

## **The Analysis of Theme and Rheme in Short Story of Sleeping Beauty with a Systemic Functional Approach**

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### **Abstract**

This paper is about theme and rheme in the text of short story as approach using a Functional Grammar. The aims of this study are to identify theme and rheme, to classify the types and components of theme and to describe the correlation both theme and text development. The method used in this research was qualitative method. The data were taken from a short story entitled Sleeping Beauty by Charles Perrault. The data were analyzed using some theories based on a Functional English Grammar. The findings of the research are there are two types of theme (Topical and Textual Theme) that could be found while Interpersonal theme couldn't be found in the data. Moreover, the components of theme in the category of textual theme are conjunctive adjunct, conjunctive, structural, continuative and conjunction. Meanwhile for topical theme, the components of theme are as subject and marked topical theme (adverbial as theme). To know the correlation theme and text development, the researcher has identified and classified the text of short story. Therefore, in the Theme-Rheme structure of a text clause by clause, to gain an insight into its texture and understand how the writer clarify the nature of his underlying concerns.

**Keywords:** Functional grammar approach; Theme; Rheme

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## 1. Introduction

The interest functional grammar approach has grown and it still continues to attract the attention of researchers. The main focus on the explanation of language use in context in the systemic-functional linguistic model (Halliday 2004), has been widely applied in educational settings around the world, both from research and pedagogical perspectives. Nowadays, language theories have been developed, linguists also have found the theory of Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL), now it is known as Functional Grammar (FG). It is the most well-known component of a broad social semiotic system to language that originally articulated by Halliday in 1960s. It is an approach to linguistics that considers language as a system.

Systemic Functional Grammar is concerned primarily with the choices the grammar makes available to speakers and writers. According to Halliday (2004: 58) there are three lines of meaning in the clause: 1) The Theme functions in the structure of the clause as a message since a clause itself has meaning as a message, as a quantum of information; the theme is the point of departure for the message. It is the element the speaker selects for grounding what he is going to say. 2) The subject functions in the structure of clause as exchange. It is the element the speaker makes responsible for the validity of what he is saying. 3) The actor functions in the structure of the clause as representations; the actor is the active participant in the process. It is the element the speaker portrays the one that does he deed. Theme, for Halliday, is the “point of departure; it is that with which the clause is concerned” (Halliday, 1994:37). Theme is seen as a universal element; in every language there is a means for identifying what the clause is about. Halliday defines Theme as a function where a “special status is assigned to one part of it the clause” (Halliday, 1994:37).

In English, the theme can be identified as the element which comes first the clause. Theme is then realised by what is placed in initial position within the clause and this initial position gives the Theme a ‘special status’ within the clause. Based on Gerot and Wighell (1994: 103) theme is broadly speaking, what the clause is going to be about. The rest of the clause is called as the rheme. In other word, theme represents the idea represented by the constituent at the starting point of the clause and rheme represents the rest of message.

In many instances rheme is related to New Information, while Theme is related to Given Information. Given refers to what is already known or predictable, while New refers to what is unknown or unpredictable. Halliday elaborates the distinction between ‘Given’ and ‘New’ as “information that is presented by the speaker as recoverable (Given) or not recoverable (New) to the listener” (Halliday, 1994:298). Additionally, Not (1996: 4) explained that theme and rheme is necessary for the construction of an optimally coherent and gramatically cohesive structured text. By analysing theme and rheme, it can reveal the types of theme. The themes can be divided into ideational or topical, textual and interpersonal. Topical themes may also be nominal group complexes, adverbial groups, and prepositional phrases or embedded clauses. This is the Theme which usually represents what the clause is about or the topic of the clause. Moreover, textual theme relates the clause to its context. It can be continuatives and conjunctions. Another theme is interpersonal, it occurs before the topical theme. It can be modal adjuncts, vocatives, finite or WH-elements. For example, the writer could have chosen:

**Example 1**

You	Are required to be familiar with this new place.
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Rheme</b>

Several studies have conducted about Theme and Rheme research, such as Hamid (2012), Gunawan (2017), and Sugiarto (2013). In this study, the researcher discussed the same topic as the previous researcher did, they explained about theme and rheme analysis. But, the researcher used short story as the data of this research. The purpose is to know the thematic development pattern mostly applied in the text. Specifically, the study is aimed at analyzing: 1) the themes and rhemes of short story text, 2) the thematic development pattern in short story text. The current study is expected to give contributions in the development of linguistic studies. This study may provide English teachers with beneficial information about the thematic development patterns that. Considering the background of the study in mine, the researcher entitled this research “The Analysis of Theme and Rheme in Short Story of Sleeping Beauty.”

**2. Literature review****2.1. Systemic Functional Grammar**

Systemic Functional Grammar is concerned primarily with the choices the grammar makes available to speakers and writers. One of the experts, who develops and explores functional grammar, is Michael Halliday. In his book, *Introduction to Functional Grammar* (1994: 19), Halliday states that “The grammatical structure is being explained by reference to the meaning.” Based on that statement, with learning functional grammar, we not only concern to structure but also the meaning. Therefore, the meaning and structure of language is correlated.

Furthermore, Gerot and Wignell (1994: 6) explain that “Functional grammars view language as a resource for making meaning.” The statement clarifies that to describe language in actual use on texts and contexts so learning functional grammar not only concerns to the structures but also how the structures construct meaning.

**2.2. Theme**

As what has been stated above, Systemic Functional Linguistic views language “not as a set of structures but as a network of system, or inter related sets of options for making meaning”. The most common approach to identifying Theme in a clause is based on Halliday (1994), who states that “Theme extends from the beginning of the clause and up to (and including) the first element that has a function in transitivity” (Halliday, 1994:53). Thus, according to Halliday (1994), the Theme of a clause “ends with the first constituent that is either participant, circumstance, or process” (Halliday, 1994:52). In order to account for this meaning-making potential of language, as introduced above, Halliday (1994) proposes three meta-functions at a lexica-grammatical level:

Ideational – “construing a model of experience”

Interpersonal – “enacting social relationships”

Textual – “creating relevance to context”

Regarding with the three meta-functions mentioned above, theme actually represents “This is what I’m talking about”. According to Linda Gerot and Peter Wignell (1994:104) “The Ideational, or Topical Theme is usually but not always the first nominal group in the clause. They may also be nominal group complexes, adverbial groups, and prepositional phrases or embedded clauses.” In the unmarked case, the topical theme is also subject. A topical Theme which is not the Subject is called a Marked Topical. Linda Gerot and Peter Wignell (1994:107) further explain that “Interpersonal elements occurring before the Topical Theme are also the thematic; they may be modal adjuncts, vocatives, finite or WH-elements.” Last but not least, Linda Gerot and Peter Wignell (1994:105) also say that “Textual Themes relate the clause to its context. They can be continuatives, adjunct, and conjunctions.”

In many cases, topical and interpersonal Theme are realized simultaneously by the same word or phrase. For instance, we typically represent the views of the participant, an animate Subject, as in *we - the company*, where *we* is experiential and topical Theme. On the other hand, if we refer to both author and reader, i.e. it is an inclusive *we*, then it should be considered interpersonal in nature, as suggested by Berry (1981). Personal pronouns which refer to both the reader and the writer, such as *you* and *we*, which are commonly analyzed as topical Theme if in initial clause position, could also be analyzed as interpersonal Theme (Berry, 1981:64).

In English the Theme, the ‘point of departure’ for the clause, is also one of the means by which the clause is organized as a message. Theme is the ‘glue’ that structures and binds the ideational and interpersonal meanings. Theme, then, is seen to play a crucial role in focusing and organizing the message and to contribute to the coherence and success of the message. Martin (1992) argues that the choice of what comes first is “a textual resource systematically exploited” to effect different patterns (Martin, 1992: 12). Martin adds that the different patterns and meanings made by the choice of theme can be manipulated and exploited, consciously or unconsciously, by the writer in order to convey their ‘angle’ or viewpoint.

### **2.3. Rheme**

In simple words, rheme is everything that is not theme; it is the part of the clause where the theme is developed (Halliday, 1994:37). A message structure in English is comprised of a theme plus a rheme. There is an order to the structure: theme comes first, followed by rheme, and whatever is placed in initial position is Theme (Halliday, 1994:37).

In many instances, rheme is related to New Information, while theme is related to Given Information. ‘Given’ refers to what is already known or predictable, while ‘New’ refers to what is unknown or unpredictable. Halliday elaborates the distinction between “Given and New” as “information that is presented by the speaker as recoverable (Given) or not recoverable (New) to the listener” (Halliday, 1994:298). Additionally, Martin (1992a) also points out that Theme is equated with “what the speaker is on about” while New is the structure which is “listener-oriented” (Martin, 1992a:448).

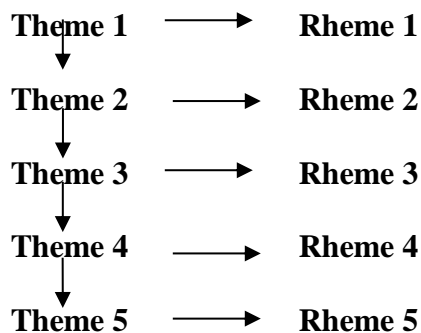
### **2.4. Thematic Development**

Thematic development refers to the way theme of a clause is developed. Theme of a clause may pick up or repeat a meaning from the preceding theme and rheme. According to

Martin and Rother in Paltridge (2000:140) as quoted by Mulatsih (2006), there are three kinds of thematic development patterns:

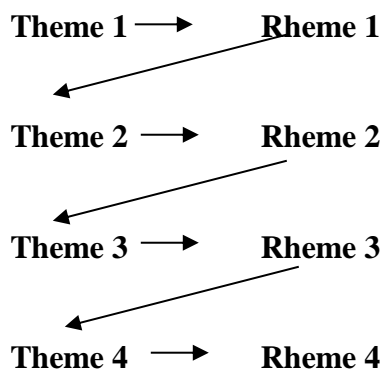
#### 2.4.1. Theme reiteration/constant theme pattern

This pattern shows that the first theme is picked up and repeated in the beginning of the next clause. The figure is as follows:



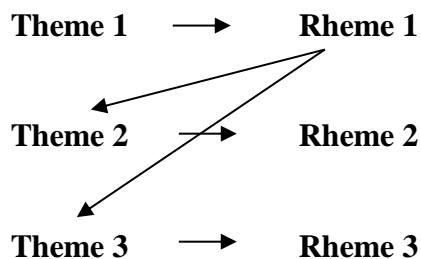
#### 2.4.2. A zig zag linear theme pattern

It is a pattern when the subject matter in the rheme of one clause is taken up as the theme of the following clause. The figure of this pattern is as follows:



#### 2.4.3. Multiple theme / split theme pattern

In this pattern, a rheme may include a number of different pieces of information, each of which may be taken up as the theme in a number of subsequent clauses. The figure of this pattern is as follows:



### 3. Method

A research method is the tool for the researcher to gather data. In addition, in this research is using a qualitative research with descriptive method. According to Mauch (2003:19) Qualitative research seeks to provide full and accurate descriptions of phenomena in all their complexity, attempts to discover and show the assumptions that underlie events or actions and uses natural settings as primary data. Qualitative studies deal mainly with statements and questions couched in words and with detailed descriptions of settings and events. So, the use of this research method is considered appropriate.

Furthermore, this research is about analyzing a text in short story, it is also used a descriptive method. Kothari (2004: 2) explains that “Descriptive includes surveys and fact-finding enquires of different kinds.” Based on the theories, the main characteristics of this methods are that the research has no control over the variables; it can only repeat what has happened or what is happening. Accordingly, to comprehend those explanation, the writer will explain every data in a descriptive way.

### 4. Findings and Discussion

#### 4.1. Themes

##### 4.1.1. Topical themes

###### Data 1

There lived a king and queen who said every day

There	lived a	who	said
Topical	king	Topical	everyday
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Rheme</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Rheme</b>
<b>Theme</b>		<b>Rheme</b>	

In the clause above, we can assume that the speaker is engaged in discourse about, say, “there” refers to place. Moreover, the word “who” explains subject in the clause referring to “a king.” So, the type of themes is topical theme. The phrase “who said everyday” are rheme. Meanwhile if we concern to the sentence, “there lived a king” to be a theme and “who said everyday” to be a rheme.

##### 4.1.2. Textual Theme

###### Data 2

But for a long time they had none

But	for a long time	they	had none
Conjunctive Adjunct	Conjunctive	Topical	<b>Rheme</b>
Textual			
<b>Theme</b>			

In addition to the topical Theme, some clauses also have a textual Theme. The word such as “but” introduced as conjunctive adjunct is often, but not always, selected as textual Theme. Besides that, conjunctive relates the clause to the preceding text by providing a logical link between messages, for example, “for a long time.” In addition, based on the data but and for a long time can be classified as textual theme. Then, “But for a long time they” to be a theme and “had none” to be a rheme.

4.1.3. Theme and Text Development

Data 3

There	lived a King and Queen	who	said every day
Topical	<b>Rheme</b>	Topical	<b>Rheme</b>
<b>Theme</b>		<b>Theme</b>	
<b>Theme</b>		<b>Rheme</b>	

‘If only	we	had a child’
Structural	Topical	<b>Rheme</b>
<b>Theme</b>		

But	for a long time	they	had none
Conjunctive Adjunct	Conjunctive	Topical	<b>Rheme</b>
Textual			
<b>Theme</b>			

1. Thematic Development

Paragraph 1

<b>Theme</b>		<b>Rheme</b>
There lived a King and Queen		Who said every day
If only we	←	Had a child
But for a long time they	←	Had none

2. The Analysis of Sleeping Beauty Script

There	lived a King and Queen	who	said every day
Topical	<b>Rheme</b>	Topical	<b>Rheme</b>
<b>Theme</b>		<b>Theme</b>	
<b>Theme</b>		<b>Rheme</b>	

'If only we had a child'

Structural	Topical	<b>Rheme</b>
<b>Theme</b>		

But for a long time they had none

But	for a long time	they	had none
Conjunctive Adjunct	Conjunctive	Topical	<b>Rheme</b>
Textual			
<b>Theme</b>			

One day, as the Queen was bathing in a spring and dreaming of a child,

Conj	Str	Topical	<b>Rheme</b>
Textual			
<b>Theme</b>			

A frog crept out of the water and said to her,

Theme	Rheme
-------	-------

"Your wish shall be fulfilled"

Topical	Str	<b>Rheme</b>
<b>Theme</b>		

"Before a year has passed you shall bring a daughter into the world."

Str	Topical	<b>Rheme</b>	Top	Str	<b>Rheme</b>
<b>Theme</b>			<b>Theme</b>		

And since frogs are such magical creatures

Str	Str	Top	<b>Rheme</b>
<b>Theme</b>			

It was no surprise that before a year had passed the Queen had a baby girl.

Top	Rheme	Str	Top	Rheme	Top	Rheme
Theme		Textual			Theme	

The child was so beautiful and sweet that the King could not contain himself for joy

Top	<b>Rheme</b>	Str	Top	<b>Rheme</b>
<b>Theme</b>		<b>Theme</b>		

He prepared a great feast

Theme	Rheme
-------	-------

and invited all his friends, family and neighbours.

Str.	<b>Rheme</b>
Text	
<b>Theme</b>	

He invited the fairies, too, in order that they might be kind and good to the child.

Top	<b>Rheme</b>	Str.	Str.	Top	<b>Rheme</b>
Theme		Textual		Theme	

There were thirteen of them in his kingdom

Theme	Rheme
-------	-------

but as the King only had twelve golden plates for them to eat from,

Str.	Top	Str.	<b>Rheme</b>
Textual		Text.	
<b>Theme</b>			

One of the fairies had to be left out

Theme	Rheme
-------	-------

None of the guests was saddened by this

Theme	Rheme
-------	-------

as the thirteenth fairy was known to be cruel and spiteful.

Str.	Top	<b>Rheme</b>
Textual		
<b>Theme</b>		

An amazing feast was held and when it came to an end,

Top	<b>Rheme</b>	Str.	Str.	Top	<b>Rheme</b>
<b>Theme</b>		Textual			
		<b>Theme</b>			

each of the fairies presented the child with a magic gift.

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Rheme</b>
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One fairy gave her virtue with everything in the world that anyone could wish for.

Top	<b>Rheme</b>	Str.	Top	<b>Rheme</b>
<b>Theme</b>		Text.		
		<b>Theme</b>		

After eleven of the fairies had presented their gifts, the thirteenth suddenly appeared.

Str.	Top	<b>Rheme</b>	Top	Conj.	<b>Rheme</b>
Text.				Textual	
<b>Theme</b>			<b>Theme</b>		

She was angry and wanted to show her spite for not having been invited to the feast.

Theme	Rheme
-------	-------

Over the years, the promises of the fairies came true one by one.

Str.	Top	<b>Rheme</b>
Textual		
<b>Theme</b>		

The Princess grew to be beautiful, modest, kind and clever.

Top	<b>Rheme</b>
<b>Theme</b>	

Everyone who saw her could not help but love her.

Top	<b>Rheme</b>
<b>Theme</b>	

At last the prince reached the tower and opened the door into the little room where the Princess was asleep

Conj.	Top	<b>Rheme</b>	Str.	<b>Rheme</b>	Str.	Top	<b>Rheme</b>
Textual			Text.				
<b>Theme</b>			<b>Theme</b>				

There she lay, looking so beautiful that he could not take his eyes off her.

Adverbial	Top	<b>Rheme</b>	Str.	<b>Rheme</b>
Marked			Text.	
<b>Theme</b>			<b>Theme</b>	

He bent down and gave her a kiss.

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Rheme</b>
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As he touched her, Sleeping Beauty opened her eyes and smiled up at him.

Str.	Top	<b>Rheme</b>	Top	<b>Rheme</b>
Text.				
<b>Theme</b>			<b>Theme</b>	

Throughout the castle, everyone and everything woke up and looked at each other with astonished eyes.

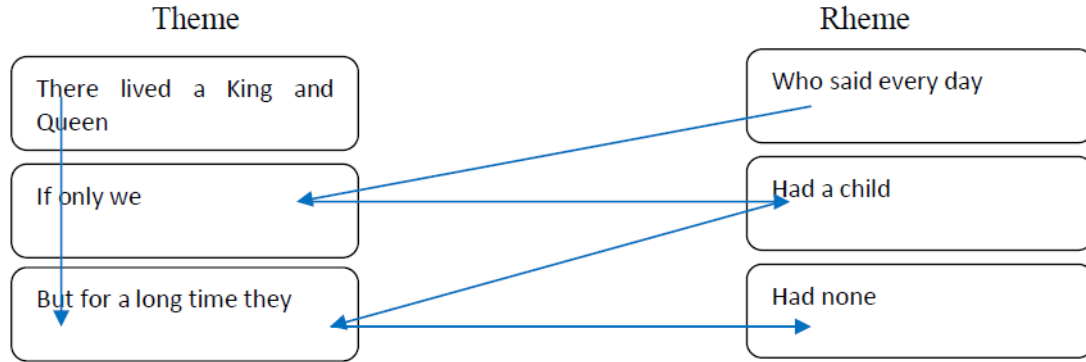
Adverbial	Top	<b>Rheme</b>
Marked		
<b>Theme</b>		

Within the month, the Prince and Sleeping Beauty were married and lived happily all their lives.

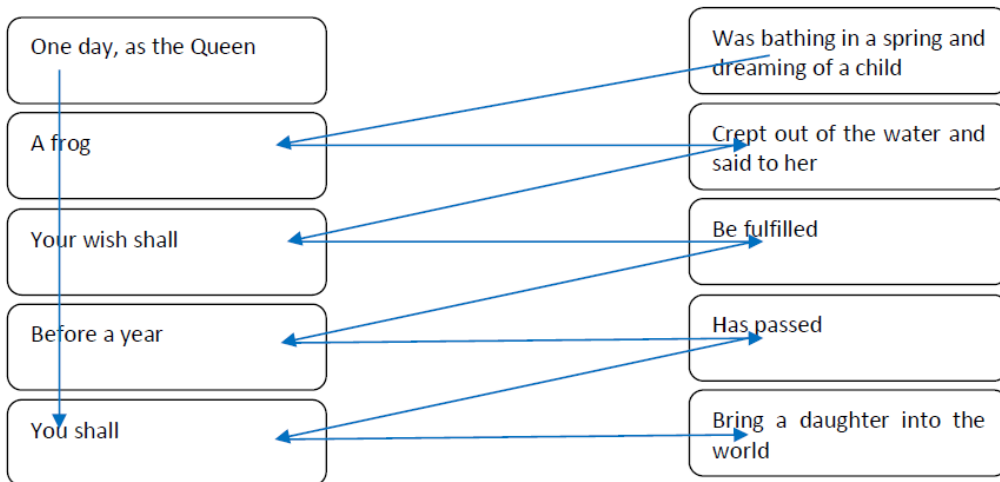
Adverbial	Top	<b>Rheme</b>
Marked		
<b>Theme</b>		

**3. Analysis of Thematic Development**

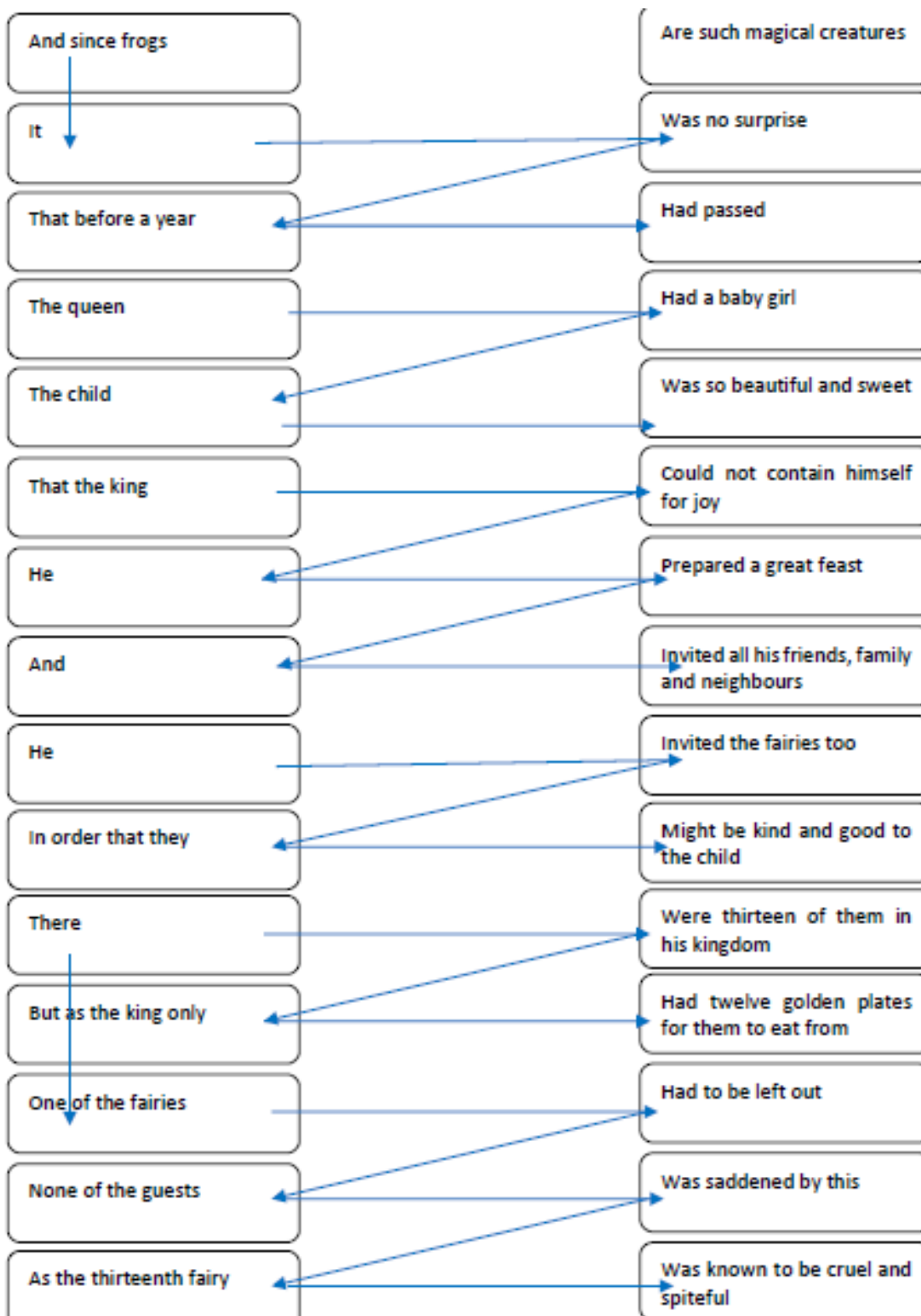
**Paragraph 1**



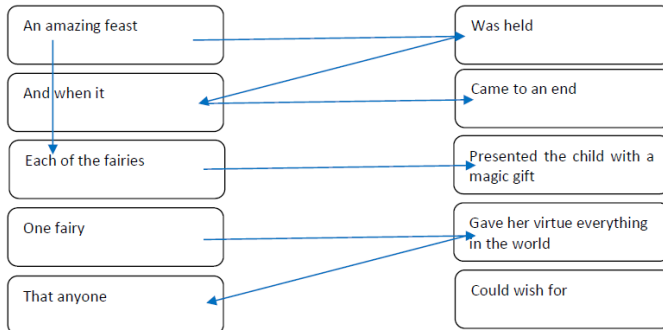
**Paragraph 2**



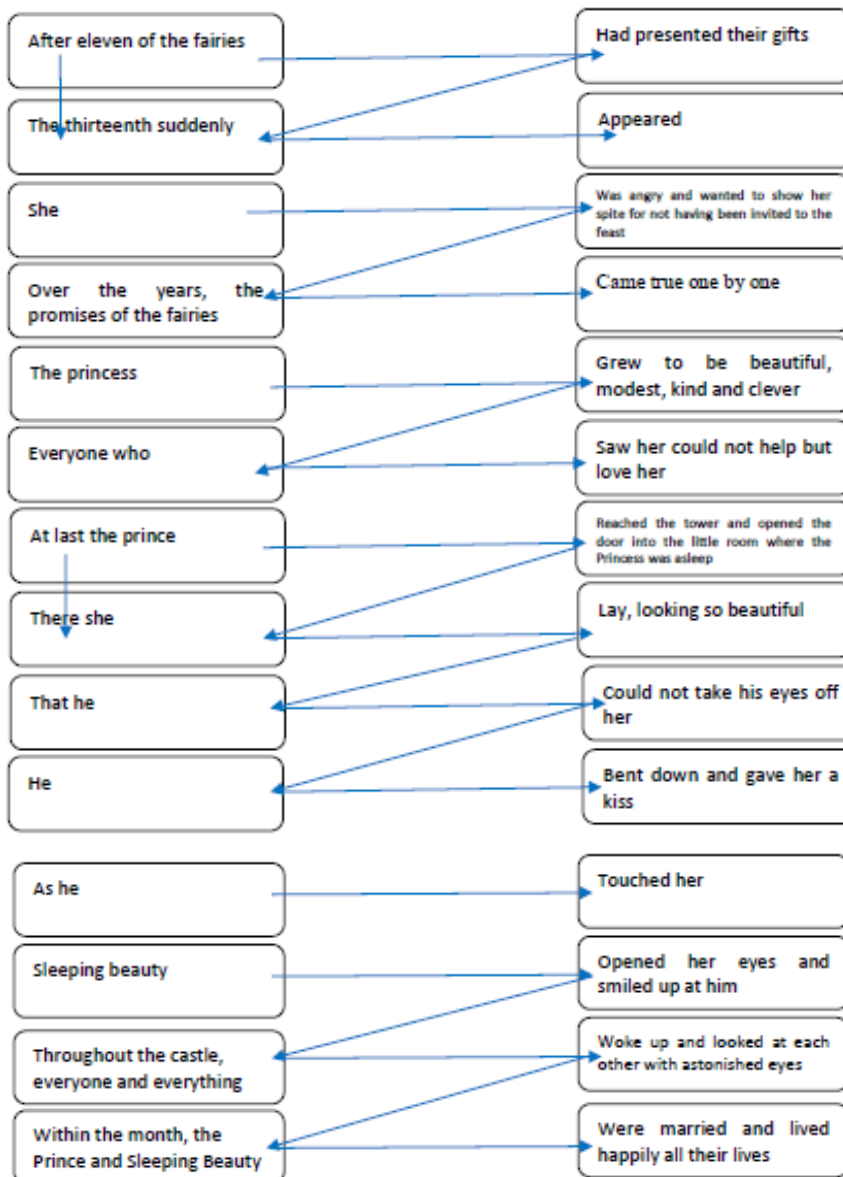
Paragraph 3



**Paragraph 4**



**Paragraph 5**



Based on the data above, that is a description about theme and text development in the first-five paragraph of the whole *sleeping beauty* story. It can be seen that the thematic organization of the clauses is the most important factor in the development of the text itself since the theme provides the environment for the remainder of the message. In the Theme-Rheme structure of a text clause by clause, we gain an insight into its texture and understand how the writer made clear to us the nature of his underlying concerns. In English Language Teaching, it is necessary for the students to know how to organize Theme and Rheme to produce good writing.

From the analysis above, theme is the element which serves as the point of departure of the message, it is that with which the clause is concerned. The rest of the message, it called rheme. In this story, there were 45 data of theme and rheme. Topical and Textual Theme were mostly dominated in this text. But, the researcher did not find the Interpersonal Theme in the text.

According to Hamid (2012), he found the types of theme in English education advertisement of The Jakarta Post in May 2011. The data were good because the writer did not find interpersonal theme in those clause. Next, Sugiarto (2013) described that the data were from source text and target text, the number of theme which was dominated in source text because this story is a tale for kids which uses simple words and there is some repetition of the name of characters in short story which is classified into ideational theme. Fitriati and Yonata (2017) showed a bit weakness on achieving coherent text due to lack of optimization of cohesive devices especially conjunctions to create interconnectedness of the whole sentences in the texts. Therefore, this research was a bit similar with previous studies because it discussed about theme and rheme. As a teacher or a lecturer, it can improve the students' writing skill especially in analyzing of the text.

## 5. Conclusion

Theme and Rheme are concerned with organization within the clauses in a text. In this research, the researcher took the data from the short story of *Sleeping Beauty* by Charles Perrault. There were 45 data of theme and rheme. After analyzing the text explained in the findings above, there are two types of theme (Topical and Textual Theme) that could mostly be found while Interpersonal theme couldn't be found in the data. Moreover, the components of theme in the category of textual theme are conjunctive adjunct, conjunctive, structural, continuative and conjunction. Meanwhile for topical theme, the components of theme are as subject and marked topical theme (adverbial as theme). To know the correlation theme and text development, the research has identified and classified the text of short story.

Therefore, in the Theme-Rheme structure of a text clause by clause, we gain an insight into its texture and understand how the writer made clear to us the nature of his underlying concerns. For next researchers, they can use this study as their reference to conduct other researches on the same field. They are also expected to be able to cover the shortcomings in this study and provide more detail information about this. As English teachers, it really helps us to give the contribution in increasing students' writing achievement and easy to understand the generic structure. Moreover, this research able to use determine which the theme as grammatical system that organizes the clause, the reader easy remember the position of theme and rheme.

Additionally, the lecturers of writing at universities are recommended to apply the Theme and Rheme technique in their writing subject to improve the students' writing competency. It also can generate students' achievement and motivation because Theme and Rheme had clear guidance and flow of thinking which later will improve their writing skill. Analyzing reading text through Theme and Rheme was highly recommended for next researchers.

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