

## **Chapter Five**

### **Conclusion**

This study has shown how the concept of Theme functions as a point of departure in popular sports writing specifically in the genre of tennis game. The six texts are analysed sentence by sentence in terms of the types of Themes used- Textual, Interpersonal and Topical (Ideational) and the thematic structures. This study seeks to answer question on the choices of themes used in the sports texts. It also seeks to answer question on the prominent thematic structures found in the sports texts.

It was found that the sports texts has the highest incidence of Topical Theme with a percentage of 75.6%, followed by the Textual Theme (19.8%) and the Interpersonal Theme (4.4%). Thematic structures are also widely exploited by the writers in these sports texts. Passive structure has the highest incidence (37.7%), followed by Preposed Theme (30.1%), Predicated Theme (16.9%), Thematized Comment (11.3%) and the lowest is Thematic Equatives (0.3%).

The analysis shows that through the different types of Themes, cohesion and coherence in text can be achieved. This is made possible especially through the different metafunctional categories.

Knowledge of how Theme and Rheme functions in a text is vital for second language learners. If students have the knowledge of how patterns of Theme and Rheme enable the organization of different types of texts, they can consciously draw on this knowledge to organize their own texts more effectively. This could help learners write a piece of text appropriately pertaining to the context and situation.

To language teachers, it is important to incorporate knowledge of textual grammar overtly into their teaching programs. Students can be taught to control the use of textual Themes, that is through the use of conjunctions and other connecting words and phrases effectively. For example, if a text is a story or event organized by time, the textual Themes used may be *and, then, as, after* and *next*. In contrast, in a text meant to instruct, explain or persuade, the preferred textual Themes may be *first, second, finally, however, even though*.

The meaning of Theme is also valuable in the teaching of reading especially when students need to read information-rich texts like academic texts. Students can be taught overtly how Themes and Rhemes function as a signpost and point of departure for a text. Students' attention can be drawn on how layers of Theme develop clause by clause and then into paragraphs and finally emerge as a piece of text.

As this study focuses primarily on the general perspective of Theme in popular sports texts and how it functions as a point of departure in the message, there is scope for suggestion to further consolidate the study.

Firstly, the present data of Theme can be re-examined but from the level of clause to see whether the results produced is the same when examined at the sentence or clause complex level. This would provide some insights into how the internal structure of Theme functions at clause level and at clause complex level in a text. It is expected that choices in the system for one level will be critically different from those at another level. For example, the two sentences shown below. Sentence (a) is a clause and sentence (b) is a clause complex, consisting of two clauses. Sentence (a) has one Theme, *John* whereas in sentence (b) there are two Themes, *John* and *so he*.

- a) //John bought a car//.
- b) //John bought a car// so he drove it around the town//.

These questions nevertheless, have not been addressed in Systemic Functional Linguistics extensively, apart from some initial exploratory studies (eg., Fries and Francis 1992). Thus, it is worth exploring the different levels of analysis that will enrich the text analysis data.

Secondly, it is beyond the scope of this study to study the relation of the experiential content of the Theme to the generic structure of the texts. It is said that Thematic progressions and the experiential content of the Themes do not

occur randomly in the texts (Fries 1995). In my study, the rich experiential content of the Theme was revealed. Hence, further studies on Themes and the generic structures of the texts would be beneficial and further enrich the understanding of how writers organize their message.

Thirdly, further studies on the system of transitivity and mood can be conducted on the texts to see how messages are organized in these systems. The relationship between the three meanings in grammar could be drawn to facilitate a clearer perspective on the textual meanings (Please refer to Section 2.1). This will produce an interesting overall pattern in the texts.

Fourthly, this study has shown a wide distribution of themes in popular sports writing. These findings can be compared to the distribution of Themes in other sports writing and genres.

Finally, this manual text analysis has used a small corpus as the research is difficult and time-consuming. It would further enrich the study if a bigger corpus is used to validate the results found. The results might be very beneficial to the study concerned.

Lastly, this study has served to give a general perspective of Theme in popular sports writing of the tennis game specifically. The above recommendations might interest educators as well as second language learners with regards to the teaching and learning of the English Language.