



## EXPLORE THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF CONTRASTING THE MEANS OF ADDRESS IN VIETNAMESE FAIRY TALES AND THAI FAIRY TALES

Songpon Baolopet<sup>1</sup>, Nguyen Thi Hong Chuyen<sup>2</sup>, Nguyen Thao Van<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rajabhat Udon Thani University, Thailand

<sup>2,3</sup> Tan Trao University

Email address: [ssvn.songpon@gmail.com](mailto:ssvn.songpon@gmail.com)

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### Abstract

The article is based on understanding and analyzing existing research works on address and means of address in Vietnamese and Thai fairy tales in two aspects: in the world and in Vietnam. In each aspect of research, we point out the research directions and results achieved by the authors with their works. From pointing out the research results related to the mentioned issues, we give an overview of research works related to comparing the means used to address in Vietnamese and Thai fairy tales to see the achieved results, the remaining things and confirm that conducting research on comparing the means of address in Vietnamese and Thai Fairy Tales is necessary.



## KHÁM PHÁ NỀN TẢNG LÝ THUYẾT CỦA ĐỐI CHIẾU CÁC PHƯƠNG TIỆN DÙNG ĐỂ XUNG HỒ TRONG TRUYỆN CỔ TÍCH VIỆT NAM VÀ TRUYỆN CỔ TÍCH THÁI LAN

Songpon Baolopet<sup>1</sup>, Nguyễn Thị Hồng Chuyên<sup>2</sup>, Nguyễn Thảo Vân<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rajabhat Udon Thani University, Thailand

<sup>2,3</sup> Đại học Tân Trào, Việt Nam

Email address: [ssvn.songpon@gmail.com](mailto:ssvn.songpon@gmail.com)

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### Từ khóa

khám phá, nền tảng lý thuyết,  
phương tiện xung hồ, truyện cổ  
tích, Việt Nam, Thái Lan

### Tóm tắt

Bài viết dựa trên việc tìm hiểu, nghiên cứu các công trình nghiên cứu đã có về xung hồ, các phương tiện xung hồ trong truyện cổ tích Việt Nam và truyện cổ tích Thái Lan trên hai phương diện: trên thế giới và ở Việt Nam. Trong từng phương diện nghiên cứu, chúng tôi chỉ ra các hướng nghiên cứu, các kết quả đạt được của các tác giả với các công trình. Từ việc chỉ ra những kết quả nghiên cứu thuộc các vấn đề đã nêu, chúng tôi đánh giá tổng quan các công trình nghiên cứu liên quan đến đối chiếu các phương tiện dùng để xung hồ trong truyện cổ tích Việt Nam và Truyện Cổ tích Thái Lan để thấy được những kết quả đạt được, những điều còn bỏ ngỏ và khẳng định việc thực hiện nghiên cứu về đối chiếu các phương tiện dùng để xung hồ trong truyện cổ tích Việt Nam và Truyện Cổ tích Thái Lan là cần thiết.

### 1. Introduction

Address in communication is a way to indicate person, thereby referring to the characters participating in communication. Address becomes the first and most important condition in identifying and establishing the subject's communication role.

Vietnam and Thailand both belong to the Southeast Asia region, sharing many similarities in terms of natural conditions, ecological environment, population, cultural characteristics, and maintaining good diplomatic relations across various fields. In the realm of literature, Vietnam and Thailand exhibit numerous similarities in literary genres, the distinctive features

of folk genres (including fairy tales), and the cultural mindset of their respective ethnic groups. Throughout the process of cultural exchange and integration, the interaction, exchange, and study of fairy tales have led to mutual influences, creating both similarities and differences between the two.

The article concentrates on delving into the theoretical underpinnings of comparing the means of address used in Vietnamese and Thai fairy tales. It underscores that numerous research initiatives have explored the means of addressing one another, ranging from theoretical perspectives to practical investigations focused on specific groups of subjects. Nevertheless,

these studies vary in purposes and methodologies, yielding specific outcomes. Notably, there has been a dearth of in-depth research comparing the methods of address in Vietnamese Fairy Tales and Thai Fairy Tales.

## 2. Research methods

To conduct this article, we use the document research method (also known as the bibliographic research method).

This method is applied in the process of collecting, analyzing, and evaluating published documents to support research and draw conclusions. It is a crucial part of the research process, allowing researchers to identify and access information from available document sources. Specifically:

Step 1. Clearly define the objectives and scope of the research to focus on searching for specific and relevant information.

Step 2. Search and gather documents relevant to the research topic, including books, articles, newsletters, official and unofficial documents from libraries, online databases, specialized journals, reputable websites, and other document sources.

Step 3. Check and evaluate the characteristics, reliability, and usefulness of each document. Select and filter out related and high-quality documents for use in the research process.

Step 4. Read and analyze the content of the selected documents. Synthesize information related to the topic, identify commonalities, differences, and diverse perspectives from various document sources.

Step 5. Apply and use the gathered information from the researched documents to support the development of ideas, arguments, or evidence for the proposed viewpoints in the research.

Therefore, the document research method is an essential tool that helps researchers access information, build a knowledge base, and delve deeper into the researched issue by surveying available documents.

## 3. Research results and discussion

### 3.1. Research on the category of address

#### 3.1.1. In the world

Addressing is one of the research areas that many researchers around the world are interested in

studying. Stemming from different purposes, methods, and scopes, researchers have produced other unique research results and contributed to the category of address. Based on an overview of published research works related to the article, we see some directions as follows:

Firstly, research on the category of address in a language:

Authors R. Brown and A. Gilman (1976), after reviewing the evolution and transformation of the concept, address form in languages such as Old French, Old Spanish, Old Italian, Old Portuguese, and Middle English, proposed the use of two letters, T and V (from the Latin words 'tu' and 'vos'), as universal symbols for pronouns denoting familiarity and pronouns denoting authority in all languages (Brown R. & Gilman A., 1976) [1]. In asymmetrical power relations, the person in a higher position receives V, while the person in a lower position receives T. To illustrate the relationship between address terms and power roles, the authors provided examples: In medieval Europe, the nobility generally used T to address commoners and were addressed back with V. The head of a household used T with slaves and servants and was addressed back with V. In 15th-century Italy, criminals used V to address priests, while priests addressed them with T... (Dung, 2003)[10].

Also according to the author, friendship is formed in the pronouns of European languages as a way to distinguish between equal people. Therefore, the role of friend can potentially be applied to address everyone. To demonstrate that, R. Brown and A. Gilman conducted a profile. As a result of the friendly face-to-face between people of low power, six pairs of address relationships between speaker and listener were formed.

When examining Western society, T. Holmes observes that the behaviors and addressing of those in authority and acquaintances are egalitarian. The author notes that emphasizing social distance and power interaction tends towards negative politeness, meaning a strategy of polite respect. Negative politeness underscores social distance and power differentials. According to R. Brown and A. Gilman, when assessing attitudes, the use of 'T' in addressing superiors by French collaborators was commented upon: polite and formal address always occurs between those who are unequal and have a distance or between those who are

not unequal but have a social relationship distance. Addressing in this direction is a strategy to respect individuals in social communication (Hofsede G.H., 1991) [13].

According to some language researchers, in most Western societies where friendly relationships are increasingly prevailing over power relationships, the use of the inclusive familiar pronoun 'T' in addressing has become common. The distinction between using 'T' and 'V' in terms of differentiation has gradually eroded, and to some extent, there is resistance. Brown P. and Gilman A. provide examples: for instance, in the United States, 'weaker' parents often encourage their children to address them by their first names; a professor might feel proud if students address them by their first name and may feel mocked if addressed with a title; even the U.S. President prefers people to address them with the familiar name 'Ike'; furthermore, in many Western cultures, in informal communication, people often use names to address each other to express familiarity (Dung, 2003) [10].

Author R.A. Hudson in *Sociolinguistics* also discussed the position of the communicator. However, he particularly emphasized the concept of power in determining the choice of address terms: "Whenever someone writes or speaks, they not only place themselves in relation to the entire rest of society but also link their actions to the ways in which communicative behaviors are classified. This scheme takes the form of a multidimensional matrix, much like the societal picture that he has constructed in his mind" [Citation according to (Phat, 2016)] [18].

Author Xiaomei Yang, in the work "Address form of English: rules and variations" conducted an in-depth study on the general rules of usage and a range of social factors (social status, gender, age, family relationships, occupational hierarchy, necessity, etc.) influencing the formation and selection of address terms. Each person may use different forms of address to express respect or affection towards others [Citation according to (Yang, 2010)] [23].

Author Anouk Buyle, in the work "Dear, my dear, my lady, your ladyship – Meaning and use of address term modulation by my" conducted an in-depth study on the use of the address term 'my' as part of the formula for address terms in a corpus of 8 English plays published from 1899 to 1912. Buyle's research, based on

qualitative analysis of the 8 works, aims to demonstrate that depending on context and action, the use of address terms—especially those containing 'my'—can encode certain aspects (enacting social relationships, marking relationships) within the communication dynamics between characters to mitigate potential harm [Citation according to (Buyle, 2020) [5].

Secondly, research compares address between languages

Author Hanna Bruns, in the work "Terms of Address: A contrastive investigation of ongoing changes in British, American and Indian English and in German" investigated changes in address terms in British English, American English, Indian English, and German. The results indicated profound societal changes (democratization, hierarchical systems, globalization of knowledge, and communication globalization) influencing the address. Particularly, the power hierarchy and democratization had the most significant impact on the changing choices of address terms. It can be said that this research work contributes to building a comprehensive picture of the use of address terms in English and German [Citation according to (Bruns, 2022)] [3].

In the work "The translation strategies on address term in love" authors Syahron Lubis and Nabila Mei Shara examined and identified address phrases in the movie 'Love, Rosie.' They demonstrated how these address phrases were translated into Bahasa Indonesia. Two translation strategies were employed: 1/ The addressing phrases searched for by the teacher include 6 addressing phrases which are pronouns; 17 phrases are relatives; 22 phrases are by name; 10 phrases are kinship forms; 2/ Translators applied translation strategies using Vinay and Dalbernet's theory (literal translation, borrowing, equivalent translation, etc.) (Citation according to (Shara, 2022)) [19].

Author Shih-Wen Wang, in the work "Forms of address and anthroponymic systems of three Taiwanese Aboriginal groups" pointed out that the appearance of address terms is not arbitrary or random but depends on the communicative purpose of the interacting characters. The choice of address terms is influenced by various factors, but for three Taiwanese aboriginal groups (Amis, Bunun, and Seedip), age is identified as a decisive factor (Citation according to (Wang, 2018)) [22].

Pho Thanh Cat, in the article “The address form of Chinese and Vietnamese with the traditional culture of the two countries of China and Vietnam” outlined 11 ways of using address terms in Vietnamese and 11 ways in Chinese. Comparing the use of address terms between the two countries, the author concluded: 1. Both countries extensively use kinship terms for addressing; 2. Chinese utilizes administrative titles for addressing more frequently than Vietnamese, which employs them relatively sparingly; 3. The ways of addressing spouses in Chinese and Vietnamese are distinctly different, influenced by the strong impact of the feudal ideology of “husband superior, wife inferior” in Chinese culture (Citation according to (Cat, 1999)) [6].

### *3.1.2. In Vietnam*

Address in Vietnamese are a subject of great interest to researchers, ranging from theoretical aspects to practical studies on specific groups. Based on an overview, we explore some research works on address terms in Vietnamese, including:

Firstly, research on address terms in Vietnamese.

Author Nguyen Van Chien with the article “Address terms in Vietnamese (Research on pragmatics and ethnology of communication) [4] has researched the units of address in Vietnamese. The research results show that: the units of address are diverse and not homogeneous in terms of units of address in Vietnamese. The way to explain this phenomenon is based on bases such as: attitude (polite or impolite), scope of use (family address and social address), interpersonal relationships in society (status, age, occupation, level of familiarity, etc.)

Author Ly Tyng Hieu, in the article “Vietnamese address terms – an ethnic-linguistic Perspective” (Hieu, 2015), aimed to highlight the characteristics and peculiarities of Vietnamese address terms. The author has determined that, in terms of origin, Vietnamese pronouns are divided into two types: Proper personal pronouns and provisional personal pronouns (including: nouns of kinship, nouns denoting social relationships, nouns denoting social status, nouns denoting people, nouns denoting personal names, pronouns only place). The author used a corpus from a language related to Vietnamese such as Brū surveyed in Daklak, Quang Tri to demonstrate [12].

Approaching address terms from the perspective of language-culture relationships in Vietnamese, author Huu Dat, in the article “Language-culture relationships in Vietnamese address terms” asserts that “pronouns occupy an insignificant position in the system of address terms”. According to Dat, “In Vietnamese, cultural aspects in behavior are clearly demonstrated through address terms in communication” (Dat, 2005)[9]. The author specifies that personal pronouns have a specific quantity and value within the general system of address terms for Vietnamese people. In communication, the participants exert influence, impacting the choice of address terms, and culture is manifested through these choices.

Secondly, in the comparative study of address in Vietnamese

Author Ha Ngoc Yen, in the work “Contrast the means used to address in Nguyen Huy Thiep’s short stories and Nguyen Ngoc Tu’s short stories” (Yen, 2009) [29] highlights certain similarities and differences in the use of address terms between the short stories of the two authors. While the similarities create a trend of “familiarization” in addressing outside societal contexts for both authors, the differences contribute to the distinctiveness in each writer’s style: “Nguyen Huy Thiep writes with intellect, while Nuyen Ngoc Tu writes with his own human instincts.”

In the work “Characteristics and usage of the class of Chinese address terms in comparison with Vietnamese” (Ham, 2004) [11] author Pham Ngoc Ham focuses on describing the means used to address in Chinese, such as pronouns with inherent functions, names, nouns indicating professions, positions, etc. Additionally, the author delves into analyzing the pragmatic meaning of address terms to illustrate similarities and differences in their usage in the two countries. However, the study does not adopt a functional grammar perspective and instead provides a general overview of the characteristics and usage of address terms in Chinese compared to Vietnamese.

Author La Thi Thanh Mai in her doctoral thesis “Address characteristics of Korean and Vietnamese” (Mai, 2014) [15] introduced and analyzed the panorama of address terms and how to use address terms in Korean. The work pointed out similarities (using address forms such as personal pronouns, clan names, full names, terms indicating positions, professions,

etc.) and differences in language, culture, and mindset (with 32 differences highlighted in the study) between Koreans and Vietnamese through their use of address forms.

In the work “Research on address terms through character dialogue in the work *Gone with the Wind* and the translation “*Gone with the Wind*” (Tuyen, 2016), author Tran Thi Kim Tuyen focused on clarifying the role, characteristics and meaning of the meaning of the word address in a specific work. However, the author has not compared the differences in terms of address between historical periods [21].

Hoang Anh Thi examined the similarities and differences in specialized pronouns and nouns used as pronouns for addressing between the Vietnamese and Japanese ethnicities to identify cultural characteristics of the two ethnicities in “Some cultural features of Japan and Vietnam through the examination of the address system” (Thi, 1995) [20].

Duong Thi Nu examines the cultural perspective, contrasting the semantics of kinship terms in English and Vietnamese. Some observations on the characteristics of address terms are discussed in the work “Some comments on the characteristics of address terms (comparing English – Vietnamese (Nu, 2003) and Some basic differences in the meaning of relative words ethnicity in English and Vietnamese from a cultural perspective (Nu, 2004) [17].

Specific studies on address terms within the family of Bui Minh Yen include “Address between spouses in Vietnamese families” (Yen B. M., 1990) [28]; “Address between siblings in Vietnamese families” (Yen B. M., 1993) and “Address between grandparents and grandchildren in Vietnamese families” (Yen B. M., 1999). The author’s comprehensive research work, “Address terms in the family to address terms in society among the Vietnamese people” [20], synthesizes the results of previous specific studies. In specific articles and the thesis, the author points out common characteristics of relationships between each pair of roles within the family, using this as a basis to identify address term characteristics between grandparents-grandchildren, parents-children, siblings, and spouses. The author concludes: “Address forms within the family are absolutely governed by the principles of respect, hierarchy (among members of the same generation and between members of different

generations), and behaviors associated with family customs, traditions, Vietnamese lineage... along with social norms governing family members” (Yen B. M., 2001) [28].

### **3.2. Research on address in Vietnamese fairy tales and Thai fairy tales**

#### *3.2.1. Research on address in Vietnamese fairy tales*

As a genre of literature that has existed since ancient times in the history of human literature, fairy tales have been described as “the cool, sweet milk nurturing the development of literature” (M. Gorki). Fairy tales, in particular, have captivated many generations, their beauty resonating throughout each individual’s life. The profound and powerful aesthetic values of folk tales not only attract listeners, storytellers, and readers but also intrigue researchers who engage in exploration, adaptation, translation, and dictionary compilation. Consequently, the field of fairy tale research has achieved remarkable accomplishments.

*Firstly*, studies on fairy tales from a literary perspective go beyond being introduced in folklore textbooks used for teaching in schools; magical fairy tales are deeply researched in specialized courses. Notable works include the Notable works include the preliminarily explore the problems of fairy tales through the story Tam Cam and problems of fairy tales through studying the story Tam Cam by Dinh Gia Khanh (1968, 1999). Other works such as “Fairy tales through the eyes of scientists” by Chu Xuan Dien (1987) and “Treasury of Vietnamese fairy tales” by Nguyen Dong Chi (2003) are also worth mentioning. Moreover, researchers in Vietnamese folklore have applied morphological theories by V. I. Prop and the type and motif patterns by Anti Aarne and Stith Thompson effectively. Exemplary works include research by Do Binh Tri (2006): “Legendary tale of Vietnam from the view of morphology of V.Ja.Propp”; Nguyen Tan Dac (2001): “Folk tales read by type and motif and From the stories of Kajong and Halek of the Cham to the type of Tam Cam stories in Southeast Asia”; Vietnamese magical fairy tales - plot structure features by Tang Kim Ngan (1994); Tran Duc Ngon: Research on the structure of magical fairy tales according to the morphological theory of Vladimia Iacoplevich Prop, Creative method of telling magical fairy tales for preschool children by Ha Nguyen Kim Giang (2001). Some other works explore folk tales from a cultural and ethnic

perspective, such as “Through betel chewing customs and the betel tale of the vietnamese people discussing sibling and spousal relationships” by Tang Kim Ngan (1984), “Perception of Buddhism in Vietnamese fairy tales” by Nguyen Huu Son and Lai Phi Hung (1993), and “Testing skills to get married - the Transformation from ethnological customs to Motifs in magical fairy tales” by Nguyen Thi Hue (1997). Research has also delved into symbols of water and its variations in Vietnamese folk tales by Ngô Thị Diễm Hằng (2004), customs in Vietnamese fairy tales by Nguyen Thi Minh Hoa (2010), among others.

Particularly, the story of Tam Cam has received research attention from many authors: Nguyen Xuan Lac (1991) with Try to propose an approach to the story of Tam Cam in the spirit of folklore, Pham Xuan Nguyen (1994) with Some thoughts on Tam Cam story, Nguyen Tan Duc with From the stories of Kajong and Halek of the Cham people to the Tam Cam story type in Southeast Asia, Nguyen Ngoc Dung with the artistic behavior and ideology of the people in the Tam Cam fairy tale... However, research works mainly approach fairy tales from a literary perspective (structure, type, genre, socio-cultural content). If the language of fairy tales is considered, it is only as an element that constitutes a literary work.

#### *Secondly, Research on address in fairy tales*

Recently, there has been a growing interest in the study of poetics, particularly in style poetics. However, this research primarily focuses on the superficial linguistic layers of the works rather than delving into the language of characters within the work or their interaction with family and societal relationships. Notable works in this area include studies such as “Poetic characteristics of Vietnamese folk literature genres” by Do Binh Tri (1999), “Poetry of folk literature” by Le Truong Phat (2000); “Issues of folk literature poetics” by Nguyen Xuan Duc (2003) and the article “Understanding the linguistic style of fairy tales” by Ho Thi Thanh Mai (2001)...

Author Le Thi Kim Cuc, in her thesis “Linguistics characteristics of communicative roles in Vietnamese magical fairy tales” conducts a deep analysis of the language characteristics of family and societal communication roles in Vietnamese magical fairy tales (Cuc, 2015). Additionally, Le Thi Kim Cuc has a series of in-depth articles on the addressing forms of characters

in magical fairy tales, such as “Understanding the language characteristics of characters’ communication in Tầm Cám fairy tale and some pedagogical conclusions” published in the Journal of Education, Issue 271 - Part 1, and “Addressing Forms Between Magical Forces and Mortals in Family Communication in Vietnamese Magical Folk Tales” (Cuc, 2014) [7]. Her conclusions include: 1/ Magical forces use addressing and calling more than mortals; 2/ Kinship nouns are the most frequently used; 3/ Addressing is not only shown by incorrectly corresponding address, but also by incorrect corresponding address; Addressing is expressed through a change in the form of self-address.

Author Phan Thi Linh Huong, in her research project “Language characteristics of characters in Vietnamese fairy tales in the Vietnamese primary school program from a communication perspective” surveys and analyzes the language characteristics of characters in Vietnamese fairy tales in terms of communication factors and addressing forms. From the survey results, classification, and analysis of addressing terms, the author concludes: “Regarding the quantity of addressing elements in spoken (explicit) and non-spoken (implicit) elements in Vietnamese fairy tales, there are 43 instances; concerning the frequency of using means of address in Vietnamese fairy tales, there are 316 instances, with the family clan terms comprising 132/316 instances; the least used addressing method is a special type, with 38 instances; the widespread use of family clan terms is evidence of the current trend of ‘familialization’ in addressing.” (Huong, 2023) [14].

#### *3.2.2. Research on address in Thai fairy tales*

Author Han Jianghua, in the article “A Study of Kinship Terms in Thai from the Culture and Cognitive Perspectives,” highlights that terms related to family relationships in the Thai language can be divided into two types based on origin: indigenous family terms and foreign family terms. They can also be categorized into civil family terms and royal family terms based on the users. Thai family terms show distinctions in six different dimensions: parentage, age, gender, generational and relative relationships, blood relationships, and kinship relationships, users, and usage opportunities. The unique usage rules of Thai family terms reflect the Thai people’s concepts of superiority and inferiority, older and younger generations, intimacy, and distance. Additionally,

Thai family terms also reflect the forms of marriage experienced by the Thai people, demonstrating their mental orientation towards familiarity, psychological distance, and shadow thinking (Bruns, 2022)

Author Somsong Buruspat, in the study "การแปรตามภูมิภาคของภาษาและวัฒนธรรมกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ ๓ แห่งในเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้

(A regional variation of selected ethnic languages and cultures in Southeast Asia)," dedicates entire chapter 5 to discuss basic address terms in the Thai language and other languages. In this chapter, the author analyzes the variations of basic address terms in Thai in Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam, providing a comparison of these terms and the system of self-addressing in Thai in Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam (Buruspat, 2018) [4].

Author Jatuporn Dompraiwan (จตุพร โดมไพรัช ย์), in the study "การเปรียบเทียบระบบคำเรียกญาติในภาษาไทยและภาษาเมียนมา (เข่า)" (A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Art Program in Thai - Comparing Kinship Address Systems in Thai and Yao), investigates the system of terms for relatives in Thai and Yao languages. The study compares the differences in terms referring to relatives in Thai and Yao and explores the cultural nuances expressed through the kinship term systems (จตุพร โดมไพรัช ย์, 2012) [30].

#### 4. Conclusion

Exploring the theoretical foundation through contrasting the means of addressing in Vietnamese and Thai fairy tales marks a crucial initial step in assessing existing research outcomes on this matter. This approach opens up opportunities to gain deeper insights into the cultures and languages portrayed in classical oral literary works. At the same time, affirming: Address becomes the first and most important condition in identifying and establishing the subject's communication role. Learning about address in fairy tales is one of the fundamental factors that help form the thoughts, emotions and intelligence of each person; preserve and transmit the cultural characteristics of the Vietnamese and Thai ethnic communities.

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