Original Article

Genre Patterns across Alur folktales: An exploration of the generic structure

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ABSTRACT

Alur folktales are an orature narrative genre. They exhibit numerous genre patterns that are crucial in defining their genre identity. However, although Alur folktales have been narrated for ages, little is known about the genre patterns characterising them. This paper was limited to the investigation of the generic structure pattern of Alur folktales. The generic structure describes functional component parts that sequence the text in phases and stages. The study employed a qualitative descriptive design to characterise the stages, the specific functions they perform in the folktales, and their organisational patterns. The study is underpinned by the Systemic Functional Linguistics approach to genre theory (SFL hereafter). Within SFL, genre analysis is adopted as a methodological framework to examine the generic structure of Alur folktales. Two models of genre analysis are used to analyse the generic structure of Alur folktales: the Labovian narrative structure analysis and Hassan's Generic Structure Potential (GSP). Four Alur folktales selected purposively from a corpus of 51 folktales collected through audio recording were analysed: Diel gikud urombo (a goat and a sheep), Gwenu giku Kalanga (a hen and a groundnut), Piny mamako dano (an abductor), and Pirang'o thwon gweno gikud ulik dong gitiye jurimo ungo (Why a bat and a rooster are no longer friends). The study findings reveal that Alur folktales consist of six stages (abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation, resolution, and coda). However, the folktales display various stage patterns. Findings also suggest that in Alur folktales, abstract, orientation, and complication stages are obligatory. Evaluation, resolution, and coda are optional. Orientation, complication, evaluation, and resolution are recursive. Therefore, it can be contended that the generic structure of Alur folktales is variable. The study recommends putting the generic structure at the heart of folktale narrative genre analysis because it reveals the folktale narrative genre's nature and unveils its semantic structure.

INTRODUCTION

Alur folktales are the traditional stories of the Alur people handed down across generations. They are a prose orature narrative genre consisting of anonymous, timeless, and placeless fictional stories that have roots in the Alur oral tradition and mythology. They play a significant role in instilling Alur cultural values in Alur members. In fact, they are often employed to share a common history, to reinforce cultural ideals, highlight important Alur traditions, and moralise Alur society. The Alur people are a Nilotic ethnic group who live in northwestern Uganda and northeastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). They are part of the larger Luo group. In Uganda, they are situated mainly in the Nebbi, Zombo, Pakwach and Arua districts, while in the Democratic Republic of Congo, they reside in the territory of Mahagi (Ituri Province), mostly to the north of Lake Albert (Atido, 2011; Wikipedia, 2025).

As a distinct genre, Alur folktales are characterised by genre patterns including the social purpose, the generic structure, and the lexicogrammatical and discourse-semantic features that define their genre identity. Genre patterns refer to the recurring structures, conventions, and characteristics found within a particular genre. These patterns help define what makes a work recognisable as belonging to a specific genre and are often based on audience expectations and historical context. Analysing genre patterns involves studying the structural elements, classifications, and connections within a genre, as well as its social and historical dimensions

(Tejada et al., 2017). This paper is limited to the investigation of the generic structure referred to as the schematic structure in numerous studies. Indeed, Alur folktales are text categories composed of fictional stories that are clearly defined by their organisational composition, which is recognised by those who use them (Miller, 2014). In fact, Alur folktales are recognised not only by their functions, but also by their formal structure or generic structure, which realises specific functions. They are perceived to be unique forms of discourse that are built on consistent and identifiable structures. Their typical content and ordering can be described in terms of internal structures called schemata that are organisational units of the stories. The formal structure, also referred to as a generic structure, captures the stage patterns of Alur folktales.

In the functional context of narratives, the generic structure may be understood as the different stages and phases that construct the narrative, and which are realised through the interpretation of functional labels such as Orientation-Resolution structures and setting, event, solution, etc. (Herman et al., 2010). A generic structure is the description of the folktale according to its component parts and the relationship of these components to each other and to the whole folktale (Propp in Akerejola, 2019). When we tell stories, we do not start from scratch (Tokunaga, 2013). In fact, like other discourse types that have conventionalised patterning and structure (a kind of template into which words and sentences can be fitted), Alur folktale narratives have also evolved a recognisable, familiar, and stable pattern

to achieve their purpose. This is because narrative genres are considered an important offshoot of functionalist genre-based theory, where narratives are considered in terms of temporal and causal ordering, having different stages and phases which are unfolded through a step-by-step approach (Muhammad et al, 2021). Martin (as cited in Eggins, 2004) argues that genre is a way of getting from A to B in each culture for whatever genre is trying to accomplish.

Undoubtedly, considered from the generic structure lens, Alur folktales are conceptualised as staged texts. In fact, they are structured into stages defined as functional parts or components. A stage is a discoursal segment that performs a particular communicative function (Swales,1990, 2004). It represents text frames that have their own meaning and function (Connor et al, 2007). Thus, each stage achieves a well-defined narrative function. Indeed, as Eggins (2004) notes, each stage in the Alur folktale structure represents a portion of meaning to convey and a function to accomplish to become a successful genre. Swales (1990) asserts that each stage of genre is assigned a communicative function which may be construed as the conveyance of meaning. Labov and Waletsky (1997) liken stages to a narrative clause. They maintain that a narrative is composed of clauses that are ordered sequentially, and the change in their order would change the whole narrative's meaning. The model is based on sequence, narratives being one method of recapitulating past experience by matching the verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events that actually occurred (Hyvärinen, 2012). Hence, it is crucial to examine the order in which the stages appear in the generic structure of Alur folktales because the logical sequence of stages produces meaning in the folktales. Thus, Alur folktale narration develops through a sequence of stages. This sequence, referred to as a genre's generic structure, may be variable (Bhatia, 1993; Swales, 1990). Whereas some stages or moves may be obligatory, others may be optional. Some may occur in different orders. Moreover, some stages may be embedded in others, and some may be repeated. However, a prototypical schematic structure will be recognisable in terms of the most typical realisation pattern, as identified by the discourse community (Swales, 1990). Therefore, generic structures are the structural formula with reference to internal discourse patterns. Eggins (2004) described generic structures as the staged, step-by-step organisations of the genre. The reason a genre has a schematic structure at all is because humans are unable to convey meanings all at once. They need to convey meanings one portion at a time (Imtihani, 2010).

Keeping in view the current research, the investigation of the generic structure was expected to cast light on the stage patterns of Alur folktales. This is crucial because stage organisation reveals the semantic architecture of folktales and unveils the genre nature of Alur folktales. Hence, the study identified the stages in which Alur folktales unfold, their sequencing pattern, the obligatory, optional, and recursive stages.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was informed by genre theory to investigate the generic structure of Alur folktales. Genre theory posits that genres are distinctive text types that are identified and categorised based on the social purpose and recurrent recognisable structures encompassing the generic, the rhetorical, lexicogrammatical, and discourse-semantic structures. It explains the conventional structures and the structural elements of a genre and helps us understand how a genre operates (Bhatia, 2004; Martin, 2009).

The Systemic Functional Linguistic approach to genre theory (hereafter SFL) was applied to uncover the structural organisation of Alur folktales. SFL holds that a genre is a staged, goal-oriented, and social activity. This means that genres are not just collections of texts, but rather structured ways of engaging in social interactions with a specific purpose, and they unfold in stages to achieve that purpose. Genres are staged because they involve a

series of steps or stages that lead to the completion of the social activity; goal-oriented because each genre has a specific purpose or goal that its users are trying to achieve and they are social because they are inherently social, as they are used by members of a culture to interact with each other and accomplish shared goals. (Halliday, 2004; Martin, 2009; Martin & Rose, 2008).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Recent years have seen considerable growth in genre-based language studies. Many of these studies focus on levels of discourse structure, which have been variously referred to in the literature as the schematic structure, generic structure, and generic structural potential for a particular genre (Paltridge, 1994). Indeed, genres are the organising principle that governs text categories. They are organised in particular ways, and the term generic structure is applied to realise different stages and phases in those genres (Paltridge, 2001; Zein et al, 2019) argue that each genre of text requires a generic structure to organise and show its uniqueness from other texts. Butler (2003) maintains that schematic structure consists of a set of functional elements having a particular order of occurrence. According to Martin and Rose (2008), the story's privileged idea is to show how they share a similar set of resources to move the story forward, to engage the listeners and readers. The generic structure of stories consists of stages that are defined as the stable components of the organisation of a story, and they unfold in an expected sequence. Stages are composed of phases, which comprise one or more messages, and they have variable sequences. Hence, stories can be broken down into stages. Stages are composed of phases such as setting, description, events, events, effect, reaction, problem, solution, comment, and reflection.

Like any other genre, folktale narratives are identified by their generic structure. The generic structures of narrative text refer to functional components that sequence the text in phases and stages (Flowerdew, 2012). It is the idea of mapping the hierarchical schema of texts (Mohammed et al, 2021). Propp (as cited in Akerejola, 2019) suggested a description of narratives based on their observable patterns or structures referred to as morphology. By morphology or story structure, Propp meant the description of the folktale according to its component parts and the relationship of these components to each other and to the whole.

The generic structure, also referred to as schematic structure in several studies, is construed as the sequential patterning of communicative acts within genres into moves and steps (Bhatia, 1993). It is the structure of the text that consists of stages through which the text goes. It usually consists of the beginning, middle, and ending stages. In other words, the generic structure describes the stages, their sequence or ordering, and their functions in the genre. According to Rose (2011), the term generic structure relates to different narrative stages and phases in the text. He describes genre as staged, goal-oriented social processes: social since texts are always interactive events; goal-oriented in that a text unfolds towards its interactants' purposes; staged, because it usually takes more than one step to reach the goal. In functional linguistics terms, this means that genres are defined as a recurrent configuration of meanings that enact the social practices of a culture.

Labov and Waletzky (1967) pioneered the study of narrative in their analysis of oral narratives of personal experience collected through sociolinguistic interviews. This work is a cornerstone in the field of narrative analysis, particularly within sociolinguistics, and outlines a framework for understanding how personal narratives are structured and communicated. In Labov and Waletzky's tradition, a narrative is defined as one means of recounting past events. It is a method for recapitulating experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events that occurred. Their work emphasises that narratives are not just stories, but also social

interactions where the narrator shapes their presentation to influence the listener's perception. Structurally, Labov (1972) suggests that narrative comprises clauses that are chronologically ordered. The narrative stage consists of one stage or more, and each stage is a carrier of meaning. In turn, narrative stages consist of a series of clauses that match the actual order of events that happened in the past. If the chronological sequence of at least two narrative clauses is inverted by a narrator, the reversed clauses will result in different meanings (or inferences by a listener) from the narrative clauses prior to inversion. The rationale behind the organisation of folktales in stages is simply to create and structure meanings. Hence, the whole architecture of folktales revolves around meaning creation. It can therefore be contended that stages are semantic units that altogether combine to build meaning. Labov (1972) claims that readers or listeners of narratives can recognise and demarcate the stages.

In the generic structure of folktale narratives, stages can combine or sequence in a complex manner. Martin and Rose (2008) demonstrated that the narrative genre is not only complex, but its stages can also be very complex. In fact, they laid out the elements that shape narratives. They argue that a narrative consists of stages. Stages are composed of phases. Phases consist of one or more messages, each of which matches a clause, a carrier of meaning.

The original model of schematic structures to analyze narratives includes six stages: Abstract (a signal to prepare an audience for the upcoming events of the text), Orientation (sets the story in time and space), Complication (culmination of crisis), Evaluation (establishes the point of view of the narrative), Resolution (the protagonist resolves the crisis), Coda (refers back to the theme of the Abstract) (Labov & Waletzky, 1967). The stages are crucial for explaining the organisation of text, since it is necessary to describe the steps of how people achieve their goals (Imtihani, 2010). Following

Labov and Waletzky (1967), Tokunaga (2013) and later Alenizi (2020) expounded on the functions of the narrative stages as follows. Abstract encapsulates the point of the story through one or more clauses, often situated at the very outset of the story. It is an optional stage which functions as the summary of the whole narrative, preparing the hearer for what is coming, while the orientation contains setting-type information which tells the listener about the people involved and the time and place of the story. Moreover, it gives background information needed by the audience to make sense of the story. Complicating actions are often composed of a chain of narrative clauses in the past tense form of verbs, which answers the question: then, what happened? It is the cornerstone of the story and builds up to its climax through presenting a problem, turning point, or even a point of interest. Evaluation involves the means that play a role in establishing and sustaining the narrative, and why the story was narrated, and what the storyteller is striving to achieve. In this story section, the narrator indicates his attitudes about the story and what is happening. Resolution is the concluding section of the story, which includes free clauses that inform the audience how the complicating actions were resolved. The complicating action and the resolution carry the main events of the narrative, while the evaluation gives information about how people in the story reacted or how they felt about the events of the story. Finally, the coda, which is also an optional element, summarises the story and builds a bridge back to the present telling of the story. In fact, it contains clauses that seal off the story and return the audience to the present time, and it could be a pragmatic device to reinstate the conversation mode and a sign of giving way to the floor.

Although narratives stages occur in a prescribed order (Labov, 1972), their sequence is largely variable. Moreover, some narratives may not have all the stages described above. Alenizi (2020) notes that short narratives may not have all these stages. Yet, they are considered complete narratives

because they give sequences of events having a beginning-middle-end pattern. The elements of a narrative do not stand independently from each other. In many cases, there are no clear-cut boundaries that isolate these stages from each other. In some cases, the components merge while in some other cases they overlap.

In the staging organisation of folktales, stages do not carry similar weight. Whereas some stages are central to the semantic construction of folktales, others are peripheral. Hasan (1984) studied the Generic Structure Potential (GSP) of nursery tales. The tales are understood as a genre with common generic elements of structure. Hasan's model is built on what she termed contextual configuration, which permits statements about the text structures and the nature of stages. She maintains that a narrative structure contains obligatory elements that must occur, optional elements that may occur, sequenced elements (the arrangements of obligatory and optional elements), and recursive or frequent elements. However, it is the obligatory elements of structure that define the tales. They are dubbed obligatory because they carry the core meanings of the folktales. Hence, stages have semantic properties. Their patterns can reveal how meanings are constructed in the folktale narrative genre.

Although literature shows extensive research has been conducted on the generic structure of narratives, little is known about the generic structure of Alur folktales. Hence, this paper examines the generic structure of selected Alur folktales to reveal Alur folktale genre. Generic structure analysis involves describing the staging organisation of Alur folktales in terms of obligatory stages, optional stages, recursive stages and other stage patterns. By studying these elements, we gain insights into how Alur folktales communicate meaning and achieve their purposes within Alur community or culture.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative descriptive design because it has a holistic description emphasis and is mostly delivered in detail. Data sources can draw on any type of qualitative source, including narrative texts, personal accounts, documents, or artefacts (Fraenkel et al., 2012). In this study, descriptive design focuses on the generic structure analysis of Alur folktales, which involves examining the stage patterns that characterise the folktales to discover how the stories unfold and how meanings are constructed. The study examined four Alur folktales selected purposively from a total of 51 Alur folktales collected through audio recording for a doctoral study. Before recording, I explained to the participants the purpose of the recording and obtained their consent. The inclusion criterion was fictionality and folktale types. I ensured the selected folktales were fictional and represented the different folktale types (fables, supernatural folktales, human folktales and others). The small sample size was selected for the purpose of this paper, which focused on just one genre pattern. It is justified by the need to conduct an in-depth analysis of the selected Alur folktales to throw light on the generic structure patterns that they exhibit. This is consistent with Leedy & Ormrod (2021), who recommend that we choose only those units of analysis that can yield the most suitable information relevant to the study problem. Although the sample size is small, it represents the different types of Alur folktales. No software was used in the analysis of the selected folktales because Alur folktales are primarily an orature narrative form, meaning they were transmitted through spoken words rather than written text..The folktales were recorded, transcribed and translated from the Alur language into English and analysed using Labov's narrative structure tradition (Simpson, 2005) and the Generic Structure Potential (GSP) model (Hasan, 1984). Both traditions are linked to the Systemic Functional Linguistics approach. In fact, the Labovian tradition suggests starting genre analysis by looking at the global structure that a narrative text has, which makes it recognisable as belonging to a particular genre. It recommends discovering the six main component stages (Abstract, Orientation,

Complicating action, Evaluation, Resolution, and Coda) and describing their patterns. GSP provides guidelines to analyse the generic structure of a folk narrative genre. According to Hasan (1984), we need to identify obligatory, optional, and recursive stages and determine their functions in the narrative. Hence, to examine the generic structure of Alur folktales, I started by identifying the stages that compose the Alur folktales through segmentation/decomposition of the Alur folktale texts. Then, I looked at their sequencing or order before analysing other stage patterns. Next, I conducted GSP analysis to identify obligatory, optional, and recursive stages of Alur folktales.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Stages of the Alur Folktales

Alur folktales are structured into functional stages that aim at organising meanings. The Alur folktale below reveals the stages of Alur folktales.

Abstract

Diel gikud urombo

Yang con, ubedu jurimu ario mapigitek Diel gikud Urombo.

The goat and sheep

Once upon a time, there lived two great friends, the goat and the sheep.

Orientation

Gibedu kacidhu i wotho mabor, gigam idho mutoka. Diel ukadho ubedu kago ku dhugola. Jungeyu ongo pirango. Gicidhu mand gicicidhu. Kinde magidingo tundo, jacok sende ucako ni coko sende pare kudibang juruwotho.

They had a long journey. They boarded a vehicle. The goat sat near the door. Nobody knew why. They travelled and travelled. When they neared their destination, the conductor started collecting his money from the passengers.

Complicating Actions

Sawa ma jajok sende utuc iban diel man epenju diel ucul sende pare, Diel ukuru ongo epiei woko kungwech uringu mapodi motokari ucungu ongo pi en epe ku sende.

When the conductor reached him and asked for the transport money, the goat jumped out and ran away before the vehicle stopped because he didn't have the money to pay.

Evaluation

Urombo ubedu pare yo.

The sheep was very comfortable.

Resolution

Kinde ma jacok sende utuc ibange etingu emio. Motokari ucungu egam elor ewok woko.

When the conductor reached him, he paid for his transport. The vehicle stopped and he walked out.

Coda

Nicako eca diel lworo mutokari pien jacok sende ube penje sente majuyeyeko.

Since then, the goat fears vehicles because of the conductor who is still demanding him transportation money. The folktale above reveals that six stages exist in Alur folktales, namely abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation, resolution, and coda. As the above Alur folktale demonstrates, the abstract stage marks the beginning of the folktale. It has two parts in Alur folktales, the folktale title and the initial sentence. In the folktale, the title *Diel gikud urombo* (The goat and the sheep) and the opening clause *Yang con, ubedu jurimu ario mapitek i wangu diel gikud urombo* (Once upon a time, there lived two great friends, the goat and the sheep) constitute the abstract stage. The folktale title *The goat and the sheep* merely plays an announcement role. It announces who or what the folktale is about. As the above folktale shows, one of the most fundamental features of Alur folktale narration is that it begins with the announcement of the folktale

title because, from the onset, the audience must know what the folktale is about. The folktale title has the power of drawing the audience's interest by naming key actors. The folktale title not only unveils the actors, but it can also reveal the theme or the topic of the folktale.

The communicative function of the opening sentence *Once upon a time, there lived two great friends, the goat and the sheep* is just to establish a linkage between the two actors (the goat and the sheep) without elaborating on them further. That role rests with an orientation stage, which provides details about the participants, their roles, relationships to each other, and the activity in which they are involved. Unlike the orientation stage, abstract is an attention getter that does not provide details. It is usually very short and realised by a single sentence, typically the first one. In the above Alur folktale, the initial clause is introduced by *yang con* (once upon a time). As can be noticed in the abstract opening sentence, the goat and the sheep are described as great friends.

Orientation introduces the participants and the setting. It identifies the participants in the action: the time, the place, and the initial behaviour (Labov, 2010). According to Labov and Waletzky (as cited in Eggins and Slade, 1997), the purpose of orientation is to orient the listener with respect to place, time and behavioural situation. Thus, orientation orients the listener to what is to follow in terms of people, actions, time and place. In the above Alur folktale, orientation starts from the second sentence. It tells us that the goat and the sheep were travelling together. The goat sat strategically near the door. Probably, he was planning something. When they neared the destination, the conductor started collecting fares from the passengers.

Complication reports a series of events that culminate in a crisis. It tells us what exactly happened. In the above folktale, the complication stage reports what happened when the conductor reached the goat for the fare. He jumped out and ran away before the vehicle stopped because he didn't have the money to pay. As the above folktale shows, a complicating Action is the core of the narrative, detailing the sequence of events that form the main action or plot of the story. It builds tension and leads to a climax, showing the challenges or conflicts faced by the characters (Rustipa, 2011). This intricate action is discursively or textually built as an exciting, fascinating, captivating, or thrilling action. It seems to be unexpected, to deviate from norms, expectations, and common habits (Reisigl, 2021).

Evaluation appraises the sheep. He was very comfortable. In the evaluation stage, the narrator reveals her or his attitude by indicating to the listeners or readers the relative importance of the specific narrative units. In the evaluation stage, the narrator can appraise or comment on the actors, their actions/behaviours, narrative events, etc. (Porto & Belmonte, 2014).

Resolution reports about what finally happened by solving the problem(s), for better or worse. It shows how a crisis or complication is resolved. It is a point where the conflict created by the conflicting action(s) in a story is resolved (Labov, 1972). In the above folktale, the resolution is when the conductor reached the sheep, he paid for his fare. The vehicle stopped and he walked out. Unlike his friend the goat, he behaved responsibly.

Coda is the final stage in which the narrator relates the events in the story to the present situation of narration. This part can be used to present the moral lesson of the story. It explains why things are the way they are today (Alenizi, 2020). In the above folktale, the narrator provides the reason why goats fear vehicles even today.

The Generic Structure Patterns of Alur Folktales

Three generic structure patterns emerged from the analysis of the selected Alur folktales.

Abstract^Orientation^Complication^Evaluation^Resolution^Coda

This generic structure pattern was found in the Alur folktale *Gwenu giku Kalanga* (The hen and the groundnut) presented below.

Stages	Alur folktale extracts	Translations
Abstract(A)	*Yang con ubino gwenu giku Kalanga.*	Once upon a time, there was a hen and a groundnut.
Orientation(O)	*Gwenu giku Kalanga gibedu jurimu. Gibedu kwo karacelu.*	Hen and Groundnut were friends. They lived together.
Complication(C)	*Nindu acel juario eno gicido ka twomu pii. Sawa magitwomo pi, Kalanga obedu mitu gwenu tel wanga yo. Gwenu okweru. Gwenu uwacu kara inyanok in re mitel yoo iwanga. Kalanga ukweru makwe.*	One day, those two friends went to fetch water from the stream. After fetching water, Groundnut wanted hen to precede him. Hen refused. She said to Groundnut "you are small. It's you who should take the lead". Groundnut refused categorically.
Evaluation(E)	*Winjiri ujai ikind ju ario eni nga mumaku tel yo. Gwenu umaku ngei cwiny nia Kalanga ube caye nacaya*	The two disagreed totally about who should precede the other. Hen became annoyed that Groundnut was disrespecting her.
Resolution(R)	*Egam etonge emwonye.*	She swallowed Groundnut.
Coda (Co)	*Ngati madit nango edit. Mi ire woru.*	Elders are elders. Show them respect.

The Alur folktale above is composed of six canonical stages that are sequenced in the following order prescribed by Labov (1972), *Abstract^Orientation^Complication^Evaluation^Resolution^Coda*. This is the regular generic structure pattern for the narrative genre (Tokunaga, 2013; Alenizi, 2020). In the above folktale, the abstract stage presents the protagonists of the folktale (the hen and the groundnut). It sparks the audience's attention. Orientation contains two messages. Hen and Groundnut were friends and lived together. It orients us on what to expect in the next stage. The complication stage underscores the argument between the two actors, the hen and the groundnut. It contains two problems, hen's refusal to take the lead and groundnut's resistance, causing a deadlock which is resolved through the swallowing of groundnut. This complication stage structure unveils the complex configurations of meanings in Alur folktales. In the Evaluation stage, the folktale narrator comments on the disagreement between the two participants (hen and groundnut) by using the appraisal resource *totally* to denote that there were no other alternatives. The swallowing of the groundnut constitutes the resolution of the story.

Groundnut was swallowed because he disrespected hen who is older. Coda presents a moral lesson. *Elders are elders. They deserve respect.*

The above Alur folktale also reveals that, unlike Abstract, Orientation, Evaluation, Resolution and Coda, which consist of one or two messages each, Complication can be complex. It consists of six clauses conveying six messages. Although the above Alur folktale is composed of six stages (abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation, resolution, and coda), it resolves around complicating events, denoting something going wrong that needs to be set right. This disruption of events characteristic of the narrative genre is evaluated and resolved by the protagonist, which returns the story to the status of equilibrium (Martin & Rose, 2008).

Abstract^Orientation^Complication^Resolution

The second generic structure pattern discovered in the examined Alur folktales is A^O^C^R. It represents incomplete Alur folktales, those lacking some stages. This pattern is evidenced in the Alur

folktale *Piny mamaku dano* (The abductor) below,
whereby evaluation and coda stages are absent.

Stages	Alur folktale extracts	Translations
Abstract(A)	*I oro moko mayang con ubedu jadwar rec moko nyinge obedu Samu.*	Once upon a time, there was a fisherman called Samu.
Orientation(O)	*Samu udongo ku kwo mi dwaru rec ni caku ku oro 10. Samu Ubedu ka bedu i nyathin adura moko majulwong'u Oyeyo. I adura eca Samu ubedu ngati acel madanu zo omaru. Adura eca obedu kago ku dupii bor ongo ku pacu pa Samu. Nindu aciel kugwenu moko mi ceng kasi aciel Samu uceu kpe kudi kavutu. Ikinde mi sawa adek mikugwenu Samu utingu katoko pare, pala pare midwar, eyikire pidwar. Kudiwangayo erombo ku jadit acel majulwongu nyinge Okech man gigam gi doko jurimu. Samu re ai kugwenu con ni nicido karombo kud Okech pi camu piny moko mi kugwenu kara uwek gicidh karacel idwar manwango dong eponje ku dwar.*	Samu grew up a fisherman since the age of 10. He lived in a small village called Oyeyo. In that village, he was the only man liked by almost everybody. The village was near the river not far away from Samu's home. Early one Monday morning, Samu woke up late from the bed. It was 9:00 o'clock. He took his paddle and a fishing knife and went to fish. On his way to the river, he met a man called Okech and they became very good friends. After making friends, Samu would wake up early every morning to meet Okech for breakfast so they would go fishing after he had already taught him to fish.
Complication(C)	*Inindo acel kende magicio kud i dwar iwangayo gineno piny ma mako dhanu. Kinde meneno Samu gikud Okech, ecako uriemo tok gi.*	One day, on their way from the river, they saw an abductor. When it caught sight of Samu and Okech, it started chasing them.
Resolution(R)	*Giringo matek makwe yor iban yen madit kara uwek gicopo pondu ingeye. E! ala piny mamako danu ukadho gi akadha enyang ongo. Yo ka kama bor ginenu ot lum aciel. Kara man ot pa ner Samu. Giringo I bao t eca. Gituc gi nwangu ner Samu maejolu gi ku galu ma malu man anyonga.*	They ran as fast as they could towards a wood so they could hide behind a tree. The abductor passed without noticing them. They saw a thatched house some distance away from their hideout. The house belonged to Samu's uncle. They ran to the house. They met Samu's uncle, who welcomed them warmly and had some fun with them.

The folktale above consists of Abstract, Orientation, Complication, and Resolution. It lacks evaluation and coda stages. Abstract names the protagonist (Samu). Orientation is lengthy. It describes the protagonist by revealing his identity, providing information about his background, role, his residence, the location of his residence, and how he met another actor (Okech) whom he taught fishing. Hence, orientation focuses on the activities of the protagonist Samu and his friend Okech. The complication stage reports the encounter of the pair with an abductor and what ensued. The abductor started chasing them. The third actor (the abductor) appears in the complication. Resolution reports what finally happened. Samu and Okech hid behind a tree. The abductor passed without noticing them. They ran to Samu's uncle. He welcomed them. The story ends without a coda stage, which would relate the events in the folktale to the present situation of narration. This folktale reveals that even if optional stages are absent, the folktale is still valid. This result is validated by Labov and Waletzky (1997), who claims that a minimal narrative is a sequence of two clauses which are temporally ordered. A

simple example Labov and Waletzky (as cited in Martin and Rose, 2008) present includes three stages, which are labelled to the right:

Well, this person has a little too much to drink, *Orientation*

And he attacked me, *Complication*

And the friend came in, *Resolution*

And she stopped it.

Such short narratives focus on the most fundamental elements, without getting distracted or confused by elements present in more complex stories (Moshe, 2013).

Moreover, in the above Alur folktale, Orientation and resolution are very long because they contain several messages about the four participants involved in the folktale (Samu, Okech, the abductor, and Samu's uncle) and the fishing activity. Orientation is embedded with a minor problem phase, *Nindu aciel kugwenu moko mi ceng kasi aciel Samu uceu kpe kudi kavutu.* (Early one Monday morning, Samu woke up late from bed). However,

the minor complication embedded in the orientation stage did not prevent *Samu* from achieving his goal(fishing). In addition, it did not impact on the denouement of the whole story because the character found a way of resolving it. Therefore, this suggests that Alur folktales revolve around problems. Even if the problem is inherent to the Complication stage, the problem phase can occur anywhere in most complex stages except Abstract and Coda, which consist of one sentence. Moreover, although the evaluation stage is absent from the folktale, appraisal resources and attitude lexis are used across the folktale to evaluate the folktale's events, participants' behaviours, actions, decisions, etc.

Abstract^Orientation^Complication^Evaluation^Resolution^Complication^ Evaluation^Complication^Complication

This generic structure pattern is evidenced in the Alur folktale *Pirang'o thwon gweno gikud ulik dong gitiye jurimo ungo* (Why Bat and Cock are no longer friends), presented below.

Stages	Alur folktale extracts	Translations
Abstract	*Yang con thwon gwenu gi kud ulik gibedu jurimu makwee.*	Once upon a time, a bat and a rooster were great friends.
Orientation	*Gibedu karacel, giwotho karacel, gitimu lembe ceke karacel. Ulik copo ongo kacamu ka podi thwon gwenu ope. Gwenu de kamenu.*	They would live together, move together, and do everything together. The bat could not eat when the rooster was away. And so did the rooster.
Complication 1	*Nindu aciel ulik uparu nia eke woth ku jurimu mukende ikind adhura makagokago. "Wabi miye ponji gibedu karacel, giwothu karacel" jurimbe mange ubewacu. Kinde magi tuc ii adhura meani jumio igi jol mamalo. Gimondu man gi dikiri swa ku dhanu man wecu kud gi jurimu mange e (paru min) yeny migi zo obedu pi poko kind ulik ku jarimbe ma thwon gwenu de andha etimire.* *Kud i adhura maeni ulik unwangu nyako maleng malandu. Ulik uwaco, "umaku anyom nyako eni."*	One day, bat decided to walk with his other friends to a nearby village. "We shall teach them a lesson. They always stay together, walk together," said bat's friends. When they reached the village, they were given a warm welcome by the villagers. They joined the group and started interacting freely with one another. Those other friends' intention was to separate bat and rooster and end their friendship which, indeed, they achieved.

	Jurimu mukende uwacu kumae. "Unen kawoni edaru nwango nyako maleng malandu. Re ceng ulik uwacu ni thwon gwenu nia gibi nyomo karacel. Ulik uwaco, "eni abe timu lemaber andhandha, ma jarimba mathwon gwenu ke udong kende?" *Kudi adura makago eca, ulik udwogo ku nyako maleng malandu megamu ni daku pare. "Kawoni ma etye ku daku, gibibedo ngo karacelo,"Jurimb ulik uwaco.*	From the village, bat got a very beautiful brown lady. "I must marry this girl," said the bat. "Look, he has gotten himself that young beautiful, brown lady," said the other friends. And yet, at first, a bat had promised rooster that they would marry together. "Is what I am doing really good when my friend rooster is left alone?" asked the bat. On coming back from the nearby village, the bat carried along the beautiful young brown lady ready for marriage. "Now that he has gotten himself a wife, we know they will not stay together again," said Bat's friends.
Evaluation 1	*Kinde ma thwon gwenu uwinju pi gamiri pa jarimbe mulik gi, cwinye obedu yom makwe*	When the rooster heard of his friend's marriage, he was extremely happy and happy.
Resolution	*En de ewotho i adhura mi kago kud gi enwangu dako de. I gamiri migi mungu umio igi awia abusiel man gibedu kud anyonga I gamri migi ne.*	The rooster later showed interest in what his friend bat did. He also walked to a nearby village and got himself a wife, too. In their marriage, God gave them six children, and they continued living a happy marriage.
Complication 2	*Ulik uwacu kumae. Jarimba podi anenu ongo dhako para. Umako alwonge ebin eliewa."* *Ku gum madit Ulik urombo ku thwon gwenu man ewacu ire bin iliewa. Ulik upenju, "ibinu?". "Eyo pirango ngo ke?Abino" Gweno ugamu io.* *Thwon Gweno uciduyero ni daku pare nya Ulik umito gicigilyewe. Giwinju lwongo man doki bi bin iliew. Juru ot pa Ulik ujolo gi ku jol mamalo.* *"Cam mi dieceng wa miio gi ango?" Dhaku pa Ulik openju Ulik., " wabimio awia mwa adek." Ulik udwoko. Dhako ucwako man uwaco, "enu bibedu cam maber makwee pi welo mwa." Ikum awia ma mungu miyo igi abic, gitingo man githumu adek. Giweko ario odong makwo.* *Kinde ma sawa micam oromo gwenu giku dako pare gibedu ku anyonga ikum gin ma Ulik gitimu giku dhako pare.* *"Cam ma mit, umaku wakan moko ni awiya mwa bende." Dako pa Ulik uyio kud tedu maeca. "Cam ne mit andanda," Gweno udwoko. "Wakan moko ni awiya mwa de"*	Bat said, "My friend has not seen my wife yet. I need to invite him to pay me a visit,". Luckily enough, the bat met the rooster and told him to come and pay him a visit. "Will you come?" asked the bat. "Of course, why won't I? I will come," replied the hen. The rooster went and told his wife of the message he got from his friend bat. They heard the call and indeed came for the visit. They were given a warm reception by the bat's family. "What are we going to offer them as food?" asked the bat's wife. "Of course, three of our children," replied the bat. The wife accepted and added, "This could be the best meal ever for our visitors,". Of their five children that God gave them, they took and slaughtered three of them leaving two children alive. When it was time for the meal, the rooster and his wife were over-excited of what the bat and his wife did. "Delicious food, we should keep some for our children, too," appreciated the

		bat's wife. "Indeed, it's delicious," replied the rooster. "Let's keep some for our children, too.
Evaluation 2	*Kinde ma ulik gicidu giku dhako pare kaliewo gwenu, juru ot pa gwenu ujolo ulik de kujol mamalu.*	When the bat and his wife also went to pay the rooster a visit, they were given a warm reception by the rooster's family.
Complication 3	*Re lemunyayu ngei cwiny ubedo sawa pa cam, jutoko dek macol kakamumako gwenu utum awia pare idwoko wang jol.*	However, what was so annoying was that at the meal's time, they were served green vegetables instead of a hen slaughtering his children in return to what the bat's family did when they went for a visit.

The generic structure of this Alur folktale is complex(A^O^C^E^R^C^E^C). In this pattern, Complication and Evaluation are recursive. The folktale contains three complications and two evaluations. It is introduced by an abstract stage, followed by Orientation and complication 1, which is evaluated and resolved. The folktale has two evaluation stages. Complications 2 and 3 are unresolved. All the stages except Abstract are also complex. This is because the stages are embedded with events, problems, solutions, and comments. Complications are the most intricate stages. They contain several messages, including smaller problems. The abstract presents the two actors (the bat and the rooster). Orientation describes the friendship of the two actors (bat and rooster) and the strong bond between them. Both were single and did everything together. Complication 1 reports about the violation of the friendship rule by the bat. In fact, out of jealousy, the bat's other friends wanted to destroy their strong friendship by separating them. They engineered a strategy to achieve their plan. They first took the bat to a nearby village, where he met a beautiful girl whom he married afterwards. Complication 1 is evaluated positively using the appraisal resources as ***extremely happy and happy***. Complication 1 is resolved as follows. When the rooster noticed that his friend Bat got married, he also took an interest in getting married, which he did. Therefore, their friends achieved their goal. Complication 2 reports that the bat offered his children for a meal. Complication 3 reveals that when the bats visited the rooster's family, they were

served green vegetables instead of meat. It is a problem because the bat had slaughtered and cooked his three children to welcome his guests (the rooster and his family members) and show respect and hospitality. He expected that the rooster would do the same. However, when the bats visited the rooster, they were just served green vegetables for the meal. The folktale ends without a coda. The above generic structure pattern appears to suggest that the coda is an optional stage in Alur folktales. It also underscores the complexity of the generic structure of Alur folktales, whereby some elements are recursive. Thus, the pattern reveals that the generic organisation of Alur folktales is not uniform.

Obligatory, Optional, and Recursive Stages of Alur Folktales

The analysis of the four Alur folktales showed that Alur folktales contain obligatory, optional, and recursive stages. According to Hasan (as cited in Campbell et al, 2018), all genres have a generic structure potential that is a linear combination of three types of elements: obligatory, optional, and recursive in a certain order. The obligatory elements and their sequence determine the genre of the text, while the optional elements, which may or may not appear in the text, add variation to the texts in the same genre. Recursive refers to stage ordering and iteration.

This study found that in Alur folktales, Abstract, Orientation, and Complication stages are

obligatory. They were attested in all four explored Alur folktales above. Hence, these stages are crucial in defining Alur folktales as a narrative genre. Halliday and Hasan (1989) maintain that obligatory elements define the genre to which a text belongs. Without these elements, the text will not be interpreted as belonging to that genre. According to Omoniyi and Akinseye (2020), it can therefore be inferred that what determines the generic type of a text is the obligatory elements it involves. We can ascribe a text to belong to a particular genre only if it is conclusive of all the obligatory elements required by that genre type. This study revealed that Evaluation, Resolution, and Coda are optional because they were absent from two of the four analysed folktales above. An optional element is one which can occur but is not under obligation to occur (Halliday & Hasan, 1989). Complication and evaluation are recursive in Alur folktales. This was evidenced in the generic structure of the Alur folktale *Pirang'o thwon gweno gikud ulik dong gitiye jurimo ungo* (Why Bat and Cock are no longer friends), whereby complication occurs three times and evaluation twice.

The exploration of the selected Alur folktales examined above demonstrated that one of the key distinctive genre patterns of the Alur folktale genre is its unique generic structure. The term Generic Structure (GS) is used by systemic linguists to describe functional structures of texts which often recur in society. The same structure is used again by different individuals, which makes the GS a socially shared way of getting tasks done. It adds to the meaning of the text, which is interpreted based on the stage it is in or what function it is serving. Generic structures are socially shared. They refer to the staging of genre, its attendant sequencing, and formalisation within the cultural experience. It is the way in which the elements of a text are arranged to match its purpose (Omoniyi & Akinseye, 2020).

Indeed, Alur folktales are a staged genre. They are structured into stages that are sequenced in a functional way such that each stage of the Alur

folktale narrative discourse performs a distinct function or functions in fulfilling its purpose. This is crucial because a discourse is not just an ordered succession of data but a structured whole where all information comes in at a certain functional stage (Van Mol & O'Donnell, 1993). Eggins (2004) argues that the reason that genres have stages is simply that we usually cannot make all the meanings we want to at once. Each stage of the structure represents a portion of meaning that the genre wishes to accomplish to become a successful genre. According to Reisigl (2021), narrations are perspective-based stories with a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Hence, the exploration of the generic structure of Alur folktales revealed that Alur folktales contain six stages (abstract, orientation, complication or complicating action, evaluation, resolution, and coda) that are organised to facilitate comprehension. Previous studies by Hanganu (2014), Dalimunte and Pramoolsook (2020) claim that stages have the potential contribution of facilitating folktale genre identification, classification, and comprehension because listeners and readers deconstruct the folktales' structures by examining each stage before determining the meanings of the entire folktales. However, as the selected Alur folktales analysed in this study show, not all Alur folktales have six stages. This is significant because it proves that Alur folktales have both genre-unique and universal properties. The selected Alur folktales also show that abstract, orientation, complication, complication, or complication, or complicating action are obligatory stages in Alur folktales. The finding on the abstract stage challenges some of the previous studies by Georgakopoulou and Goutsos (2004), Labov and Waletszky (1997), which claim that abstract is an optional stage. The abstract stage is obligatory due to the significant function it performs in Alur folktales. In fact, it is an attention grabber that identifies the key actors (protagonists or antagonists) and/or the folktale theme either in the title or in the opening clause. Evaluation, resolution and coda stages are optional. This result

also disagrees with several previous studies by Georgakopoulou and Goutsos (2004), Labov and Waletszky (1997), and Lambrou (2005). In Alur folktales, resolution and coda are intentionally omitted by the narrator to incite audience participation. This strategy proves that Alur folktales are interactive texts whereby both text internal entities (protagonists or antagonists) and text external players (the narrator and the audience) can interact. As for the evaluation stage, although it can be absent, multiple appraisal resources are used across Alur folktales to evaluate the actors and events. The analysis of the selected Alur folktales also shows that evaluation, complication, and resolution stages can be recursive. Iddings and Oliveira (2011) found a similar stage structure in the narrative they analysed. Finally, the analysed folktales revealed three generic structure patterns. This means that the generic structure of Alur folktales is not uniform. Hence, Alur folktales have different patterns of presenting information.

CONCLUSION

This paper analysed the generic structure of Alur folktales. Four Alur folktales were examined. From the onset, the exploration of the selected folktales revealed that Alur folktales are a staged narrative genre. They unfold in interrelated stages, each of which is assigned a specific communicative function. The stages contribute to the semantic architecture of the folktales and distinguish Alur folktales from non-narrative discourse. Alur folktales have six stages (abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation, resolution and coda) that are sequenced in various order. Although six stages exist in Alur folktales, not all Alur folktales have them. Abstract, orientation and complication are the obligatory stages that unveil the narrativity of Alur folktales. Evaluation, Resolution, and Coda are optional. In Alur folktales lacking Resolution and Coda stages, the narrator challenges audience members to work them out. Furthermore, a closer inspection of the selected Alur folktales also

showed that Alur folktales have different generic structure patterns.

It can therefore be concluded that the generic structure of Alur folktales is variable because they exhibit several patterns.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the generic structure of Alur folktales to comprehend how they organise meanings and achieve their communicative purpose. However, the results of this study only threw light on the macro or global structural patterns of Alur folktales in terms of stages. Future research could further examine their microstructural patterns to contribute to a deeper understanding of how the Alur folktale genre operates. Hence, the following areas are recommended for future research: phase structure analysis to understand the internal organisation of the stages and the exploration of the language features characterising interstage shifts of Alur folktales to comprehend how language realises the generic structure.

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