

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

#### 6.0 Summary of findings

Evidence from the analysis of Lahu Shi expressions has supported the claim that language is not an autonomous system that can be characterized in isolation from other aspects of cognition. It shows that cognitive abilities are reflected in Lahu Shi and that they are not only relevant to lexical expressions but also grammatical expressions. This is possible with what is known about cognitive processing. That is to say, it is possible because an expression's meaning can be treated as conceptual content which can be shaped and construed.

Chapter 4 focuses on construal – our ability to conceive the scene in more than one way, one aspect of which is profiling. It has reached the first objective that cognitive abilities (perspective and profiling) are reflected in Lahu Shi. It shows that aspect is a matter of how the speakers construe a situation (by means of profiling). That is, profiling is responsible for the difference between aspect markers. To be more precise, aspect is a linguistic device used to impose a specific profile on some conceptual content, and each language has its own way to impose a profile on the scene. In other words, whichever facet of the scene is chosen to encode linguistically varies from language to language. The facet symbolized and conventionalized linguistically in one language may not be so in another.

In addition, evidence from the analysis of the Lahu Shi aspect markers has supported the claim that grammar and meaning are inseparable and attained the second objective that the difference in nature of construal between aspect markers shows up grammatically, and semantically. In case of the grammaticalized forms *chehd* and *tod*, it appears that some loss of meaning is involved, but that they are far

from being semantically void. Furthermore, they still have a clear relationship to their lexical source. The analysis shows that the difference between semantic effect of *chehd* and that of *tod* are motivated by their lexical meanings.

This thesis also examines the evidentiality system in Lahu Shi language. The analysis illustrates the nature of evidentials that allow the Lahu Shi speaker to communicate without any outside stimulus. It has reached the last objective that Lahu Shi evidentials function as grounding elements. It shows that an evidential enables the discourse participants to establish mental contact with the designated process so that they are able to determine the epistemic status (the way in which information is measured, for example probability, reality etc.), and the source of information (whether it is personal or hearsay observation). This leads to the successful communication. Section 5.3 illustrates that by visual particle, it does not mean that it is used to encode every visual experience. It is employed only when the speaker is just a **glancer** of the situation, that is he neither pays attention nor participates in the situation. This relationship between the speaker and the situation has to do with the source of epistemic nature of *lar*.

## 6.1 Further investigation

The research findings of Lahu Shi aspect and evidentiality represents just the beginning. These findings should be further tested with more data. Also, this thesis is analyzed at sentence level. Further research with discourse taken into consideration would be helpful to uncover the conceptual structures and significant insights of Lahu Shi aspect and evidentiality which cannot be found at sentence level.

It is found that there are three independent motion verbs: *kae* 'go', *lar* 'come' and *veh* 'motion away' and two motion verb particles: *-e*, *-aq*. They all have a good etymology that can be traced back to ProtoLoloish: *\*ka + \*e*, *\*la'*, *\*we*, *\*-ay'*, and *-la'* respectively. One question arises as to why the language needs all these motion verbs and

particles. It seems to be redundant. One possible answer is that the directive construction in Lahu is in the process of grammaticalization. This can be another topic for further study. Interestingly, *kae* 'go' in Lahu Shi consists of two morphemes *ka* + *e*, even though it is considered as a single word by the speakers. There is some evidence showing that *ka* can occur without the suffix *-e*. Compare the following sentences. (1) *Lao kax to kae cheh yaog.* 2) *Lao kax lo ka veh cheh yaog.* These findings need to be further investigated.

A detailed description of Lahu Shi ground system also will be another topic for further study. For example, what is the function of the final particles *yaog*, *awg*. They seem not to be merely declaratives. There are some other particles that could be miratives *aq* and *law* which should be further tested.