

Chapter 6 Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of this thesis, along with conclusions and suggestions for further research.

6.2 Summary

Chapter one presented an introduction to the Bisu people and their language, explained the research goal and methodology of the thesis, and presented a review of literature relevant to a grammatical study of the Bisu noun phrase.

Chapter two provided a phonology outline and introduction to the orthography used in this thesis.

The word classes relevant to the noun phrase were identified and discussed in Chapter three. Several features of adjectives were discussed in regard to whether Bisu adjectives are an independent word class or a distinct sub-class of verbs. More data and more in-depth analysis of Bisu adjectives is necessary before a conclusion may be drawn.

The function and features of the noun phrase in its syntactic environments were discussed in Chapter four. Chapter five presented the constituents that make up the internal structure of the noun phrase, and gave particular attention to two constituents whose behaviour is somewhat idiosyncratic: *mang* and case markers. The Bisu word *mang* has been previously identified as a classifier. Several key features of *mang* were investigated to test the hypothesis “*mang* is a classifier” and the alternative hypothesis “*mang* is a number marker.” The second hypothesis is more strongly supported, and so *mang* is assigned to the number marker word class,

marking “singular,” along with two other Bisu words marking “dual” and “plural greater than two.”

Bisu also has several words that occur when a NP’s semantic content is a poor match with its syntactic role, such as when inanimate items function as subjects (marked with *yang*) and animate items function as objects (marked with *na*). Based on this behaviour, these words are assigned to the word class “case markers,” along with instrument markers and accompaniment markers. It is interesting to note that the inanimate subject marker and the instrument marker are both *yang*. This suggests an intuitive link between “non-AGENTIVE” causes in Bisu. The focus marker *ma*´ is also analyzed and assigned to the case marker word class, while noting that *ma*’s function is best understood in the discourse context.

6.3 Results

The analytical work represented by this thesis contributes to the documentation and preservation of an endangered language of Southeast Asia. It is a resource for language development work and translation work involving the Bisu language.

6.4 Recommendations for further study

The opportunities for further study of the Bisu language are practically limitless. In terms of grammatical studies, clause predicates and adverbial expressions are excellent candidates for further investigation. Within the noun phrase, several important questions about adjectives remain unanswered and no systematic explanation of the prefix *ang-* yet exists. Case markers are an interesting topic for more investigation, particularly from a discourse/participant reference perspective.