CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary

The purpose of this thesis study is to identify and analyze selected discourse features of folk narratives of Jirel, one of the Tibeto-Burman languages of Nepal.

Chapter one presented brief information on Jirel people, their distribution, language classification, a summary of Jirel phonology, and a general introduction to texts used in the thesis.

Chapter two discussed discourse boundary analysis; change in time, change in location, change in participant(s), and phonological markers as the main elements to signal discourse boundaries. The closings of paragraphs or episodes were signaled by the main verbs of the last sentences. Sometimes, a pause was also heard at the ending of a paragraph. The reasons why pauses were not heard at the end of every paragraph or major boundary is a topic for further research.

Change in time was signaled either by a temporal word/phrase, or by an adverbial clause (mainly tail-head and summary-head linkage clause or back-reference). Change in location was indicated by a locative word/phrase, which might not be overtly marked in some cases. Change in participant(s) was denoted by introduction,

re-introduction and by a change in agent role or focus. Finally, a pause and change in intonation served as phonological markers in the present Jirel texts. A longer pause was heard between the title and the introduction or setting and occasionally before the starting of the peak. Change in intonation (faster speech) occurred at the beginning of the peak. This was observed in only one text. The reason for diminished occurrence of this feature needs further investigation with many more folk narratives. For the present Jirel texts, change in time and location occasionally reinforced by a pause and/or change in participant(s) were the most common combination of features of boundary markers. Out of the total forty-three paragraphs, twenty nine of them were marked by these boundary markers. Similarly, change in location and participant(s), seldom reinforced by a pause, were the least common paragraph boundary markers. When the boundary markers are counted, the maximum and the minimum numbers of boundary markers or features to mark the paragraph or episode were four and two respectively. Most of the paragraphs were marked by two boundary markers and the episodes by three boundary markers.

After describing the discourse boundaries in chapter two, the surface structure features were described in chapter three. All the surface structure features were found in Jirel texts, though not in each text, since the title, the closure and the finis are optional. The reasons for a narrator to provide or omit a title needs further analysis of additional Jirel folk narratives. There was an absence of the peak′ episode feature in

all four texts analyzed. A usual Jirel folk narrative begins with a problem, reaches the problem at the point of maximum tension, and keeps untangling or working out the details of the resolution. It then comes directly to a conclusion or the closure. If the closure is encoded, it is normally marked by a moral. In some cases, the narrative may not even encode the closure. But in such a case, the Jirel audience/reader deduces the missing information through other means such as postpeak contents and/or the finis. For example, the "JACKAL" text does not mark the closure. However, as the postpeak states that the villagers were able to solve their problem by killing the cunning old jackal, the audience/reader can tell that the story is ended. The finis is even less important than the closure, and it makes little difference whether it is marked or omitted.

Important features that mark the prepeak episodes are the use of more connectives, frequent occurrences of non-storyline verbs, including the secondary storyline verbs, fewer participants and medium or lower verb density. Significant signals that indicate the peak episode(s) of a narrative are decreased use of connectives, use of (primary) storyline verbs only, concentration of participants, high verb density and heightened vividness. The postpeak episode(s) is indicated with almost the same features that mark the prepeak episodes. For example, features like decreased use of participants and lower or medium verb density are also found in the postpeak episode(s). Different verb density graphs may be obtained by including or excluding secondary storyline

verbs. However, the changes in the verb density graphs do not affect the structure in the peak episode(s) section of the verb density graphs.

Chapter four dealt with the plot structure. All the Jirel texts analyzed have all plot structure features suggested by Longacre (1996:36) with the exception of the final suspense. This is because a Jirel narrative usually builds up towards the climax, states the climax, resolves the problem or conflict, and then stops abruptly.

Salience analysis of storyline was the content of chapter five. This chapter presented how storyline and non-storyline or other information of the text is arranged by using different salience scheme bands. Except for the flashback and the routine/script predictable action sequences, all the salience scheme proposed by Longacre (1996:28) were found in Jirel texts. There are not enough data in present Jirel texts to prove the presence of these two missing salience bands.

The salience scheme bands are arranged according to their saliency, from the most salient to the least salient. The most salient scheme band marks the primary storyline in a Jirel text. The least salient band is represented by adverbial clauses that hold the text together.

Band 1 clauses, the primary storyline, are marked by the verbs with the suffix -*duk* '-Past Disjunct'. It includes various types of action, motion, speech act, event proper and cognitive event verbs.

The secondary storyline, band 2, clauses are indicated by the verbs with the suffix *-cyakwa* '-Disc', which describe lesser important actions/events (excluding an event proper) in the text.

Background activities/events, band 3, describe those actions/events in which the activity is prolonged, repetitive and gradual. These clauses have a lower saliency than the clauses used in the primary and the secondary storyline bands. The clauses report to an audience/reader events like keep on looking upon something, action with continual aspect like catching and eating something and so forth that are not needed to move the story further. Setting band 4 tells of time, place and participants, which is further removed from the background activities/events band 3. This band consists of existential and stative verbs. Clauses with negation, condition, suggestion, question and pretension verbs are included in irrealis band 5, which tells what could have happened or what did not happened instead of reporting what really happened. Evaluative materials are the content of evaluations band 6. In the present Jirel texts, evaluative materials were mainly indicated by morals and occasionally with evaluative clauses although there are several types of evaluative phrases that speak of good or bad about a certain thing or a participant.

Finally, cohesive materials were discussed in cohesion band 7. Cohesion between sentences, paragraphs and episodes were marked by adverbial clauses (mainly

tail-head and summary-head linkage clauses or repetitive back-references) and occasionally by relative clauses.

6.2 Suggestions for further research

This thesis analysis is based on only a small sample of folk narratives, leaving some of the analytical questions unsolved. Future research with more folk narratives, non-folk narratives and other text genres would not only be helpful to solve the questions raised in this paper but may yield other interesting results on the study of Jirel discourse. For example, reasons for the narrator's employing or not employing a title, pauses, faster speech at or around the peak, etc. may be revealed in a future study.

A detailed description of verb morphology taking discourse into consideration also will be another topic for further study. For example, when a Jirel speaker uses verbs with suffix *-duk* '-Past Disjunct', it is evident that an action or event took place. But when the speaker uses verbs with the suffix *-cyakwa* '-Disc' with the particle *-lo* '-RI', the speaker not only disclaims responsibility for what he tells relative to the verbs with the suffix *-duk* '-Past Disjunct', but he also casts doubt if the action or event really took place. Detailed research is required on the use of this suffix. There are also some other suffixes, such as *-cya*, *-cye*, *-i*, etc., on which further study is needed. As seen in a few cases in this thesis, the meanings of suffixes like *-cya* and *-cye* are glossed with an 'x' indicating unknown gloss or meaning at the moment.

Similarly, the meaning of suffix -i is glossed as 'will' or 'NPC' or 'NPD'. Depending on the context, this suffix indicates a command, a suggestion or a speaker's uncertainty in doing something. The research findings of the salience hierarchy for Jirel represents just the beginning. These findings should be further tested using Longacre's second hypothesis for the use of salience schemes in dominance relationships in local spans of text.

Although these are not all the possible topics of study within discourse analysis, the selected discourse features of Jirel folk narratives do present a logical unit whose study will yield significant insight into these particular narratives. The writer hopes that this thesis will add a valuable asset in the linguistic investigation of the Jirel language. It is also hoped that this work will be useful to people who are interested in knowing about discourse features of this particular language, and also to others who do the same kind of study in other Tibeto-Burman languages which are related to Jirel. More broadly, this thesis should be useful for those linguists who wish to carry out the same type of study in other Tibeto-Burman languages.