

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

This thesis has described five sources of textual cohesion in Sgaw Karen oral folk narratives: discourse macro-structure, linkage and conjunction, participants, lexical items and substitution and ellipsis.

In Sgaw Karen, textual cohesion can be achieved by the macro-structure of the text, which is like a backbone or a skeleton on which various parts of the discourse are attached. In addition, the macro-structure can be compared to a map showing the location of the different parts of the discourse. In addition, the macro-structure has correlations with some other sources of cohesion. For example, an increase of participant identification by zero is more frequently detected in the Peak of a climactic story than elsewhere.

Cohesion of the text is also achieved by linkage and conjunction. Linkage operating between sentences is used as a chief device for maintaining the structural cohesion of the text while only a few inter-paragraph linkage occurrences were observed. However, a new type of inter-paragraph linkage was found in the data, which I termed "body-head" linkage. Body-head linkage requires a cross-reference between a paragraph-medial sentence and the first sentence of the following paragraph.

Conjunction also contributes to textual cohesion. Most conjunctions function straightforwardly. However, the conjunction $\sigma\sigma^5$ 'and' has a double function. Usually signalling a temporal succession, $\sigma\sigma^5$ may function as an additive conjunction in a discourse section which is not part of the event-line.

Participant identification maintenance also plays an important role in maintaining textual cohesion in Sgaw Karen folk narratives; it helps the audience to trace the participants in the story. Name identification appears to be the most common method of

maintaining a named main participant's identification while a nameless main participant is usually referred to by repetition.

The selection of vocabulary also contributes to cohesion of the text. Based on the texts studied, Sgaw Karen makes use of a repetition type of reiteration as the chief mechanism in maintaining lexical cohesion. Nominal classifiers also play an important role in sustaining cohesion, in the sense that each of them agrees with the physical appearance of the noun it classifies. Back reference to a lexical item may be by a nominal classifier alone, without the narrator needing to repeat that lexical item.

Substitution and ellipsis also have contribution to textual cohesion. Substitution, however, plays a greater role in maintaining textual cohesion than does ellipsis. According to the texts studied, nominal substitution in Sgaw Karen usually involves the word *ta²* 'thing' which functions as a general nominal substitute, not as a general noun as it seems to be. The word *ta²* can be used to substitute for a noun of any type, except for a human being, while a "general noun" refers to the most general noun in a certain semantic domain (Halliday and Hasan 1976:274).

In a similar manner, the verb *ma³* 'do, make' is commonly used as a substitute for a verb phrase. Moreover, it was observed that substitution may operate even at the sentence level, i.e., a series of sentences is replaced with the nominal substitute *ta²* while ellipsis, on the other hand, operates differently; it results in the deletion of an entire noun phrase in the subject or object slot of a clause. However, ellipsis appears to play a less important role in maintaining textual cohesion than does substitution since only one type of nominal ellipsis was observed in the data.

Textual cohesion is a very broad topic covering many aspects of discourse. In this thesis I have described only five sources of textual cohesion. In addition, themes and sub-themes of a story may be significant in constituting textual cohesion in Sgaw Karen.

Information blocks and information rate, as proposed by Grimes (1984), may also play an important part in sustaining cohesion of the text in this language. These await further research.

Further study of other discourse genres in Sgaw Karen may also enable us to have a better understanding and a clearer picture of discourse structures in this language. As the focus of this thesis has been cohesion in Sgaw Karen spoken folk narratives, the data consists of third-person narration. Studies of first-person narratives and written narratives will no doubt provide further insights as to how textual cohesion in Sgaw Karen is achieved.

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