blacksmith)	ဆို–၏။ sʰò-ʔḭ say-sent.Suf.
'Brother, show your needle' said (the great blacksmith).			

Example 24. Complement in relational process as unmarked Theme

| T.1 | topical Theme | | Rheme |
---	marked	unmarked	
1.1	ရှေးသရောအခါ ʃéθəjɔ́ʔəkʰà Long time ago ရာဇဂြိုဟ်-မြို့တော်-၌ jàzədʑò-mjo̰dɔ̀-n̥aiʔ Yazajo-capital-Post		[[1.2]]　သူဌေး-သား　တစ်–ယောက် θətʰé-θá　　tə-jauʔ millionaire-son　one -Class. ရှိ-သည်။ ʃḭ - θ ì have-sent.Suf.
1.2		ဉ္ဂသေန - အမည် *ʔag̰aθèna̰ - ʔəmì* *Aggathena - name*	ရှိ-သော ʃḭ - θɔ́ have-Rel.
'Long time ago, at Yazajo city, there is a millionaire's son whose name is Aggathena.'			

5.2.2 Marked Topical Theme

By definition, a marked topical Theme is an element not functioning as the Subject of the clause. It can be an element which is the circumstance in the transitivity structure such as temporal, spatial, manner, cause, or role. Most marked Themes are realized by a nominal group with or without a postposition. The Temporal circumstance is the most selected marked topical Theme followed by

spatial, manner, cause and role, respectively. Example 25 below shows a Spatial circumstantial marked Theme with postposition.

Example 25. Spatial circumstantial Theme as marked Theme

		Theme	Rheme
T.1		**marked: spatial; nominal gp. with Post.**	**Rheme**
64		ထို-နေရာ-မှာ-ပင် *tʰò-nèjà-m̥à-pìɴ* *that -place-Post.-Emp.*	မိမိ-၏-သမီး-ပျို နှင့် *m̥im̥i-ʔḭ-θəmí-pjò n̥ḭɴ* *self-of-daughter-young with* လက်ထပ်ထိမ်းမြား -ပေး-လေ- သည်။ *lɛʔtʰaʔtʰeíɴmjá -pé-lè-θì* *marry -Aux.-Aux-sent.Suf.*
'At that place, (ø) lets (the young man) marry his daughter.'			

In addition, some objects of the clauses are interpreted as marked topical Themes when it is placed in the first position of the clause, before its Subject. In Burmese the object can be placed in the first position of the clause not for emphasizing it but it is the effect of the more emphatic element, such as Subject, is moved to the pre-verb position as already discussed in Section 3.
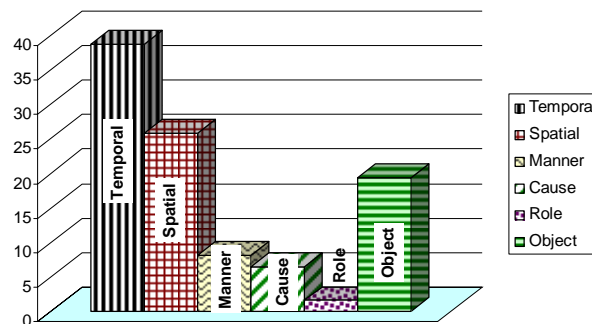

Figure 1. Marked Theme in Burmese religious tales

Figure 1 shows that temporal and spatial circumstantial Themes were the most selected. They were chosen to set the scene of the story. They illustrate time and place of the event in the tales.

In sum, unmarked Theme is the most selected in Burmese religious tales. Most of them are participants of the clauses which can be either ellipsed or non-ellipsed (see Figure 2). In this study, unmarked subject Themes are typically ellipsed; from a total 379 subjects, there are 213 ellipsed subjects and 6 unidentified subjects. As for marked Theme, there are two types: circumstantial and object. The object which is interpreted as marked Theme is the object which precedes the subject of the clause.
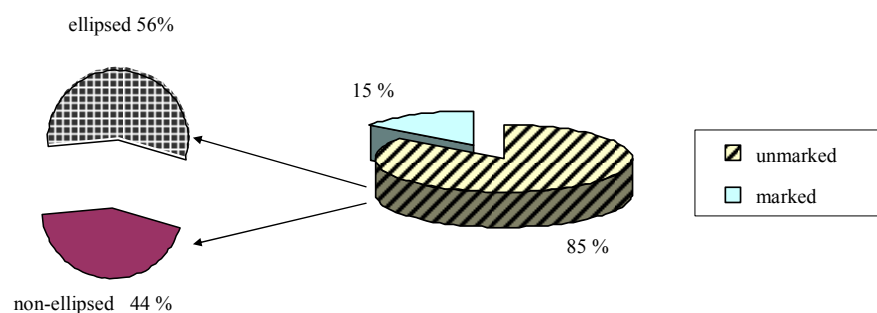
ellipsed 56%

15 %

unmarked

marked

85 %

non-ellipsed   44 %

Figure 2. Theme selection in Burmese religious tales

5.3 Theme Types

In each clause, there must be an obligatory topical Theme which can be marked or unmarked as discussed above. In some cases, there is a topical Theme accompanied by an interpersonal or a textual Theme. The Theme with topical Theme only is called *'a single Theme'*, while the Theme with two or more Thematic elements is called *'a multiple Theme'*. In this study, both single and multiple Themes were found.

Theme range in these Burmese religious tales consists of an obligatory topical Theme, which may be ellipsed, preceded by optional textual Theme and/or optional interpersonal Theme, or may be followed by a textual Theme. Example 26 shows a single Theme, while Example 27 shows a multiple Theme in Burmese religious tale which is a combination of a textual and a topical Theme.

Example 26. Single Theme

T.2	Theme	Rheme	
	topical		
27	မှူးမတ်- တို့-သည်	မကိုဋ်တော်-ကို	ရှာ-ကြ-သည်။
	m̥úmaʔ-dɔ̥-θi	məkòdɔ̀-gò	ʃà-tɕa̰-θì
	counselor-Plu.-Subj.	crown-Obj.	search for -Plu.-sent.Suf.
'The counselors searched for the crown.'			

Example 27. Multiple Theme

T.4	Theme		Rheme			
	textual	topical				
8	ထို့နောက်	သူ-သည်	တပည် - လုလင်	- တို့	-ကို	ခေါ်-သည်။
	tʰɔ̰nauʔ	θù-θì	təbɛ -lʉlìɴ	-dɔ̥	-kò	kʰɔ̀-θì
	After that	he-Subj.	pupil -young man	-Plu.	-Obj.	call-sent.Suf.
'After that, he called the young pupils.'						

Figure 3 below shows some textual resources used in making meaning of Burmese particularly in the religious tales. There are two systems which occur simultaneously. These are Theme type and Theme selection. The Theme element is the point of departure of the clause, and it is what the speaker/author wants to tell or the grounding of the message. It can be a single or multiple Themes. When it explains the experiential meaning, it can be either marked or unmarked. In this Burmese data, unmarked Theme is realized in either ellipsed or explicit form. As mentioned above, unmarked topical Theme is the most selected because the tales are moved and developed by its characters.
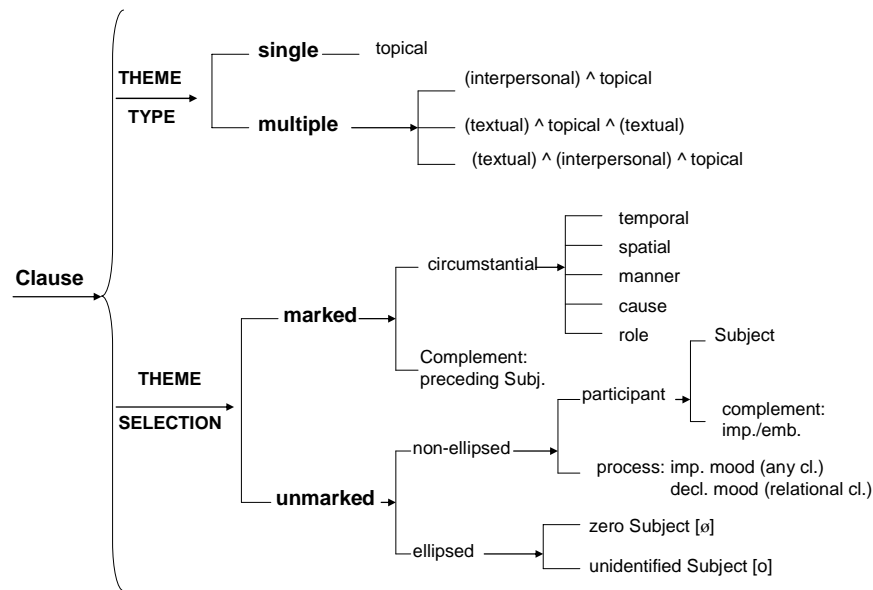
Figure 3. System network of Textual resources in Burmese religious tales

6. Conclusion

The realizations of textual meaning illustrate some of the characteristics of both Burmese language and narrative, especially in these tales. In order to organize text, textual Theme, interpersonal Theme and topical Theme are the choices selected to be the point of departure of the clause. However, it is also found that some elements in the clause which have the same function as textual Theme, but they are placed at the end of dependent clauses or in Rheme. Those elements are Conjunction, relative element and clause binder. This may be characteristic of Verb-final languages typology as in Burmese. Therefore, the profiles of textual Theme in Burmese include only the textual elements which occur at the point of departure, but do not cover the others which appear in Rheme.

Based on Theme selection, unmarked Theme is the most selected Theme in Burmese religious tales. More than half of unmarked topical Themes function as a Subject of the clauses. The Subjects in the clauses are the participants of the tales. This reflects the development of the tale which is developed by the characters

throughout the story. Typically, the Subject, often, is ellipsed from the clauses but the reader still understands by considering the context or the neighboring clauses which are connected by textual elements such as conjunctive Adjunct or Conjunctions. As for marked Theme, most of them are the circumstances of the clauses. Temporal circumstantial Theme is the most selected marked Theme followed by Spatial circumstantial Theme. The combination of Temporal and Spatial circumstance Themes serve an important function, in the placement stage of the tale's structure, to indicate the time when the story happened and the place where the event took place. Additionally, there is the object element identified as a marked topical Theme. Marked Theme in Burmese is the effect of moving the emphatic element, especially the Subject of the clause, to a pre-verb position, not for emphasis on the first element of the clause.

Since this study explored only textual meaning of the language and analyzed only one of various text types, the result may be just a small part of Burmese grammar and it is still not the system of the language as a whole. In order to explore Burmese grammar, an analysis of various text types and an analysis of interpersonal and ideational metafunction should be carried out.

Endnotes

1. In Pe Maung Tin's article the word "suffix" and "particle" are interchangeable and attached to noun or verb to covey the relation of elements in the clause.

2. According to Matthiessen and Halliday (1997: 45), '*metafunction*' is "The highly generalized functions language has evolved to serve and which are evidenced in its organization (and are thus intrinsic to language)" and there are three metafunctions: the ideational, the interpersonal, and the textual, while according to Halliday and Natthiessen (2004: 31), '*function*' means "purpose or way of using language."

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