CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary

This thesis provides a preliminary analysis of the sentence final particles as spoken by the Jerway dialect speakers in the Eastern Shan State of Myanmar and Northern Thailand. The Jerway dialect has 87 sentence final particles in three major categories: declarative, jussives, interrogative; and one miscellaneous category. There are 42 declarative particles, 32 jussive particles, 10 interrogative particles and 3 miscellaneous particles.

The declarative particles are divided into seven categories: statement, weak assertion, probability, possibility, appreciation, contra-expectation and negative prediction. The jussive particles are divided into eight categories: command, negative, mitigative, exhortative, hortative, proposal, advisory and precaution. The interrogative particles are divided into inquiry questions and yes-no questions.

In terms of syntactic surface structure, sentence final particles contrast with non-sentence final particles such as noun particles, verb particles, adverb particles, and connective particles, in both position (sentence finally) and function.

This research focused on various functional areas of each particle, such as sentence type restrictions, subject-person reference restrictions, polarity marking, and temporal reference in addition to syntactic structure to elaborate the role of sentence final particle in Akha syntax.

Sentence type and subject-person reference are obligatory functions for almost every sentence final particle. The sentence type function determines the particle type, i. e. the category or subcategory to which a certain sentence particle belongs. Subject-

person indicates whether the subject is singular or plural, providing a discourse level method of maintaining participant reference in the face of the widespread zero anaphora found in Akha discourse.

The polarity marking and temporal reference functions are rather optional functions for some of the sentence final particles. Polarity marking indicates negative or positive sentences, with the negative marker generally co-occurring with either the prohibitive verb prefix (PROH) $t^h\grave{a}$ or the denial verb prefix (NEG) $m\grave{a}$. Temporal reference is usually marked by the two contrastive tones on the verb suffix 'ə,' the mid tone 'ə̄' being non-past and the mid-tone 'ə̀' being past. However, when a sentence final particle takes this function, the verb suffix is deleted and the tense is taken over by the sentence particle. Hence, when the sentence final particle *mɛ* is in the mid-tone *mɛ̄*, it is a non-past tense marker and when in the low tone *mɛ̀*, it is a past tense marker.

6.2 Further research

As stated above, this paper represents a preliminary analysis of the Akha sentence final particles, attempting to describe the role and function of individual particles, mostly in simple sentences where each particle stands as a sentence final. Only in a few cases have particles in more complex sentences been discussed. Further research is needed in order to have a more complete view of sentence final particles in Akha grammar in all possible manifestations.

Further research is also needed on the ordering of sentence final particles. The Akha sentence final particles seem to have clear rules of concatenation where particles from different categories could come into different strings of concatenation to make meaningful communication in Akha society. The concatenation of sentence particles involves linguistic maneuvers to configure an unbiased or an evidential message with a speaker's attitude and feeling toward an addressee.

The concatenation of sentence particles may help us to find out rules of speech behaviour of the Akha language by studying which particles out of all three categories are usually chained together with particles from their own category, as well as from other categories. The concatenation of particles from all three categories will be most interesting, because it show us how an evidential declaration is seasoned by the speaker's attitude and feelings that are expressed in jussive particles.

The compatibility of some particles to be chained together with particles from other categories is also great interest, because preliminary observation shows that only a few particles may concatenate with particles from all three categories simultaneously. For example, in non-interrogative particle concatenation, evidential particles are successively followed by attitudinal particles (jussives) and emotional particles (jussives). Example 6.2.1 illustrates a common daily expression as an example of sentence particle concatenation, for which a natural English translation is really difficult.

(6.2.1)

ʔí	mɛ̄	dʒé	bā	ʔélɔ̀
go	(001-2/3PSS)	(086-3QMS)	(009-1NFS)	(064-2PHS)

là	lɛ́	lā	
(063-2PHS)	(084-2YQS)	(083-2YQS)

[Are you] insisting that [you heard person A says that] person B is going, [but person C says] person B is not going, [but you say that Person A says] person B is going so he is, [and you are trying to get] person D to agree with you?

Example 6.2.1, which is merely made up of one verb and five sentence particles, displays undeniably crucial role that the sentence final particles have in the grammar of the Jerway dialect. A thorough analysis of Akha sentence particles concatenation rules as spoken by Jerway dialect speakers may give us interesting speech behaviour of the language as well.

An additional important direction for further research would involve particle comparison among the Akha-Hani dialects spoken in Myanmar, Thailand Laos, China and Vietnam. Such research may help to predict language intelligibility among the related dialects. For example, while lexical correspondence in terms of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs between some Hani and Akha dialects is higher than 80 percent, they are unintelligible to each other because Hani dialects have lost many sentence particles which still see rigorous usage in Akha dialects.