THE MORPHEME *LE* IN NORTHERN SOTHO: A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS.

BY

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DECLARATION

I, **MAKOMA DONCY SEJAPHALA**, hereby declare that **THE MORPHEME *LE* IN NORTHERN SOTHO: A LINGUSTIC ANALYSIS**, submitted to the University of Limpopo, has not previously been submitted for a degree purposes at this or any other university and that it is my own work in design and in execution. All the reference materials contained herein have been duly acknowledged.

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STUDENT   NUMBER
200729373

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the following:

My family :   Botšhilo   Anna   Sejaphala (My mother),

Tumelo   Mokhanyane   Sejaphala,

Miyelani   Ingrid   Sejaphala   and

My late father: Papalala   Wilson   Sejaphala

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the morpheme *le* in Northern Sotho. It is sometimes confusing to establish the correct semantic function which the morpheme *le* expresses; and also to classify it into a certain word category. This study suggests the morphological features which the morpheme *le* bears in terms of its word categorization. The morpheme *le* in Northern Sotho can be used as a conjunction, a demonstrative pronoun, an agreement, a preposition, a copulative, an adverb and a complement as well.

It is suggested in this study, ways of identifying the semantic function of the morpheme *le* in various contexts. This study reflects that the morpheme *le* in Northern Sotho can be used to denote: possession, accompaniment, location, additive focus, existentialism and honorifics.

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CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Northern Sotho has a variety of morphemes that can be classified into various word categories. For example, it is possible to classify some morphemes into nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, and conjunctives. However, when it comes to the morpheme *le*, it is difficult to do so since it can function in various capacities, such as, a preposition, conjunctive, concord, demonstrative, copulative and locative. Semantically, the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* can denote various meanings such as showing possession, accompaniment, and location.

A study of the morpheme *le* is therefore crucial in Northern Sotho so as to clarify semantic problems and word categorization to the Northern Sotho language users.

1.2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Louwrens (1994:113) acknowledges the work of Crystal (1991:223) wherein the concept morpheme is defined as :

> The minimal distinctive unit of grammar, and the central concern of morphology. Its original motivation was as an alternative to the notion of word which had proved to be difficult to work with in comparing languages. Words, moreover, could be quite complex in structure, and there was a need for a single concept to interrelate such as roots, prefix, compound, etc. The morpheme, accordingly was seen primarily as the smallest functioning unit in the composition of words.

What Louwrens (1994:113) emphasizes in this regard is that a morpheme is the smallest meaningful unit in language. From this definition, it is clear that a morpheme is the smallest unit of language which is meaningful.

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1.2.1. Semantic problem of the morpheme *le* in Northern Sotho

The morpheme *le* poses many semantic challenges as it expresses a variety of meanings. For example:

1. a. *Ke na **le** dijo.*
        (I have food.)

    b. *Ke na **le** Asthma e sego TB.*
        (I have Asthma not TB.)

    c. *Tate o na **le** mma.*
        (Daddy is with mummy.)

    d. *Ke be ke **le** toropong.*
        (I was in town.)

    e. *Ngwana **le** yena o tla lla.*
        (The child too will cry.)

    f. *Go be go **le** bose.*
        (It was nice.)

The examples in (1) above appear with *le* which respectively denotes possession, qualification, accompaniment, location, additive focus and existentialism. It is sometimes confusing to establish the correct meaning which *le* expresses on account of its ambiguous nature. A study is therefore necessary to highlight all these issues and, especially, to suggest ways of identifying the correct meaning of *le* in various contexts.

1.2.2. Word categorization of the morpheme *le* in Northern Sotho

Apart from the ambiguity that *le* denotes in terms of semantics, it also causes a lot of difficulties with regards to word categorization. This is the case because *le* does not belong to a single word category as the following examples prove:

2. *Dijo **le** dino*.
    (Food and drinks.)

```
                    NP
                  / | \
                /   |   \
              /     |     \
            /       |       \
          NP        |        NP
          |         |         |
          |         |         |
          N       Conj.       N
          |         |         |
          |         |         |
        Dijo       le        dino
```
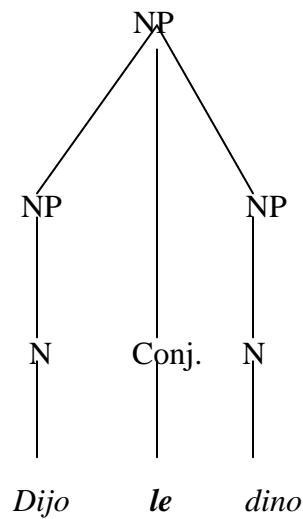
In this example, the morpheme *le* is used as a conjunctive between the noun phrases *dijo* (food) and *dino* (drinks).

3. *O tšere **le***.
    (He took this one.)

In this example, the morpheme *le* is used as a demonstrative pronoun of Class 5 (Position 1A).

4. *Letšatši **le** a hlaba*.

(The sun rises.)

The morpheme *le* in (4) above is used as a concord, Class 5 in this example.

5. *Ngwana o na **le** dijo.*

    (The child has food.)
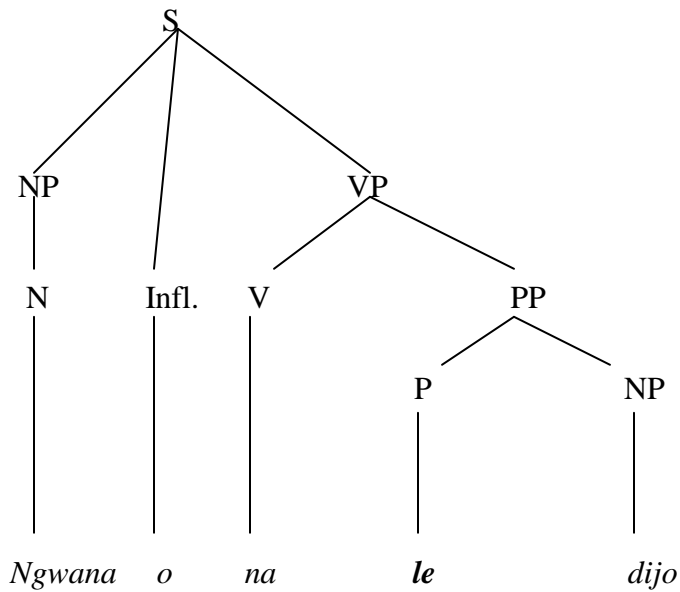
In this example, the morpheme *le* is used as a preposition.

6. *Legapu **le** bose.*

    (The watermelon is tasty.)

The morpheme *le* in (6) is used as a descriptive copulative in this example.

7. O bolokilwe go le (lebitla).

    (He/She is buried in this grave.)

In this example (7) above, the morpheme *le* is used as a locative adverb.

The examples in (2-7) above clearly indicate that the morpheme *le*'s morphological structure is complicated, seeing that it cannot be fully explained on account of a single word category.

1.2.3.   The structural properties of the morpheme *le* in Northern Sotho

The complex nature of the morpheme *le* cannot be fully accounted for by using its morphological and semantic features only. One needs to take into consideration its syntactic structure as well. In other words, it is important to establish the role of *le* in the formation of Northern Sotho sentences as it appears in the following examples:

8.   *Ngwana   o   dutše   kgauswi   le   mmagwe.*

    NP   **predicate**   **locative**   **NP**

   (The   chilld   sat   next   to   its mother.)

In this example (8) above, the morpheme *le* is used as a complement of the NP *mmagwe* (its mother) according to its syntactic position.

9.   *Nora o lwele **le** mošemane.*
   (Nora has fought with the boy.)

The morpheme *le* is used as a complement of the verb in this example (9) above.

The examples in (8-9) above clearly indicate that the structural properties of the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* is complicated. It cannot be fully explained on account of a single word category. In the light of this, it is thus necessary to undertake a study on the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* as this will assist in identifying the semantic role, the morphological structure and the syntactic role of this morpheme.

1.3.   AIM OF   THE   STUDY

The aim of this proposed study is to examine the role that the morpheme *le* plays in the Northern Sotho discourse. In order to achieve this aim, the proposed study will need to answer the following questions:

1.3.1.   What is the semantic role of the morpheme *le* in Northern Sotho?

1.3.2.   To which word category does the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* belong?

1.3.3.   What is the syntactic role of the morpheme *le* in Northern Sotho?

1.4.   OBJECTIVES   OF   THE   STUDY

The objectives of this study are:

1.4.1.   To classify the types of meaning that the morpheme *le* denotes in Northern Sotho;

1.4.2.   To determine the word category into which the morpheme *le* belongs in Northern Sotho; and

1.4.3.   To determine the syntactic position of the morpheme *le* in Northern Sotho.

1.5.   RATIONALE

The linguistic analysis of the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* aims at assisting Northern Sotho speakers to realize the importance of knowing the word category to which words belong. It is important to know exactly what the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* refers to, as its polysemous nature causes ambiguity and misunderstanding. Lastly, it is important to know the syntactic properties of the morpheme *le* in Northern Sotho as this will assist one to use *le* in its proper context.

1.6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The linguistic analysis of the Northern Sotho morpheme le will assist Northern Sotho language users to understand and identify the correct word category for the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* and highlight strategies that one should use in order to interpret the meaning expressed by the morpheme le correctly. This proposed study will be useful to researchers who are interested in this field of study.

1.7. METHODOLOGY

The qualitative research method, underpinned by government and binding theory, will be used in this proposed study as it will give insight to the topic under discussion.

1.8. DATA COLLECTION

In order to gather data about linguistic nature of the Northern Sotho morpheme *le*, the present researcher intends to use the following methods:

1.8.1. Primary sources

The present researcher intends to obtain firsthand information from the respondents by interviewing, face-to-face, the following people because they are the ones who deal with language issues in their day-to-day lives:

> ➢ 6 x Northern Sotho and Linguistics Lecturers;
> ➢ 5 x Northern Sotho Language Practitioners;

- ➢ 5 x Lexicographers;
- ➢ 6 x Northern Sotho and Linguistics Students;
- ➢ 5 x Secondary schools Northern Sotho teachers; and
- ➢ 3 x Northern Sotho Curriculum Advisors.

1.8.2. Secondary sources

The present researcher intends to collect information about morphemes by consulting library books, periodicals, dissertations, and searching through the Internet.

CHAPTER   TWO

LITERATURE   REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Thus far, Northern Sotho language scholars and other scholars have undertaken an in-depth study of the other morphemes with little attention to the morpheme *le*. Among those who have worked on morphemes are, namely: Mogoba (1992); Matsinhe (1993); Mphahlele (2003); Mous & Mreta (2004) and Matlebjane (2006). Other scholars have tried to work on the morpheme *le* of which the present researcher in this proposed work intends to undertake a deeper study to indicate the ambiguity of this morpheme. Among those who have tried to work on the morpheme *le* are, namely: Lombard, Van Wyk and Mokgokong (1985); du Plessis & Visser (1996); Poulos and Louwrens (1994); and Ziervogel, Lombard and Mokgokong (1988).

2.1.1.   Nida (1946)

Nida (1946) works on the identification of morphemes, types of morphemes, the distribution of morphemes, the meaning of morphemes and sequence of morphemes.
Like other linguists, he describes morphemes as "the meaningful units which may constitute words or parts of words e.g. *re-, de-, un-* and *–ish* in the combinations **re**ceive, **de**mand, **un**tie and boy**ish".**

On the identification of morphemes he maintains that for linguists to be able to examine a new language with a view to discover and describe its structure, they have to identify the meaningful units of which the language is composed. He

argues that there are six principles which apply in isolating and identifying morphemes. In his principle number six, he states that a morpheme is isolatable if it occurs in isolation condition.

On the basis of this condition, he identifies morphemes such as *boy, jump, up, he*, and *this*. This is one condition which will help in this study to argue that the morpheme *le* in Northern Sotho can be isolatable.

On the types of morphemes, Nida (1946) asserts that the types of morphemes are divided between (1) the internal composition of morphemes and (2) the formal relationships of morphemes to each other. He argues that the formal relationships of morphemes to each other are structural and positional. In my work I will dwell on the formal relationship of the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* to the other morphemes in a sentence, which is positional.

On the distribution of morphemes, Nida (1946) identifies ten groups of the types of morphemes as determined by their distribution. Amongst them he identifies one group "bound vs free morphemes", which the researcher going to concentrate on.

He argues that bound morphemes never occur in isolation, that is, they are not regularly uttered alone in a normal discourse. Such morphemes include affixes. He further argues that free morphemes are those which may be uttered in isolation, e.g. *boy, girl, this*, and *you*. Based on this argument, I will also argue that the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* can also be used as a free morpheme when uttered alone in a normal discourse.

2.1.2. Langacker (1968)

Langacker (1968) defines morphemes as "minimal units of grammatical structure". He cites an example "unfaithfulness", where he indicates that the word

"unfaithfulness" has four morphemes, i.e. *un, faith, ful* and *ness*. He argues that a morpheme usually has a fairly clear and constant meaning in all its uses, although it is easy to find exceptions.

Langacker (1968) acknowledges that sometimes linguists distinguish between full morphemes and empty morphemes, between free and bound morphemes, and between roots and affixes. He dwells much on the full morphemes and empty morphemes. Using an example of the sentence "*the man chopped some wood with an axe*", he indicates that full morphemes are forms like **man, chop, wood,** and **axe**; while empty morphemes are forms like **the, some, with, an**, and the past tense morpheme**-ed**. He goes further to argue that full morphemes are nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. They have more or less independent meanings, so that one or a series of full forms in isolation can be fairly menaningful.

Langacker (1968) states further that empty morphemes are things like prepositions, article, conjunctions, forms indicating gender, or tense, and so on. He goes on to argue that prepositions are classed as empty morphemes, yet they are not at all empty of semantic content.

He further argues that free morphemes are those that can stand alone as independent words; all others are said to be bound morphemes. **Dog, sad, rapid** and **able** are thus examples of free morphemes while the plural morpheme *s* of dog**s**, the *ness* of sad**ness**, the *ly* of rapid**ly**, and the *un* of **un**able exemplify bound morpheme. He also argues that most full morphemes are free (at least in English), and many empty morphemes are bound, as shown in the examples above.

Langacker's (1968) work will help me in this work to argue that what he classifies as empty morphemes, i.e. prepositions, bears a semantic meaning as will be indicated by the usage of the Northern Sotho morpheme le. This morpheme has more than one semantic meaning and therefore it will be clarified how it can be a semantic problem to linguists.

2.1.3.   Hodge (1969)

In his work, Hodge (1969) asserts that "morphs are the smallest meaningful pieces into which we may divide the utterance". He continues to say that morphs may be roots and affixes. Roots such as *house, book & boy*, and affixes such as *–s* (in boy*s*) and *-let* (in book*let*).

Hodge (1969) goes on to work on the allomorphs where he cited examples which indicate the past tense. He pays more attention to allomorphs which indicate past tense in different languages. He classifies morphemes according to their shapes, according to the other morphemes with which they combine, and according to the way these combinations are made. He argues that in most languages the possibilities for combination and the order in which the morphemes combine into words are quite restricted. He cite an example in English, that the morphemes composing a word such as *unsuitability* cannot recombine in any other order.

Hodge's (1969) work indicates that it is mostly based on the bound morphemes. He does not have anything to do with free morphemes. The researcher is going to concentrate on the free morpheme *le* in Northern Sotho and argue that it poses some semantic problems to the Northern Sotho language user.

2.1.4.   Lombard, Van Wyk and Mokgokong (1985)

Lombard, Van Wyk and Mokgokong (1985) argue that morphemes can be classified on the grounds of various principles, but their discussion is limited to the classification of morphemes according to the way in which they combine with other word aspects (i.e., roots and other morphemes in words).   They concentrate on the affixal morphemes, i.e, the prefixes and the suffixes. In this case, they are dealing with the sub-lexical items. On the lexical item level, they

argue that the conjunctive particle *le* can function as a connective particle, like *le* in: *O sepela le mosadi* (He walks with the woman).

This contribution will help the study to argue further that the morpheme *le* in Northern Sotho can function as a conjunctive particle and, even further than that, so that one can realize the ambiguous nature of this morpheme, especially as a lexical item.

2.1.5. Ziervogel, Lombard and Mokgokong (1988)

Ziervogel, Lombard and Mokgokong (1988) argue that the morpheme *le* expresses the connective form of the noun when it is placed before a noun, for example, ***le** mosadi* (together with the woman). They argue that the morphemes *le* and *ka* cannot be used independently but must always be used with the other words (*inter alia*, noun).

However, this work will assist the present researcher to argue further that the morpheme *le* can sometimes be used independently, such as when it is used as a demonstrative in the following example: *A nke o mphe le* (Please give me this one).

2.1.6. Jensen (1990)

In his work, Jensen (1990), states that "morphemes are the fundamental units of words; they are primarily structural units which are typically but not necessarily meaningful". He argues further that a word form may contain only one morpheme, example, *cat*, or it may contain two or more morphemes, example, *cats*, where *–s* is a separate morpheme with the meaning "plural".

Jensen (1990) clarifies that *cat* is a stem, while *–s* is a suffix in the word form *cats*. He differentiates between free morphemes and bound morphemes. He argues that a free morpheme can stand as a word by itself, example, *cat*. The morpheme *–s* is a bound morpheme since it cannot stand by itself as a word.

Jensen's (1990) work will assist me in arguing that the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* is a free morpheme and can stand by itself according to its semantic significance and its word categorization. I will further argue that this morpheme poses some semantic problem which I will clarify.

2.1.7.   Mogoba (1992)

Mogoba's (1992) study covers the explanation and definition of various morphemes used in the Northern Sotho word construction. She also examines forms and meanings of various morphemes as appearing in different word categories. Mogoba distinguishes between two types of morphemes, namely, free morphemes and bound morphemes. She pays attention to bound morphemes such as prefixal, suffixal, concordial, negative and imperfect tense morphemes.

Mogoba (1992) did not in her work, pay attention to free morphemes such as the morpheme *le*, of which it is what the present researcher in this proposed work intends to dwell much on.

2.1.8. Matsinhe (1993)

Matsinhe (1993) worked on bound morphemes wherein he specifically dwelled much on the verbal affixes in Xitsonga. He pays more attention on the lexical grammar of bound morphemes; individual verb affixes in Xitsonga, especially the applicatives, causatives, neutrostatives, passives, reciprocals and reflexives, since they have an effect on the NP argument structure or the predicate argument structure.

Concatenation of verbal affixes whereby different verbal affixes co-occur in the same verb and the constraints that hold on the concatenation of verbal affixes also received scrutiny from Matsinhe (1993).

Matsinhe's (1993) work will assist the present researcher in this work to further examine the role that a free morpheme *le* can play in Northern Sotho.

2.1.9. Poulos and Louwrens (1994)

Poulos and Louwrens (1994) indicate that the use of the subject concord *le* of Class 5 shows the agreement with the Noun Class 5, for example, *Lerapo **le** robegile* (The bone is broken). They also demonstrate that the morpheme *le* can be used as an associative adverb prefix to link when we have more than one subject occurring before a verb, e.g., *Mošemane le mosetsana ba hlapa nokeng* (The boy and the girl are washing in the river). The morpheme *le* can also function as the object concord of the object that was earlier referred to in a sentence as in the following example:

10.   *Naa o le (lesogana) bone kopanong maabane?*
         (Did you see him (the lad) at the meeting yesterday?)

The morpheme *le* can also be used as the object concord of the second person of Class 2 when one wishes to show respect towards an individual, for example:

11.   *Ke tlo le thuša nkgapele (a era hlogo ya sekolo).*
        (I will help you (singular) after a little while (referring to the principal)).

This work will assist the present researcher in this proposed work to argue further that the ambiguity of the morpheme *le* need to be analysed linguistically as the present researcher will be indicating its semantic and syntactic nature in sentences.

2.1.10.   Haegeman (1994a)

Haegeman (1994a) defines theta theory as "the component of the grammar that regulates the assignment of thematic role." This definition implies that, in studying the linguistic analysis of the Northern Sotho morpheme *le*, one will be able to establish what its meaning is and the word category to which it belongs.

In Example (1b) above, *Tate o na le mma* (Daddy is with mommy), the two arguments *tate* and *mma* have different relationships with the morpheme *le*. The *NP Tate* (daddy) is the Agent while the *NP mma* (mommy) is the Patient. According to Haegeman (1994a), we have the following tentative types of thematic roles:

Agent/Actor :   the doer, the one who intentionally initiates the action
                   expressed by the predicate.
Patient/Theme: one who undergoes the action expressed by the predicate.
Experiencer :   the entity that experiences some psychological state
                   expressed by the predicate.

Goal   :   the entity towards which the activity expressed by the predicate is directed.

Source   :   the entity from which something is moved as a result of the activity expressed by the predicate.

Location   :   the place in which the action or the state expressed by the predicate is situated.

2.1.11.   Du Plessis and Visser (1996)

Du Plessis and Visser (1996) argue about the copulative construction wherein, amongst others, they indicate that the associative relation is recognized through the presence of the preposition *le* in the complement, for example, *monna yo o na le thipa* (this man has a knife), which clearly indicates that the relation is possessive. They acknowledge the work of the Greek Philosopher, Aristotle, who is of the opinion that the copulative has as many senses as there are categories, i.e., there are ten different senses of the copulative, namely: substance, quantity, place, time, quality, relation, contrast, condition, activity and passivity.

This work will assist the present researcher in this proposed work to be able to argue further by clarifying the ambiguity of the semantic nature of the morpheme *le* in Northern Sotho.

2.1.12.   Mphahlele (2003)

Mphahlele (2003) has, in his work, indicated that lexicographers have ignored to lemmatize sub-lexical items in the macrostructure of the Northern Sotho monolingual dictionaries. Having realized this problem, Mphahlele (2003)

came up with suggestions that would help lexicographers to compile a user-friendly dictionary that will include sub-lexical and multi-lexical dictionary, which will assist the Northern Sotho monolingual dictionary users to retrieve information successfully.

Mphahlele dwells on sub-lexical items, which include the prefixal and suffixal morphemes. He also touched on the treatment of the sub-item *le-* and the lexical item *le* which could pose problems for the Lexicographer. Mphahlele only clarified that the lexical item *le* can function as a concord of Noun Class 5, a conjunctive and a demonstrative pronoun of Noun Class 5.

Mphahlele did not, in his work, indicate that the Northern Sotho lexical item *le* can also function as a locative, preposition and a copulative; which the present researcher in this proposed work is intending to clarify.

2.1.13.   Mous and Mreta (2004)

Mous and Mreta (2004) gave a sound account of the communicative/conjunctive preposition *na* in Chathu (Pare), a Bantu Language in Tanzania. They presented an overview of the meaning and functions of the morpheme *na* in Chathu (Pare) that the morpheme *na* is a preposition. Mous and Mreta further discuss whether the preposition *na* is a conjunctive or not.

Mous and Mreta's work will assist the present researcher in this proposed work to argue about the ambiguity of the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* in terms of its word category.

2.1.14.   Pretorius and Berg   (2004)

Pretorius and Berg (2004) propose and demonstrate, in their work, a method for the morphological analysis of Setswana nouns. They refer to morphological structure of a noun as different morphemes of which the noun consists and their arrangement. They acknowledge the work of Kruger (1994:17) where he describes a morpheme as "a meaningful part of a word expressed by form and which exist as an integral part of the word meaning and word form".

Pretorius and Berg (2004) argue that the Setswana noun may include morphemes such as grammatical morphemes (prefixes and suffixes), roots and stems. They dwell much on the grammatical morphemes of the Setswana noun. They indicate that semantically, grammatical morphemes indicate a certain category such as number, dimunitive, locative, et cetera; which are word bound in form and meaning: *mo-* and
 -(i)ng, for example, are the grammatical morphemes in motseng (village – locality) and *se-* and *–nyana* are the grammatical morphemes in **se**tlhako*nyana* (small shoe).

They further classify morphemes according to their positions in a word, i.e. categories of prefixes and suffixes, for example, in mothwana (small person) *mo-* is the prefix and the *–ana* is the suffix; and in the word setlhakonyana (small shoe) *se-* is the prefix and *–nyana* is the suffix.

Pretorius and Berg (2004), like some other linguists, dwell much on bound morphemes. Their work will help me argue that free morphemes can also be a concern to linguists. I will argue on the semantic and the grammatical status of the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* as a problem to the linguists.

2.1.15.   Kosch (2005)

Kosch (2005) works on discontinuous elements in the morphology of some African languages, Northern Sotho in particular. He concentrates on the two principles, namely: the principle of invariance of morphemes and the principle of a "one-form - one meaning" between a form and a meaning. He argues that some of the African languages, including Northern Sotho, display deviation from these principles. His work is based specifically on deviations which display elements which could be regarded as "discontinuous" or "interrupted".

On the principle of invariance of morphemes, also termed the 'no alteration at morpheme boundary' by Hagêge (1990:297), Kosch (2005) argues about the violation of this principle with reference to the realizations of the perfect tense suffix in Northern Sotho: *-lê, -itšê, -mê, -nê* or the shortened version form -**ê**, example:

-leka : -lek*ilê* (tried)

-lesa : -les*itšê* (left)

-r**ê**ma : -r**ê**m*mê* (chopped)   (also -r**ê**m*ilê*)

-gana : -gan*nê* (refused)

-bona : -bon*ê* (saw)

Kosch (2005) argues that these -**ilê, -itšê, -mê, -nê,** and the shortened version **-ê** are the allomorphs of the perfect tense suffix.

On the second principle, the principle of "one-form-one meaning", Kosch (2005) argues that it specifies that each morpheme, be uniquely paired with exactly one grammatical function or meaning and vice versa, that each function or meaning be expressed by a separate morph. He acknowledges the work of Spencer (1991:125/6) who says "…the most natural type of morphology is fully 'transparent', in the sense that every morpheme has one form and one meaning, and

every meaning (or grammatical category) corresponds to exactly one form. This relationship is called biuniqueness."

This research will argue with the deviation of this principle where I will indicate that the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* can semantically have more than one meaning, i.e. something like 'one-form-more meanings' principle.

Kosch (2005) further works on extended exponence as a deviation on the "one-form-one meaning" principle. He argues that the extended exponence describes the situation in which a single grammatical function or meaning is expressed by two or more morphological markers; has discontinuous representation, i.e. its realization shows up in more than one place. For example, a single grammatical function such as 'negative form'. The negative form may be marked by at least two non-continuous morphs, namely by negative prefix and a simultaneous modification of the final vowel of the verb stem, e.g. Northern Sotho **go** *se rut**ê*** 'not to teach' (positive form: *go ruta* 'to teach')

go	*se*	*rut**ê***	(not to teach)
infinitive	negative	verbal suffix	
suffix	marker	negative marker	

Kosch (2005) goes on to argue about circumfixation where the simultaneous affixation of a prefix and a suffix to a base, express a single meaning, category or process. He illustrates by the use of examples that a single category may have a discontinuous representation in the form of two disjoined morphs. For example, in Northern Sotho, the double marking in items such as colour terms is used to indicate female animals:

ntsho (black bull)　-　**na**swa**na** (black cow)

khulong (red bull)　-　**na**khulwa**na**　(red cow)

As a deviation to the "one-form-one meaning" principle, the researcher will argue that the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* can indicate more than one semantic meaning and more than one word category.

2.1.16. Hendrikse and Poulos (2006)

Hendrikse and Poulos (2006) assert that the classification of word categories in African languages has been modeled on Western European languages without taking cognizance of the fact that the European languages and the African languages belong to different language types. They argue that these historical factors have had adverse implications for the various word categories which have been distinguished in the African languages. They critically explore these issues and propose a rather revolutionary framework for the treatment of word categorization in African languages.

They acknowledge the work of Sapir who distinguishes four types of degree of alliteration of morphemes, namely: isolating (no affixation), agglutinative (simple affixation), fusional (considerable morphophonemic alteration) and symbolic (suppletive). Hendrikse and Poilos' (2006) distinguish in their work, between two types, namely: an isolating morphological type and agglutinative morphological type.

Hendrikse and Poulos (2006) further state that with regard to word categorization, in an isolating type of language, no word category is dependent on any affixation in order to acquire categorical status. This means that in an isolating language, words and word categories are essentially free morphemes.

They further argue that in an agglutinating language, there is no free morphemes in the lexicon; only bound morphemes. An agglutinative language may have words

such as interjections that are free morphemes without any dependency on affixation in order to function as words.

The two linguists worked on the two types of languages, namely: isolating and agglutinative languages, which will help me in this work to argue that in Northern Sotho (an agglutinative language) we also have free morphemes such as the morpheme *le* . This study will further argue that this morpheme poses a problem in terms of its word categorization, its semantic significance and its syntactic status, which this study will further clarify.

2.1.17. Matlebjane (2006)

Matlebjane (2006) gives an account of aspect morphemes as word categories that cannot occur in isolation from other word categories. She argues that aspect morphemes may be used in various tense forms with the ultimate effect of changing the overall meaning. She further analyses the Northern Sotho aspect morphemes from a syntactic perspective. Matlebjane specifically analyses the aspect morphemes: *sa, hlwa, šetše,* and *fo*, especially when they occur in simple and complex sentences. She also endeavours to analyse the semantic significance of aspect morphemes in Northern Sotho, where syntax has a bearing as it interacts with semantics. On this significance, she pays special attention to the morphemes: *sa, no, fela* and *šetše*.

Matlebjane (2006) did not concentrate on the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* which is another morpheme that gives some problems with regard to its word categorization, meaning and its syntactic properties. The present researcher in this work is going to clarify those problems relating to the morpheme *le*.

2.2.   CONCLUSION

This chapter investigates morphemes and the role which they can play in a language. Other linguists' works have been consulted where it was discovered that in their works, they generally have a common understanding that morphemes are the smallest functional units of words.

Different linguists worked on the types of morphemes, but not all of them dwell on both the two types of morphemes, namely: bound morphemes and free morphemes. Most of the linguists have their works based on bound morphemes because they argue that morphemes are units of words which cannot occur in isolation, that is, they pay attention to affixes which are sub-lexical items. It is further discovered in these linguists' works that Northern Sotho linguists and other scholars have their works on Northern Sotho morphemes, but it is only a few who worked on free morphemes, that is, morphemes which are lexical items; especially on the morpheme *le*.

CHAPTER   THREE

THE   MORPHOLOGICAL FEATURES OF   THE   NORTHERN SOTHO   MORPHEME   *LE*

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Louwrens (1994:115) says morphology is a term referring to the scientific/linguistic study of morphemes and their variants/allomorphs, and the way they function in the formation of words. The aim of this chapter is to examine the morphological features of the Northern Sotho morpheme *le*. Why do we say *le* is a morpheme in Northern Sotho? In terms of morphology, the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* can be used as a conjunction and a complementizer, demonstrative pronoun, agreement (concord), preposition, and also as a descriptive copulative.

3.2. THE   NORTHERN SOTHO MORPHEME   *LE*   AS   A CONJUNCTION

3.2.1. DEFINITION

A conjunction is a word which is used to join phrases or clauses which are of the same value, i.e. main clauses only. Richards, Platt and Weber (1985:58) say a conjunction, also a connective , is a word which joins words, phrases or clauses together such; as but, and, when. Units larger than words which function as conjunctions are sometimes known as conjunctives, for example so that, as long as, as if. They go further to give the two types conjunctions as follows:

Co-ordination, through the use of co-ordinating conjunctions such as; and, or, but. These join linguistic units which are equivalent or of the same rank. Subordination, through the use of subordinating conjunctions such as because, when, unless, that. These join an independent clause and a dependent clause.

In Northern Sotho, the conjunctions *gore, fela, gomme, le*, can be used to join two main clauses of a sentence. The following discussion give examples where the morpheme *le* is used to join clauses of the same value.

3.2.2. THE MORPHEME *LE* CAN APPEAR BETWEEN NOUNS

10. a *Dijo* **le** *dino*.

   (Food and drinks).

The noun phrase "*Dijo*" (Food) and the noun phrase "*dino*" (drinks) are joined by the use of the conjunction "*le*' (and).

```
                    N
          ┌─────────┼─────────┐
        NP        Conj.       NP
         │          │          │
        Dijo        le        dino
```
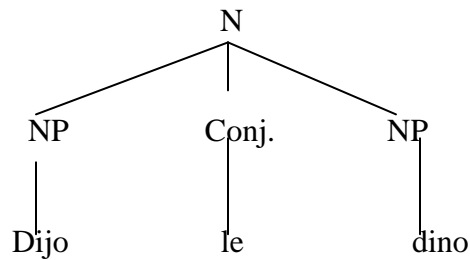
b. *Pene* **le** *letlakala*.

   (A pen and a paper).

```
                   N
          ┌────────┼────────┐
        NP       Conj.      NP
         │         │         │
        Pene       le      letlakala
```
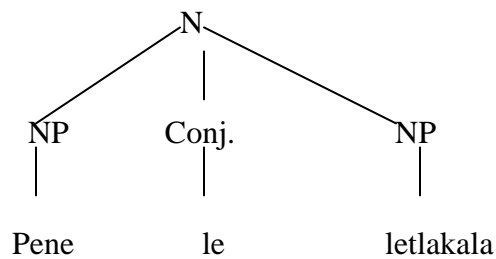
c. *Motswadi* **le** *ngwana*.

   (A parent and a child).

26

```
              N
         ╱    │    ╲
       NP    Conj.   NP
       │      │      │
    Motswadi  le   ngwana
```
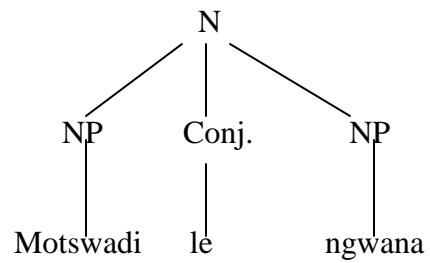
3.2.3. THE MORPHEME *LE* CAN APPEAR BETWEEN PRONOUNS.

11. *a. Nna **le** wena.*

  (Me and you (singular)).

The pronominal phrase "*Nna*" (Me) and the pronominal phrase "*wena*" (you) are joined by the use of the conjunction "*le*".

```
               P
          ╱    │    ╲
        PP   Conj    PP
        │     │      │
       Nna    le    wena
```
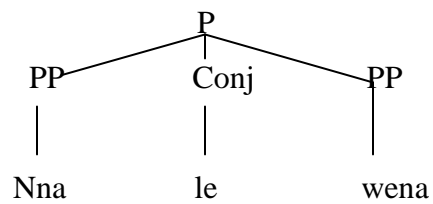
b. *Rena **le** lena.*

  (We and you(plural)).

```
               P
          ╱    │    ╲
        PP   Conj.   PP
        │     │      │
       Rena   le    lena.
```
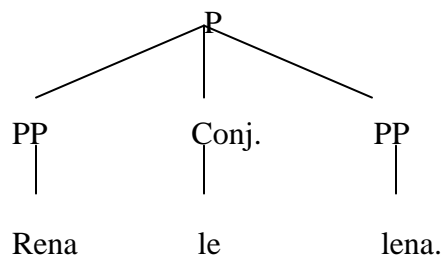
3.2.4. THE MORPHEME *LE* CAN APPEAR BETWEEN ADVERBS

12. a. *Mo **le** kua*.
    (Here and there).

The adverbial phrase "*Mo*" (Here) and the adverbial phrase "*kua*" (there) are joined by the use of the conjunction "*le*".

b. *Mamohla **le** gosasa*.
    (Today and tomorrow).

```
                         A
          ┌──────────────┼──────────────┐
         AP            Conj.            AP
          │              │               │
       Mamohla          le            gosasa
```
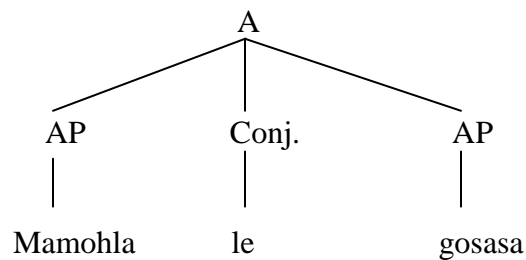
c. *Legodimong **le** lefaseng*.
    (In heaven and on earth).

```
                         A
          ┌──────────────┼──────────────┐
         AP            Conj.            AP
          │              │               │
      Legodimong         le           lefaseng
```
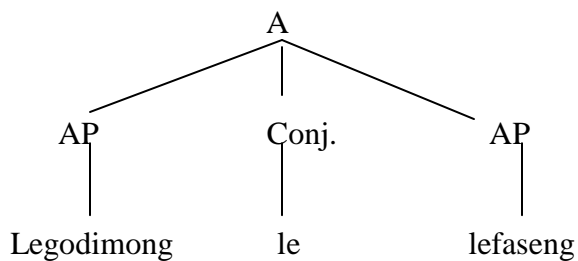
d. *Ka boleta **le** ka boikokobetšo*.

   (With politeness and submissiveness.)

```
                          A
              ┌───────────┼───────────┐
             AP          Conj.        AP
              │            │            │
          Ka  boleta       le       ka  boikokobetšo
```
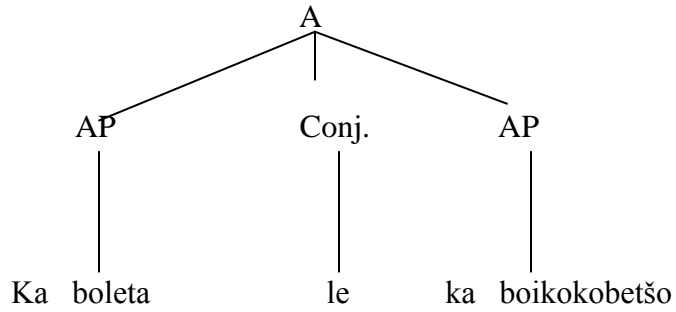
3.2.5. THE MORPHEME *LE* CAN APPEAR BETWEEN A PRONOUN AND A NOUN

13. a. *Nna **le** basetsana*.

   (Me and the girls).

   b. *Sona(sešebo) **le** bogobe*.

   (It and the porridge).

   c. *Thapelo **le** yona(kopelo)*.

   (A prayer and it(hymn)).

   d. *Tlala **le** wona(mokhoro)*.

   (Hunger and it(satation))

3.2.6. THE MORPHEME *LE* CAN APPEAR BETWEEN ADJECTIVES

14. a. *(Ntlo) Ye kgolo **le** ye nnyane*.

    (A big one and a small one(house)).

  b. *(Dikgomo) Tše diso **le** tše ditšhweu*.

    (The black ones and the white ones(cattles)).

  c. *(Batho) Ba batelele **le** ba bakopana*.

    (The tall ones and the short ones(people)).

  d. *(Mohlare) Wo mokoto **le** wo mosese*.

    (A thick and a thin (tree)).

3.3. THE MORPHEME *LE* AS A DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUN

3.3.1. DEFINITION

According to Richards, Platt and Weber (1985:75), a demonstrative is a word which refers to something in terms of whether it is near or distant from the speaker. Poulos and Louwrens(19994:81) say that the demonstrative has two basic functions. In the first instance, it may be used in discourse to indicate the actual position which some or other referent occupies. In the second instance, it may be used with what may be called a secondary function, i.e. to refer back to the antecedent.

Louwrens(1994:48) says that a demonstrative is a term used to refer to a word which is used to indicate the position of a person or object relative to

the positions of the speaker and the addressee… The demonstrative is classified into different positions and sub-positions depending on the demonstrative suffix which is used, and these positions can be roughly translated into English with "this (one here)", "that (one there)" and "that (one yonder)". In Table 1 below Northern Sotho demonstratives are shown according to noun classes and positions:

Table 1 : Northern Sotho Demonstratives

NOUN CLASSES	DEMONSTRATIVES ACCORDING TO POSITIONS			
	POSITION 1		POSITION 2	POSITION 3
	POS. 1 A	POS. 1 B		
1. Mo-	yo	yono	yoo	yola
2. Ba-	ba	bano	bao	bale
3. Mo-	wo	wono	woo	wola
4. Me-	ye	yeno	yeo	yela
5. Le-	*le*	leno	leo	lela
6. Ma-	a	ano	ao	ale
7. Se-	se	seno	seo	sela
8. Di-	tše	tšeno	tšeo	tšela
9. N-	ye	yeno	yeo	yela
10. Di-	tše	tšeno	tšeo	tšela
14. Bo-	bjo	bjono	bjoo	bjola
15. Go-	mo /go	mono/gono	moo/goo	mola/gola
16. fa-	mo	mono	moo	mola
17. go-	mo	mono	moo	mola
18. mo-	mo	mono	moo	mola

In Northern Sotho, the morpheme *le* can be used as a demonstrative pronoun of noun Class 5 (Position 1A) This can be seen in the following examples.

In the examples 15. (a-b) below, the demonstrative pronoun *le* appears at the end of the sentences.

15. a. *O tšere **le***.
       (He took this one).

   b. *Ba mphile **le***.
       (They gave me this one).

In the example 15. (c-d) below, the demonstrative pronoun appear somewhere in the middle of the sentence.

   c. *Tšea **le** o sepele*.
      (Take this one and go).

   d. *Ngwala **le** o romele*.
       (Write this one and send.)

In the example 15. (e-f) below, the demonstrative pronoun appear at the beginning of the sentence.

   e. ***Le*** le *a fiša*.
      (This one is hot).

   f. ***Le*** *ke a le rata*.
      (This one, I like.)

3.4. THE MORPHEME *LE* AS AN/A AGREEMENT/CONCORD

3.4.1. DEFINITION

Richards, Platt and Weber (1985:56) say a concord, also agreement , is a type of grammatical relationship between two or more elements in a sentence, in which both or all elements show a particular feature. Du Plessis and Madadzhe (1999:199) put it clear that in Venda, the form of AgrS morpheme is determined by the noun with which it appears. They go further to indicate that nouns can be divided into strong and weak noun classes according to their AgrS. They even go to an extent of indicating on a table the strong classes and weak classes in Venda.

In Northern Sotho, like in other languages, we have strong subjectival agreements and also weak subjectival agreements according to noun classes. The form of AgrS (Subjectival Agreement) morpheme in Northern Sotho is determined by the nouns with which it appears. Strong agreement is realized when the concord looks exactly the same as the prefix of the noun; while the weak agreement is realized when the concord does not look like the prefix of the nouns as indicated in the following tables:

Table 2 : Northern Sotho - Strong Subjectival Agreement

STRONG AGREEMENT			
STRONG CLASSES	**PREFIX**	**EXAMPLE OF A NOUN**	**AgrS**
2.	Ba-	batho(people)	ba
5.	Le-	leoto(leg)	*le*
7.	Se-	seeta(shoe)	se
8.	Di-	dieta(shoes)	di
10.	Di-	dimpša(dogs)	di
14.	Bo-	borotho(bread)	bo

15.	Go-	go ja(to eat)	go
17.	go	godimo(up)	go

Table 3. Northern Sotho – Weak Subjectival Agreement

W E A K A G R E E M E N T			
WEAK CLASSES	**PREFIX**	**EXAMPLE OF A NOUN**	**AgrS**
1.	Mo-	motho(person)	o
3.	Mo-	mohlare(tree)	o
4.	Me-	mehlare(trees)	e
6.	Ma-	maoto(legs)	a
9.	Ø	mpša(dog)	e
16.	fa-	fase(down)	go
18.	mo-	morago(back)	go

The Northern Sotho morpheme *le* can be used as a strong subjectival agreement of noun Class 5 as in the following examples:

16.   a. Letšatši **le** a hlaba.

(The sun rises.)

```
                        AgrS
             _____/|_____
            /            |            \
          NP            agr            VP
           |             |             |
        Letšatši         le          a   hlab - a
         Cl. 5          Cl. 5
```
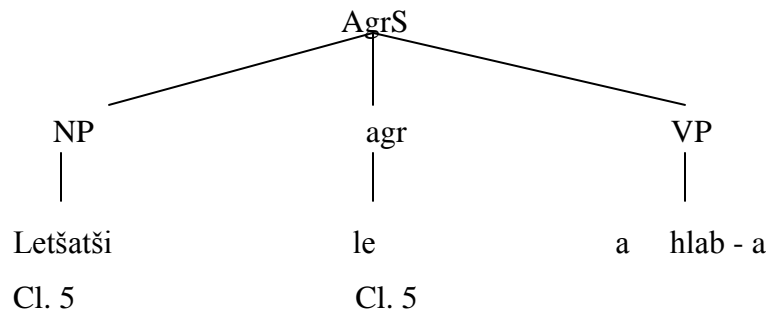
b. *Leihlo **le** rurugile*.

(The eye is swollen).

```
                    AgrS
          ┌──────────┼──────────┐
         NP         agr         VP
          │          │           │
       Leihlo        le      rurug – ile
        Cl. 5       Cl. 5
```
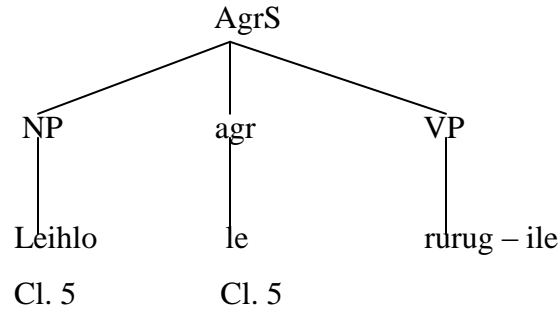
c. *Lefšega **le** a kitima*.

(The coward runs.)

```
                    AgrS
          ┌──────────┼──────────┐
         NP         agr         VP
          │          │           │
      Lefsega        le    a   kitim - a
        Cl. 5       Cl. 5
```
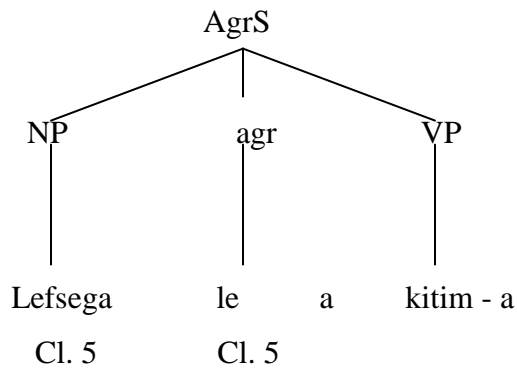
Sometimes the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* can be used as a weak subjectival agreement of noun Class 5 where the noun prefix is hidden as shown in examples 16. (d-f) below:

d. *(Le)sogana **le** sepetše*.
   (The lad is gone).

e.   *(Le)rato la motswadi **le** bohlokwa kudu.*

    (The love of a parent is very important).

f.   *(Le)tšoba la gagwe **le** botse.*

    (His flower is beautiful.)

3.5.   THE   MORPHEME   *LE*   AS   A   PREPOSITION

3.5.1.   DEFINITION

Richards, Platt and Weber(1985:227 assert that a preposition is a word used with nouns , pronouns and gerunds, to link them grammatically to other words. Prepositions may express such meanings as possession(e.g. the leg *of* the table), direction (e.g. *to* the bank), place (e.g. *at* the corner), time (e.g. *before* now).

According to Louwrens(1994:149) a preposition is a term which is not used in the grammatical description of Northern Sotho, since it is maintained that Bantu languages do not have prepositions. He goes further to indicate that this term (preposition) has, however, been employed on a very limited basis to refer to the prefixal elements, "*ka, kua, ga, go* and *mo*, which occur in locative structures such as :

ka kamoreng   -   in the room

mo tafoleng   -   on the table

Louwrens(1994:149) again indicates that the term preposition is rather replaced by particle in some sources, and by prefix in others. He further clarifies that if the definitions which are given for the concept preposition by authoritative sources on linguistic terminology are analyzed, what are regarded as particles in Northern Sotho seem to qualify equally as prepositions.

In addition to the prepositions mentioned above, the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* can also be used as a preposition as indicted in the following examples:

17.   a.   *Ngwana o na **le** dijo*.

        (The child has food.)
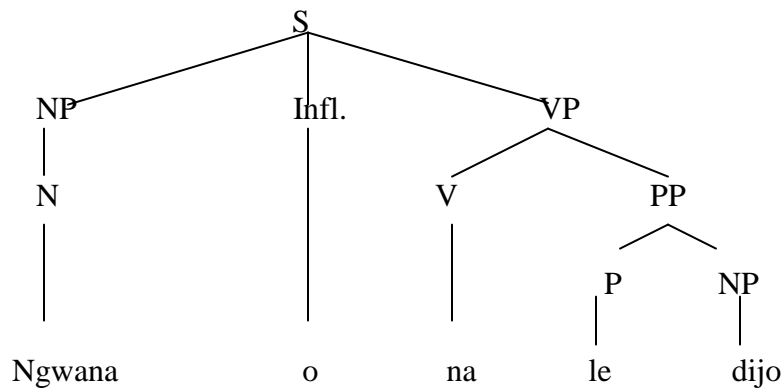
   b. *Dinonyana di na **le** mafofa*.

      (Birds have feathers.)
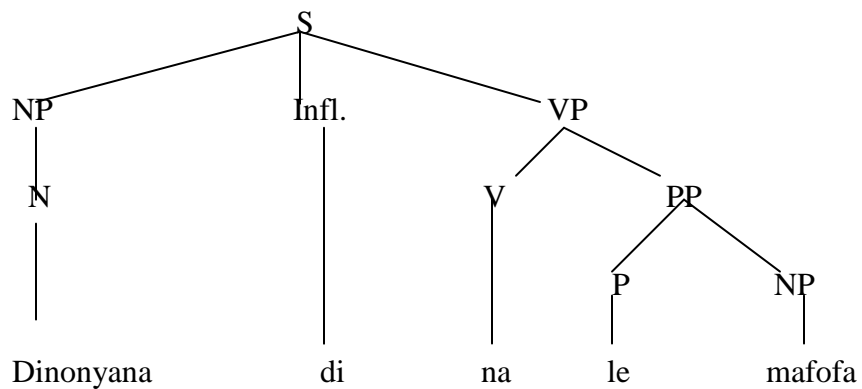
When the sentence changes into the negative form the morpheme *le* does not change its form, as it appears in the following examples:

c. *Ngwana ga a na **le** dijo.*

(The child does not have food.)

```
                          S
         ┌────────┬───────┬─────────────┐
        NP    Neg. marker  Infl.        VP
         │        │         │        ┌───┴───┐
         │        │         │        V       PP
         │        │         │        │     ┌──┴──┐
         │        │         │        │     P    NP
         │        │         │        │     │     │
      Ngwana     ga         a        na    le   dijo
```
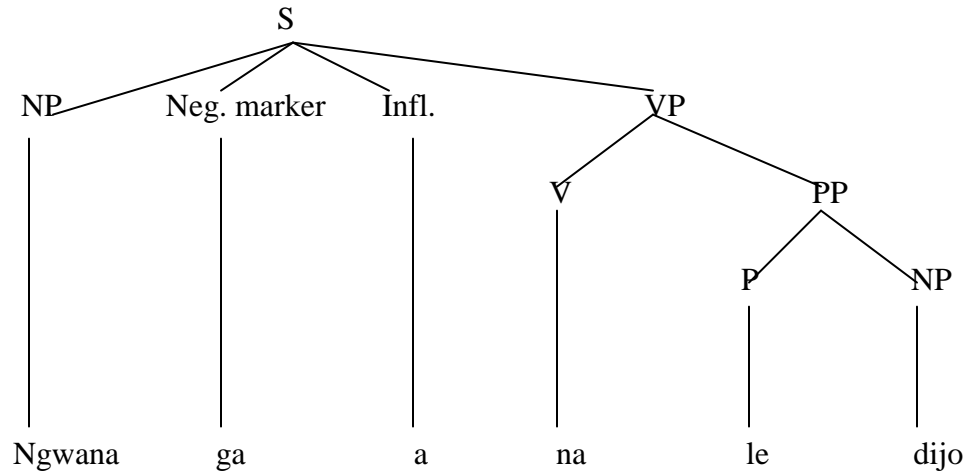
d. *Dinonyana ga di na **le** mafofa.*

(Birds do not have feathers.)

```
                           S
          ┌────────┬───────┬──────────────┐
         NP    Neg. marker  Infl          VP
          │        │         │         ┌───┴────┐
          │        │         │         V        PP
          │        │         │         │      ┌──┴──┐
          │        │         │         V      P    NP
          │        │         │         │      │     │
      Dinonyana   ga         di        na     le  mafofa
```
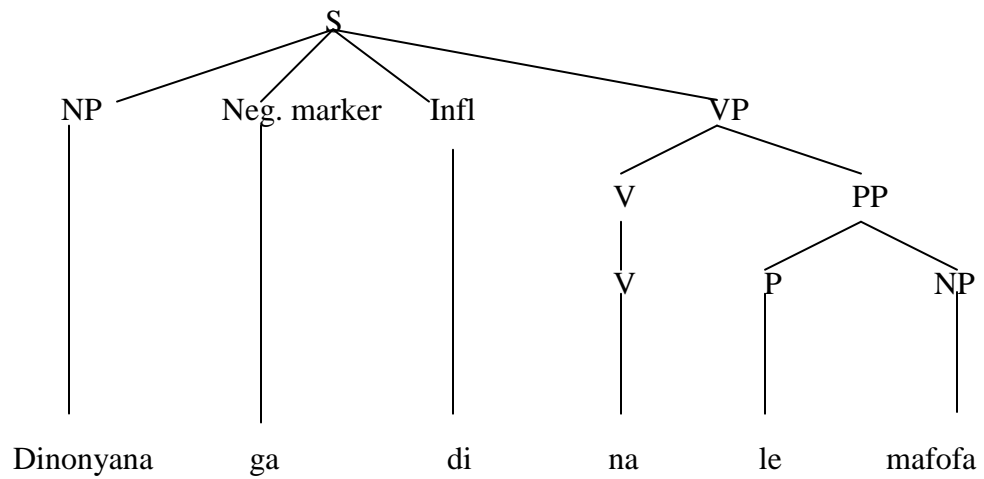
3.6.   THE   MORPHEME   *LE*   AS   A   COPULATIVE

3.6.1.   DEFINITION

Louwrens(1994:40-42) says a copulative is a term used to refer to structures which incorporate a variety of prefixes (called particles in some grammatical descriptions of Northern Sotho) of which some resemble the subject concord (e.g. *o bohlale, le bohlale, e bohlale*, etc. 'he/it is clever'), whereas others have a unique form like *ke* (ke monna 'he is a man') and *ga se monna* 'it is not a man', as well as a series of verb forms with the copulative verb stems *–be* (e.g. … *gore a be bohlale* 'so that he may become clever'), *-ba* (e.g. …*a ba bohlale* 'and then he became clever'), *-le* (e.g. … *ge a le bohlale* 'if he is clever'), *-se* (e.g. … *ge a se bohlale* 'if he is not clever') and *-na* (e.g. *o na le lehufa* 'she/he is jealous'). The copulative expresses the English verb 'to be', and is therefore translated with 'is', 'was', 'will be', 'has been', etc.

Poulos and Louwrens(1994:290) clarifies that copulatives may be assigned different names, depending on the type of information that they convey. If the information helps to identify the referent, then the copulative is referred to as an identifying copulative. If the information given describes the referent in one way or the other, then it is a descriptive copulative. If the information expresses some form of ownership or association; or if it translates the English verb "to have", then it is an associative copulative. If the information refers to some or other locality or place where the referent is, then we speak of a locational copulative.

There are four types of copulatives that can be recognized in Northern Sotho, namely:

The identifying copulative

The descriptive copulative

The associative copulative

The locational copulative

Copulatives can appear in different tense constructions, positive and negative forms such as indicative form, potential form, etc, like it is reflected in the following examples:

In Northern Sotho, the morpheme *le* can be used as a copulative as reflected in the following examples:

3.6.2. THE MORPHEME *LE* AS AN IDENTIFYING COPULATIVE - PRESENT TENSE - POSITIVE FORM

18. *a. Lena **le** baetapele.*

(You are the leaders.)

*b. Le sa **le** baeng.*

(You are still visitors.)

*c. Lena **le** ditau.*

(You are the lions.)

d. *Lena **le** bokamoso bja rena.*

(You are our future.)

3.6.3. THE MORPHEME *LE* AS AN IDENTIFYING

COPULATIVE - PRESENT TENSE - NEGATIVE FORM

19.   a.   *Lena ga **le** baetapele*.

          (You are not leaders.)

   b.   *Ga le sa **le** baeng*.

          (You are not visitors anymore.)

   c.   *Lena ga le ditau*.

          (You are not the lions.)

   d.   *Lena ga **le** bokamoso bja rena*.

          (You are not our future.)

In the future tense negative form and the past tense negative form, the Northern Sotho identifying copulative *"le"* changes to "*se*".

3.6.4. THE MORPHEME *LE* AS A DESCRIPTIVE

COPULATIVE - PRESENT TENSE - POSITIVE

   20.   a.   *Lehodu **le** bohlale*.

          (The thieve is clever.)

   b.   *Legapu **le** bose*.

          (The watermelon is tasty.)

c. *Lerato **le** bohlokwa.*

(Love is important.)

d. *Lesogana **le** bogale.*

(The lad is brave.)

3.6.5. THE MORPHEME *LE* AS A DESCRIPTIVE COPULATIVE - PRESENT TENSE - NEGATIVE FORM

21. a. *Lehodu ga **le** bohlale.*

(The thieve is not clever.)

b. *Legapu ga **le** bose.*

(The watermelon is not tasty.)

c. *Lerato ga **le** bohlokwa..*

(Love is not important.)

d. *Lesogana ga **le** bogale .*

(The lad is not brave.)

3.6.6. THE MORPHEME *LE* AS AN ASSOCIATIVE COPULATIVE - PRESENT TENSE - POSITIVE FORM

22. a. *Ke na le dijo*.

    (I have food.)

    b. *Ngwana o na le bagwera ba gagwe*.

    (The child is with its friends.)

    c. *Re be re na le baeng*.

    (We were with the visitors.)

3.6.7. THE MORPHEME *LE* AS AN ASSOCIATIVE COPULATIVE - PRESENT TENSE - NEGATIVE FORM

23. a. *Ga ke na (le) dijo*.

    (I do not have food.)

    b. *Ngwana ga a na (le) bagwera ba gagwe*.

    (The child is not with its friends.)

    c. Ga *re na (le) baeng*

    (We are not with the visitors.)

    d.   *Batho ga ba na (le) mathata*.

(People do not have problems.)

In the past tense negative form, the morpheme *le* might hide as it is reflected in the examples 23(a-d) above.

3.6.8. THE MORPHEME *LE* AS LOCATIONAL COPULATIVE - PAST TENSE - POSITIVE FORM

> 24. a. *Re be re **le** kopanong maabane.*
>
>   (We were at a meeting yesterday.)
>
> b. *Re tlo ba re **le** Gauteng gosasa.*
>
>   (We will be in Gauteng tomorrow.)
>
> c. *Hlapi e be e **le** ka meetseng.*
>
>   (The fish was in the water.)
>
> d. *Ba be ba le yunibesithi ngwagola.*
>
>   (They were at the university last year.)

In the present tense negative form and also in the future tense negative form, the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* changes to the morpheme *se*.

3.7. THE MORPHEME *LE* AS AN ADVERB

3.7.1. DEFINITION

Richards, Platt and Weber (1985:6) say that an adverb is a word that describes or adds to the meaning of a verb, an adjective, another adverb, or a sentence, and which answers such questions as how?, where?, or when?. They classify three types of adverbs, namely, adverbs of manner, e.g. carefully, slowly; adverbs of place, e.g. here, there and adverbs of time, e.g. now and hourly.

Louwrens(1994:5-6) also shares the same sentiments when he says an adverb is a word which is used to modify the meaning of a verb, i.e. which adds more information to the meaning which is contained in the verb itself. A distinction is normally drawn between basic adverbs and derived adverbs.

Poulos and Louwrens(1994:327) assert that adverbs in general provide more information about the actual performance or carrying out of an action or state. They may indicate, inter alia, how, when, where and why an action or state is performed. They further state clearly that the adverb as a word category in Northern Sotho can be seen as much of a mixed bag, involving numerous types. Adverbs in Northern Sotho are, generally speaking, derived from other word categories, like nouns, pronouns, demonstratives, qualificatives, etc.

We identify the following types of adverbs in Northern Sotho:

Adverbs of manner,

Adverbs of place   and

Adverbs of time.

3.7.2. THE MORPHEME *LE* AS AN ADVERB OF PLACE

The Northern Sotho morpheme le can also be used as an adverb of place in the form of a demonstrative pronoun (Position 1A) of the noun Class 5. It can be used in the present tense, future tense and past tense; and also in the positive or negative forms. The following examples are used to support this idea.

3.7.2.1. THE MORPHEME *LE* AS AN ADVERB OF PALCE - PRESENT TENSE - POSITIVE FORM

25. a. *Re phela go **le** (lefase).*

(We live on this (world).)

b. *Ngwalela ka go **le** (letlakala).*

(Write on this page.)

c. *Tate o bolokwa ka go **le** (lebitla).*

(My father is being buried in this (grave).)

d. *Re lota makhura ka go **le** (lebotlelo).*

(We keep fats in this (bottle).)

3.7.2.2. THE MORPHEME *LE* AS AN ADVERB OF PLACE - PRESENT TENSE - NEGATIVE

26. a. *Ga re phele go **le** (lefase).*

(We are not living on this (world).)

b. *O se ngwalele ka go **le** (letlakala).*

(Do not write on this (page).)

c. *Tate ga a bolokwe ka go **le** (lebitla).*

(My father is not being buried in this (grave).)

d. *Ga re lote makhura ka go **le** (lebotlelo).*

(We do not keep fats in this (bottle).)

3.7.2.3. THE MORPHEME *LE* AS AN ADVERB OF PLACE - FUTURE TENSE - POSITIVE FORM

27. a. *Re tla phela go **le** (lefase).*

(We will live on this (world).)

b. *O tla ngwalela go **le** (letlakala).*

(You will write on this (page).)

c. *Tate o tla bolokwa ka go **le** (lebitla).*

(My father will be buried in this (grave).)

d.   *Re tla lota makhura ka go **le** (lebotlelo).*

(We will keep fats in this (bottle).)

3.7.2.4.   THE   MORPHEME *LE* AS   AN   ADVERB   OF   PLACE   -   FUTURE   TENSE   -   NEGATIVE   FORM

28.   *a.   Re ka se phele go **le** (lefase).*

(We will not live on this (world).)

*b.   O tla se ngwalele go **le** (letlakala).*

(You will not write on this (page).)

*c.   Tate o tla se bolokwe ka go **le** (lebitla).*

(My father will not be buried in this (grave).)

*d.   Re tla se lote makhura ka go **le** (lebotlelo).*

(We will not keep fats in this (bottle).)

3.7.2.5.   THE   MORPHEME *LE* AS   AN   ADVERB   OF   PLACE -   PAST   TENSE - POSITIVE   FORM

29.   a.   *Re phetše go **le** (lefase).*

(We lived on this (world).)

b.   *O ngwaletše go **le** (letlakala).*

(You wrote on this (page).)

c.   *Tate o bolokilwe go **le** (lebitla).*

(My father was buried in this (grave).)

d.   *Re lotile makhura ka go **le** (lebotlelo).*

(We kept fats in this (bottle).)

3.7.2.6.   THE   MORPHEME   *LE* AS   AN   ADVERB   OF   PLACE -   PAST   TENSE   -   NEGATIVE   FORM

30. a*.   Ga se ra phela go **le** (lefase).*

(We did not live on this (world).)

b.   *Ga se wa ngwalela go **le** (letlakala).*

(You did not write on this (page).)

c. *Tate ga se a bolokwa ka go **le** (lebitla).*

(My father was not buried in this (grave).)

d. *G*a *se ra lota makhura ka go **le** (lebotlelo).*

(We did not keep fats in this (bottle).)

The Northern Sotho morpheme *le* does not change when it is used to answer the question 'where?' (*kae*?) in the present tense, future tense and the past tense; and also in the positive and the negative forms.

3.8.   THE MORPHEME   *LE*   USED   AS   A   COMPLEMENT

3.8.1.   DEFINITION

Richards, Platt & Weber(1985:52) say that a complement is that part of the sentence which follows the verb and thus completes the sentence. They go further to give types of complements as follows:

subject complement,

object complement,

adjective complement and

prepositional complement.

In Northern Sotho, the morpheme *le* can be used as a complement of the noun phrase and also as a complement of the verb according to its syntactic position.

3.8.2. THE MORPHEME *LE* AS A COMPLEMENT OF THE NOUN PHRASE

The following examples serve to indicate the morpheme *le* used as a complement of the noun phrase:

31.   a. *Ngwana*   *o dutše*   *kgauswi*   *le*   *mmagwe*.

        NP   predicate   locative   NP

      (The child   sat   next   to   its   mother.)

    b. *Re*   *tla*   *aga*   *kgole*   *le*   *mohlare*.

     (We   will   build   far   from   the   tree.)

```
                                         PP
                                    ┌─────┴─────┐
                                    P           NP
                                    │           │
c.  Ba        e       robile    malebana      le        moedi.

    (They    broke    it                      by        the river valley.)
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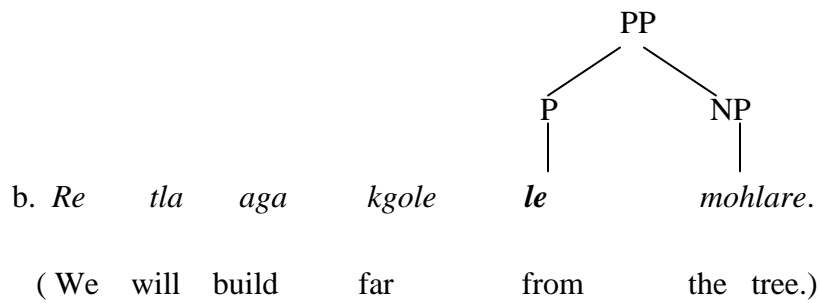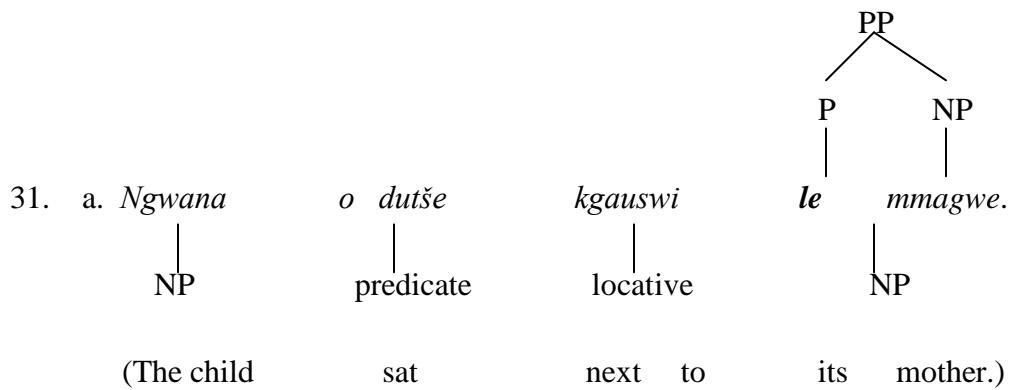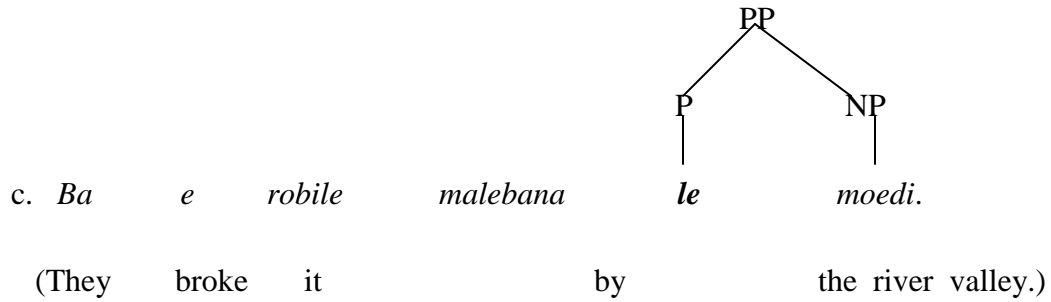
3.8.3.   THE   MORPHEME   *LE*   AS   A   COMPLEMENT   OF

THE   VERB

The following examples serve to indicate the morpheme *le* used as a complement of the verb:

32.   a. *Nora o lwele **le** mošemane.*

          (Nora fought with the boy.)

       b. *Mošemane o sepetše **le** mmagwe.*

          (The boy left with his mother.)

       c. *Ka moka ba dutše **le** bašomi.*

          (All of them stayed with the workers.)

3.9.   CONCLUSION

Morphology is the scientific study of morphemes. In terms of morphology, the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* can be used as different types of word categories. It can be used as follows:

as a conjunction to join clauses which are of the same value,

as a demonstrative pronoun of noun Cl. 5,

as an/a agreement/concord of the noun Cl. 5,

as a preposition,

as an identifying copulative, a descriptive copulative an associative copulative and a locational copulative,

and also as an adverb of place.

One cannot quickly classify the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* into word categories without first looking into its syntactic position in the sentence together with its semantic function.

CHAPTER   FOUR

THE SEMANTIC FUNCTION OF THE NORTHERN SOTHO MORPHEME   *LE*

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The term semantics is defined by Richards, Platt Weber(1985:254) as the study of meaning. They go further to clarify as follows: There are many different approaches to the way in which meaning in language is studied. Philosophers, for instance, have investigated the relation between linguistic expressions such as the words of a language, and persons, things and events in the world to which these words refer. Linguists have investigated, for example, the way in which meaning in a language is structured ; and have distinguished between different types of meanings. There have also been studies of the semantic structure of sentences.

Saeed (1998:1) also says semantics is the study of meaning communicated through language. Palmer (1996:1) also shares the same view and puts it simply by saying semantics is the technical term used to refer to the study of meaning.

The aim of this chapter is to examine and clarify the semantic function of the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* according to the linguistic point of view. It is sometimes confusing to establish the correct meaning that the morpheme *le* expresses on account of its ambiguous nature. In terms of its semantic function, the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* can express a variety of meanings, such as possession, accompaniment, location, additive focus and existentialism.

The following discussion serves to highlight and suggest ways of identifying the correct meaning of the Northern Sotho morpheme *le*.

4.2. THE MORPHEME *LE* CAN BE USED TO DENOTE POSSESSION

4.2.1. DEFINITION

Richards, Platt and Weber(1985:223) define the noun possessive as a word or part of a word which is used to show ownership or possession. They go further to clarify that in English, there are many kinds of possessives, for example, possessive pronouns, `s and the "of" construction.

Louwrens(1994:145) shares the same view with Richards, et al(1985:223) when he says that possessive is a term which is used to refer to those grammatical constructions which expresses ownership, e.g. *dipuku tša baithuti* (the students' books). He goes on further to clarify that, that which is owned, is commonly referred to as the possession, whereas the owner is called the possessee or possessor… A distinction which is commonly drawn with regard to possessives, is that amongst direct possessives, descriptive possessives; communal possessives; alienable possessives and inalienable possessives.

In Northern Sotho, the morpheme *le* can be used to denote the following kinds of possessives , which will also be presented in different tense.

4.2.2. THE NORTHERN SOTHO MORPHEME *LE* DENOTING DIRECT POSSESSIVE

4.2.2. 1. DIRECT POSSESSIVE - PRESENT TENSE - POSITIVE

33. a. *Rita o na **le** diaparo*.

(Rita has clothes.)

b. *Nna ke na **le** morwalo*.

(I have a luggage.)

c. *Thabo o na **le** motswala*.

(Thabo has a cousin.)

d. *Moithuti o na **le** dipuku*.

(The student has books.

The examples 33 (a-d) express the idea that Rita, "*Nna*" (I) , Thabo and "*moithut*i" (student), directly own the possessions "*diaparo*" (clothes), "*morwalo*" (luggage), "*motswala*" (cousin) and "*dipuku*" (books) respectively.

4.2.2.2. DIRECT POSSESSIVE - PRESENT TENSE - NEGATIVE

In the present tense negative form, the morpheme *le* may hide as it is reflected in the following examples:

34. a. *Rita ga a na (**le**) diaparo*.

(Rita has got no clothes.)

b. *Ga ke na (**le**) morwalo.*

(I do not have any luggage.)

c. *Thabo ga a na (**le**) motswala.*

(Thabo does not have a cousin.)

d. *Moithuti ga a na (**le**) dipuku.*

(The student does not have books.)

4.2.2.3.   DIRECT   POSSESSIVE - FUTURE   TENSE   - POSITIVE

35 a. *Rita o tla ba **le** diaparo.*

(Rita will have clothes.)

b. *Nna ke tla ba **le** morwalo.*

(I will have a luggage.)

c. *Thabo o tla ba **le** motswala.*

(Thabo will have a cousin.)

d. *Moithuti o tla ba **le** dipuku.*

(The student will have books.)

The examples 35 (a-d) above express the idea that Rita, "*Nna*" (I), Thabo and
"*moithuti*" (student),   will in the future own the following possessions respectively:
"*diaparo*" (clothes), "*morwalo*" (luggage), "*motswala*" (cousin) and "*dipuku*"
(books).

4.2.2.4. DIRECT POSSESSIVE - FUTURE TENSE - NEGATIVE

Unlike in the present tense negative, the morpheme *le* will always show up in the future tense negative, as it is shown in these examples:

36. a. *Rita a ka se be **le** diaparo.*
        (Rita will not have clothes.)

    b. *Nna nka se be **le** morwalo.*
         (I will not have any luggage.)

    c. *Thabo a ka se be **le** motswala.*
         (Thabo will not have a cousin.)

    d. *Moithuti a ka se be **le** dipuku.*
        (The student will not have books.)

4.2.2.5.   DIRECT POSSESSIVE - PAST TENSE - POSITIVE

    37 a. *Rita o bile **le** diaparo.*
            (Rita had clothes.)

    b. *Nna ke bile **le** morwalo.*
         (I had a luggage.)

    c. *Thabo o bile **le** motswala.*
         (Thabo had a cousin.)

    d. *Moithuti o bile **le** dipuku.*
         (The student had books.)

The examples 37 (a-d) above express the ideas that Rita, "*Nna*" (I), Thabo and "*moithuti*" (student), had previously been of the owners of "*diaparo*" (clothes), "*morwalo*" (luggage), "*motswala*" (cousin) and "dipuku" (books), respectively.

4.2.2.6. DIRECT POSSESSIVE - PAST TENSE - NEGATIVE

In the past tense negative form, the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* does not change; it will always show up as in the following examples:

38. a. *Rita ga se a ba **le** diaparo.*
          (Rita did not have clothes.)

     b. *Nna ga se ka ba **le** morwalo.*
          (I did not have any luggage.)

     c. *Thabo ga se a ba **le** motswala.*
          (Thabo did not have a cousin.)

     d. *Moithuti ga se a ba **le** dipuku.*
          (The student did not have books.)

4.2.3. THE NORTHERN SOTHO MORPHEME *LE* DENOTING COMMUNAL POSSESSIVES

4.2.3.1. COMMUNAL POSSESSIVE - PRESENT TENSE - POSITIVE

39.   a. *Setšhaba se na **le** bothata*.
          (The community has a problem.)

    b. *Bathobaso ba na **le** naga*.
       (The Black people have a land.)

    c. *Sekolo se se na **le** tšhelete*.
       (This school has money.)

    d. *MaAfrika Borwa ba na **le** dijo*.
       (The South Africans have food.)

The examples 39 (a-d) denote that *"setšhaba"* (the community) is jointly having *"bothata"* (a problem), *"bathobaso"* (the Black people) are jointly possessing *"naga"* (land), *"sekolo"* (school) is jointly possessing *"tšhelete"* (money) and lastly *"maAfrika Borwa"* (South Africans) are communally possessing *"dijo"* (food).

4.2.3.2. COMMUNAL POSSESSIVE - PRESENT TENSE - NEGATIVE

In the past tense negative form, the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* may hide as it is reflected in the examples 40 (a-d) below:

40   a. *Setšhaba ga se na (le) bothata.*

        (The community does not have any problem.)

        b.   *Bathobaso ga ba na (le) naga.*

        (The Black people do not have land.)

        c.   *Sekolo se ga se na (le) tšhelete.*

        (This school does not have money.)

        d. *MaAfrika Borwa ga ba na (le) dijo.*

        (The South Africans do not have food.)

4.2.3.3.   COMMUNAL   POSSESSIVE - FUTURE   TENSE -   POSITIVE

41.   a. *Setšhaba se tla ba **le** bothata.*

        (The community will have a problem.)

       b. *Bathobaso ba tla ba **le** naga.*

        (The Black people will have land.)

       c. *Sekolo se se tla ba **le** tšhelete.*

        (This school will have money.)

       d. *MaAfrika Borwa a tla ba **le** dijo*.)

        (The South Africans will have food.)

The examples 41 (a-d) above denote that in the future, "*setšhaba*"(the community) will jointly have "*bothata*" (problem), "*Bathobaso*" (the Blacks) will jointly possess

"*naga*" (land), "*sekolo*" (school) will communally possess "*tšhelete*" (money) while "*maAfrika Borwa*" (South Africans) will communally possess "*dijo*" (food).

4.2.3.4.   COMMUNAL POSSESSIVE - FUTURE TENSE - NEGATIVE

In the future tense negative form, the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* will always be reflected as it is in the following examples:

42. a. *Setšhaba se ka se be **le** bothata.*
         (The community will not have any problem.)

     b. B*athobaso ba ka se be **le** naga.*
         (The Balck people will not have land.)

     c.   *Sekolo se se ka se be **le** tšhelete.*
          (This school will not have money.)

     d. *MaAfrika Borwa a ka se be **le** dijo.*
         (The South Africans will not have food.)

4.2.3.5.   COMMUNAL POSSESSIVE - PAST TENSE - POSITIVE

43.   a. *Setšhaba se bile **le** bothata.*
           (The community had a problem.)

       b. *Bathobaso ba bile **le** naga.*
           (The Black people had land.)

c. *Sekolo se se bile **le** tšhelete*.
   (This school had money.)

d. *MaAfrika Borwa ba bile **le** dijo*.
   (The South Africans had food.)

The examples 43 (a-d) above indicate that "*setšhaba*" (community) has previously had "*bothata*" (problem), "*bathobaso*" (Black people) owned "*naga*" (land) previously, "*sekolo*" (school) has in the past possessed "*tšhelete*" (money) and lastly, "*maAfrika Borwa*" (South Africans) have owned "*dijo*" (food) in the past.

4.2.3.6. COMMUNAL POSSESSIVE - PAST TENSE - NEGATIVE

In the past tense negative form, the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* will always show up as it is reflected in the following examples:

44.   a. *Setšhaba ga se sa ba **le** bothata*.
          (The community did not have any problem.

       b. *Bathobaso ga se ba ba **le** naga*.
          (The Black people did not have land.)

       c. *Sekolo se ga se sa ba **le** tšhelete*.
          (This school did not have money.)

       d. *MaAfrika Borwa ga se ba ba **le** dijo*.
          (The South Africans did not have food.)

4.2.4. THE NORTHERN SOTHO MORPHEME *LE* DENOTING ALIENABLE POSSESSIVES

4.2.4.1. ALIENABLE POSSESSIVE - PRESENT TENSE - POSITIVE

    45.   a. *Ke na **le** dijo*.
             (I have food.)

             b. *Tate o na **le** tšhelete*.
             (My father has money.)

             c. *Fana o na **le** sefatanaga*.
             (Fana has a car.)

             d. *Ana o na **le** mogwera*.
             (Ana has a friend.)

The examples 45 (a-d) above implies that the ownership of "*dijo*" (food) by "*nna/ke*" (I), "*tšhelete*" (money) by "*tate*" (father), "*sefatanaga*" (car) by Fana and "*mogwera*" (friend) by Ana, are in such a way that they can be terminated or discontinued any time.

4.2.4.2. ALIENABLE POSSESSIVE - PRESENT TENSE - NEGATIVE

In the present tense negative form, the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* may hide as it appears in the following examples:

46. a. *Ga ke na (**le**) dijo.*
         (I do not have food.)

     b. *Tate ga a na (**le**) tšhelete.*
         (My father does not have money.)

     c. *Fana ga a na (**le**) sefatanaga.*
         (Fana does not have a car.)

     d. *Ana ga a na (**le**) mogwera.*
         (Ana does not have a friend.)

4.2.4.3. ALIENABLE POSSESSIVE - FUTURE TENSE - POSITIVE

47. a. *Ke tla ba **le** dijo.*
         (I will have food.)

     b. *Tate o tla ba **le** tšhelete.*
         (My father will have money.)

     c. *Fana o tla ba **le** sefatanaga.*
         (Fana will have a car.)

     d. *Ana o tla ba **le** mogwera.*
         (Ana will have a friend.)

The examples 47 (a-d) clearly indicates that in future, "*nna/ke*" (I) , "*tate*" (father), Fana and Ana will be having ownership of "*dijo*" (food), "*tšhelete*" (money),

"*sefatanaga*" (car) and "*mogwera*" (friend) respectively. The type of ownership that they have is such that it can be terminated at any time.

4.2.4.4. ALIENABLE POSSESSIVE - FUTURE TENSE - NEGATIVE

In the future tense negative, the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* does not change or hide, it will always show up as it is shown in the following examples:

48.   a. *Nka se be **le** dijo.*

(I will not have food.)

c. Tate a ka se be **le** tšhelete.

(My father will not have money.)

d. *Fana a ka se be **le** sefatanaga.*

(Fana will not have a car.)

e. *Ana a ka se be **le** mogwera.*

(Ana will not have a friend.)

4.2.4.5. ALIENABLE POSSESSIVE - PAST TENSE - POSITIVE

49.   a. *Ke bile **le** dijo*.

(I had food.)

b. *Tate o bile **le** tšhelete*.

(My father had money.)

c. *Fana o bile **le** sefatanaga*.

(Fana had a car.)

    d.   *Ana o bile **le** mogwera.*
       (Ana had a friend.)

The examples 49 (a-d) denote that in the past "*nna/ke*" (I), "*tate*" (father), Fana and Ana had ownership of "*dijo*" (food), "*tšhelete*" (money), "*sefatanaga*" (car) and "*mogwera*" (friend), respectively; which could be terminated any time.

4.2.4.6.   ALIENABLE POSSESSIVE - PAST TENSE - NEGATIVE

In the past tense negative, the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* will always appear to denote alienable possession as it is indicated in the following examples:

    50. a. *Nna ga se ka ba **le** dijo.*
         (I did not have food.)

       b. *Tate ga se a ba **le** tšhelete.*
         (My father did not have money.)

       c. *Fana ga se a ba **le** sefatanaga.*
         (Fana did not have a car.)

       d. *Ana ga se a ba **le** mogwera.*
         (Ana did not have a friend.)

4.2.5. THE NORTHERN SOTHO MORPHEME *LE* DENOTING INALIENABLE POSSESSION

4.2.5.1. INALIENABLE POSSESSIVE - PRESENT TENSE - POSITIVE

The following examples imply that under normal circumstances, the ownership of the possessions cannot be terminated.

> 51.   a.   *Kgomo e na **le** leihlo.*
>   (The cattle has an eye.)
>
>   b.   *Neo o na **le** hlogo.*
>   (Neo has a head.)
>
>   c.   *Ngwana o na **le** diatla.*
>   (The baby has hands.)
>
>   d.   *Mpša e na **le** mosela.*
>   (The dog has a tail.)

The relationship between the possessors "*kgomo*" (cattle), Neo, "*ngwana*" (the baby), "*mpša*" (the dog); and their possessions "*leihlo*" (eye), "*hlogo*" (head). "*diatla*" (hands) and "*mosela*" (tail), cannot be discontinued under normal circumstances.

4.2.5.2. INALIENABLE POSSESSIVE - PRESENT TENSE - NEGATIVE

In the present tense negative form, the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* may hide. The relationship of the possessors and their possessions can only be discontinued under abnormal conditions as it appears in the following examples:

52.   a.   *Kgomo ga e na (le) leihlo.*
            (The cattle does not have an eye.)

      b.   *Neo ga a na (le) hlogo.*
            (Neo does not have a head.)

      c.   *Ngwana ga a na (le) diatla.*
            (The child does not have hands.)

      d.   *.Mpša ga e na (le) mosela.*
            (The dog does not have a tail.)

4.2.5.3.   ALIENABLE POSSESSIVE - PAST TENSE - POSITIVE

53.   a.   *Kgomo e bile **le** leihlo.*
            (The cattle had an eye.)

      b.   *Neo o bile **le** hlogo.*
            (Neo had a head.)

      c.   *Ngwana o bile **le** diatla.*
            (The baby had hands.)

d. *Mpša e bile **le** mosela.*

(The dog had a tail.)

4.2.5.4. INALIENABLE POSSESSIVE - FUTURE TENSE - POSITIVE

54. a. *Kgomo e tla ba **le** leihlo.*

(The cattle will have an eye.)

b. *Neo o tla ba **le** hlogo.*

(Neo will have a head.

c. *Ngwana o tla ba **le** diatla.*

(The baby will have hands.)

d. *Mpša e tla ba **le** mosela.*

(The dog will have a tail.)

4.2.5.5. INALIENABLE POSSESSIVE - FUTURE TENSE - NEGATIVE

In the future tense negative the sentences will appear as follows:

55. a. *Kgomo e ka se be **le** leihlo.*

(The cattle will not have an eye.)

b. *Neo a ka se be **le** hlogo.*

(Neo will not have a head.)

c. *Ngwana a ka se be **le** diatla.*

(The baby will not have hands.)

    d. *Mpša e ka se be **le** mosela.*
       (The dog will not have a tail.)

It should be pointed out that the literal change in meaning from the present tense to the future tense in the examples 53 (a-d) to 55 (a-d) can lead to a doubtful deeper meaning of the inalienable relationship which is realized between the possessors and their possessions.

4.3.   THE NORTHERN SOTHO MORPHEME *LE* CAN BE USED TO DENOTE ACCOMPANIMENT

4.3.1. DEFINITION

Allen(1990:8) says that an accompaniment is an accompanying thing; an appendage.
In Northern Sotho, the morpheme *le* can be used to indicate that a person or object is accompanied by another person or object. It indicates that one is not alone but is having the company of some other people or things. The following examples are showing that the subjects in each sentence has got company of other people or things.

4.3.2. ACCOMPANIMENT - PRESENT TENSE - POSITIVE

  56.a. *Tate o na **le** mma ka ntlong.*
      (Daddy is with mummy in the house.)

This example indicates that "*tate*" (daddy) is not alone in the house at the moment, he is accompanied by "*mma*"(mummy).

b. *Nelly o na **le** baeng*.
(Nelly is with the visitors.)

This sentence implies that Nelly is in the accompaniment of some other people, i.e. "*baeng*" (visitors); she is not by herself.

c. *Bašemane ba na **le** basetsana*.
(The boys are with the girls.)

This example denote that "*bašemane*" (boys) are not alone, they are accompanied by "*basetsana*" (girls). The boys are not separated from the girls, they have got company of the girls; i.e. amongst "*bašemane*" (boys), there are "*basetsana*" (girls).

d. *Motsomi o na **le** dimpša tša gagwe*.
(The hunter is with his dogs.)

The idea which is expressed in this example is that "*motsomi*" (the hunter) is not alone at this moment, he is with his "*dimpša*" (dogs). The hunter is accompanied by his dogs.

4.3.3. ACCOMPANIMENT - PRESENT TENSE - NEGATIVE

The Northern Sotho morpheme *le* may hide in the present tense negative form to denote accompaniment as it is reflected in the following sentences:

57. a. *Tate ga a na (**le**) mma ka ntlong*.
(Daddy is not with mummy in the house.)

b. *Nelly ga a na (**le**) baeng.*

(Nelly is not with the visitors.)

c. *Bašemane ga b a na (**le**) basetsana.*

(The boys are not with the girls.)

d. *Motsomi ga a na (**le**) dimpša tša gagwe.*

(The hunter is not with his dogs.)

4.3.4.   ACCOMPANIMENT - FUTURE   TENSE   - POSITIVE

58. a. *Tate o tla ba **le** mma ka ntlong.*

(Daddy will be with mummy in the house.)

The idea in this sentence is that "*tate*" (daddy) will in the next moment, in future , not be alone in the house, but he will be with mummy. He will have the company of "*mma*" (mummy).

b. *Nelly o tla ba **le** baeng.*

(Nelly will be with the visitors.)

The implication in this example is that Nelly will not be alone in the next moment, in future, she will be accompanied by "*baeng*" (visitors).

c. *Bašemane ba tla ba **le** basetsana.*

(The boys will be with the girls.)

This example denote that in future, "*bašemane*" (boys) will not be alone, they will have company of "*basetsana*" (girls)

d. *Motsomi o tla ba **le** dimpša tša gagwe.*

(The hunter will be with his dogs.)

The idea which is expressed in this sentence is that "*motsomi*" (the hunter) will not be by himself, he will be accompanied by "*dimpša*" (dogs).

4.3.5. ACCOMPANIMENT - FUTURE TENSE - NEGATIVE

The morpheme *le* will always denote accompaniment also in the future tense negative form as it appears in the following sentences:

59. a. *Tate a ka se be **le** mma ka ntlong.*

(Daddy will not be with mummy in the house.)

b. *Nelly a ka se be **le** baeng.*

(Nelly will not be with the visitors.)

c. *Bašemane ba ka se be **le** basetsana.*

(The boys will not be with the girls.)

d. *Motsomi a ka se be **le** dimpša tša gagwe.*

(The hunter will not be with his dogs.)

4.3.6. ACCOMPANIMENT - PAST TENSE - POSITIVE

In the past tense positive form, the morpheme *le* will still denote accompaniment. The following examples support this idea:

60. a. *Tate o bile **le** mma ka ntlong.*

        (Daddy was with mummy in the house.)

This example expresses the idea that "*tate*" (daddy) was previously not alone in the house, but he was accompanied by "*mma*" (mummy).

     b. *Nelly o bile **le** baeng.*

        (Nelly was with the visitors.)

The idea which is expressed in this example is that Nelly did not stay alone previously, she was accompanied by "*baeng*" (visitors).

     c. *Bašemane ba bile **le** basetsana.*

        (The boys were with the girls.)

This example expresses the idea that "*bašemane*" (boys) did not stay alone or were not separated from the "*basetsana*" (girls), they were together.

4.3.7. ACCOMPANIMENT - PAST TENSE - NEGATIVE

The Northern Sotho morpheme *le* will also show accompaniment in the past tense negative form, as it is reflected in the following examples:

61. a. *Tate ga se a ba **le** mma ka ntlong.*

         (Daddy was not with mummy in the house.)

     b.   *Nelly ga se a ba **le** baeng.*

        (Nelly was not with the visitors.)

     c. *Bašemane ga se ba ba **le** basetsana.*

(The boys were not with the girls.)

    d. *Motsomi ga se a ba **le** dimpša tša gagwe.*

        (The hunter was not with his dogs.)

4.3.8. THE MORPHEME *LE* WITHOUT THE USE OF THE COPULATIVE PREFIX AND THE COPULATIVE BASE TO DENOTE ACCOMPANIMENT

Sometimes the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* can denote accompaniment without being used with the copulative prefix, e.g. "*o*" for noun Cl. 1, and the copulative base "*na*" (with). The following examples proof this:

4.3.8.1. ACCOMPANIMENT WITHOUT A COPULATIVE PREFIX - PRESENT TENSE - POSITIVE

62.   a. *Ke ja **le** bana.*

        (I eat with the children.)

    b. *Morutiši **le** morutwana ba a rerišana.*

        (The teacher and the learner are discussing.)

    c. *Re sepela **le** yo.*

        (We go with this one.)

    d. *Bana ba raloka **le** wa ka.*

        (The children are playing with that of mine.)

4.3.8.2. **ACCOMPANIMENT WITHOUT A COPULATIVE PREFIX - PRESENT TENSE - NEGATIVE**

63.   a.   *Ga ke je **le** bana.*

(I do not eat with the children.)

   b.   *Morutiši **le** morutwana ga ba rerišane.*

(The teacher and the learner are not discussing.)

   c.   *Ga re sepele **le** yo.*

(We are not going with this one.)

   d.   *Bana ga ba raloke **le** wa ka.*

(The children are not playing with that of mine.)

4.3.8.3. **ACCOMPANIMENT WITHOUT A COPULATIE PREFIX - FUTURE TENSE - POSITIVE**

64.   a.   *Ke tla ja **le** bana.*

(I will eat with the children.)

   b.   *Morutiši **le** morutwana ba tla rerišana.*

(The teacher and the learner will discuss.)

   c.   *Re tla sepela **le** yo.*

(We will go with this one.)

   d.   *Bana ba tla raloka **le** wa ka.*

(The children will play with that of mine.)

4.3.8.4. ACCOMPANIMENT WITHOUT THE COPULATIVE PREFIX - FUTURE TENSE - NEGATIVE

65. a. *Nka se je **le** bana*.

   (I will not eat with the children.)

   b. *Morutiši **le** morutwana ba ka se rerišane*.
   (The teacher and the learner will not discuss.)

   c. *Re ka se sepele **le** yo*.
   (We will not go with this one.)

   d. *Bana ba ka se raloke **le** wa ka*.
   (The children will not play with that of mine.)

4.3.8.5. ACCOMPANIMENT WITHOUT THE COPULATIVE PREFIX - PAST TENSE - POSITIVE

66. a. *Ke jele **le** bana*.

   (I ate with the children.)

   b. *Morutiši **le** morutwana ba rerišane*.
   (The teacher and the learner have discussed.)

   c. *Re sepetše **le** yo*.
   (We went with this one.)

   d. *Bana ba ralokile **le** wa ka*.

(The children played with that of mine.)

4.3.8.6. ACCOMPANIMENT WITHOUT THE COPULATIVE BASE - PAST TENSE - NEGATIVE

67.   a.   *Ga se ka ja **le** bana.*

           (I did not eat with the children.)

    b.   *Morutiši **le** bana ga se ba rerišana.*

           (The teacher and the learners did not discuss.)

    c.   *Ga se ra sepela **le** yo.*

           (We did not go with this one.)

    d.   *Bana ga se ba raloka **le** wa ka.*

           (The children did not play with that of mine.)

4.4. THE NORTHERN SOTHO MORPHEME *LE* CAN BE USED TO DENOTE LOCATION

4.4.1. DEFINITION

Allen (1990:695) define location as a noun which refers to the place or position in which a person or thing is. In Northern Sotho we have words which are used to indicate location and they are referred to as adverbs of place.

Poulos and Louwrens (1994:327) clarify that adverbs in Northern Sotho derive from other word categories; and this process of derivation takes on different forms.

Some adverbs are being formed by the addition of prefixes, while others use suffixes.

Richards, Platt and Weber (1985:6) define an adverb as a word that describes or adds to the meaning of a verb, an adjective, another adverb, or a sentence, and which answers such questions as how?, where?, or when an action or state is performed.

Answers to these questions lead us to types of adverbs; which are: adverb of manner, adverb of place and adverb of time. The discussion below is going to focus on the use of the morpheme *le* to denote location.

4.4.2. LOCATION   BY   USING   THE   NORTHERN   SOTHO   MORPHEME   *LE*

In Northern Sotho, the morpheme *le* can be used to denote location where the activity is performed. This can be shown in the past tense positive form and the future tense positive form.

4.4.2.1.   LOCATION   - PAST   TENSE   - POSITIVE

68   a. *Ke be ke **le** Durban ngwagola.*
          (I was in Durban last year.)

      b. *Mosadi o be a **le** ka gae ge re fihla.*
          (The woman was at home when we arrived.)

      c. *Dikgomo di be di **le** ka šakeng.*
          (The cattles were in the kraal.)

d.   *Dijo di be di **le** tafoleng*.
         (Food were on the table.)

When we change the above examples into negative form, the morpheme "*le*" will change into the negative morpheme "*se*". In other words, the negative morpheme "*se*" is used to negate the location where the activity is performed.

4.4.2.2   LOCATION - FUTURE   TENSE - POSITIVE

69.   a.   *Re tla ba re **le** kgole kudu*.
            (We will be too far.)

      b.   *Bana ba tla ba ba **le** sekolong*.
            (The children will be at school.)

      b.   *Lehodu le tla ba le **le** kgolegong*.
            (The thieve will be in jail.)

      c.   *Hlapi e tla ba e **le** ka nokeng*.
            (The fish will be in the river.)

4.5. THE NORTHERN SOTHO MORPHEME LE CAN BE USED TO DENOTE ADDITIVE FOCUS

4.5.1. DEFINITION

Allen (1990:14) says additive is an adjective which refers to being characterized by addition or be added to. In Northern Sotho the morpheme *le* can be used to denote additive focus. The following discussion support view:

> 70.   a.   *Ngwana **le** yena o tla lla.*
>   (The child too will cry.)

The idea which is expressed in this sentence is that "*ngwana*" (the child) is not left out in carrying out the activity "*lla*" (cry); the child is added to those who are executing the activity.

> b.   *Dipapadi **le** tšona di bohlokwa.*
>   (Games too are important.)

This example express the idea that there is a list of things which are important; on the list provided there is an addition of "*dipapadi*" (games).

> b.   *Ba swanetše go rwala **le** dijo.*
>   (They must carry food too.)

The idea which is expressed in this example is that there are some things which need to be carried and amongst those things, there must also be "*dijo*" (food).

> c.   ***Le** ba bagolo ba a e tseba taba ye.*

(Even the elderlies know this issue too.)

This sentence gives the idea that there is knowledge about an issue. Amongst the people who have knowledge about it, the are "*ba bagolo*" (elderlies).   It is not known by young people only.

4.6. THE   NORTHERN   SOTHO   MORPHEME   *LE*   CAN   BE   USED   TO   DENOTE   EXISTENTIALISM

4.6.1. DEFINITION

Richards, Platt and Weber(1985:99) say "existential" describes a particular type of sentence which often expresses the existence or location of persons, animals, things, or ideas. In Northern Sotho the morpheme *le* can also be used to denote the existence of persons, animals, things or ideas. The following discussion support this idea:

4.6.2. THE   EXISTENCE   OF PERSONS BY USUNG   THE   MORPHEME *LE*

71. a.   *Go be go **le** moruti ka kerekeng*.
         (There was a priest in churh.)

     b. *Ga ke tshepe go **le** baeng ka gae*.
         (I don't believe there are visitors at home.)

     b.   *Sekolong go be go **le** barutwana feela*.
          (At school there were learners only.)

c. *Go be go **le** Anita ge ke fihla.*

(There was Anita when I arrive.)

4.6.3. THE EXISTENCE OF ANIMALS BY USING THE MORPHEME *LE*

72. a. *Ga ke tsene ka ge go **le** ditau.*

(I cannot enter as there are lions.)

b. *Ge go **le** dimpša gona go bolokegile.*

(If there are dogs then it is safe.)

c. *Ba tšhabile ka gobane go **le** ditlou.*

(They ran away because there are elephants.)

d. *Go ka ba go **le** dikwena ka nokeng.*

(There might be crocodiles in the river.)

4.6.4. THE EXISTENCE OF THINGS BY USING THE MORPHEME *LE*

73. a. *O tla bona manong ge go **le** setopo.*

(You will see eagles if there is a caucus.)

b. *Ge go **le** selo ka thoko yeo o tla mpotša.*

(If there is something that side you will tell me.)

c. *O e tšere go **le** diaparo feela.*

(He took it whilst there were clothes only.)

d.   *O ithutile ka ge go **le** dipuku*.

(He studied because there are books.)

4.6.5. THE EXISTENCE OF IDEAS BY USING THE MORPHEME *LE*

74.   a.   *Go be go **le** bose moketeng*.

(It was nice at the party.)

b.   *Ge go **le** bodutu ke tla mmitša*.

(If there is loneliness I will call him.)

c.   *Ga ke lokologe ge go **le** poifo go nna*.

(I do not feel free when there is fear in me.)

d.   *O thušitše le ge go **le** dipelaelo*.

(He helped though there are complaints.)

4.7.   THE NORTHERN SOTHO MORPHEME *LE* CAN BE USED TO DENOTE HONORIFICS

4.7.1. DEFINITION

Richards, Platt and Weber (1985:131) state that honorifics is a noun which refers to politeness formulas in a particular language which may be specific affixes, words, or sentence structures. They go further to indicate that languages which have a

complex system of honorifics are, for instance, Japanese, Madurese, and Hindi. They also say that English has no complex system of honorifics.

Northern Sotho as a language, also has its own system of honorifics. There are specific prefixes e.g. "*bo-*", suffixes e.g. "*-ng*", words e.g. "*morena*"; which are formulas which show politeness in Northern Sotho

4.7.2.   THE MORPHEME *LE* USED AS A CONCORD TO DENOTE   HONORIFICS

The Northern Sotho morpheme *le* can also be used to denote honorific as it is used in the following discussion:

4.7.2.1. THE MORPHEME *LE* AS A SUBJECT CONCORD TO DENOTE   HONORIFICS

75.   a. *Mma **le** rapetše naa*?
           (Mother did you(singular) pray?

       b. *Rakgadi **le** hlokomele bana.*
           (Aunt take care of the children.)

       c. *Malome **le** ba bone kae batho*?
           (Uncle where did you(singular) see the people?

       d. Koko ***le** tla ja le rena lehono*.
           (Granny you (singular) will eat with us today.)

4.7.2.2. THE MORPHEME *LE* AS AN OBJECT CONCORD TO DENOTE HONORIFICS

76. a. *Ke tla **le** thuša tate*.

    (I will help you(singular) father.)

    b. *O a **le** rata ruri*.

    (He loves you(singular) really.)

    c. *Ngwana o **le** boditše bothata bjo*.

    (The child told you(singular) about this problem.)

    d. *Ba **le** agela ntlo ye kgolo mma*.

    (They are building a big house for you(singular) mother.)

4.8. CONCLUSION

Semantically the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* can give different meanings which can sometimes be confusing due to its ambiguous nature. Its correct meaning can only be clarified when it is used in various contexts to clarify its ambiguity. The morpheme *le* can be used in Northern Sotho to denote possession, accompaniment, location, additive focus, existentialism and honorifics.

CHAPTER   FIVE :   CONCLUSION

5.1.   CONCLUSION

The aim of this study is to examine the role that the morpheme *le* plays in the
Northern Sotho discourse. The linguistic analysis of this morpheme will assist the
speakers and users of Northern Sotho to realize the importance of knowing the word
category to which the morpheme *le* belongs. This study also serves to highlight
strategies which one should use in order to interpret the meaning expressed by the
morpheme *le* correctly.

CHAPTER   ONE serves as the introduction to this study which reveals the
background to the problem that the ambiguous nature of the Northern Sotho
morpheme *le* poses with regard to its semantic function as well as its word
categorization. The linguistic analysis of this morpheme will assist Northern Sotho
language users to understand and identify the correct word category and the
semantic function the Northern Sotho morpheme *le*. The qualitative research
methodology is used in this study to give insight to the topic under discussion.

CHAPTER   TWO deals with literature review which reflects the work of other
scholars who have undertaken an in-depth study of the other morphemes but with
little attention to the Northern Sotho morpheme *le*. It is acknowledged that,
amongst other scholars and linguists, Mogoba (1992), Matsinhe (1993), Mphahlele
(2003), Lombard, Van Wyk and Mokgokong (1985), Ziervogel, Lombard and
Mokgokong (1988), Poulos and Louwrens (1994) worked on morphemes. Most of
them worked on bound morphemes while a few of them worked on free morphemes
like the morpheme *le*, but on a lighter note.

CHAPTER   THREE deals with the morphological features of the Northern
Sotho morpheme *le*. Morphology is defined in this chapter as the scientific study of
morphemes. It is indicated in this chapter that the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* can

be categorized into many word categories, it will depend on the morphological function it carries in that particular context. The Northern Sotho morpheme *le* can be categorized in Northern Sotho as follows:

- ➢ As a conjunctive, for example: *Dijo le dino*.
  <div align="center">(Food and drinks.)</div>

- ➢ As a demonstrative pronoun of noun Cl. 5, for example: *Ba mphile le*.
  <div align="right">(They gave me</div>
  <div align="right">this one.)</div>

- ➢ As an agreement of noun Cl. 5, for example: *Letšatši le a hlaba*.
  <div align="right">(The sun rises.)</div>

- ➢ As a preposition, for example: *Dinonyana di na le mafofa*.
  <div align="center">(Birds have feathers.)</div>

- ➢ As a copulative, for example: *Lena le baetapele*.
  <div align="center">(You are the leaders.)</div>

- ➢ As an adverb, for example: *Re phela go le (lefase)*.
  <div align="center">(We live on this (world).</div>

- ➢ And also as a complement, for example: *Nora o lwele le mošemane*.
  <div align="right">(Nora has fought with the boy.)</div>

Categorizing the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* into different word categories is clarified by its use in sentences uttered in a specific context to clarify its ambiguity.

CHAPTER FOUR concerns the semantic function of the Northern Sotho morpheme *le*. Semantic is explained in this chapter as the study of meaning. This chapter suggested ways of identifying the correct meaning of the morpheme *le*. In terms of its semantic function, the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* can be used to denote different things which will depend on the context in which it is used. Semantically the morpheme *le* can be used in Northern Sotho to denote the following:

➤ possession, for example: *Rita o na **le** diaparo.*

(Rita has clothes.)

➤ accompaniment, for example: *Tate o na **le** mma ka ntlong.*

(Daddy is with mummy in the house.)

➤ location, for example: *Ke be ke **le** toropong.*

(I was in town.)

➤ additive focus, for example: *Ngwana **le** yena o tla lla.*

(The child too will cry.)

➤ existentialism, for example: *Go be go **le** moruti ka kerekeng.*

(There was a priest in church.)

➤ honorifics, for example: *Mma **le** rapetše naa*?

(Mother did you(singular) pray?

The morpheme *le* is used in sentences which are uttered in different contexts which clarify the correct meaning which it denotes.

CHAPTER   FIVE   is the conclusion of this research work, and it summarizes all its chapters.

5.2. FINDINGS

This study has made the following findings:

❖ More literature has been done on bound morphemes than it is on free
morphemes.

❖ The morpheme *le* in Northern Sotho cannot function as a complementizer, it
can only function as a conjunctive.

❖ When used as an identifying copulative, the morpheme *le* in Northern Sotho changes to *se* in the future tense negative and the past tense negative forms, e.g.

*Ke tlo ba ke **se** moithuti išago.*
(I will not be a student next year.)

*Ke be ke **se** moswa kerekeng.*
(I was not youth in church.)

❖ When used to denote location, the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* changes to *se* in the negative form, e.g.
*Ke be ke **se** Durban ngwagola.*
(I was not in Durban last year.)

❖ The difficulty in establishing the correct meaning of the morpheme *le* in Northern Sotho, together with its word categorization, can only be clarified by its use in sentences uttered in different contexts.

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

❖ It is recommended that an in-depth study of the Northern Sotho free morphemes is necessary because most linguists are focusing on working on bound morphemes rather than free morphemes.

❖ An in-depth study of the syntactic structure of the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* is necessary to clarify its function as it is used in a particular discourse.

❖ An in-depth study of the phonological features of the Northern Sotho morpheme *le* is necessary to establish its phonological status as it is used in a particular context.

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