

**REGISTER AS DETERMINANT OF IDENTITY:  
A CASE OF NORTHERN SOTHO *SEŠATE* LANGUAGE**

By

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(i)

**DECLARATION**

I, declare that the mini dissertation **REGISTER AS DETERMINANT OF IDENTITY: A CASE OF NORTHERN SOTHO *SEŠATE* LANGUAGE**, is hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree of M.A. in Translation Studies and Linguistics has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university; that it is my work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

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**SIGNATURE**

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**DATE**

(ii)

## **DEDICATION**

I heartily dedicate this dissertation to my only three daughters, **Peggy Phuti; Midah Makoena (Mogaleadi, *Serokolo tšhemo ke tšea ya go lala*)**, and **Mankopodi Lillian (Mahlako) Mphahlele.**

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4. For you Andries Maoka Dikotla belief that, even if the deadliest storm may torment us hither, the righteous will show us the path thither, and with this pen in hand on paper, the world will read. Unto you “Phaahla” I say, with your helping hand never despair and you will never fall far from where I will be standing.

**MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL**

## ABSTRACT

This research study is divided into five chapters and they are as follows:

**Chapter one** is the introductory chapter of this study and it covers the background of this study problem, aim of the study, rationale of the study, significance of the study, study methodology, and literature review.

**Chapter two** covers the analytic study of discourse at *mošate* looking at the use of figurative speech patterns such as idioms, proverbial utterances as gestures of speech in control by the domain, purpose, and setting.

**Chapter three** covers politeness and related gestures of speech as used by Northern Sotho language speakers during gatherings at *mošate* and other discourse conventions.

**Chapter four** covers the study of *Sešate* as a restricted code as opposed to elaborate code and its appropriateness, discourse theories and the purposefulness of *Sešate*.

**Chapter five** is the concluding chapter of this study.

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### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

This study will focus on the use of *Sešate* register as a language form at *kgorong ya mošate* amongst Northern Sotho language speakers. This study will concentrate on selected *Sešate* register as used in the following areas: *Mohlaletse*, *GaMphahlele* and *GaMamabolo*.

According to Saville-Troike (1982:51), communication use in a given speech community differs with regard to domain, purpose and setting and can as such take on either formal or informal dimensions which cut across dialect speakers. It may also assume different channels of communication such as oral, written and manual communication.

Fishman (1971:56) and Hymes (1964:45) also made extensive contributions to various levels of communication with regard to situation which, according to their findings, is central to both the participants and the topic in which discourse is taking place. Baker (1992:15) adds that register is a variety of language that a language user considers appropriate to a specific situation. Therefore, a register arises from variation of use in discourse. As *Sešate* register is one of the most important devices of communication in Northern Sotho, it is important to undertake a study on it.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM**

The researcher intends to concentrate on *Sešate* as a social variable since it has hardly received any scholastic attention. Neglect of *Sešate* as a social interaction is a curious anomaly, since much of the daily social communication of Northern Sotho speakers revolves around the use of *Sešate*.

Catford (1965:90) maintains that “by register we mean a variety correlated with the performer’s social role on given occasions. Every normal adult plays a series of different social role-one man for example, may function at different times as head of the family, motorist, cricketer, and a member of a religious group, and within his idiolect he has varieties appropriate to these roles. When the professor’s wife tells him to stop talking like a professor, she is protesting against his misuse of register”. Language choice is thus situational in use and is as such guaranteed by domain and dimensions with regard to purpose, mode, tenor, and field. Catford’s explanation of register can, therefore, be referred to as style-shifting or variety-changing which, according to Saville-Troike (1982:54), is a change in language varieties. It involves changing the code-markers.

These are variable features which are associated with social and cultural dimensions such as age, sex, social class, and relationships between speakers in context.

From this exposition, it is evident that register is a code which can be manipulated by speech community speakers in relation to their social role and role fulfillment in a given environment (which in this case is *mošate*). *Sešate* is thus, a language form peculiar in context as another social variable. It serves to establish identity through appropriateness of usage, which according to Sekhukhune (1988:22), is interplay between language behaviour and social interaction in communication that could be termed space-time continuum and is usually attributed to situational context. As such, *Sešate* establishes the idea of identity, which according to Mokgoatšana (1999:6), is a description of what *is*, sameness, a kernel concept attributed to belongingness in social context.

The following examples will help signify *Sešate* as a language form unique from other forms in Northern Sotho as a register of prestige characterized by a mode of intense silence and politeness. The use of proverbs and idiomatic expressions serves the purpose of being different to understand among non-Northern Sotho speakers, non-initiates or members of different regiments. For example:

(1) *Aowa kgoši, o dutše ka lephekong.*

(Lit.: No Chief, he is seated on the other side of the wooden stick.)

(Com.: Sorry, Sir, you cannot see/talk to him.)

(2) *Eya kgoši, re kwele feela ge a robala ka baneng.*

(Lit.: Yes, Chief, we only heard that she sleeps with the children.)

(Com.: Yes Sir, we only heard that she denies him conjugal rights.)

(3) *Thobela, o sa ile kgakala ga modutudu.*

(Lit.: Greetings to you, Chief, he has gone out to the toilet.)

(Com.: Sir, he has just gone out to relieve himself.)

Utterances in the above examples indicate a restricted code which, according to Verma (1969:3), is particularistic to a context. They single out field, mode and tenor between the addressee and the performer, herein referred to as the speaker, concerning issues that pertain to cases closely related to *mošate*. The language choice is idiomatic and it is characterized by a very humble way of interaction. Each sentence in the examples begins with the address to the high ranking member in a kingly manner, starting with *eya kgoši*; *thobela* and *aowa kgoši*. Traditionally, if a sentence or utterance does not begin in this manner it should then end with these words and phrases to indicate unique respect. A comma signifies a pause followed by a brief silence, a discourse pattern rarely used currently. Today even at *mošate* language choice is elaborative and characterized by universalistic tenor of code choice. *Bakgomana* and *bakgoma* hardly address each other in this manner (*Sešate* or *Sekgomana*), hence their protracted internal discords.

Another typical symbol in the examples is the usage of idiomatic expressions. This makes it hard for non-Northern Sotho speakers to actually understand what is meant without being clarified about the field of the specific register. For instance, in example (1) *lepheko* is a wooden stick put on the entrance floor, a symbol to tell visitors that there is a newly born baby in the house so that not everybody is allowed to enter. In example (2) *ka baneng* refers to a separate dwelling specially built for children whilst parents are not supposed to sleep in it. But in this example, the mother sleeps there with the reasons known to the two parents. After a long time, the case is reported at the *mošate* for the *bakgomana* to intervene. In example (3) what is meant is that the person in question has not gone out to relieve himself or has gone out to squeeze the intestine as one could interpret it, but he has gone out to defecate or *o ile go tlemolla lepanta* (He has gone out to loosen his belt) or *o ile go mena lela* (He has gone out to squeeze the intestine). As such *Sešate* is characterized by the use of strong words, but those in interaction have the skill of moderately using such words or expressions.

To add to these examples, the following extracts from Matsepe (1982:31) will help explain the use of typical *Sešate*:

“*O a tamiša, Tshetlo, kgoši.*”

“*Ke nnete, kgoši. Tshetlo ge a ilalo ke motho yo a tlilego go ipega gore o na le morero– ke morero wa go thabiša morwagwe le bagwera ba gagwe, gomme go tla itaodiša yena thobela.*”

(Lit.: Chief, Tshetlo greets. “It is true, Chief. Tshetlo is here to report that he has a function at home, and the function is about to please his son and his friends, Chief.”)

(Com.: “Chief, Tshetlo greeted us and came to report that he will have a function at home to please his son`s friends.”)

In this extract from Matsepe, *kgoši* does not literarily refer to a chief in that it is just impossible for one to talk to a *kgoši*, not even during *pitšo (indaba)*, but it refers to a member in the chieftainship who is a senior member of the tribe (*mokgomana* or *mokgoma*). One is, therefore compelled to use these utterances whenever one wishes to be respected too. To avoid variation-shift or language death it will be necessary for scholars in sociolinguistics to preserve these registral features of *Sešate*.

According to Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000:13), language shift refers to a process in which the speakers of a language form increasingly begin to use a second language, until they eventually use only the second language, even in personal and intimate contexts. These authors furthermore point out that language shift becomes total when the second language becomes a symbol of the socio-cultural identity of a group. Once language shift has occurred, the possibility is that a greater number of the speech community members and in the case of this study, Northern Sotho speakers, will experience what is best defined as language death. According to Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000:13), language death occurs when all the speakers of a language have totally shifted their language behaviour, so that there are no persons left who still speak the original language. This prompted the researcher to investigate this language form to preserve it as an indigenous language system amongst Northern Sotho language speakers.

Other language forms that are registral features of *Sešate* are witnessed in extending greetings, formally or intimately. For example:

*Agee! Mosebo`a Mogale`a Hlabirwa.*

(Lit.: Well done, Mosebo, son of Mogale who is the son of Hlabirwa.)

(Com.: You have done so well, Mosebo, son of Mogale, grandson of Hlabirwa.)

*Aгаа! O nepile yola Hunadi`a Mosebo.*

(Lit.: Very good, Hunadi, wife to Mosebo is right.)

(Com.: Thanks, there is it, Mosebo`s wife Hunadi, is right.)

*Mosebo, Hlabirwa, and Hunadi* are not the actual names of these persons but praise names. In any communication at *mošate*, it will be derogatory to call the participants or referents in the discourse by their names. The speaker, therefore, has to use praise names and further praises his/her father and the grandfather to indicate his/her sense of appreciation or disapproval of what is being said in the interaction. But in today utterance or speech form is rarely used. These formal addresses in communication have thus been shifted by those in interaction to digglosic situations such as *thanks!* and *dankie!* which are language forms derived from either English or Afrikaans that the Northern Sotho speakers are in contact with in their daily lives.

Another typical *Sešate* language form is characterized by regular interjections such as *Aowa! Aai! Agee! Eya! Aa!* at the beginnings of sentences or utterances as are reflected in the examples in Sekhukhune, (1975:11) which are words or affective expressions convey feelings of either pain, surprise, a sense of appreciation, or disapproval. For example:

*“Agee, Hunadi`a Ngwato, o šomile mmago banake.”*

(Lit.: Thanks a lot, my wife, you have done so well.)

(Com.: Well done, my wife.)

### 1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this research study is to investigate the use of *Sešate* as a prestigious language form amongst Northern Sotho language speakers. To achieve this aim, the study will endeavour to answer the following questions:

- \* What is the value of *Sešate* amongst the Northern Sotho communities?
- \* When is *Sešate* used appropriately or inappropriately?
- \* How should *Bakgomana* and *Bakgoma* behave in interaction when at *mošate*?
- \* Is *Sešate* really different from other language forms used by Northern Sotho language speakers?

### 1.4 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Owing to language contact, semi-urbanization and industrialization Northern Sotho speakers are experiencing a drastic language shift. This study will be undertaken to task language speakers and scholars in language study to write extensively on *Sešate* as a prestigious language form amongst Northern Sotho communities because *Sešate* deserves respect.

### 1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will be used to alert the present and coming generations of the need of indigenous knowledge systems which may fade away with the custodians of *Sešate*. It also aims to preserve Northern Sotho culture of *Sešate* and to make the younger generation develop a love for and interest in *Sešate* in most cases when they are in discourse or in any form of interaction at *mošate* or concerning issues relating to *mošate*, thus making sense of distinctive code usage. Since *bakgomana* and *bakgoma* have a



tendency of code switching and using borrowed words when at *mošate*, this study will sensitize them to the need for use of *Sešate*, thus restricting them from over indulging in this language behaviour.

## **1.6 METHODOLOGY**

In this research study the qualitative method will be used to collect relevant information from the respondents and existing literature.

### **1.6.1 Qualitative research**

Qualitative research will be used in this research study. This research method will be used since it is mostly descriptive due to the fact that the research is conducted through the use of words as the main instrumental tool in the research. One of the main reasons behind conducting this research study by using the qualitative method is that this research study is descriptive and explanatory. In addition, very little has been written on this topic.

### **1.6.2 Data collection**

According to Creswell (1994:148) qualitative research is designed to select information that will seek to answer the research questions. Creswell mentions that when collecting data from the respondents, the researcher must consider the place where the research will undertaken, the participants in the study, the observer in the study, and the nature of data collection, as well as the reason why is the researcher undertaking such research activity. In this research study, data will be collected from knowledgeable senior members of the tribe (*bakgomanana and bakgoma*), a number of previous researchers in this field of language study, library sources, and newspapers together with other reading material and interpersonal interviews. The primary and secondary methods of data collection will be used in this study.

#### **1.6.2.1 Primary method**

Unstructured interviews will be used. This will enable discussions that will elicit data from knowledgeable respondents. Interpersonal interaction will be in the form of direct verbal discussions. The interviewees will consist of the following:

- 3 - Members of the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) stationed at the University of Limpopo Sesotho sa Leboa Lexicographic Unit.
- 4 - Members of Language Research Development Centre (LRDC) stationed at University the of Limpopo.
- 8 - Northern Sotho language lecturers attached to Colleges of Education (Sekhukhune Multipurpose Centre).
- 2 - Northern Sotho language lecturers attached to the University of Limpopo.
- 10 - Northern Sotho language teachers randomly selected in the areas of Mhlaletse, GaMamabolo and GaMphahlele.
- 5 - Bakgomana randomly selected.
- 5 - Bakgoma randomly selected.

The interviewees will be asked questions such as those mentioned in the aim of the study.

### **1.6.2.2 Secondary method**

This method will be used to collect data from libraries and other media sources relevant to this study on the use of *Sešate* amongst Northern Sotho language speakers.

### **1.6.2.3 Data analysis**

According to Gay and Airasian (2000:240) qualitative data analysis is essential in research studies. As such, in this research study the data analysis will focus on an

examination of the collected data to provide a detailed description of *Sešate* and to interpret the organized data into more general conclusions.

## **1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW**

The principal aim of this section is to highlight views of scholars on *Sešate* register.

### **1.7.1 Baker (1992)**

Baker (1992:15) argues that register is a variety of language that a language user considers appropriate to a specific situation. Baker furthermore mentions that register variation arises from variations in the field of discourse which is an abstract term for what is going on that is relevant to the speaker's choice of linguistic items. Tenor of discourse, according to Baker, is an abstract term to reflect the relationships between the people taking part in the discourse while the mode of discourse is the role that the language is playing, and for its medium of transmission.

As such, different groups of people within each culture have different expectations about what kind of language is appropriate in a particular situation. The same applies to *Sešate*. *Bakgomana* and *bakgoma* do not just randomly select words or language forms just to fulfill what is expected of them, but have to use a very unique form of language suitable to the discourse when at *mošate*.

In this research study attention will thus be drawn to how *bakgomana* and *bakgoma* communicate at *mošate*, illuminating the differences between the speech used by individuals in differing situations in the same speech community at various times to clarify the appropriateness of the specific use of language.

### **1.7.2 Catford (1965)**

Using Catford's (1965:90) definition of speech register as a variety correlated with the performer's social role on given occasions, every normal adult, therefore plays a series of

different social roles. One man for example, may function at different times as head of a family, motorist, cricketer, a member of a religious group, or a professor in biochemistry. But within his idiolect he has varieties (shared by other persons and other idiolects) appropriate to these roles. This idea is shared with Verma (1969:3) when he asserts that “every human being is a bundle of institutionalized roles”.

This argument is valid to this study in that it is evident that at *mošate* participants in the discourse are members of different families who are at that point in time assigned duties different from the family life. Their language usage, *Sešate*, differs enormously from the language form or register at home. The relationship between the participants also differs and so do the positions they occupy during the discourse. Since *bakgomana* are assigned different tasks from *bakgoma*.

What makes *Sešate* a register different from other language forms amongst the Northern Sotho language speakers, is the fact that articulation of words in use, among others, command the utmost respect and politeness.

### **1.7.3 Hymes (1964)**

Hymes (1964:45) explored various levels of communication with regard to situation. According to his findings, communication levels are central to both the participants and the topic in which discourse takes place. Register is a variety of language that a language user considers appropriate. Therefore, register, and in the case of this study, *Sešate*, arises from a variation of language usage in discourse and no fixed set of domain can be posited as a priori for all speech communities, since the set of activities which will constitute a cluster of purpose, role-relations, and setting will be culture-specific.

Hymes (1964:56) further stresses this point by writing that every person is chemically structured, and that human beings are language specific species, has an innate ability, and is constituted in a certain way. Hymes points out that human beings have grown up in an environment where the responses elicited from him/her by his colleagues have developed

in him/her a set of responses to certain continua as if those continua were divided in a certain discreet way and as if those discreet responses were related to a total system of such responses.

Interrogating the ideas of Hymes, this study will show that one cannot make any successful study on register without bringing into play the concept of situation. Thus, to make insightful study of field of discourse, tenor of discourse and the mode of discourse, *Sešate* is no exception of such studies as a register of Northern Sotho language speakers when at *mošate* and it is important to study this register as another form of language use for appropriate usage.

#### **1.7.4 Mokgoatšana (1999)**

To define identity, according to Mokgoatšana (1999:6), is a treacherous act for the idea itself is so ambiguous that it rejects unity of description across Sociolinguistics and other disciplines. He maintains that the ontological defining identity would as far as possible trace the ancestry of the subject, its attributes and history. Mokgoatšana asserts that the idea of sameness already comes to mind when one applies the term, and in this way, identity brings together those attributes which are essential to describe what *is*.

Taking into account Mokgoatšana's thesis, one could posit the view that *Sešate* is a language form which, when applied or when the term comes to mind serves to identify group members from others as well as the purpose of grouping themselves in the manner they have grouped themselves, thereby not disregarding the context or the environment within which they are grouped. A register is different from other language forms amongst the Northern Sotho language speakers in that it identifies the participants in discourse with the environment in which they are interacting and the purpose, mode and field of discourse.

The language form at *mošate* cannot in any reason be associated with, made similar to or form a oneness with language forms used in any other social gatherings among the

Northern Sotho language speakers. Therefore, *Sešate* serves as an indicator of identity, or belongingness, togetherness, and self or in the words of Mokgoatšana, *Sešate* describes what *is* or what is going on.

### **1.7.5 Saville-Troike (1982)**

Saville-Troike (1982:51) describes communication use in a given speech community as a tool that will differ with regard to domain, purpose and the setting. It can as such take on either formal or informal dimensions. This tool will cut across dialect speakers and may use also different channels of communications such as oral, written and manual communication.

Saville-Troike furthermore makes the valuable point that, while many aspects of language use consistently mark particular roles the individual has to fulfill, these roles which individual speakers assume and the status they are accorded, are generally dependent on their relationship to others in the communicative event. It is thus the field, mode and tenor that will determine the register as is the case with *Sešate* register.

This being the case, Saville-Troike (1982:75) maintains that varieties of language which are more closely associated with the setting or scene in which they are used than with the people who are using them, are usually included in the concept of register, and distinguished from one another primarily on the dimension of relative formality. Thus, the physical setting of an event may call for the use of a different variety of language even when the same general purpose is being served, and when the same participants are involved. Therefore, communication patterning occurs at all levels of communication, be it societal, group or individual. At societal levels, Saville-Troike mentions that patterning usually takes form in terms of its functions, categories of talk, attitudes, and conceptions about language and the speakers. He is of the opinion that communication also patterns according to particular roles and groups within a society, such as sex, age, social status, and occupation.

As *Sešate* is a patterned communication tool, Saville-Troike's (1982) views will be important as he emphasizes on the impact of status and gender on language use.

#### **1.7.6 Sekhukhune (1988)**

According to Sekhukhune interplay between language behaviour and social interaction in communication gives rise to what could be termed space–time continuum (1988:22). He further explains that this existential moment of space or environment, which according to this research study is related to *mošate*, is usually attributed to situational context.

From this point of view, *Sešate* is a register that is used basically during interactions at a place unique to all other places or as Sekhukhune puts it, space. Though *bakgomana* and *bakgoma* may use *Sešate* in their interpersonal interactions with one another at places different from *mošate*, it is the field, tenor, and mode that will indicate to the listeners that these are members of *mošate* according to their way of talking.

It is, therefore, clear that every situation in a person's life time has a command of language patterning for communicative events to succeed otherwise the use of an inappropriate language form may result in discarding the speaker from taking part in the discourse since the situation calls for the use of another register than the one he/she is using.

This study will thus stress that the idea of situation is of extreme importance for participants in a discourse to make the appropriate choice of language form as preferred by the context-space within which the discourse is taking place.

#### **1.7.7 Verma (1969)**

According to Verma (1969:3) every human being is a bundle of institutionalized roles. He/she has to play many parts, and unless he/she knows his lines as well as his/her role, he/she is no use in the play. In fact, he/she has to operate in a network of interlocking roles and his/her success, to a very great extent, depends on his/her ability to switch

automatically from a restricted code to an elaborate code in accordance with the situation he/she is in and the social role he/she is playing at the time.

*Sešate* as a register is a restricted code that has to be used in a situation different from other situations, and the participants herein referred to as *bakgomana* and *bakgoma* in the discourse, are to be aware of the fact that the field of discourse commands respect at *mošate*. *Bakgomana* and *bakgoma* can use both elaborate codes and the restricted code as individuals in a social environment but the roles they will be fulfilling in different situations will vary. For example, at home the father will take the responsibility as head of the family while at *mošate* the language form that he will have to use in discourse will be that of *mokgomana*. Therefore, it is the field and the tenor that determine the mode of discourse in a situation. Since *Sešate* is a register amongst the Northern Sotho language speakers at *mošate*, it is important to do research on this type of register in that it consists of all registrational features and the extra-linguistic contextual factors as outlined by Verma (1965:90).

### **1.7.8 Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000)**

Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000:13) refer to language shift as a process in which the speakers of a language form begin to use a second language for more functions, until they eventually use only the second language even in personal and intimate contexts. They also point out that language shift becomes total when the second language becomes a symbol of the socio-cultural identity of the speakers. Once language shift has occurred, the possibility is that a greater number of the speech community members and in the case of this study, Northern Sotho speakers, will experience what is best defined as language death.

Webb and Kembo-Sure maintain that language death occurs when all the speakers of a language have totally shifted their language behaviour, so that there are no persons left who still speak the original language, and this is what will happen to *Sešate* if scholars do not preserve this language form by extensively writing on it.



To avoid this shift, this study has been chosen to restore the usage, and retain the value of an the indigenous knowledge system amongst the Northern Sotho language speakers, in particular to transmit an aspect of these knowledge systems to the younger generation.

## **1.8 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

### **1.8.1 Communication**

Communication is the use of verbal cues or non-verbal cues to transfer information from the speaker to the hearer in social interaction. This may take either formal or informal dimensions or oral, written or manual channels depending on the domain or setting. It is, therefore, necessary for the speaker in discourse to be competent in various settings. Communication competency, according to Savile-Troike (1982:22) extends to both knowledge and expectation, who may or may not speak in certain settings and when. A distinction is drawn between communication competence and performance in which the latter entails attitudes towards a language. To clarify this point on speaker's attitudes, Van Dijk (1998:124) describes it as stance, perspective, empathy, subjectivity, and metafunctional. Unlike information flow factors, attitude factors reflect how a person views or assess the state of affairs. Gumperz (1971:1) advocates that communication is a social activity requiring the coordinated efforts of two or more individuals. Therefore, a mere talk to produce sentences does not constitute communication at all. It will admittedly be taken only when a move has elicited a response that we say communication has taken place in a given context, in that communication is situational social process. In its broadest sense Khun (1966:152) furthermore, argues that communication means a transfer of information (understandable information), and by transfer meaning a change of locality or location of messages namely from the sender to the recipient.

### **1.8.2 Channels of communication**

By channels of communication is meant the mode of discourse. According to Saville-Troike (1982:51), this may take oral interpersonal conversations, written texts, or manual communication in a form of sign language. Van Dijk (1998:3) argues that language users are spontaneously engaged actively in discourse either using written text in contexts or talk not only as speakers, writers, listeners or readers, but also as members of the social categories wherein these complex combinations of language behaviours are used in accomplishing social and cultural roles and identities. So channels of communications are the manners through which communicative goals are been archived.

### **1.8.3 Formal communication dimensions**

Formal communication dimensions refer to social interaction that takes place in formal social gatherings such as at *mošate*, business meetings and other official meetings such as government meeting or functions. According to Saville-Troike (1982:51), describes and explains communication use in a given speech community as a tool that will differ with regard to domain, purpose and the setting, and can as such take either formal or informal dimensions.

### **1.8.4 Informal communication dimensions**

Communication dimensions that are informal are those dimensions that take place on individual or during informal gatherings over domestic issues such as matters between the parents at home, and this kind of gatherings or meetings are regarded as interpersonal social interactions. This is been explained by Saville-Troike (1982:51) by saying dimensions of communication in a speech community might be either formal or informal.

### **1.8.5 Domain**

Fishman (1971:587) defines domain as a socio-cultural construct abstracted from topics of communication, relationships between communicators, and locales of communication, in accord with the institutions of a society and spheres of activity of a speech community.

Fishman further argues that factors determining domains may include general subjects under discussion on issues such as religion, tribal issues as in the case of this study, the relationship between the participants such as the chief and the councilors, and the setting of the interaction such as *mošate* or home.

### **1.8.6 Speech community**

A speech community refers to a homogenous group of people who use one language code for the purposes of their daily communication. The language or the medium of communication they use is shared amongst the inhabitants of the area and as such the language form becomes a common entity. From the various scholars in sociolinguistics, various definitions were given to what speech community means or entails. Hudson (1980:25) using these numerous definitions, defines speech community as a term referring to a community based on language and furthermore equates linguistic community to have the same meaning. Labov (1972:120) goes on to explain that a speech community is not defined by any marked agreement in the use of a language elements, so much as by participation in a set of shared norms, and further explain by saying these norms may be observed in overt types of evaluative behaviours, and by the uniformity of abstract patterns of variation which are invariant in respect to particular levels of usage.

### **1.8.7 Dialect**

Within a speech community, there originates different speech varieties or language forms. Therefore, studies in sociolinguistics have identified multiples of speech varieties within a given speech community. Dialects are distinguished into two types, namely, social dialects and geographical dialects or what Mokgokong (1966:35) calls dialectology or linguistic geography. To make a distinction, social dialects are categorized by virtue of the social categories into which the speakers are grouped, for example, social stratifications such as upper, middle and lower classes, and geographical dialects are

classified following their geographical areas or localities, which according to Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000:19), are physical boundaries such as rivers and mountains. The more elaborate definition of dialect is that it denotes language differences within a specific area, usually a country or part thereof. The differences are those of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Mokgokong (1966:30) defines dialect as a form of speech peculiar to a district, class or a subordinate variety of a language with distinguishable vocabulary, pronunciation or idioms.

### **1.8.8 Discourse**

Discourse refers to social interaction between two or more people with a purpose of achieving communicative objective or goal. Therefore, there should be mutual understanding between the speaker and the hearer. Discourse may be between the speaker and the audience or interpersonal. Pellegrini (1984:243) agitate that spoken and written languages are often dichotomized as the two distinct forms of language. Therefore, the most interesting approach in studying the differences between channels of communication is to imagine or visualize the continuum of linguistic forms stretching extreme spontaneous speech and the expository written prose, and to demonstrate we may look at an example of classroom lecture which takes a closer form of conversation than to a written prose.

To this end each point of the continuum represents a linguistic form designed to serve a particular communicative function. Van Dijk (1998:1) assert that it therefore, focuses on properties of what people say or write in order to accomplish social, political or cultural acts in various local contexts as well as within the broader frameworks of societal structure and culture.

### **1.8.9 Mode of discourse**

According to Sekhukhune (1988:27), mode of discourse refers to the writer`s or speaker`s relationship with his medium. Sekhukhune further explains that the speaker`s relationship

is determined solely by the strength of his/her stylistic choice between the spoken and the written language. For example, it may happen that the writer uses his regional dialect and subconsciously avoids the use of the standard language.

#### **1.8.10 Field of discourse**

Van Dijk (1998:238) defines field of discourse as it is about what is happening, the nature of social action that is taking place, and what is it that the participants in discourse are engaged in, in which the language figures as the most essential component of the relationship. According to Sekhukhune (1988: 23), field of discourse is commonly known as the topic or the subject under discussion.

#### **1.8.11 Tenor of discourse**

Tenor of discourse refers to the role that each participant in the relationship assumes. It describes those who are to take part, their statuses and roles. Sekhukhune (1988:33) regards tenor of discourse as a third dimension in discourse which refers to the relationship between the speaker or the writer on the one hand, and the hearer or reader on the other hand in terms of formality and informality continuum.

#### **1.8.12 Context**

Context refers to the situation, condition or the milieu in which social interaction takes place between the participants with common goal of achieving communicative goal or the manner in which information is disseminated to others in a form of a text. Van Dijk (1998:11) says that a context intuitively implies some kind of environment or circumstance for event, action or discourse. Something we need to know about in order to properly understand the action, event or discourse. Van Dijk (1998:11) further mentions that it is that which functions as background, setting, surroundings, conditions or consequences.

Lyons (1971:413) points out that the context of an utterance cannot be identified with the spatiotemporal situation in which it occurs, but it must be held to include not only the relevant objects and actions taking place at that time, but also the knowledge shared by the speakers and the hearer of what has been said earlier on, in so far as this is pertinent to the understanding of the utterance or in so much as the stretch or the string of words are understood by those in interaction as communication otherwise communication cannot be understood as having taken place in that there is no sense in the utterances. Lyons (Ibid) further mentions that context must also be taken to include the tacit acceptance by the speaker and the hearer of all the relevant discourse conventions, beliefs, and presuppositions taken for granted by the members of the speech community to which the speakers belong.

### **1.8.13 Social interaction**

Social interaction refers to the ideas that are communicated to others in discourse either verbally or non-verbally following the rules of communication competence since communication is rule based. According to Pellegrini (1984:3-4), social interaction is said to be a very subtle and complex set of language behaviours which in his view necessitate a developed research focus and methodology. Indeed research has proved that social interaction is an interesting complex phenomenon in social sciences, a social process that is essential in human communication and socialization. This is so because social interaction as Pellegrini explains it, is a process constituted by complex stream of behaviours, multifaceted in social interrelationships.

### **1.8.14 Social variable**

Baker (1992:19) defines a social variable as the medium through which human beings are able to communicate with each other in the communicative event, and a language code is an example of such a variable.

### **1.8.15 Idioms**

In contrast to proverbs, Ntsanwisi (1965:18) says that the idiom is not didactic in tendency though figurative. It does not necessarily express a truism in symbolic language but it expresses an idea. It is a fixed structural form of words which go together, and its morphology may be modified by formative addition, to appear again, in modified set patterns which fit in with the mood, tense and conjugation of the sentence into which it is incorporated.

### **1.8.16 Restricted code**

Verma (1969:3) defines restricted code as a speech variety that is particularistic to a given environment or context during social interaction. This means that a restricted language code is rarely used and its usage is in accordance with the setting. It is therefore a stylistic manner or conversational style of articulating linguistic units to convey or express emotional inner self. According to Hudson (1980:216), restricted code is relatively inexplicit, and makes greater assumptions about knowledge shared by the hearer. Therefore it is evident that this a kind of language code greatly used by people who knows each other very well and it is claimed that many member of the lower working class or groups use only this kind of speech.

### **1.8.17 Elaborate code**

According to Verma (1969:3), a universalistic language code is the language form or variety that is loosely used by anyone, any time and everywhere regardless of its importance. It is as such the most common usage of language. In contrast to restricted code, Hudson (1980:215) explains that elaborate code is a kind of speech which is relatively explicit, making fewer assumptions about the hearer's knowledge, and he maintains that it is a kind of speech required in schools.

### **1.8.18 Culture**

Culture is defined as the way of life of people in a given society as governed by institutionalized norms, values, standards and ethics. It is as such a way of doing things in a social setting, and it depicts behaviour patterns with cultural traits. Furthermore, Khun (1966:205) maintains that culture is both a body of content and a set of relationships between human beings in society. It is therefore, a system of relationships and content which depends on the ability of human beings to communicate, and to engage in related behaviours with the same level of competence which distinguishes man from other animals. Culture as a system is universal yet in its manifestation is unique differing from one human society to the other. Thus, culture as content is never the same although in certain primitive and isolated societies the content may not change perceptibly for centuries. Culture therefore, brings the notion of chicken-egg situation between itself and individuals in societies the world over.

### **1.8.19 Language**

Language is a tool or vehicle through which human beings express their feelings about the world around them. Language can be seen as or further defined as either verbal or non-verbal cues of communicating with the encounter in context. Sociolinguists regard language as an activity, purposeful activity frequently spoken of as a living organism with the implication that language can be born, referring to new languages which is a result of languages in contact or die when referring to old languages which face language decay/death or shift. Giglioli (1975:45) argues that man is constantly using language either in a spoken, written or in a printed form and are linked to each other through the use of language as a shared human behaviour. This therefore, implies that language give human beings access to interaction in society. According to Mokgokong (1966:30), language is a vocabulary and a way of using it prevalent in one or more countries or a method of self expression; utterances or words in use for communicative goal attainment.

## **1.9 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**



### **1.9.1 Introduction**

This research study will at this stage give a sketchy focus on the origin of the Northern Sotho language speakers since an overwhelmingly voluminous and exciting work has already been covered by scholars in this field such Mokgokong (1966: 30-40), Mphahlele (1978:40-49), and many others like Ziervogel (1955:74). This study will only concentrate on the Central and the Northern-Eastern Northern Sotho language speakers. The Central cluster is formed by baPedi, baTau, baKone, baRoka, and baKopa. The North-Eastern cluster is formed by baPhalaborwa, baLobedu, baMamabolo, baLetswalo, baMametša, baMahlo, and baKgaga. From this classification and for the purpose of this study, a further classification is made to make it fit this research study, and this includes baKgaga *ba* GaMphahlele, Dikolobe *tša* GaMamabolo, and baTau *ba* Mohlaletse.

### **1.9.2 TERRITORIAL SURVEY AND ORIGIN**

#### **1.9.2.1 Ba gaMphahlele**

History has it that the Mphahlele tribe originates from Bokgaga near Tzaneen and broke away from baKgaga baMaake under the chieftainship of Chief Maake. Mphahlele (1978: 28) mentions that the Chief realized that his son “Mphahlele” after his death will be ill-treated by his other sons from the senior wives, and he then advised him to break from the main tribe and go and seek settlement elsewhere. Mphahlele further writes that at present, Bakgaga baMaake are at Marobone and Bakgaga Mphahlele are at GaMphahlele East of Polokwane under the chieftainship of Chief Ngoanamohube Mphahlele of baTau origin from Mohlaletse.

In this group, we find dialect speakers such as Mathabatha, Mafefe, Chuene, Maja, Mothapo, Molepo, and Mothiba.

#### **1.9.2.2 Mamabolo and Dikgale**

Mamabolo and Dikgale form only one huge dialect cluster under separate Chief Dikgale and Chief Mamabolo. This group is settled North East of Polokwane and traces their origin to Zimbabwe and they are closely related to Vhavenda, and their totem is *kolobe* (a boar).

### **1.9.2.3 BaTau *ba* Mohlaletse**

According to Mphahlele (1978:29), baTau *ba* Mohlatse broke away from the Langa section of the Swazi and had the *ilanga* as their totem but later changed to *nong* which means “vulture”. They acquired the totem *nong* “vulture” and later *tau* “lion” after having killed a wild cat mistaking it for a lion. This is why today they call themselves *Tau ya godimo*.

### **1.9.3 PERIOD OF ENLIGHTENMENT**

According to Mphahlele (1978:41-48) and Mokgokong (1966:36), it was in 1860 when the first missionaries arrived in the Transvaal. They were Alexandra Merensky and Heinrich Grutzner and they were later joined by the other two, Endemann and Nachtgal in 1861. The first missionary station was built at Maleoskop under chief Boleo of Bakopa in Gerlachshoop. After they fought with Alexander Merensky and Heinrich Grutzner, and the Trekkers who came to their rescue together with the Swazis, the next mission station was established at Schoonoord (Kgalatlou) under chief Sekwati who unfortunately died on the 20<sup>th</sup> September 1861, some days after allowing them to settle into his region. Sekhukhune 1 and Mampuru who were the two sons of chief Sekwati were ever at loggerheads until Mampuru fled and sought refuge with the Swazis. Sekhukhune 1 remained as the chief of Bapedi tribe. Because of some jealousy and suspicion that the missionaries were interfering with his tribal administration, Sekhukhune1 fought the missionaries and Merensky fled to Lydenburg where it is reported that he bought a farm and thereon established a mission station and the first teacher training college amongst Bapedi (Northern Sotho language speakers).

In the literary circles, According to Mphahlele (1978:41-48) and Mokgokong (1966:36), Bakopa under chief Boleo and Bapedi under chief Sekhukhune1 of Masego (Kgalatlou) were the first to be introduced to writing and the first Biblical translation was completed at Lobethal with the help of Reverend Abraham Serote which was published in 1905 together with the other miscellaneous collection of stories entitled “*Puku e xo kopantšoexo xo eona Ditaba tša mehuta-huta* in 1893. Thereafter, the missionaries trekked all over Bopedi establishing mission stations and wherever they settled, villagers surrounding the station turned converts in great numbers. The other motive of spreading or disseminating Biblical information amongst the Northern Sotho language speakers was to eradicate superstitious beliefs, perceived ignorance, and laziness amongst the black population and Northern Sotho language speakers in particular.

#### **1.9.4 HARMONIZATION**

According to Mokgokong (1966:36), the first complete Biblical translation was published in 1905 under the guidance of the Berlin Lutheran missionaries and the supervision of Reverend Abraham Serote of Bakopa, who lived amongst the Pedi dialect speakers. Dialects incorporated into Sepedi then as a designate language form were Sekopa, Sepedi, Setau, Seroka, and Sekone. Mokgokong makes mention of the point that, this Biblical translation was typical of Pedi and Kopa in that Abraham Serote was humbly requested by the missionaries to learn the Pedi dialect at Lobathal. This is how Sepedi became to be known as the first written form of language of the known Sotho language speakers in the then Transvaal. It is interesting to notice that today the language form we write within the government institutions is Sepedi and Northern Sotho is but a designate language of all Northern Sotho dialects of the Province.

This being the case, Northern Sotho became the standardized language of the Northern Sotho dialect speakers using the elevated Sepedi as a social dialect. Northern Sotho terminology and vocabulary in dictionaries is that of Sepedi origin and it is as such universally accepted as the standard terminology.

## **1.10 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

This study is divided into five chapters and they are as follows:

1.10.1 Chapter one is the introductory chapter of this study and it covers the background of this study problem, aim of the study, rationale of the study, significance of the study, study methodology, literature review, definition of concepts, historical overview, definition of concepts, and the organization of this study into chapters.

1.10.2 Chapter two covers the analytic study of discourse at *mošate* looking at the use of figurative speech patterns such as idioms, proverbial and politeness as gesture of speech in control by the domain, purpose, and field.

1.10.3 Chapter three covers politeness and gestures, para-linguistic and extra-linguistic contextual factors and other figurative speech patterns of *Sešate*.

1.10.4 Chapter four covers the study of *Sešate* as a restricted code, and its appropriateness, usefulness also discourse theories covering language and gender, language and power, purposefulness and its relevance in context.

1.10.5 Chapter five is the concluding chapter of this study and it contains the bibliography.

## **1.11 CONCLUSION**

From this brief exposition, it is clear that *Sešate* plays an important role among the Northern Sotho language speakers.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE USE OF IDIOMS AND PROVERBS AS FIGURATIVE SPEECH PATTERNS IN DISCOURSE - *SEŠATE***

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this chapter is to make an intensive study of the varieties of speech forms that are figurative and commonly characterize the Northern Sotho register of *Sešate*.

Figurative speech patterns such as idioms, proverbs and proverbial expressions, will be discussed. This will be done through the consultation of the works of other scholars in this field such as Saville-Troike (1982), Pellegrini (1984), Baker (1992), Webb and Kembo-sure (2000), Ntuli (1984). Moreover, respondents' viewpoints and extracts from a variety of published Northern Sotho literature and other works such as dissertations and theses will be examined and used as supportive material.

## 2.2 THE USE OF IDIOMS AND IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

*The BBC English Dictionary* (1992:574) defines an idiom as a group of words which have a different meaning when used together from the one they would have if you took the meaning of each word individually. According to Kooij (1971:127), idiomatic expressions or idiomatic in general refers to the meaning that cannot, except at the cost of artificiality, be described as a compositional function of the meaning of its component parts and the structure of the expression. Various scholars in the field of sociolinguistics have made an attempt in defining idioms as, according to Shipley (1982:417), a construction or expression having meaning different from the literal one and not according to the usual patterns of the language. Swan (1980:17) defines an idiom as a group of words with special meaning, which cannot be understood by taking the meaning of the individual words one by one at a time. Guma (1977:66) in his definition further points out that idioms are characteristic indigenous expressions, whose meanings cannot ordinarily be deduced or inferred from a knowledge of the individual words that make them up. The following are examples of idioms from Rakoma (1995):

- (1) a. *Go tšwa tema*  
(Lit.: To go forward.)  
(Com.: To be progressive.)
  
- b. *Go tshwa dinose*  
(Lit.: To spit bees.)

(Com.: To talk sense/ to tell interesting news.)

*c. Go tšhuma moroto*

(Lit.: To burn initiation school camp.)

(Com.: To finish work.)

*d. Go ntšha muši ka dinko*

(Lit.: To emit smoke through nostrils.)

(Com.: To feel angry.)

*e. Go mona molomo ka mare*

(Lit.: To smear lips with saliva.)

(Com.: To tell lies.)

### **2.2.1 The origin of idioms in Northern Sotho**

Although the origin of Northern Sotho idioms (*dika*) is obscure, according to Mphasha (1992:5), it is believed that they originate from Northern Sotho beliefs of mythology and superstitions.

#### **2.2.1.1 Idioms which are associated with mythology**

According to Mphasha (1992:5), mythology is connected to myths, the impossible especially related people's gods (*badimo*) and heroes and their origin, or those connected with certain subjects. Myths in Northern Sotho are basically connected to gods which in this case are the ancestral spirits (*badimo*) and the strong belief in some objects (*titikwane*) that even though they are dead, non-living, and invisible, they have enormous control of our lives and it is through their will, it is believed, that God the Almighty, can listen and give help to the living. The following are the examples of idioms which illustrate this notion:

(2) a. *Go phasa badimo*  
(Lit.: To let gods go.)  
(Com.: To request assistance from ancestral spirits.)

b. *Go begela badimo*  
(Lit.: To report to the gods.)  
(Com.: To make offerings to ancestral spirits.)

c. *Go ya badimong*  
(Lit.: To go to the gods.)  
(Com.: To die.)

d. *Go balwa le badimo*  
(Lit.: To be counted with the gods.)  
(Com.: To be very ill.)

e. *Go emiša badimo ka maoto.*  
(Lit.: To make gods to stand on feet.)  
(Com.: To commit mistakes/wrongs.)

### **2.2.1.2 Idioms which are associated with superstitions**

By definition, Makhado (1988:4) says that superstition or superstitious beliefs are beliefs upheld by faith in magic, chance or dogma. Superstitious beliefs are justified neither by reason nor evidence nor by any religious canon. Reading through this definition the inference is that superstitious beliefs are beliefs in the fear of the unknown entities in life. To these beliefs the Northern Sotho speakers mostly attach the help of the organic doctors to help in explaining the unseen. Examples of idioms in this regard are as follows:

(3) a. *Go thekga motse*



(Lit.: To support the house.)  
(Com.: To use muti (medicines) to quell evil spirits.)

b. *Go thuma ke kota*  
(Lit.: To be head-on with a log of wood.)  
(Com.: To be unlucky.)

c. *Go bona sepoko*  
(Lit.: To see ghost.)  
(Com.: To escape trouble miraculously.)

d. *Go swara pelo ka seatla*  
(Lit.: To hold heart by the hand.)  
(Com.: To feel nervous.)

e. *Go thekga lela*  
(Lit.: To support the intestine.)  
(Com.: To eat small ration of food.)

## **2.2.2 CLASSIFICATION OF NORTHERN SOTHO IDIOMS**

From the classification advanced by Mphasha (1992:14-26) idioms are further classified into the following categories:

### **2.2.2.1 Idioms which express poverty**

(4) a. *Go ja nta wa šeba ka lekgai*  
(Lit.: To eat ticks with their eggs.)  
(Com.: To be very poor.)

b. *Go topa tša fase.*  
(Lit.: To pick up remnants.)  
(Com.: To be very poor.)

#### **2.2.2.2 Idioms which express ambition and determination**

(5) a. *Go loma molomo wa ka fase*  
(Lit.: To bite the lower lip.)  
(Com.: To show courage.)

b. *Go bolaiša pelo*  
(Lit.: To make the heart painful.)  
(Com.: To feel anxious.)

#### **2.2.2.3 Idioms which express anger and irritation**

(6) a. *Go ngwaya tau ka mogweteng*  
(Lit.: To scratch a lion's anus.)  
(Com.: To tease somebody.)

b. *Go tlalwa ke pelo*  
(Lit.: To feel heart full.)  
(Com.: To be angry.)

#### **2.2.2.4 Idioms which express intelligence and understanding**

(7) a. *Go ntšha mahlo dinameng*  
(Lit.: To take flesh from the eyes.)  
(Com.: To be clever.)

b. *Go tšwa dipitšeng tše kgolo*

(Lit.: To be from great pots.)

(Com.: To be clever.)

#### **2.2.2.5 Idioms which express madness and insanity**

(8) a. *Go hlakana hlogo*

(Lit.: To have mixed head.)

(Com.: To be mad.)

b. *Go fiša ka hlogong*

(Lit.: To have a hot head.)

(Com.: To be insane.)

#### **2.2.2.6 Idioms which express success and failure**

(9) a. *Go tlala boroko*

(Lit.: To be full of sleep.)

(Com.: To be a failure in life.)

b. *Go loma koma*

(Lit.: To bite initiation.)

(Com.: To succeed in life.)

#### **2.2.2.7 Idioms which express surprise and disbelief**

(10) a. *Go tsaroga phoka*

(Lit.: To jump the dew.)

(Com.: To be do things speedily.)

b. *Go itshwara molomo*

(Lit.: To hold one's mouth.)

(Com.: To be surprised.)

#### **2.2.2.8 Idioms which express hesitation and indecision**

(11) a. *Go phapharega*

(Lit.: To wake up suddenly.)

(Com.: To walk like someone who is not quite normal.)

b. *Go gakanega*

(Lit.: To be confused.)

(Com.: To be undecided.)

#### **2.2.2.9 Idioms which express honesty and dishonesty**

(12) a. *Go ba kgontheng*

(Lit.: To be on the right.)

(Com.: To be honest.)

b. *Go tšhela phori mahlong*

(Lit.: To throw black rust onto someone's eyes.)

(Com.: To be dishonest.)

#### **2.2.2.10 Idioms which express character and personality**

(13) a. *Go itira modingwana*

(Lit.: To make oneself small god.)

(Com.: To be proud.)

b. *Go itira mothwana*

(Lit.: To make oneself a small person.)

(Com.: To feel proud of oneself.)

### 2.2.3 CONTEXTUAL USAGE OF IDIOMS

Indigenous communication systems and forms together with various channels of communications are controlled by the settings in which they take place. According to Saville-Troike (1982:14), language usage as a communication tool differs with regard to domain, purpose, and setting and can as such take either formal or informal dimensions which cut across dialect speakers. This suggests that communication through the use of language may also take different channels such as oral, written and manual communication, and this has proven to be effective among people who are illiterate yet knowledge carriers and custodians of the human race.

In the case of this study, our focus will be on the use of *Sešate* register as another language form among the Northern Sotho language speakers. *Sešate* is an example of discourse densely and conspicuously coloured with consecutive use of idioms. In this case, an example from Maserumule (1988:50) will help to illustrate a situation wherein there emerges an interchange of idiomatic expressions. If this happens, the employed restricted code is purposefully used to make others (non-Northern Sotho speakers), not to easily understand. For example: (Maserumula, 1988:17-18):

(14) *Ge ba le ka segotlong, Sefenyoko a di fa kgoši gore a di huetše a di kgopele gore a dinyakwa di phethilwe ka moka na. Thobela ge a di tšholotše tša re: “Borare, re kwele tsela tša bophelo ga di na ditshehlo. Ge e le dipitša di hlaeditše meetsemagolo. O tlogele madiadia morwa o mo thelege.”*

(Lit.: When they are in the secret place, Sefenyoko gave the chief so that he can blow air unto them and ask if the requests are all done. When the chief has thrown them, they said: “Ancestors, we have heard all about life surrounding us, and hither there are no

thorns on our way through. What is missing from our pots is greatwaters. Leave wasting time brother and catch and cook him.”) (Com.: In their secret place, Sefenyoko gave the chief the divination bones so that he can blow his air over them and make a request to the ancestors to tell if their needs are all met. When the chief has finished throwing them, Sefenyoko said: “Our ancestors we have heard all about conditions of life around us, and there is no problems lying ahead of us. What is missing from our pots is human flesh. So you must not delay on your way to catch and kill him.”)

Idioms that belong to *Sešate* that have been used in this instance may be analyzed as follows:

(14) a. “*Ge ba le ka segotlong.*” > *Go ya segotlong* > *Ge ba le ka sephiring*

(Lit.: “When they are in the secret place.”)

(Com.: “When they met in camera.”)

b. “*Borare, re kwele tsela tša bophelo ga di na ditshehlo.*” > *Go mela ditshehlo* > *Go mela meotlwa* > *Ditsela di bulegile*

(Lit.: “Our ancestors, we have heard our routes have no thorns.”)

(Com.: “Thanks that all is still well with our life.”)

(c) “*Ge e le dipitša di hlaeditše meetsemagolo.*” > *Go hlaetša* > *Dipitša tša dihlare di omile / di fedile dihlare*

(Lit.: “Our pots have run dry of muti-medicines).)

(Com.: “We need fresh muti medicines.”)

(d) “*O tlogele madiadia morwa o mo thelege.*” > *Go diadia* > *O se ditelege*

(Lit.: “Do not delay brother, go all out and catch him.”)

(Com.: “Make it snappy.”)

(e) “...o mo thelege.” > o mo fofotše > o mo kgabelele > “dipitša  
ga di thelegwe ka meetse feela.”

(Lit.: “Catch him and kill him.”)

(Com.: “Bring him dead.”)

Examining extract (14) above, we discover that interpreting the meaning of the linguistic behaviour according to Saville-Troike (1982:23), requires knowing the meaning in which it is embedded. This means that interpretation becomes only appropriate after having acquired insightful linguistic competence and knowledge in the culture and the language of the people speaking it. Otherwise interpretation will be difficult or the actual meaning be distorted as it goes together with association of circumstance in the setting herein referred to as field of discourse.

From the example in (14-b), *thorny routes* denote difficult pathways for one to take since they bring discomfort. Ways of life need not bring discomfort to people earning it and if the opposite is true then resolutions and solutions had to be taken as precautionary measures to ensure that the evils that might be, rear their heads no more. From our extract above, this has to be done by refilling the pots with fresh muti (medicines) at *mošate* for better of all. In the example in sentence (14-d) *madiadia* is used as if it is a concrete noun, something that Kgwahlane must take along with, when instead it is simply an abstract verb that denotes – that one should not delay but hurry up to catch him (*maswika a noka e kgolo*- human flesh to be used as muti (medicines) in refilling the pots at *mošate*). Therefore, without competence of Northern Sotho register of *Sešate*, Northern Sotho non-speakers will find it hard to make appropriate interpretation of such assertions or utterances.

(15) *Ge di le mahlong a botša Kgwahlane gore a botšiše ge e ba nku ya mmala wo, thobela o nayo. Mo go ile gwa fetola Sefenyeko a re: “Kgoši o*

*tlile ka potšišo ye bohlokwa. Ka ge re tsošološa pitša tša pula le motse le go thiba difata, go tla nyakega le maswika a noka ye kgolo. Ona ke nao le šabašaba la go šoma mmogo le ona. Mokgwa ke tla kgopela dikokontwane tša morobe ka ge di tlo re thuša go thiba dibaga. Ge di se gona ka ge modiro e le wa mantšiboana, go tla re Kgwahlane a tope selepe le kepu a ye le lešoka.”*

*Ka ge sekgalela se batamela ba di katoga, ge e le Kgwahlane a tšwa ka seroba a gopotše go ya go tla le dinyakwa ge meriti e wetše bohlabela (Maserumula, 1988:18).*

(Lit.: When they are brought in front of him he told Kgwahlane that he should ask if a sheep of this colour the chief has. Here Sefenyoko replied and said: “Our chief has raised an important question. Since we are reactivating rain pots and to revitalize our village and to protect our village from invasion, we need to gather stones from the big river. This I have together with the river sand that will be used with. But I will ask for wooden corner pins of “*morobe*” tree that will help to block mishaps. If they are not available, because this work is scheduled for late afternoon, then Kgwahlane will have to take the axe and “*kepu*” (iron rod) and go all out to search for them.” Because it was already towards midday, they had to adjourn, but as for Kgwahlane, he had to get out through the entrance in mind planning coming back with what is needed before dawn.)

(Com.: When Sefularo has brought the divination bones, he wanted to know from Kgwahlane if their chief has a sheep of that colour. Sefenyoko intervened and said: “Sir you have asked a good question. Because we are activating rain pots, village and to protect the tribe from the evil spirits, we will need muti (medicine). Sefenyoko further said this (human flesh) he has together with other medicines that will be mixed with, but what will be needed is wooden perks to wade off bad omens from troubling the tribe. If they are not available and because that work is scheduled for the late afternoon, then Kgwahlane will have to search for them in the bush.” Because it was towards midday, they had to adjourn the discussion, and as



for Kgwahlane, he had to go into the bush in search of what is required to complete the work as such planned.”)

The following examples are idiomatic expressions denoting *Sešate* traced from the extract in (15):

(15) a. “*Ge di le mahlong...*” > *Go ba mahlong* > *Ge di tlišitšwe pele ga gagwe*

(Lit.: “When they have brought the divination set of bones before him.”)

(Com.: “When they were ready.”)

b. “*Go thiba dibaga.*” > *Go thiba dimpe.*

(Lit.: “To block evil spirits.”)

(Com.: “To protect us.”)

c. “... *go tla re Kgwahlane a tope selepe le kepu a ye le lešoka.*” > *Go ya le lešoka* > *Go tla re Kgwahlane a ye go di nyaka.*

(Lit.: “It will mean that Kgwahlane must go all out to search.”)

(Com.: “Kgohlwane must go and look for what we are running short of.”)

Grammatically there is also no doubt that the sentences in (15a-c) are mixed with idioms.

Discourse of this nature typically characterizes *Sešate* in that the participants in the interaction never transparently talk of the state of affairs in their discussions, but prefer to hide or shadow the implications in their talk either by using difficult terminology or by omission of the operative concepts in their statements.

### 2.3 PROVERBS AND PROVERBIAL EXPRESSIONS

### 2.3.1 The origin of Northern Sotho proverbs

According to the *BBC English Dictionary* (1992:924), proverbs are short sentences that people often quote to give advice or make general comments about life. A proverb is therefore, a short well-known expression that states a general truth and gives an advice. Whiting (1932:302), having read through and scrutinized the various attempts by other scholars to give a more precise definition of a proverb which was however an exercise in futility, he resorts to sum up what is contained in these different definitions and give a more all embracing definition as an expression that, owing to the people, testifies to its origin in form and phrase. It expresses what is fundamentally true (truism), in a homely language often adorned, however, with alliteration and rhyme, he writes. He goes on to say it is usually short, but need not be; it is usually true, but need not be. Some proverbs have both a literal and a figurative meaning, either of which makes perfect sense, but more often they have but one of the two. A proverb must be venerable; it must be the sign of antiquity, and since such signs may be counterfeited by a clever literal human being, it should be attested in different places at different times.

What makes proverbs different from idioms is their grammatical structure in that proverbs are lengthy in form while an idiom may consist of two or three words as stretch of utterance with thoughtful sense.

### 2.3.2 The classification of Northern Sotho proverbs

#### 2.3.2.1 Proverbs on criticism and against laziness

(16) a. *Ngwana wa maganagorongwa o gana le go ja ga gagwe.*

(Lit.: A child who refuses to be sent refuses also to eat.)

(Com.: Good work is always compensated.)

b. *Ngwana wa kgwale o lewa ke mphaera.*

(Lit.: Child of a partridge is eaten by I do not know.)

(Com.: If you do not listen, you will get lost.)

### 2.3.2.2 Proverbs on save for the future

(17) a. *Mpa ke ngwana e a beelwa.*

(Lit.: The stomach is a child you always have to spare something for it.)

(Com.: Always store for the future.)

b. *Fegolla se borala mampša re lapa melala.*

(Lit.: Unpack that is stored, for we dogs our necks get tired.)

(Com.: We store for the future in case of starvation.)

### 2.3.2.3 Proverbs which encourage hard work

(18) a. *Kodumela moepathuse, ga go lehumo leo le tšwago kgauswi.*

(Lit.: Sink deep the digger of a *thuse* for there is no riches that come from nearby.)

(Com.: Hard work is always rewarded.)

b. *Nonyana tše pedi ga di rakwe.*

(Lit.: Two birds are not easily chased away.)

(Com.: Two people encourage each other.)

### 2.3.2.4 Proverbs which encourages patience

(19) a. *Mogolo o pelo pedi.*

(Lit.: Adults have two hearts.)

(Com.: Grown ups do take their time in making decisions.)

b. *Wa se kwe nna, o tlo kwa dinonyana thabeng.*

(Lit.: If you chose not to listen to me, you will hear from the birds  
in the mountains.)

(Com.: Do not rush into making decisions.)

### 2.3.2.5 Proverbs on religion

(20) a. *Kgoši ya tloga ye ngwe e a dula.*

(Lit.: When the chief goes away the other takes his position.)

(Com.: The nation or tribe has to have a leader.)

b. *Rutang bana ditaola, le se ye natšo badimong.*

(Lit.: Teach children divination bones so that you may not go with  
them to the gods.)

(Com.: Children are to be taught good morals.)

### 2.3.2.6 Proverbs on wisdom

(21) a. *Bohlale bo tšwa lebading.*

(Lit.: Wisdom comes from the scars.)

(Com.: Keep on making endeavours for success.)

b. *Lepotlapotla le ja pudi, modikologa o ja namane ya pholwana.*

(Lit.: Quick doers eat a goat, those who delay eat a calf.)

(Com.: Accomplish your plans while time still allows.)

### 2.3.2.7 Proverbs on honesty and dishonesty

(22) a. *Mphiri o tee ga o lle*

(Lit.: One bangle makes no sound.)

(Com.: Friends do form a bond together.)

b. *Se bone thola boreledi, teng ga yona go a baba.*

(Lit.: Don't see the outside smoothness of thola (fruit) inside it is bitter.)

(Com.: Don't judge a book by its cover.)

### 2.3.2.8 Proverbs on teamwork

(23) a. *Tau tša hloka seboka, di šitwa ke nare e hlotša.*

(Lit.: Lions which do not join together, they are unable to kill an injured buffalo.)

(Com.: Learn to help each other.)

b. *Ngatana ga e robje.*

(Lit.: A bundle is unbreakable.)

(Com.: People live in solitariness.)

The following is an extract from Sekhukhune (1975:50) from which an advice is given which is about truism in life (do not fight your fellowman because a day will come when one will need each other most in the eyes of the devil).

(24) *“Babedi ga ba lwe ke dithaka, ba ronana dinta. Mohlapa, o tla hlatswa leina la Matšedi ka namane ya pholo, Mmutle le yena o tla bona gore o go tšea bjang kgopu gona mowe. Lena le tla bona gore le beelana matšo a lena bjang go tliša pholwana yeo. Segagabo lena ke tla fela ke re, se re monna ke kgapa.”*

(Lit.: “Two people do not fight they are friends, they remove ticks from each other's body. Mohlapa will have to wash the name of Matšedi with a male calf; Mmutle too will see how to take them halfway. You will see how you

put together your compensations to bring the calf here. Your tradition if I am to repeat, says a man is a ram.”)

(Com.: “Friends do not fight each other, but instead they help each other. Mohlapa is fined to compensate Matšedi with beast, and Mmutle will also help Matšedi by contributing portions of the fine. How to settle the matter between yourselves on how to bring beast here is up to you. If I am to repeat, our tradition tells that a man is a ram.”)

The following are proverbs from the abovementioned extract:

(24) a. *“Babedi ga ba lwe ke dithaka, ba ronana dinta.”*

(Lit.: “The two does not fight but cleanse each from ticks.”)

(Com.: “People help each other in life.”)

b. *“Monna ke nku o llela teng.”*

(Lit.: “A man is a ram, he cries inside.”)

(Com.: “One has to exercise patience.”)

Matsepe (1982:74) reflects the following proverbs that can also be associated with *Sešate* due to the setting in which they are expressed:

(25) *“Monn`a gešo, kua re tšwago ba re emetše ka maoto, bokaone wena tšwela pele o yo kgopela thušo gore phepheng ye e re lomago ye e tle e fsielelwe mollong.”*

*“A bolwetši ga se bja ba bja rethefatša lehloyo la gago go kgoši ya rena yeo re e tlogetšego re se ra rakwa ke motho?”*

*“Kwaa, kwaa, kwaa gore o bolela bjang ntamalomelakobong tena! Ke fularetše bana ba ka le maruo a ka go yo rapa dira tšeo di tla tlogo di re bea bogoši, mme ge o bona ke šitwa o a ntlhanogela. Montshepetša bošego wa rare, ke mo leboga go sele.”*

(Lit.: “Fellow man, where we come from they are standing on their feet for us, better you proceed with the trip and go and seek help so that this spider that is stinging us be swept into the fireplace.”)

“Is the illness not made your hatred to our chief whom we have decided to leave without being chased away?”

“Listen, listen, and listen at how you talk you betrayer! I have left my children and live stock behind to invite enemies to helping enthroning us, and now you see me struggling you turn your back against me. Who walk with me in the night, I thank him in the morning.”)

(Com.: “My friend, back home is bad news you know, all I suggest is that you go ahead with the trip and seek help from the neighbours who will come to our rescue, assist us to destroy our chief and enthrone us.”)

“I you still strong to fight our chief even if you are ill in this manner. It is surprising.”

“Now you talk ill/bad of me even if I have helped you so much in life.”)

The following is proverb extracted from the example (25) of Matsepe (1982:74):

(25) a. “*Montshepetša bošego, ke mo leboga go sele.*”

(Lit.: “One who lets me walk in the night, I thank him/her in the morning.”)

(Com.: “People help and thank each other.”)

According to Trench (1905:10), no matter how fulfilling a saying may be, it cannot just be esteemed as a proverb. For a saying to be regarded as a proverb it should be in use for quite a time and the language in use should be expressing some meaning hidden or shadowed by the literal meaning of those words as they appear on surface with the superficial value. Looking at the proverb in the example (25-a), what is deduced is that the praise goes to those who offer help when one is destitute. A person at night is in most cases a dangerous person or devil that may wreck your entire life, but those who at night

are of assistance and do help others in need, deserve to be praised publicly. This proverb is best explained by the following supplementary proverbs:

- (26) a. *Mosadi ke tšhwene ge le sobela o a le bona.*  
(Lit.: A woman is a baboon, when the sun goes down she sees it.)  
(Com.: When it dark, we all go home.)
- (b) *Bošego ga bo rone nta.*  
(Lit.: Darkness does not cleanse one off ticks.)  
(Com.: When it is dark/at night all evils rears their heads.)

Reading through the two extracts (24) and (25), it is evident that Northern Sotho speakers are fond of using proverbs and other language forms to make the meaning more profound as it is argued by Saville–Troike (1982:14), and also in an attempt to make the listener to really understand the seriousness of the state.

The discourse between the two speakers in Sekhukhune (1975:50) in extract (24), is in a formal dimension while that in Matsepe (1982:74) has taken an informal dimension. These differences occur because of differences in localities or what has been earlier on best termed the ecological space or space continuum. As such, *Sešate* is a contextualized form of talking, individually or in groups among the Northern Sotho language speakers. For example, in Sekhukhune, 1975 the context is that of typical *mošate* wherein we find that the accused (Mohlapa) and the complainant (Matšedi), are brought to *mošate* to resolve their differences and the resolution is that Mohlapa must compensate Matšedi and these are typical activities we expect to happen whenever disputes erupt between the tribe's men. All is resolved at *mošate* using the appropriate language. For example, using a consecutive string of idiomatic expressions mixed with proverbial expression to really reflect *what is* as Mokgoatšana (1999:6) mentioned, such as:

- (27) a. *Go ronana dinta* > as in “*Babedi ga ba lwe ke dithaka, ba ronana dinta.*”



(Lit.: “The two do not fight, they clean each off ticks.”)

(Com.: “People do not fight but help each other.”)

*b. Go hlatswa motho leina > as in “Mohlapa, o tla hlatswa leina la Matšedi ka namane ya pholo.”*

(Lit.: “Mohlapa will wash Matšedi` name with a beast.”)

(Com.: “Mohlapa will have to compensate Matšedi with a beast.”)

*c. Go tšeana kgopu > as in “Mmutle le yena o tla bona gore o go tšea bjang kgopu.”*

(Lit.: “Mmutle also shall have to see how to take you halfway.”)

(Com.: “Mmutle will also have to assist you.”)

*d. “Monna ke nku o llela teng.”*

(Lit.: “A man is a ram, he cries inside.”)

(Com.: “One has to exercise patience.”)

The verdict has been pronounced and all that is expected of the three (that is, Mohlapa, Matšedi and Mmutle) is to do as it is ruled. So, Northern Sotho speakers enjoy using proverbial expressions. This being the case, *Sešate* through its employment of intense usage of proverbs in one speech stretch, qualifies to be a noble language form much adored not only by those of the kingly crown or those in the chieftainship, *bakgomana* and *bakgoma* but also by the commoners. Evident from this extract is that we notice that a speaker can talk for a lengthy period of time using only idioms and proverbs as a form of bringing more glamour to the language in usage.

From the extract (25) in Matsepe (1982:74), the following idioms are jointly used with a proverb for emphasis. For example:

(28) *a. Go emela motho ka maoto > as in “Monn`a gešo kua re tšwago*

*ba re emetše ka maoto.”*

(Lit.: “Countryman, from where we come from, people are waiting on their feet.”)

(Com.: “Friend, our enemies at home are angry with us.” > To be angry with someone.)

b. *Go fsielela phepheng mollong* > as in “*bokaone wena tšwela pele o yo kgopela thušo gore phepheng ye e re lomago ye e tle e fsielelwe mollong.*”

(Lit.: “It will be better if you could proceed further so that you go and ask for assistance so that we can be able to broom the spider into the fire.”)

(Com.: “My friend it will better for to proceed with the journey and go and ask for assistance.” > To get rid of someone).

c. *Go rapa dira* > as in “*Ke fularetše bana ba ka le maruo a ka go yo rapa dira tšeo di tla tlogo di re bea bogoši...*”

(Lit.: “I have turned my back towards my children and my livestock to invite enemies that will come and put us on the throne.”)

(Com.: “I sacrificed by to go all out to invite neighbours to come and assist us in fighting for us to get the chieftainship...” > To look for assistance.)

d. “*Montshepetsa bošego wa rare, ke mo leboga go sele.*”

(Lit.: “One who lets me walk in the night, I thank him/her in the morning.”)

(Com.: “People help and thank each other.”)

From the example of the idiom provided in (28-a), the explanation is that there is a fight between them-(speaker and the colleague in discourse) and other tribe’s men in the village to which they belong. This reveals that the tribe is divided into two rival camps.

As such, the plea is that they have to hurry up in their escape to seek assistance from the neighbouring tribes.

In the example (28-b) the communicative meaning is that of bringing forth destruction and defeat through the use of armed forces with the purpose of winning the throne or chieftainship from the other sector of the tribe. But the literal meaning of taking the broom with intentions of sweeping along the spider into the fireplace will be a wrong interpretation as it is expected from the non-speaker of Northern Sotho or linguistically incompetent Northern Sotho speakers.

From the example in (28-c), the communicative meaning which is semantic or the implication is that the participants in the discourse are on a escape trip to invite neighbouring tribe to come to their assistance in defeating or dethroning their chief for the reasons best known to them. This has been put clear by Baker (1992:223) and Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000:256) by defining implicature as what the speaker means or implies rather than what she/he literally says. Looking at the literal meaning, the incompetent listener will first attempt to take *rapa* as a derivative term from the English word –rub off (error in a given stretch of letters), which has of course a direct semantically different meaning as -invite someone for help, and more especially armed forces or military exodus or invasion. To give a further explanation, using *Sešate*, we do not *rapa* an individual for assistance, but a contingent. The two extracts are typical examples of stylistic features of *Sešate* wherein there is an intense usage of strings of both idioms and proverbs in one speech stretch.

#### **2.4 IDENTITY FEATURES OF *SEŠATE***

From the above exposition on treatment of the use of idioms and proverbs, utterances from the participants in discourse in both extracts from the two differing books, indeed depicts the style usage of this variety (*Sešate*) in both formal and informal settings. In extract (24) of Sekhukhune (1975:50) discourse took place at *mošate* (formal setting) where Mohlape and Mmutle were summoned accused of wrong doing, and they were

made to compensate the complainant, Matšedi. In this case the verdict was pronounced in one stretch of words in sentences mixed with a number of idiomatic and proverbial expressions and these are identity features of *Sešate*. The same appeared in extract (25) of Matsepe (1982:74) wherein discourse took place at an informal domain. What makes the reader to realize that Diphaphu and Monoši are decedents of the royal family (*bakgoma and bakgomana*) is their manner of utterance which also reflects or reveals traces of *Sešate* by virtue of recurrence of number of idiomatic expressions in one utterance followed by proverb at the end of the utterance which are a stylistic features to leave the companion in discourse to infer and deduce implications of the meaning of words said afore in the same speech stretch. In extract 24, “*monna ke kgapa*,” is a proverb that the chief direct towards Mohlapa and Mmutle and this laves their minds in suspense to think of what will happen to them next time in case they repeat and of course this tells them not to feel hurt by the results of their mischief. Same occurred with Diphaphu who was told not to forget that people help each other in case of troubles, and this Monoši uttered at the end of the utterance to leave Diphaphu in suspense to imagine of the times he will be looking for assistance from others if he (Diphaphu) at this time refuses or feel inconvenienced by Monoši. Idioms and proverbs are therefore, identity markers of *Sešate* together with other figurative speech patterns among the Northern Sotho language speakers generally used to enliven discourse.

## **2.5 OBSERVATION OF SEŠATE AMONG THE BAKGOMA AND BAKGOMANA OF GAMPHAHLELE AND MOHLALETSE**

The following are some of the utterance captured during the recent burial of one of *bakgoma* of GaMphahlele who was representing baMagaseng clan. BaMagaseng are second in chieftainship from the major clan of Mangana from which chiefs to the throne of Mphahlele are nominated. Here, responses and utterances were also captured from *bakgoma*, *bakgomana* and other senior members of Mohlaletse tribesmen in their speeches and speeches of condolences in that they were given a chance to say a word of condolence to the berieved family and Mphahlele tribe, because traditionally the queens

(*bahumagadi*) of the Mphahlele tribe are married from the Mohlaletse tribe and in return *bakgoma*, *bakgomana* and other tribesmen feel satisfied to have married from Mohlaletse tribe and as such the two tribes share a genealogical link. Therefore, during this burial ceremony, responses were gathered from *bakgomana* and *bakgoma* of Mphahlele (Bakgaga) and Mohlaletse (Batau, Tau ya Dimo) though some were just reluctant to comment or give their views on the usefulness of *Sešate* within their tribal administration. Hereon, attention was given to prosody and cohesion since spoken or written information is easily conveyed and understood through the use of appropriate words and punctuations or pauses and other linguistic features such as, interjections and other speech patterns or language behaviours. Between the two distinct tribes, some differences and similarities were deduced in their utterances. The following language behaviours were observed between men and women. From the side of Mohlaletse, men repeatedly use *eya*, and *eya kgoši* as confirmation of saying, *I am attentively listening to you as you are talking to me Sir or you are right Sir or it is true Sir*. Mphahlele tribesmen do not use this type of speech behaviour, but uses *ke nnete*, *o a rereša*, *aowa kgonthe ke nnete*. There is also the difference in the pitch or accent as attached to this type of speech patterns, which is indicative of humbled politeness coupled with gestures of either movements of the head or hands and the limbs. For example:

Mphahlele one (29) “*Le re go na le batho gona ka fa re tsenago, goba re tlo gitlwa re sa ya? Koko! babo Serogole sa Magasa, le ka thoko dife re tle re le hwetšeng?*”

(Lit.: “You people do say there are people inside or are we going to be beaten on our way? Knockknock! People of Serogole of Magasa, where are you for us to meet you?”)

(Com.: “Knockknock! Are there people inside? Where are you for us to join you?”)

(Each with a hand at his back holding a hat and with the other holding a wooden walking stick as they entered the homestead.)

Mphahlele two: (30) “*Hee! Kgonthe gona le kokota re le dinaong Tau, lena ga le bone*

*ge bjale molokoloko e le ola! re le lebile gona tšhuaneng kua Mehlokwaneng? Ee?”*

(Lit.: “Oh yes! But really you knock when we are on foot Tau, do you see the procession is going to the graveside there Mehlokoaneng.”)

(Com.: “Oh yes! We are late we cannot have time to discuss anything. The procession is leading to the graveside.”)

Mohlaletse one: (31) “*Eya kgoši, ke therešo ba a felegetša Kgaditsi mong`aka, thobela.*”

(Lit.: “Oh chief,! It is true they are leading to the graveside.”)

(Com.: “Oh chief! It is true we are late.”)

( Reporting now to the fellow Tau in company and who his kinshipname is Kgaditsi. Tau ya Kgaditsi as they call each other).

Mohlaletse two: (32) “*Kgonthe gona kgoši re tlo fo bonana ge re phethile, eya kgoši.*”

(Lit.: “Chief it is true we will meet when we are finish, yes chief.”)

(Com.: “Chief it is true let us hurry up we are late.”)

In contrast to men, women talk differently in that *eya* and *eya kgoši* is used in both sexes in the case of Mohlaletse and in the case of Mphahlele *ee!* and *aowa hle! gape, and gomme*. The two tribes use their language this way because it is their speech which tends to relate them to their social class as *bakgoma* and *bakgomana*. For example:

Mohlaletse one: (33) “*Ruri kgoši, re lahlegile re lahlegile e le ruri, mabu a utswitšwe e le ruri thobela.*”

(Lit.: “Really chief, we are lost, our soil is been stolen, really chief.”)

(Com.: “Our chief is late.”)

Mphahlele one: (34) “*Aowa, re re ga go ne taba, le rena re bone ka ditakana re sa le kgojana. Ge e le ka dinko gona re kwele go nkgamoletelo gona ka mo kgorong ka wa sekgalela.*”

(Lit.: “No, we are saying it is right, we were watching this to happen from long ago. With our nose we only smelled mourning ceremony right inside this chief’s kraal at daylight.”)

(Com.: “That is what he wanted.”)

Mohlaletse one: (35) “*Gona ka fa eya?*”

(Lit.: “You really mean right in here?”)

(Com.: “Do you mean it?”)

Mphahlele two: (36) “*Isee morena, gona ka fa.*”

(Lit.: “Yes sir, right in here.”)

(Com.: “That is it.”)

Mohlaletse two: (37) “*Thobela, o reng wa re hlaba, o re tsetsemetša, o re thokgesetša o robesetša dipelo ka tšhuduba re inamišitše difahlego re itšalo ngwan`a kgoši?*”

(Lit.: “Why do you pierce us with *tšhuduba* when still looking down, son of chief?”)

(Com.: “Why do you talk like that when we are in grieve?”)

Mphahlele one: (38) “*Gape gomme go bile molaleng, ke ra gona pepeneneng, gore sa pokolo e tlo ba ngwana, gobane wena o ile wa bona kae malome a baka malao le setlogolo?Gomme le ge setlogolo se ithwele megono, se re ke a gatelwa, go se yo a rego a re kweng?Aai! Gomme bjalo ke tšona tše tša bo rena lehono le re kweng.*”

(Lit.: “It was obvious that the donkey cry will be a child because where have you seen an uncle fighting niece for a woman? Now even if the niece cried, no one got worried to listen to him? As

such all this, is all we are here for today.”)

(Com.: “We were watching all this and tried to stop him from doing that but in vain.”)

Mohlaletse one: (39) “*Aowa kgoši, a di fegweng mafateng kgoši, re di tlogele re fetše pele, fao o tlo re ka morago o tle o re hlamulele, thobela.*”

(Lit.: “No chief, let us leave them just like that, you will come and tell us when we come back.”)

(Com.: “Let us join them and you will come and tell us fully when we return.”)

From the conversations above, the following idioms and a proverb have been traced:

(40) a. “*Go felegetša mohu.*”

(Lit.: “To take the corpse half way.”)

(Com.: “To take the coffin to the graveyard.”)

b. “*Go ba dinaong.*”

(Lit.: “To be on feet.”)

(Com.: “To be going out.”)

c. “*Go leba / go ya tšhuaneng.*”

(Lit.: “To go to the orphanage.”)

(Com.: “To go to the cemetery.”)

d. “*Go inamiša sefahlego.*”

(Lit.: “To face down.”)

(Com.: “To feel sad.”)

e. “*Go gatela motho malao.*”



(Lit.: “To tremble on someone’s bedings.”)

(Com.: “To have sexual relationship with someone’s wife.”)

The following is the proverb as extracted from the conversation in men above:

(41) “*Mabu a utswitšwe.*”

(Literal translation: “Our soil is stolen.”)

(Communicative translation: “Our chief has passed away.”)

Utterances of this nature bring with them an oblique mental picture or thoughts into the minds of the linguistically incompetent language user of Northern Sotho (youth today). This is of course the ultimate purpose of using these proverbial expressions in *Sešate*, to categorize and characterize it as a restricted code, noble as it features with other language forms (registers) in Northern Sotho.

## 2.6 CONCLUSION

In conclusion to this section of uses and origin of idioms and proverbs in Northern Sotho, we have seen how they are used as another communication device through which the speaker artistically conveys messages figuratively. In distinction we noticed that idioms bear with them features through which they are identified by the use of *go* at the beginning of each phrase or sentence and when used in the middle of the sentence *go* is omitted. It is also noticed that it happens that in most cases of course, when speakers are in discourse do end their utterances by using proverbs. This is an unconscious innate ability to throw in a sense of belonging or to show ability to communicate appropriately with others for a purpose which complies with domain and time. This style of utterance is usually aimed at throwing in an advice about life in general or to make a comment in relation to current issues at the time of interaction for the participants to infer or make deductions making comparisons with their past experiences. Expressions used in this way carry with them more weight of intended communicative success or goal.

It has also been noticed that participants have a tendency of omitting or substituting some words as used in the original structure of the idiom or proverb. When this happens the non-Northern Sotho speakers find it hard to understand what the others in discourse imply, which is of course one other aim of such interaction and to teach and to inculcate use of *Sešate* to the youth. From this section on the usefulness and purpose of idioms and proverbs in utterance as a style in *Sešate* language as a form, a further examination will be made at how idioms and proverbs are used in conjunction with other discourse conventions and figurative speech patterns such as simile, personification and others in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **DISCOURSE CONVENTIONS AND OTHER FIGURATIVE SPEECH PATTERNS OF *SEŠATE***

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this chapter is to analyze Northern Sotho discourse conventions and other figurative speech patterns of *Sešate*. Discussion on discourse conventions in this chapter, will be centered on greetings, co-operation and politeness, protocol, honorifics, address, thanks as other functional aspects in communication. Figurative speech forms that will receive scrutiny are personification, and metaphors. The works of exponents in this field

such as Stayt (1986), Colbuild (1994), Baker (1992), Kembo-Sure (2000), Finegan (1994), together with visits and other literature works from Matsepe (1983), Maserumula (1988), and Sekhukhune (1975) will be referred to.

### **3.2 GREETINGS**

Cobuild (2003) defines greetings as something friendly that one says or does on meeting someone. Therefore, greetings are yet another way of welcoming someone when they meet for in the case of discourse or communicative event, the mode should be exceptionally accepted by the two. According to Stayt (1986:157), greetings mean to salute or honour someone. In this research study, it is further discovered that greetings differ with regard to duration or time taken in process in that others are relatively short while others are given more time and are as such more elaborate. Greetings become elaborate in case the two know each other well and their relationship is sound or become elaborate since there is a crucial issue to be discussed between the two.

In Northern Sotho there are different types of greetings and these are situational varying from one given context and time to the other. This is further emphasized by Sekhukhune (1988:22) in referring to space-time continuum. According to Dixon (1964:38), in any consideration of language, as it is used in a general way as part of a widely diversified social scene, a linguist must consider the varieties of language which correspond to different situations, different speakers and listeners, or readers and writers. Verma (1969: 3), further states that human beings has the ability of switching automatically from a restricted code to an elaborate code and vice-versa depending on the situation in which he/she finds himself/herself. For example, speakers in discourse may use *Sešate* while at a marriage ceremony (*monyanyeng*) or in a family setting (*ka gae*) turning formal greetings into intimate greetings and so will be their social roles.

The following extract will help demonstrate an example of family setting taken from Matsepe (1983:39-40):

- (42) “*Ga Kgoši Afakenna o ka ya, eupša ga ke rate.*”  
“*Ga o rate?*”  
“*Yeo ke potšišo ye nkabego o e botšišitše pele, ka gore tabakgolo ga ke tsebe gagenomogolo o sola eng.*”  
“*Ga ke sole selo.*”  
“*O ela eng ga Afakenna?*”  
“*Ga se Afakenna, ke Kgoši Afakenna.*”

“*Ga Kgoši Afakenna o ka fo ya, eupša ga ke rate.*”

(Lit.: “To chief Afakenna she may go, but I do not want.”)

(Com.: “I dislike the idea of allowing her to be married to chief Afakenna family.”)

“*Ga o rate?*”

(Lit.: “You do not want?”)

(Com.: “You are saying you do not understand?”)

“*Yeo ke potšišo ye nkabego o e botšišitše pele, ka gore tabakgolo ga ke tsebe gore gagenomogolo o sola eng.*”

(Lit.: “This is a question you should have asked first, because to your old place of birth I do not know what is wrong in that.”)

(Com.: “You should have long understood why I dislike the idea.”)

“*Ga ke sole selo.*”

(Lit.: “I see nothing in that.”)

(Com.: “I do not see anything wrong in allowing her to marry.”)

“*O ela eng ga Afakenna?*”

(Lit.: “Why is she going to Afakenna?”)

(Com.: “Why is she getting married to Afakenna family?”)

*“Ga se Afakenna, ke kgoši Afakenna.”*

(Lit.: “He is not Afakenna, but Chief Afakenna.”)

(Com.: “Call him not Afakenna, but Chief Afakenna.”)

In the above text is a dialogue between *kgoši* Phentšwe and the daughter Tahlego. *Kgoši* Phentšwe deliberately made an omission of addressing *kgoši* Afakenna intimately as Afakenna. Tahlego as a daughter is seen dissatisfied with resolutions taken by *kgoši* Phentšwe. The fight between them is over her getting married to unwanted royal family which is her choice.

According to Northern Sotho culture, royal marriages are arranged. In the passage she also does not address him as *kgoši* Phentšwe reason being that the setting is informal (at home) and also angry. By addressing *kgoši* Afakenna in the manner he did, might be because he (*kgoši* Phentšwe) is angry or dislike his daughter`s idea of getting married to the royal family of *kgoši* Afakenna. He therefore, did not see the need of addressing *kgoši* Afakenna with the respect he deserved. The reason might also be that the two are chiefs and that because of his anger over marriage issue, he (*kgoši* Phentšwe) see no need and significance of addressing him as *kgoši* Afakenna since he does not belong to *kgoši* Afakenna`s tribe, hence a bone of contention between them.

Also tied to greetings are status and gender differentiations and social relationships. So is with *Sešate* register usage in context. The councilors herein referred to as *bakgomana* and *bakgoma*, the chief and the commoners greet each other differently. The following are types of greetings that are in use to reflect *Sešate* as the prestigious language usage by the Northern Sotho language speakers (Matsepe, 1983:24-25):

(43) *“O re morwedi wa gago o be a nyetšwe?”*

*“Tau ya ka meetseng, ke realo.”*

*“Etse o thaka dife wena Selotsoko?”*

*“Ke rena Mereleba sebakgomo.”*

*“O re morwedi wa gago o be a nyetšwe?”*

(Lit.: “You are saying your daughter was married?”)

(Com.: “You tell that your daughter divorced?”)

*“Tau ya ka meetseng, ke realo.”*

(“Lit.: “Lion of the water, I am saying so.”)

(Com.: “I am telling the truth chief.”)

*“Etse o thaka dife wena Selotsoko?”*

(Lit.: “By the way, Selotsoko to which regiment do you belong?”)

(Com.: “How old are you?”)

*“Ke rena Mereleba sebatakomo.”*

(Lit.: “We are Merebeba chief.”)

(Com.: “I belong to Mereleba regiment chief.”)

(44) *“Ntamišetše go taurabatho.”*

*“O a tamiša thobela.”*

*“Ntamišetše go taurabatho.”*

(Lit.: “Pass my greetings to the chief.”)

(Com.: “Pass my greetings to our chief.”)

*“O a tamiša thobela.”*

(Lit.: “He is greeting you chief.”)

(Com.: “You are welcome, chief.”)

(Matsepe, 1984:7)

(45) *“Molato o rerwa ke moobi, samma.”*

*“Mokwi ke nna, mogolle.”*

“*Ga se ya lomela go tshwa bagolo ba ka, pipamolomo ke šetše ke beabeditše seo se iteilwego ke poo.*”

“*Molato o rerwa ke moobi, samma.*”

(Lit.: “A case is to be resolved by the causer.”)

(Com.: “You are the accused and you are to resolve the case.”)

“*Mokwi ke nna, mogolle.*”

(Lit.: “The hearer is me, my brother.”)

(Com.: “I am the one to be blamed.”)

“*Ga se ya lomela go tshwa bagolo ba ka, pipamolomo ke šetše ke beabeditše seo se iteilwego ke poo.*”

(Lit.: “It is not sharpened to spit my elders brothers, I have already arranged cow that has already been beaten by the ox.”)

(Com.: “I do understand my case and I have already arranged for compensation with a pregnant cow.”)

(Sekhukhune, 1975:3)

In the above extracts by Matsepe, the chief is addressed as *taurabatho*, *thobela*, *tau ya ka meetseng*, and *sebatakgomo*. From the examples in Sekhukhune (1975:3), social relationships are indicated by the use of words such as *mogolle* (my brother), *samma* or *warra* or *morwarre* (my brother or sister), and *bagolo ba ka* (my seniors or my worship), in both family setting in use of *Sešate* at *mošate* and are used to designate either full brother/s or sister/s.

### 3.2.1 Praise names

Praise names are not actual names of referents in talks or texts, but names in use to praise someone for his/her heroic deeds, act of excellence or a symbol of appreciation. They are

as such traditional names that are usually tied to the actual names of individuals in that it is at times derogatory or an act of disrespect to call someone by his/her actual name. The following extract from Sekhukhune (1975:3 and 64) will help demonstrate the use of praise names in discourse:

- (46) a. *“Metša megokgo ngwan`a Bauba, bohloko bo ye le pelo. Lesa go hlaba diema o tla ba wa tla le go re segiša bagaditšong. Mpša ya go goba ga e lome Mmutle`a Matuba. Mogale ge a ekaeka ka makailwane o bitša marumo.”*

(Lit.: “Swallow your tears child of Bauba, pains must go to the heart. Stop making idioms because you will make our neighbours laugh at us. Bucking dog does not bite Mmutle`a Matuba. When the brave run around he calls enemies.”)

(Com.: “Be calm, our neighbours we laugh at us.”)

- b. *“Ba gona kgaetšedi, le ge mo ke tšwago ke tšwele ke betšwa ka noga. A rena ra hloka mahlatse baetenang! Go mpetša ka fafaga ge ke gobotša Mahlako.”*

(Lit.: “They are present my sister, even if where I come from I went out been thrown with a snake. So is all badluck with us. They swore at me if I am to tell you Mahlako.”)

(Com.: “I met with them though we did not agree with each other.”)

In the extract (45a) and (45b) above, the names Bauba and Mahlako are both praise names and not actual names of persons in interaction. These are commonly used between Mphahlele and Mohlaletse royal families and this is so in that the two tribes share genealogical links. History has it that the Mphahlele royal family traditionally marry from the Mohlaletse royal family and this is a standing customary practice just like the Mamabolo royal family who marries from Mphahlele royal family. Other royal tag praise names common between Mohlaletse, Mphahlele and not with Mamabolo, are names such



as Hlabirwa, Gobetse, Phaahla, Hunadi, Mogotldi, and Mogale. For men the most fearsome praises are those of Hlabirwa, Bauba, Ngoato and Mogale which express and are associated with bravery, diligence, trustworthiness and denote a very high ranking member of the royal family- *mošate*, and for women Mahlako and Tlakale are the most fearsome praise names amongst Mohlaletse people in that these are praise names given to chiefs (chiefs) and chieftainees (*bahumagadi*). These are given to women with Mankopodi as their first names whom are to be the queens or the chief's mothers whom at times ascend the throne as chieftain. According to Mphahlele (1978:46) and Monnig (1983:26-27), Chief Sekwati's son Sekhukhune 1 got married and his wife was named Tlakale who because of her beauty made Chief Sekhukhune 1 to become jealous and started to fight the Missionaries at Kgalatlou, Mosego and Ga-Ratau mission stations since she turned convert and with suspicion of undermining his tribal authority she would connive with the Boers and Missionaries to dethrone him. Currently Mankopodi Nchabeleng whose praise name is Mahlako, is the chieftain of Nchabeleng tribe and Ngwanamohube Mphahlele who is the chieftainees of Mphahlele tribe currently, her praise name is Mahlako, also the late Sophia Mamabolo who was the chieftain of Mamabolo tribe of Mankweng is a descendend of Mphahlele royal family and her praise name is Mogotladi. What is surprising is that these praise names are given not only to senior wives of the chief upon marriage as a custom in the case of Mohlaletse and Mphahlele, but this is practiced also among commoners who get married to women with no praise names.

Thus, upon meeting each other and extending greetings between Mohlaletse and Mphahlele people, usage of these praise names or utterances immediately signal to the others that the person whom one is greeting is an important figure and deserve respect by virtue of sharing his/her praise name with the royal family, and of course at some instances he/she may be rightfully traced to have genealogical links or relationship of some kind with the royal family.

### **3.2.2 Honorifics**

According to Mokgokong (1975:103), honorifics are grammatical forms used to convey the idea that the speaker is being polite or respectful to the hearer. Mokgokong further asserts that honorifics are based on social stratification.

### 3.2.2.1 Totems

The following are examples of totems as used by Northern Sotho language speakers to address each other in discourse using *Sešate* as a speech patterning indicative of respect and gesture or symbol of positive politeness. The following are some of *Sešate* totem names used mostly by all Northern Sotho among the Mphahlele, Mamabolo and Mohlaletse tribes as a gesture of respect and appreciation for their chiefs, *bakgoma* and *bakgomana*:

<i>Sebata</i>	(lion)
<i>Dimo</i>	(lion)
<i>Kgomo</i>	(beast)
<i>Tlou</i>	(elephant)
<i>Kwena</i>	(crocodile)
<i>Noko</i>	(porcupine)
<i>Kolobe</i>	(wild boar)
<i>Tau</i>	(lion)
<i>Tau ya Dimo</i>	(Vulture)
<i>Tau ya ka meetseng</i>	(Crocodile)
<i>Sebatakgomo</i>	(lion)

### 3.2.2.2 Tribal names

Significantly equal to totems usage in interaction, is the habitual alternative frequent use of tribal names by both adult men and women. The following are some of the examples in use by the Northern Sotho language speakers to identify themselves as belonging to a identifiable group using *Sešate* as their language form.

<i>Mokgaga</i>	(as used to address Mphahlele, Mothapo and tribesmen)
<i>Tau</i>	(as used to address Batau tribesmen)
<i>Mokone</i>	(as used to address Bakone tribesmen)
<i>Kolobe</i>	(as used to address Mamabolo tribesmen)
<i>Letebele</i>	(as used to address Ndebele tribesmen)
<i>Dimo</i>	(as used to address Mohlaletse tribesmen)

Also typical of *Sešate* is the frequent use of totems and tribal names during *pitšo* (indaba) and many other *mošate* formal gatherings and these are called introductory formula when used at the beginning of a speech. For example:

*i. Babinašoro, nkadimeng ditsebe.*

(Lit.: Babinašoro, please listen to me.)

(Com.: Babinašoro, allow me to speak.)

*ii. Bakgaga, Tšielala.*

(Lit.: Bakgaga, silence.)

(Com.: Bakgaga, order please.)

*iii. Bakwena, Moletesekuba.*

(Lit.: Bakwena, Sorry forgive us.)

(Com.: Bakwena we made a mistake.)

*iv. Bakone, re eneleng diatla meetseng.*

(Lit.: Bakwena padon us.)

(Com.: Bakwena forgive us.)

v. *Noko, phula khudu ka mpeng ba tšitlane.*

(Lit.: Noko, tell us their secret.)

(Com.: Noko, tell us the story.)

### 3.2.2.3 Kinship names

According to Monnig (1983:243) kinship terminology classifies those relatives who are either superior or inferior to someone, and the behaviour should be correspondingly respectful or expecting respect. This form of greeting or address is also found amongst the Northern Sotho speaking people even when in discourse during their interaction using *Sešate* over issues relating to *mošate*. Instead of addressing *mokgoma* as Hlabirwa or Dimo, in the case of Mhlaletse people, a son of his elder brother may rightfully address Hlabirwa as *rangwane* and this will be accepted. The following are other examples of kinship terminology used as *Sešate* register and accepted for use in interaction on matters relating to *mošate*:

<i>Ramogolo</i>	(as for my father`s elder brother or one`s mother`s elder sister`s husband)
<i>Rakgolo</i>	(grandfather)
<i>Mme</i>	(mother)
<i>Tate</i>	(father)

It is realized that at times the use of kinship names is more important than to address a person you are referring to by his/her totem or tribal name. This is true because the kinship name is carrying with it a specific referent to the topic in question. It therefore carries a referential meaning while totems and tribal names carry superordinate meanings or expressive meanings. According to Baker (1992:13), referential meaning or propositional meaning of a word or utterance arises from the relation between it and what it refers to or describes in real or imaginary world, as conceived by the speaker of the particular language to which the word or utterance belongs.

### 3.2.3 Greetings and gender patterning

A distinction is made in Northern Sotho greetings between people of different sex. For example in greeting my uncle's wife it will be different as I would greet my uncle as a male. The following is evident in *Sešate* language form:

<i>Malome</i>	(uncle) as in – <i>re a tamiša malome</i> .
<i>Mogatša-malome</i>	(uncle's wife) as in – <i>mogatša-malome thobela</i> .
<i>Kgaetšedi</i>	(full or half sister) as in- <i>kgaetšedi le kae?</i>
<i>Morwarre/morwa/warra</i>	(full or half brother) as in- <i>morwarre dumela</i> .
<i>Mogolle</i>	(elder brother or sister) as in- <i>mogolle tama</i>
<i>Kgoši</i> .	(chief) as in – <i>O a tamiša Tshetlo kgoši</i> .

When it becomes so impelling to talk to the chief informally, it is compulsory to address him/her by his/her praise name, sited if the setting so allows. Meeting with the chief intimately is nothing wrong, but all that matters is respect at all times. For example, with a hat off one's head, and with hands at the back or folded appropriately in case of men, as another gesture and posture of respect and of showing politeness in the talk, *Sešate*. To hear of a commoner telling that he/she was talking to the chief on matters best known to him/her, it becomes a somewhat disbelief in the ears of those in discourse since that is regarded as a very rare contact to be easily accepted as the actual occurrence. In Northern Sotho, a chief is though, a human being, he/she is not allowed by the custom to mix easily and freely with his/her people intimately unless circumstances so allow and more so there are *bakgoma* or *bakgomana* by his side on watch.

It should be noted that it is not that easy to greet or extend greetings to strangers or people one does not fully know in that one does not just know how to address them. According to Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000: 280), the response is often confusion or a bewildered smile as the respondent will not know how to respond in an acceptable manner. In most cases the addresser prefers to ask the one accompanying the stranger the

manner in which he/she would prefer to be greeted or addressed. Otherwise, the addresser will chose not to greet the stranger up until time allows. That is, after having introduced each other properly. It is also noted that among Mphahlele, Mohlaletse and Mamabolo it is common to call someone by the kinship name as a formal greeting instead of his/her praise or totem names.

### 3.2.4 Address

It is imperative in Northern Sotho culture to address tribesmen using their stratified social classes such as regiments, initiation and tribal names. This gives them dignity they deserve and makes them feel as one. According to Mokgokong (1975:106) men from initiation schools deem it a pride and honour throughout their lives to be addressed by their regimental names. For example: Matladi, Mankwe, Mangana, and Madima. They are proud of these names that they even swear by them to express their determination or truthfulness, and trust or surprise. For example:

(47) a. *Mangana, le re mosadi o robala ka baneng?*  
(Lit.: Mangana, do say the wife sleeps with children?)  
(Com.: Are you saying the wife denies him the conjugal rights?)

b. *Nna ke Lenkwe, o ntlhokomele, o ntebelele ga botse.*  
(Lit.: I am Lenkwe, watch me, and look at me carefully.)  
(Com.: I am Lenkwe, so be careful.)

c. *Ka Matlakane ke tla go bolaya.*  
(Lit.: By Matlakane I will kill you.)  
(Com.: I swear by Matlakane, I will kill you.)

## 3.3 CO-OPERATION AND POLITENESS

Languages around the world do provide their speakers with alternative modes for the achievement of communicative goals. Furthermore, in actual utterances in many contexts, language users do not express their intentions in the clearest and most explicit ways possible. Research in the pragmatics of politeness aims at explaining contextual and cultural variability in linguistic behaviours seeking to explain what motivations are inherent in and what social meanings are attached to the choice of verbal and /or non-verbal cues for the achievement of communicative goals. To this end, Van Dijk (1998: 50) argues that politeness is intentional, strategic behaviour of an individual meant to satisfy self and other face wants in case of threat, enacted via positive and negative styles of redress.

Grice (1975:41-58) describes that co-operation in conversation as having four rules or co-operative maxims. The maxims concern the quality, quantity, relation, and the manner of utterance. To explain these maxims he further says that quantity has to do with giving just the right amount of information; quality is about not saying anything of which the speaker has no conclusive evidence about state of affairs or about things you know to be false; relation has to do with contributing relevantly towards the conversational goal, and manner require that the speaker be clear, avoid ambiguity and obscurity. There are also polite principles which he suggested for conversational goals, such as do not impose your hearer.

Hornby (1998:893) suggested the following questions in regard to politeness:

- \* What are one`s reactions when people speak?
- \* How does one answer questions, is one emotional?
- \* Does one`s actions show respect or disrespect?

Therefore, a distinction is made between positive and negative politeness and co-operation.

### **3.3.1 Positive politeness**

According to Van Dijk (1998:51), positive politeness strategies enhance the positive face needs of the interlocutor, by such means as attending to the hearer, stressing reciprocity, displaying a common point of view and showing optimism. Finegan (1994:334) defines positive politeness as a state when we allow and let people know that we enjoy their company, feel comfortable when with them, like something in their wellbeing. This is evident when we extend invitations for celebrations, making telephone and cellphone calls and exchange of gifts.

In the case of *Sešate* in this research, positive politeness is experienced when at *mošate* the commoners and even *bakgoma* respond favourably in response to the calling over issues much related to the tribe, for example matters over family disputes and routine tasks such as *bothokgo* and *masolo*.

Other forms of positive politeness are witnessed in utterances which are marked densely by brief silence in articulations and the conspicuous usage of interjections such as *eya kgoši*, and *thobela* either at the beginning of sentences, middle or at the end particularly when the receiver is addressed by senior member of the tribe. The following are demonstrations of such conversations at *mošate* as obtained from various sources:

(48) a. “*Ka ge lena thobela le le dithamaga, mohlomongwe ge le gola tša mohuta woo le kile la di kwa. Mokgwa ga ke se be sehvirihwiri ka ge di tla goroga thobela a tle a di ahlola.*”

(Maserumule, 1988: 23)

(Lit.: “Because you chief you are old people, maybe when you grew up this type of things you once heard. However, let me not be inquisitive because they will come and chief will resolve them.”)



(Com.: “Because you chief you are experienced in this kind of things, let me not tell you until they report the case to you, and you will make settlements.”)

b. *“Tau e kgolo, ao ke wona mantšu a ka thobela.”*

(Matsepe, 1982: 52)

(Lit.: “Big lion, those are my words chief.”)

(Com.: “Chief, this is my side of the story.”)

c. *“Thobela, kgagara tše ga di sware moloji le ge e ka ba maselekane.”*

(Maserumule, 1988: 10)

(Lit.: “Chief, these bones do not catch witch even if it is with naughty people.”)

(Com.: Chief, these divination bones are cheap stuff.”)

d. *“Di reng tša motse ngwan`a kgoši?”*

*“Go befile, Bafohloše. Ga go bophelo mo.”*

*“Go befile, Sebakaborena. Hlaga e keka e eya pele, thobela.”*

*“E fokela kae go la lehono, thobela?”*

*“Ebago lena Phafogang le gata kae ngwan`a thobela, moste o namile o kgakgana o eya pele?”*

*“Di reng tša motse ngwan`a kgoši?”*

(Lit.: “How are things at home child of chief?”)

(Com.: “How is it going brother?”)

*“Go befile, Bafahloše. Ga go bophelo mo.”*

(Lit.: “It is ugly, Bafahloše. There is no life here.”)

(Com.: “It is bad, Bafahloše.”)

*“Go befile, Sebakaborena. Hlaga e keka e eya pele, thobela.”*)

(Lit.: “It is ugly, Sebakaborena. Veldfire stretches forward, chief.”)

(Com.: “It is bad, Sebakaborena. Things are getting worse by the day.”)

*“E fokela kae go la lehono, thobela?”*

(Lit.: “To which side is it blowing today, chief?”)

(Com.: “What are the news.”)

*“Ebago lena Phafogang le gata kae ngwan`a thobela motse o namile o kgakgana o eya pele.”*

(Sekhukhune, 1975: 72)

(Lit.: “But where do you put your feet Phafogang son of chief, this village is in trouble.”)

(Com.: “But Phafogang my brother, why are you so ignorant? Our village is in trouble.”)

In Northern Sotho culture, it is necessary for the addresser to start and end his/her utterance with such words as cited above such as *thobela*, *ngwan`a kgoši*, and *ngwan`a thobela*, to show respect and as a gesture of being polite.

### **3.3.2 Negative politeness**

Van Dijk (1998:51) defines negative politeness as strategies geared to satisfy the hearer's negative face, his/her need for freedom from imposition. He furthermore, agitates that negative politeness strategies are realized by asking about cooperation, by giving options to the hearer not to do the act, and by adopting a pessimistic attitude and by various kinds of hedging. Therefore conventional indirectness in request is a prime example of negative politeness.

Negative politeness is a behaviour that an individual speaker in discourse may use deliberately or with no intention to cause discomfort on the part of the others in interaction. In most cases this, according to this research study occur when participants in discourse ignore their cultural rules of interacting with other people.

According to Dlaki (2001:76), negative politeness may involve actions such as threatening, ordering, demanding, accusing, cursing and reprimanding of the hearer. As such negative politeness refers to the violation of the cultural norms of behaviour due to ignorance.

### **3.3.3 THANKS**

According to Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000:280), thanks (*malebo* or *ditebogo*) are what is called polite formula and are therefore compulsory words that the speakers of the Northern Sotho language in the case of *Sešate* language form in this research have to use to show respect, politeness, affection, love, praise, sense of appreciation or pity for an individual. In Northern Sotho culture, thanks (*malebo* or *ditebogo*) involves more than just merely saying to someone 'thank you'. *Malebo* or *ditebogo* cut across Northern Sotho culture regardless of age, sex. Failure to mention these words would be interpreted as a sign of rudeness, disrespect, or disregard.

In most instances, thanks in *Sešate* language form are usually pronounced coupled with interjections at the beginning of an utterance or at the end in the case of leave-taking. Totem names as well as praise names are also used such as in the following examples (Sekhukhune 1975:11):

(49) a. “Agee, *Hunadi`a Ngwato*, o šomile mmago banake.”

(Lit.: “Aa, *Hunadi`a Ngwato*, you have done so well.”)

(Com.: “Thank you so much *Hunadi`a Ngwato*.”)

In the example (49a) *Agee*, is an interjection in Northern Sotho which is frequently used to show appreciation or when goods are being received from the other party in discourse, just another way of saying -thank you. This is usually followed by a praise name as it is with the example (49a), *Hunadi`a Ngwato*. *Hunadi* in this case being the actual praise name of the person who is giving while *Ngwato* is the grandfather or the father to *Hunadi*. It therefore, symbolizes thanks upon receipt of something good or well wishes. Thus in Northern Sotho greetings are extended to include either the immediate parent or great grandparent or even to include also great great grand parent when social interaction is at the level of Northern Sotho *Sešate*. What is also impressing is that the one who greets at times jokingly go to the extend of even asking the one he/she greets his/her great parent`s or forefather`s praise name like “*Etse sereto sa rrago rrago ba be ba re ke morwa wa mang ge ba moreta, mošaa?* – By the way what is the praise name of your forefather. In this example a mention of the great grandparent`s praise name is made and this is to instill the culture of knowing his/her clanor lineage very well and to equip one with the ability and skill to trace his/her geneology far back in the lineage. For example:

b. *Agee, Hunadi`a Ngwato`a Mogale*.

In this case *Mogale* will be regarded as the grandparent of *Hunadi*.

Or

c. *Agee, Hunadi`a Ngwato`a Mogale`a Hlabirwa*.

In which case, Hlabirwa will be the great grandfather to Hunadi.

Other examples are obtainable from Matsepe (1982:110):

d. “*Aгаа, go tša magadi a morwediago o swanetše go ntšha tše nne le dipudi tše nne o feletše le ba bogwe, o nišhe le pholo le phooko tše pedi o tle o lefe lekgotla. Emelela gona bjale...*”

(Lit.: “Good, from your daughter’s lobola you must take out four and four goats to settle with bride’s family, and again take out an ox and two goats and come and pay the council. Stand up right now.”)

(Com.: “Good, for lobola give four oxen and four goats to settle your relationship with the bride’s family. As a punishment you are to give us one ox and two goats to the council.”)

In the extract (49d) “*Aгаа*” is again Northern Sotho interjection used in *Sešate* with equal importance as “*Agee*” in the examples (49a, b, and c) to express satisfaction and emotional relief. In this discourse, a case is brought to *mošate* where a husband to two of his wives is found guilty of punishing them after he found them fighting saying “*bobedi ga ba lwe, ba ronana dinta!*”- Friends do not fight each other but help each other (Matsepe, 1982:109). In the example by the utterance of “*Aгаа*,” the speaker who is Kgoši Letšaga pronounced the verdict and use the interjection to indicate that he is now relieved that the case has been brought to an end last and to the satisfaction of the wives and those who had an interest at resolutions in the case wherein all three parents in the family fought- a husband and his two known wives.

From the investigation on use of praise names and totems in this study as another device of thanks (*malebo* or *ditebogo*), it has been found that Mamabolo people do not use praise names in either thanks or praises but rather they use totem names and tribal names such as *Kgomo* (Modiba, Bopape and Letsoalo clan), *Kolobe* (Mamabolo and Mahlatji clan), and *Bahlalerwa* (Mojapelo clan). On the contrary these praise and totem names are vigorously or regularly used by those in interaction with Mohlaletse and Mphahlele

people to the extent that others do distaste them. At times others do reject to be called by their totem and praise names viewing such utterances as just another way of betraying or fooling the other, thus they are regarded as bearing negative influence other than the intention aimed at.

### **3.4 PROTOCOL**

According to Mönning (1983:249) the political organization of the Northern Sotho language speakers is characterized by a centralized authority pivoting upon the chief (*kgoši*). The entire system of the government administration and control of tribal life is based on the institution of chieftainship, and permeates from the chief downwards through the tribal structure. Mönning (Ibid) further points out that succession to all political offices in the tribe, including that of the chief, is hereditary in the male line according to the normal principles of the kinship system.

The above statement suggests further that on matters pertaining to tribal life, the protocol will be in accordance with the prescribed kinship system. The procedure of reporting such matters relating to *mošate* are those of using the appropriate register-*Sešate*. The protocol is that of, from the commoners (*setšhaba*) there follows *bakgomana* whom in law of succession are to report to *bakgoma* who are the most senior councilors of the chief. Lastly, *bakgoma* then reports to the head of the tribe who is the chief (*kgoši*).

### **3.5 FEEDBACK**

Feedback is a cybernetic process which deals with the ways a system gauges its effect and makes necessary adjustments. The simplest cybernetic device consists of a sensor, a comparator, and an activator. The feedback mechanism varies in complexity. The basis is the output-feedback adjustment. All purposeful behaviour requires feedback. Feedback may be classified as positive or negative in response to stimuli which in the case of this study is information flow or what it is best defined as communicative event. The following extract from Maserumule (1988:17) will help to illustrate this point:

- (50) a. “*Kgoši o ile a akga nao tša bogolo a roma ngwana go bitša Mafego. Mafego le yena a hwetašega ka bokgauswi ka ge matšatšing a go sa fulelwe kgole le mošate, ka baka la morero wo Thobela a sego a be a ba begela gore bjale gona go weditšwe.*”

(Lit.: “The chief suddenly sent a child to call Mafego. Mafego was also quickly found nearby because these days he does not graze too far because of a case that the chief did not inform them of and that all is done.”)

(Com.: “The chief suddenly called Mafego.”)

The implication in the above extract is that *mokgoma* (Mafego) is to be around by those days since it is not known when the chief will need him urgently because what they are busy with at *mošate* seem to be too secretive, so in case his assistance is needed he should be easily located. The other typical example of *Sešate* feedback process is illustrated by the discourse between Chief Matilwane, Sefularo and Kgwahlane by the time they were preparing rain-making medicines.

- b. “*Sefularo o ile a fetleka morabana go bona ge a feletše. Ge di le mahlong a botša Kgwahlane gore a botšiše ge e ka ba nku ya mmala wo, thobela o noyo. Ka ge tša mohuta wo kgoši a godile natšo, a ba botšiša gore a go ka nyakega tshadi goba ya pholo le ge e ka ba kgapa goba kgapana.*”

(Maserumule, 1988:18)

(Lit.: “Sefularo searched his pocket to see if he is complete. When they at the eyes he told Kgwahlane that he should ask the chief if a sheep of that colour he has. Because this the chief knows, he asked if they want a female or a male sheep or a small ram.”)

(Com.: “Sefularo searched his divination bones bag to check if all is well. When he was satisfied, he then wanted to know if chief Matilwane has a ram to complete the ritual.”)

What the above example symbolizes is that it is not possible for any subject in the tribe to can talk to the chief, but selected few like Sefularo who is the organic doctor and Kgwahlane as the messenger in this incidence.

### 3.6 HYPERBOLES

Freeborn (1996:65) explains that hyperbole is an exaggerated or extravagant statement used to express strong feeling or produce a strong impression, and that is not intended to be understood literally or that is not to be easily understood.

In this sub-section of discourse analysis surrounding the use of *Sešate*, attention will be centered on the recurring use of stylistic repetitions of exaggerative language forms. This is in an attempt to make the speaker’s message in thoughts of the other to carry valuable perceptions and to be of more increased value in intent. These types of expressions are such as in the following extract from Matsepe, 1982: 72:

(51) “*Homola, homola Tshetlo, mantšu a gago a phuleletša pelong ya ka gobane ge ruri dira di ka rotoga re tla reng ka gore re a ponapona?*”

(Lit.: “Keep quite, be quite you Tshetlo, your words penetrate through my heart because indeed what will we do if enemies approach because we are naked.”)

(Com.: “Tshetlo just stop talking like that, because what you are saying is painful and we are not protected in the eyes of our enemy.”)



From the above expression it is evidently clear that the two escapees are stranded in the bush and they feel extremely unprotected. The implication here is that with “*mantšu a gago a phuleletša pelong ya ka*” the speaker is putting his view point in no unequivocal terms to Tshetlo not to disregard his illness coupled with the tragedy that might be befalling them in the eyes of the enemies. So, by such assertion the speaker is trying to indicate to Tshetlo to stop joking because there is absolutely nothing that will come to their rescue in that valley of death. This is further demonstrated by the manner in which Tshetlo was quickly forced to stop talking “*Homola, homola, homola Tshetlo,*”

The speaker in the extract continues to say “*...re a ponapona.*” (we are naked > we are unprotected, and unarmed). The communicative meaning of this stretch of language is that the speaker feels nobody will ever come to their rescue in case they are attacked by whoever is their enemy. But here the speaker uses “*ponapona*” to really indicate that with them they have absolutely nothing and they are as such more frustrated, more so that he is sick and helpless.

In “*...mantšu a gago a phuleletša pelong ya ka.*” The speaker equates words with a very sharp ended blade of a spear that will in no way pierce his heart, an organ which is the source of life in all living organisms, if Tshetlo does not stop talking like that. Therefore if Tshetlo continues to talk in the manner he is talking, he will undoubtedly die because blood will have flown out of his body. As such this utterance is been put in this manner to indicate to Tshetlo that what he is saying cherish no hopes for survival to them.

### **3.7 METAPHORS**

Freeborn (1996:63) defines metaphor as a name or descriptive term transferred to some objects different from the original, but analogous to, and to which it is properly applicable to. Freeborn (1996) further explains that if a comparison is implicit or compressed, then simile becomes metaphor. Untermeyer (1968:225) defines metaphor by placing it above simile in that it is usually more effective than simile because it makes an instant comparison and an imaginative fusion of two objects without the use of

explanatory prepositions. Using *Sešate* as a language form among Northern Sotho speakers such as *bakgoma*, *bakgomana*, *dikgoši*, organic doctors and even commoners talk of their bravery and diligence and intelligence by comparing themselves with the most fearsome and dangerous animals in the wild or very powerful kings or inanimate entities in their lives.

Thus, in this subsection concentration is based on how one sees himself/herself through the eyes of the others in comparison to the others and this commonly appears in praise poems. A further example is taken from Matsepe, (1982:75-76):

(50) a. “*Kgoši Matshelo o amule borole, masogana o swere tlhorela yeo*

*bogale e bo amogilego semane, tikologong ya gagwe o bolelwa ka  
go hwenahwena gobane ga se motho ke sera...*”

(Lit.: “Chief Matshelo has young soldiers, young boys who have robbed bees (*semane*) of their danger, in his surrounding people whisper when talking about him because he is not a person but dangerous animal.”)

(Com.: “Chief Matshelo is militarily strong. He has the strongest contingent of soldiers by himself and it will be very difficult to over power him.”)

From the above extract the speaker in discourse is compared with a very terrible type of bees on earth called *semane*. *Semane* is another kind of dangerous bees that are scarce and they bring not only injury to whatever they come across but death, sudden death. Chief Matshelo is regarded as the strongest chief in the vicinity and whoever fights him his village will be burnt, destroyed and be reduced to ashes and his followers be captured and killed while others will be kept in captivity as slaves. Chief Matshelo has the power and the capabilities to do all this in a wink of an eye. For example, in the above extract (52a), boys are used in the text to symbolize a very active people, so energetic, and flexible like calfs-*borole*. Using Kwelapele by Matsepe (1969: 18) Setongwane which is a trap used to catch small and very small wild is personified and compared to other traps

used in the catch of big wild animals like antelopes. In praise poems at times they take features like “*Kgomo e a tsha*” which is followed by an answer from the respondent as if they are in argument and the respondent respond with a doubtful mind that he/she will ever succeed in accomplishing what the speaker is saying. In such instance the poet will go on to prove comparing himself/herself with vicious animals or entities. Such as

(52) b. “*E gangwa ke nna Setongwane sa badiši,*

*Setongwane ke morwarrago molaba le sefu,*

*Dinama ba di kgobela go di ja ba sa di je.”*

(Lit.: “It is me Setongwane of the heardboys,

Brother to molaba and sefu,

Meat they gather not eating them.”

(Com.: “I am Setongwane younger brother to all big traps,  
and make heardboys satisfied with food to eat.”

(Matsepe, 1969: 18)

In this poem extract (52b) the poet compares himself/herself with the very strong traps in that they scarcely bring food home and in case they feed or provide heard boys with the catch, the food last longer because the catch is huge. Setongwane compares well in that the catch is daily and heard boys are being provided with fresh catch each day small as it is.

The following are other forms of metaphors found in frequent use in *Sešate* discourse among the Northern Sotho language speakers:

### **3.7.1 Dead metaphors**

Dead metaphors are by definition metaphors wherein the reader or participants in discourse are hardly aware of the image as expressed by the speaker’s intent to figure out to the listener or others in interaction. Dead metaphors are metaphors that are part of the daily communications. These metaphors generally refer to universal terms of time and

space and the most important parts of the body, generally ecological characteristics and the most important human activities. For example:

(53) “*Ke gore ditshadi di farafarile mathapisana le poo e kgokgoetša powana.*”

(Maserumule, 1988: 46)

(Lit.: “That is the cows came with other small ones together with bulls.”)

(Com.: “The marriage was blessed with enough marriage goods.”)

### 3.7.2 Cliche` metaphors

These metaphors are the language forms that have lost their usefulness temporarily, and are as such used as substitutes for clear thinking. For example:

(54) *Tladi e be e sa amuša tatšana ge ba fihla.*

(Lit.: The sun was still breast feeding the little upon heir arrival.)

(Com.: They arrived quite early.)

### 3.7.3 Standard metaphors

Standard metaphors are defined as fixed metaphors used in an informal context as an adequate and concise method to cover a physical and/or spiritual situation in referential and pragmatic terms. In *Sešate*, these are not to be used excessively. For example:

(55) a. *Badikana ba tšwela ba opele lehwete kgoro e bowa ka melalana ka basadi.*

(Lit.: Initiates came singing mountain songs while the chief’s kraal was full of women.)

(Com.: It was unnatural/ unfortunate moment.)

b. *Mogolo o rongwa a eme gore a tle a kgone go otlolla mogwete mahuto.*

(Lit.: Elderly are sent whilst standing, once sited their anus folds.)

(Com.: Requests are made to those nearby with help.)

In Northern Sotho it is indecent to make use of vulgar or strong words in the midst of younger people. This is regarded as taboo codes according to Northern Sotho culture which implies that the use of such strong words may turn to be a daily habit of the youngster when they do not know how and when to use them in discourse. In the above examples (55a and b), words such as *lehwete* and *mogwete* are words that are not to be used in the presence of youngsters in that they denote a specific meaning much deeply embedded in the discursive interaction and they reflect in themselves an ill-disciplined way of talking. These words are as such restricted in use as codes in any open social interaction, *Sešate*.

### 3.8 IMAGERY

In this subsection attention will be focused on how speakers in discourse stylistically employ their knowledge of language that is called linguistic or communicative competence by using imagery in attempt to create space in the minds of the listener to realize the difficulty of state of affairs. This is in many occasions done by leaving the listener in suspense for him/her to make inferences and deduction in order to arrive at conclusions. An example of this type of discourse is extracted from Matsepe (1982: 82):

(56) a. *“Lesang ditaba re fodišeng dihlogo re be bjalo ka noga e tsenego*

*moleteng marega, gomme kokolohute ya lalela fao e re e tla tšwa anthe e ile phuphu. Gona bjalo naga e re emetše ka maoto, e re meletše meno a ka godimo, gomme a re yeng phuphu.”*

(Lit.: “Leave the news and let us cool down our heads and be like a snake that has entered into the hole during winter to die while the bird-*kokolohute* in vain wait outside. Now the land is standing on feet against us, it has grown upper teeth, so let us go to the graveside.”)

(Com.: “We are in trouble and as such we have to cool down, rest and make fresh decisions.”)

The extract (56a), reflected above clearly endeavour to demonstrate that when at *mošate* the choice of linguistic units to be used in discourse is tense and difficult, and should be chosen in line with the mental picture that the speaker want to put forward in a very unambiguous manner to the listener. The speaker has accurately chosen to use an event where the bird waited outside in vain for its prey. The point the speaker want to stress here is that they are to - *re swanetše go šikiša dira le melapo*– (to withdraw from taking active military roles in their fight and take refuge with the idea of regaining fresh military strategies, power, techtics and strength) overpower and ultimately to dethrone the encounter.

From Matsepe (1982:97) the following extract will help indicate the stylistic narration of the setting wherein the narrator attempt to vividly bring the mental picture of the prevailing situation as the discourse unfolds.

b.“*Naga e robetše bja matlogadibešong le batho ba ja bofodile.Mafsi ke magelegele; bana ka moka ba tlotše gore magotšane a ba dume a ba lebeletše.”*

(Lit.: “The land is fast asleep and people eat all that is cool. Milk is plenty; all children have smeared themselves with fat from milk so that cracks could wish like feeding itself with them.”)

(Com.: “There is peace on land and all is well.”)

The above extract (56b), clearly brings in the mind of the listener a vision, a picture of a land where there is plenty of everything and calm. The writer compares that land with the Biblical story of Canon, a land of milk flowing in the river like water and plenty of honey “*Mafsi ke magelegele.*” The listener will obviously in his psychic make-ups start to visualize and draw pictures of such a land. The first sentence is an example of personification as another type of metaphor. A land is something inanimate, an object, concrete as it is with no life in it, and it can therefore not sleep since only human beings and other living organisms can sleep in that physiologically they have senses. So, the writer attributes and attaches these human characteristics to these non-living objects to achieve the communicative goal.

### 3.8.1 Simile

According to Ntuli (1984:150), simile is used in literature chiefly through comparison. In the case of poetry, poets usually compare two things from otherwise dissimilar fields because they share common features. Ntuli (1984) further asserts that in a simile this comparison is explicitly announced by the words such as – *bjalo ka; nke ke; o ka re ke; wa; swana le; boka; la* and *bj*, in the case of Northern Sotho. From the investigations thus far conducted in poetry, poets are prone to use *wa, boka; la* and *bj*, and other formative patterns. Leech (1983:156) argues that simile is overt in character in comparison to metaphor which is covert. This means that for each metaphor we can devise a roughly corresponding simile, by writing out tenor and the vehicle side by side, and indicating the similarity between them. The following is an example of poems wherein *boka* is used as indicative of comparison (Matsepe, 1982:71):

(57) a. “*Letšaga bjale o fofa godimodimo bjalo ka nong...*”

(Lit.: “Now Letšaga fly very high like a vulture.”)

(Com.: “Letšaga is now very angry.”)

b. *Wa ba tsebiša ka la boJesu leswao thwadima phadimela leswiswi,*

*Difahlego di rebamišwa bowatla, ba tlatlabalela pele,  
Kgane ba ka ipobola makgopo, ba ithapelela Moreneng,  
Ba boela ba swana le motwatwa ba taga ba re twa!  
Ba boela ba bitšwa borekolla-ka-madi-a-kwanyana,  
Ba swaiwa leswaotona la go gakantšha moloi Rameleko,  
La fenyka ka nnete lerato la ka mehla yohle.*

(Tseke, 1973:12)

*c. Tshebi ya dira e buduletše lepapata maloba,  
Segošane gwa thubuga sa diradisebja motseng,  
Ya bjobana phaga ka sehlefala boka sa marega sebešo,  
Ka itlhama ka tša borrawešu diphakabarwa,  
Kgapšhane mphufutšo ka kgrapha ya madi khulwana,  
La ka lerumo la o lalela ka tša Matebele dibebebe*

(Tseke, 1983: 9)

In the first poem (57b) the stanza that indicates a form of simile is stanza (4) which reads, “*Ba boela ba swana le motwatwa ba taga ba re twa!*” In the second poem (57c) we find a simile used in stanza (3) which reads, “*Ya bjobana phaga ka sehlefala boka sa marega sebešo,*” It is only unfortunate that the poet in the first poem used “*swana le*” as a maker of simile in that poem. As one reads through the poem one discovers some useless information and this led Ntuli to classify this type of simile as common in that the formation is there in our daily communication. It is now worse if we are to read this through a piece of written text. Experienced poets will prefer to use *boka; la; wa,* and *bja* instead of *bjalo ka; swana le, nkego ke,* as their forms of expressing comparison in their works to add more flavour and glamour to the texts as in Tseke (1973:15):

(58) *Ke tsokametše boka segodi seutlamaeba,  
Ke lema ke dutše ke ngangile ngangane,  
Ke thethenkgedi nna mapalane pele sepalela mello,  
Ke thuhutšwe meloreng ya mehutahuta ka thunya*



*Ke thunya bohlalehlale botse bo dula hlogong,  
Ke thunya boka leloba ka kganyogwa dikgopolo,  
Ka kgantšhwa ke bafahloši ka fahloga.*

(Lit.: “I am at my arlet position like segodi the swindler,  
I plough whilst I am seated  
I am at my rest I the one, who could not be burned by fire,  
I rolled myself on different ashes till I became white,  
I became bright like a flower and my wisdom was in  
demand,  
I got praised by lecturers and I became educated,  
I am now suspicious and I not a male baboon,  
I am a messenger up in the mountain where the baboons  
live at Makgata’s son.”

(Com.: “Education pays the divided. Right now I am up in the  
highest ranking offices occupying the most senior post.”

It is imperative that in simile and for its effectiveness to be conspicuous, there should be elimination of some elements in the text that also compare well with two dissimilar objects. If this does not happen or the writer does not see the need for this elimination, the communicative goal may be spoiled. So the need is that in simile only two differing phenomena are required.

### **3.8.2 Symbolism**

Chiari (1956:47) defines symbolism as a form of indirect, metaphorical speech meant to carry or to suggest a hidden reality. The following examples will help demonstrate symbolism as another figurative speech pattern in *Sešate* language form among the Northern Sotho speakers.

(59) a. “*Homola, homola Tshetlo, mantšu a gago a phuleletša  
pelong ya ka.*”

(Matsepe, 1982: 72)

*“Homola, homolo Tshetlo, mantšu a gago a phuleletša  
pelong ya ka boka tšhuduba.”*

(Lit.: “Shut up, shut up shut up Tshetlo, your words pierce my heart  
like a sword.”)

(Com.: “Tshetlo you make me feel hurt.”)

The concept *tšhuduba* is a name given to a very sharp edged instrument used to repair shoes and even big bags and for other leather works. So reading through the sentence the reader immediately pictures a very tough material being pierced through with exceptionally very sharp instrument, so sharp that to other a sense of shiver may go through their spines. So in the poem Monoši (the sick) managed with success to bring forward emotional pains that go through him – trouble and difficult times in life equal to the sharp edged instrument that goes through his heart and the inevitable pains.

b. *“Letšaga bjale o fofo godimodimo bjalo ka nong, mahlo o a rometše  
kgole go bona seo e kago go ba tlhaboroko ya gagwe ya bosasa.”*

(Matsepe, 1982: 71)

(Lit.: “Now Letšaga fly high and higher like a vulture, with eyes sent  
far to see that which can make him feel sleepless.”)

(Com.: “Now Letšaga is on alert.”)

In the above sentence (59b) a vulture, which is a vicious carnivorous bird, is used to symbolize how dangerous Letšaga was, and how angry he was that he even sent out people to quickly search or hunt for Tshetlo and Monoši. Furthermore, Letšaga is been associated with this huge bird (vulture) which naturally cannot fly that height as is it is mentioned in the sentence, but the meaning is that on that day, the height was exceptionally high to show anger that tormented Letšaga. Letšaga took to that height angry as he was in the sky to monitor the interior of his tribal region checking on Monoši and Tshetlo who fled to the neighbouring regions for help – to overthrow or fight him.

- c. *“Hono gona ga ka wela ke sobeletse sobesobe  
Ke sobeleditšwe magalagapeng a ntlolerole  
Ntlo ya mošate, e re maruru, e re maphene  
Mabose le mahloko a yona ke pula e a na.”*

(Tseke, 1987: 29-30)

(Lit.: “Now I have not fallen but I am inside  
I have been pushed right inside the troublesome house  
The Chief’s house is full of coldness and co crèches  
The good and the bad of it is like raining rain.”)  
(Com.: “I am in big trouble.”)

The extract carries with it heavy weight words to demonstrate difficulties in which the poet finds himself/herself. The poet is using magalagapa which is the far end of the mouth cavity and the beginning of the velar or the esophagus. The implicature is that he/she will be rescued from that part of the problem with no ease. Around in the house or as may be interpreted, the problematic area nothing seems good-looking, what makes matters even more worse is the piling problems on top of the existing and this has been meticulously illustrated by “*mabose le mahloko ke pula yeo enago.*”

### **3.9 Personification**

Leech (1983:100) defines personification as a special form of comparison. It is thus defined as representation of an inanimate object or abstract idea as endowed with personal attributes. Using personification, in most cases we discover that the poet attach certain human qualities to inanimate objects or to personify other living organisms, and in talking to these inanimate objects it seems as if they possess in themselves the human faculty of understanding. In some cases we find that the poet gives these objects human features and actions to arrive at what he/she want to bring forth to the audience in a

poetic form. An example of this type of metaphor we can demonstrate by using *Mogogonope* (hen) in Tseke (1987:7):

(60) “*Kgomo e a tsha!*”  
*E gangwa ke mang?*  
*E gangwa ke nna tšhethekgwa kwankwetla,*  
*Moisa wa letsedi letelele setšhošamerogwana,*  
*Mogogonotswana ya matšhetšhenkgwegwana ditholeng,*  
*Nna pholo ye kgwadi ya ka mošate mošimogolong,*  
*Nna ke letšago phalola nakakgolo sephafošamantho.*

(Lit.: *Kgomo e a tsha!*  
*E gama ke mang?*  
It is me who milks it,  
It is me the strong one  
A gentleman with a horn at the back of my head, with which I  
scare foolish messengers,  
Little ugly hens in the mist of chickens,  
It is me the brave one from the chief’s kraal.  
The one who blows the great horn which wakens people.)

(Com.: *Kgomo e a tsha!*  
*E gangwa ke mang?*  
I am the great leader of all,  
The great chief and all of you fall under my jurisdiction,  
I am the one and the only one who make decisions over you.”)

In Northern Sotho culture it is a common practice that those in discourse display their linguistic skills and competency through the use of rhetoric, poetic, and melodramatic utterances to indeed depict their aesthetic identity of belonging to the cultural group, and praises let goes to *Sešate*, *sekgoma*, and *sekgomana* way of living. This practice is

conspicuously seen during festive gatherings and when the mood is positively high or negative emotions as it is witnessed in anger.

In the above poem extract (60), a hen assumes a role of time-keeper or the whistle blower, referee or the empire whose decisions are final. Every morning it will wake up well before everybody as a routine work. This hen has a whistle which has to be blown and here the poet associates the cry with the whistle. The word “*moisa*” can only be attributed to a very handsome gentleman and this being the case in this poem, the poet associate its movements with the movements of proud well dressed young man and not “*matšhetšhenkgwana*” which means emaciated young hens in the mist of chickens.

### **3.10 FINDINGS ON CONDUCTED INTERVIEWS WITH *BAKGOMA* AND *BAKGOMANA* OF MAMABOLO, MOHLETSE AND MPHAHLELE**

A visit was undertaken to establish how Bakgaga, Dikolobe and Babina Tau ya Dimo address each other when in contact. This investigation was conducted with the aim of making a comparative study on greetings with special reference to cultural aspects such as totems, kinship names, tribal names, leave-taking and gender patternings.

Evidence gathered from the Mamabolo people is that praise names are of less importance to them, and in actual fact they do not just use praise names as compared to Mphahlele and Mohlaletse people who view praise names as heroic address. What is surprising in this investigation is that, Bakgaga of Mphahlele do not greet and call each other by their totems or tribal names which is the case with Mamabolo people. Bakgaga do not just call or address the other Mokgaga by their totem, but prefer praise names and kinship names such as *rangwane* or *kgatšedi*. Bakgaga only addresses each other as Mokgaga when in heterogeneous groupings and this is done purposefully to identify themselves as belonging to Bakgaga tribe and to indirectly send a message unto those who do not belong to this group, of their chiefdom or chieftainship, supremacy over the other and dignity they so much esteem, which is another way of boasting and feeling proud of their identity.

On the other hand Mamabolo people are fond of addressing each other by their totems or tribal names which is also a case with Mohlaetse people, but the latter would go on to use also a praise name, Tau and Kolobe respectively. So Mohlaetse people feel much respected when called by their totem and praise name which is not a case with Mphahlele people who would use preferably a praise name. One other discovery is that Mohlaetse people have a tendency of identifying themselves by using their father's first names or genealogical patriarchal names such as morw`aPogoti, morw`aMakgare, morw`aMašakoane, morw`aMathakanela, and morw`aNkopodi. This is done to specify and to direct their greetings to a referent or to a specific person in case the respondent find it hard to identify the person they are referring to in their interaction. This is a rare case with the Mphahlele people and with the Mamabolo people this does not occur and regard such address as derogatory. A well stretched right arm and never left arm, is extended which is an indicative of intimacy accompanied by a wide smile upon contacts. What happens in all three tribes, is that strangers are not greeted by a gesture of an arm and if the approached respondent feels it is inevitable to do so, a cold arm stretch is extended to the stranger with a somewhat morose facial look. A conversational maxim or principle in practice in the use of such gesture is to wait a bit until the stranger had been well and properly introduced, and it will be then that greetings can be directed to him/her in an acceptable manner as prescribed by the institutionalised norms.

Other noticeable discourse conventions among the three tribal groups, is the distinction made between men and women in their greetings. Men praise each other but this is not the case with women. In the case of the Mphahlele and Mohlaetse people, women would like to know from the respondent the welfare of the family members and even of extended families and they end their greetings with bidding farewell by saying *aowa, re le bone* – well, we have enjoyed your company; *aowa, sepelang gabotse* – Well, goodbye; *le ba dumedišeng* – pass our greetings unto them, and the other will respond by saying *re tla sepela gabotse* – we will go well, *re lebogile* – thank you, *ba tla tsoga* – we will pass your greetings, as farewell formulae and end such utterances by saying *Agee!* As a form of saying thank you. This is done regardless of time when last met. This is different from

men who would like only to know of the wellbeing of family members only in case they have long met.

### 3.11 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, insightful investigation has been made in regard to discourse conventions that are acceptable language behaviours in Northern Sotho *Sešate*. *Sešate* language form is a variety that is characterized by good behaviours on the part of those in interaction. This is explicit in approaches to those elderly or occupying senior positions at *mošate* like *bakgoma* and *bakgomana*. Evident to this is the strict use of protocol, politeness and appropriate gestures as other distinct and very conspicuous behaviours expected from Northern Sotho language speakers. Register as a language form, is not made up of large number of words in sentences or what can best be defined as stretches of words in use to convey thought expressions. This is noticeable in languages the world over, and it brings us to the typological and to universalistic language studies wherein further discoveries are made through the study of the purposefulness and usefulness of these appropriate language form in differing contexts among differing nationalities, but in our case it will be of *Sešate* in our indigenous ecological space *mošate* and areas of such equal repute. It is noted however, in our discussion of discourse conventions that formulas and other forms of address used in *Sešate* amongst the Northern Sotho language speakers are of vital importance in ensuring that tenderness, warm reception, and mutual reciprocity in communication process fulfils its communicative goal or objectives to the fullest in excellence and this will be proved by the its usefulness and purposefulness in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **PROXIMITY, NON-VERBAL FACTORS, FEMINIST THEORY, AND THE USEFULNESS OF *SEŠATE***

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this chapter is to investigate the appropriateness and usefulness of *Sešate* as a register in Northern Sotho language by focusing on proximity, non-verbal factors, and the Feminist Theory. According to Pellegrini (1984:3), for the past decade scholars in sociolinguistics focused attention on discourse forms such as diglossia, creoles, lingua franca, pidgins, and others such as registers, as another form of communication vehicle in



social interaction. The need for such devices and its growth was due to huge and insurmountable demand for the recognition of oneness and group identity. Social interaction thus cannot be viewed simply as a mechanism that will produce only a particular cognitive or emotional state or condition of being, but a tool that will bring forth intended communication objective such as exchange of views over the contexts as they present themselves to those involved. Previous works of scholars and exponents in this field as a subset of language study such as Naude (2005), Sekhukhune (1988), Van Dijk (1998) will be used as frame of reference.

Social interaction itself, and in the case of this research study, *Sešate*, is defined as problematic and worthy of study in its own terms. *Sešate* is recognized as a complex set of behaviours requiring a developed research focus and methodology. Indeed, this research study on *Sešate* have thus far revealed that this discourse form is an interesting and complex social process and that it is an essential part of socialization at *mošate*. *Sešate* as a social interaction though is a subtle process difficult to record, and to analyze deserves however, ample time to do research on. The need for such time is in that it is constituted by a complex stream of language behaviours including postures and gestures forming a bond with related utterances, indicative of humbled politeness in whatever approach, contact, and often all these occur in fleeting duration. Also in this chapter the feminist theory on language study will be covered looking at language and gender, and language and power as other aspects worthy of study in *Sešate* as communicative device among the Northern Sotho speakers.

## **4.2 PROXIMITY**

Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000:276) defines proximity as a physical space determined by social stratification. Thus, it is social relationship which signifies nearness in interaction and predominantly guarantees safe communication distance in an event. The concept proximity in *Sešate*, accounts not for a physical distance that can be measured in terms of geometrical or metric system using international unit standards expressed in centimeters or meters as determinants or chief denominators. It is a term for usage in Northern Sotho

language to primarily denote a universally acceptable safe distance for communicative goal. In Northern Sotho language form, *Sešate*, it is derogatory and belittling – *go nyatša*, to shout when talking with those in interaction at a setting for a communicative goal. Shouting is as such, seen as taboo speech repertoire which renders discomfort in space for communicative event to take place as mapped and desired. In this study on *Sešate* screaming, yelling and shouting are regarded as speech repertoires that dethrone this benevolent diplomatic language. Aspects in language study in context such as demonstratives as indicators in discourse are been investigated in this regard.

#### 4.2.1 Demonstrative pronouns

Demonstrative pronouns are linguistic units which in speech are used to indicate the reader or listener to the referent.

#### NORTHERN SOTHO NOUN CLASS TABLE

##### Class

no.	Class Prefix	Examples	Demonstrative Pronoun		
			Positions		
			1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
1	Mo-	as in <i>-motho</i> (person)	<i>yo</i> (lit.: this)	<i>yo</i> (lit.: that)	<i>yola</i> (lit.: that)
2	Ba-	as in <i>-batho</i> (persons)	<i>ba</i> (lit.: these)	<i>bao</i> (lit.: those)	<i>bale</i> (lit.: these)
3	Mo-	as in <i>-mohlare</i> (tree)	<i>wo</i> (lit.; this)	<i>woo</i> (lit.: that)	<i>wola</i> (lit.: that)
4	Me-	as in <i>mehlare</i> (trees)	<i>ye</i> (lit.: this)	<i>yeo</i> (lit.: these)	<i>yela</i> (lit.: those)
5	Le-	as in <i>lesogana</i> (young man)	<i>le</i> (lit.: this)	<i>leo</i> (lit.: that)	<i>lela</i> (lit.: that)
6	Ma-	as in <i>masogana</i> (young men)	<i>a</i> (lit.: this)	<i>ao</i> (lit.: those)	<i>ale</i> (lit.: those)
7	Se-	as in <i>selepe</i> (axe)	<i>se</i> (lit.: this)	<i>seo</i> (lit.: that)	<i>sela</i> (lit.: that)

8	Di-	as in <i>dilepe</i> (axes)	<i>tše</i> (lit.:these) <i>tšeo</i> (lit.;;those)	<i>tšela</i> (lit.:those)
9	N-	as in <i>nku</i> (sheep)	<i>ye</i> (lit.: this)	<i>yeo</i> (lit.; that) <i>yela</i> (lit.: that)
10	Di-	as in <i>dinku</i> (sheep)	<i>tše</i> (lit.: these)	<i>tšeo</i> (lit.:those) <i>tšela</i> (lit.: those)
14	Bo-	as in <i>bogobe</i> (porridge)	<i>bjo</i> (lit.: this)	<i>bjoo</i> (lit.: that) <i>bjola</i> (lit.: that)
15	Go-	as in <i>go sepela</i> (to walk)	<i>mo/fa</i> (lit.: here)	<i>moo/fao</i> (lit.: there) <i>mola/fale</i> (lit.: there)
16	Fa-	as in <i>fase</i> (below)	<i>mo/fa</i> (lit.: here)	<i>moo/fao</i> (lit.: there) <i>mola/fale</i> (lit.: there)
17	Go-	as in <i>godimo</i> (above)	<i>mo/fa</i> (lit.:here)	<i>moo/fao</i> (lit.:there) <i>mola/fale</i> (lit.: there)
18	Mo-	as in <i>morago</i> (behind)	<i>mo/fa</i> (lit.: here)	<i>mo/fao</i> (lit.:there) <i>mola/fale</i> (lit.: there)

In *Sešate*, these linguistic units are appropriately used simultaneously with facial expressions as gestures of equal value to indeed express what the circumstances are and who is to be held responsible for deeds carried out or to be carried out. Demonstratives differ in that others refer the reader or hearer to contextual aspects in discourse such as time, space, location, and entities in the talk which may be either inanimate or animate. Utterances used with demonstrative pronouns are usually accompanied by gestures of hands wherein referred to as deictics (Yule, 2006:173). To illustrate, the following extract from (Matsepe, 1984:20) will help:

(61) “*Moeng wo o mmonago wokhi o tlile go mpotša gore kua gae ke nyakega gona bjalebjale.*”

(Lit.: “The visitor you now see here is coming to tell me that there at home I am wanted nownow.”)

(Com.: “The message is that I should come home today.”)

Demonstratives such as *wo*, *wokhi*, *kua*, and *gona bjalebja*, in the example above (61), are demonstratives which may be interpreted as follows: *wo* and *wokhi*- this- referring to a person who is a visitor (in the example) present, brought a serious message saying, *kua*- there- referring to a locality which is not next to a place where the discourse is taking place but far. The phrase, *gona bjalebja*- right now -refers to time in moment and not any other time.

These are words through which the reader can easily read the situation –proximity and what they mean to the hearer herein referred to as the referent looking at safe distance for possible communicative goal achievement. The reader or the listener’s perspective will be channeled by the intonation or accent in articulation as another speech repertoire in interpretation resume. Politeness involves moderate voice lowering accompanied by the use of two hands put together in a begging manner in Northern Sotho culture-*Sešate*. In making the above request (61) *Sešate* way, it is evident that the speaker is humble though firm and serious in making such utterance because at *mošate* there is hardly time and space for jokes –*lapeng la mosate ke marediredi, gago papadi, o re o ewa wa ngatologelwa*. This can be best explained by pointing out that in the extract (61), the demonstrative pronouns used indicate the seriousness and the urgency the situation warrants from the listeners as it is clearly demonstrated by *gona bjalebja* – right now and not at any other time like tomorrow or later in the day. Furthermore, it can be analyzed and interpreted as an illocutionary speech act in a form of instruction or an order by the chief, *bakgoma* or *bakgomana* referring to a commoner. The demonstrative as such, put more emphasis on what is to be done, at that time, by those who are physically there-present, and not referring to anyone else away from the group since the referent who is the visitor, is also present. As such, the emphasis in this regard rest on time aspect as it is explained by the demonstratives pronouns in the text (61)–*gona bjalebja*, which denotes obviously the needed time as request or order from those together as participants in a physical context in their discourse.

It will be impossible in *Sešate* to utter such words without more emphasis being carried through the help of upper body parts such as hands to really inflate the seriousness of

state at that time in context. Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000:276) in the definition of proximity elucidate by saying that it would be inappropriate for a subordinate, who in this study will refer to either a commoner, *bakgoma* or *bakgomana*, to be too close to the chief when in conversation, not unless authorized to come closer. A too close and unsafe distance may hamper the smooth running of the discourse, *Sešate*. Words in use gather linguistic weight when said with the understanding of what they stand for and will mean to the hearer from whom reciprocity is expected. This is all about sound and healthy interpersonal interaction for goal attainment in social discourse. For this to happen, an acceptable safe distance is to be observed for sound interaction on low pitched voices to guard against making unnecessary shouting which is voice raising.

Communication will be ineffective if participants keep on requesting the other to repeat and to repeat again and again what has been said. If the message over issues is inaudible or received from far away speaker because of unhealthy communication distance, the conversational exchange will obviously be disturbed and will deter mutual understanding. This is not expected with *Sešate* since the response may be either adversely negative, such as expulsion from the gathering—*kgoro / pitšo*—indaba, or stopped from talking further or minimally and partially positive *-go ngaletša*, in nature depending on the communicative goal achievements intended. Talking to the chief or high ranking member at unhealthy and in conducive distance is a taboo in Northern Sotho, since the essence of communication is about respect in *Sešate*.

From the above exposition on proximity as determining factor for useful and appropriate *Sešate*, it is noted that it will be derogatory and a symbol of disrespect for a commoner to be too close to the chief when in discourse. For example, when a commoner is called to account on matters wherein he/she was present. What is expected is to wait for his/her turn to respond to questions put across keeping the relatively safe, conducive, and audible distance from the chief, which means not to be too far nor too near, seated. Any communication with the chief takes a sitting position as posture of politeness, since it will be regarded as *-go nyatša* to deliberate on issues pertaining to *mošate* while standing with the chief. This at *mošate* is done exceptionally well by appointing *mokgomana* and

*mokgoma* to interpret and mediate. By assigning duties of an interpreter to *mokgomana* means therefore, that *mokgomana* has to be more reasonably close to the commoner keeping the distance between the chief and the commoner still at reduced and advantaged space of being just not next to the chief. So the interpreter in *Sešate* serves as a barricade or a divide putting the chief and the commoner reasonably apart.

### **4.3 NON-VERBAL FACTORS**

According to Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000:275) non-verbal factors are those categories in social interaction which does not include the use of verbal linguistic units such as words to make meaningful expressions in discourse. Among these there are postures, gestures, para-linguistic factors and dress codes.

#### **4.3.1 Postures**

The *BBC English dictionary* (1992:895) defines posture as the manner of standing or sitting and related bodily movements. Since once at *mošate* it is expected that people are to behave well for them to receive a warm welcome, it is thus, expected that those involved and have decided to visit *mošate* are to behave as such. For example, men are not allowed to put their hands in their pockets or lean against each other or over any object next to him or them. If this happens when discussions are on, it will viewed as a sign of disrespect and a penalty may be pronounced in a form of goat and not in physical cash. What is expected of men during such gatherings is to fold their hands or arms together while seated or at their backs in case they are standing, and observe the great silence as the senior member talk or make any pronouncements over issues pertaining to *mošate*. Men prefer to bring along their own sitting objects such as pieces of wood or a bench, otherwise a log of wood or sit on the floor or ground like women.

Women are expected to sit down on the floor or ground with their legs well stretched -*go naba* and so will be with boys though they prefer to take half sitting posture with a knee put on the floor -*go hlaba thedi*. Some do choose to sit on stone or small rocks.

According to Northern Sotho culture, girls or young adult women are allowed not to attend *kgoro* unless they are victims of some circumstances. To reflect such postures taken, the example hereunder will help to depict the situation as such at *mošate* from Maserumula (1988:40):

(62) “*Bjale go tla re re kweng tša ge leloko la mošate le le mmogo. Kgoši*

*Matilwane o dutše le mababo go ba botša ge a godišitše. Go dutšwe mathuding a ngwako wo mogolo wa mollo. Ge o ba hwetša o tla thoma go tseba basadi ka ge ba dutše fase ba namile maoto. Ge e le banna bona o bona go tloga dikgatong go fihla matolong.”*

(Lit.: “Now it will be that we will hear about when the royal kinship met. Chief Matilwane is sitting with family members to tell them that he has children who grew up. They are seated on *mathudi* of the big fire house. When you find them you will start with women because they are seated on the floor with their legs stretched straight. As for with men you will see from the feet to the knees.”)

(Com.: “Chief Matilwane called the royal family to tell them that one of his children wants to marry.”)

The extract above (62) has shown the sitting position that both men and women take when called together to deliberate on *mošate* issues which in this case, is about marriage preparations of one of the chief’s son. Women took the front row position seated on the floor with their legs well straight stretched –*ba namile maoto*.

Men took their positions with some in standing positions, with their waste coats on as one could see their body parts only from their feet up to the knees. When at *mošate* men are not allowed to talk while seated, but only women do. It is with this reason that some took standing positions because in the event one feel like making inputs into the deliberations, one will be expected to stand up. This is only allowed at large gatherings. But with

gatherings of manageable size, all men are expected to sit down and only stand up to air his views in regard to the topic which in this case will refer to the field of discourse.

Community Halls are in use today to facilitate such *Sešate* proceedings in gatherings and this innovative situation makes it possible for greater number of men and women to sit down on benches. Sitting down is indicative and symbolic act of mutual respect to *Sešate* in Northern Sotho culture, the hierarchy, and supremacy of the royal family, *mošate*. When at *mošate* normally people should sit down before they engage in conversation. This shows a good moral standing on the part of members in a group, like at *mošate*. Generally, people may join into talk while standing like it would be with commoners and this will make no harm to rules of communication disregarding *Sešate*.

From this description of the gathering in extract (62), it is evident that although men are expected traditionally to put on *kaross / rug –lethebo* then. Still in modernity it is compelling for men to put either a jacket or long coats as a formality and respect when attending to *mošate* matters. Since now these type of dressing is been imbibed from the Western culture, it is respectful of men to put on jackets of whatever size in formal gatherings otherwise, one will not be allowed to identify himself with the group. In Western cultures men put on jackets when attending gatherings such as church, funerals and wedding ceremonies. In contrast, today men put on virtually nothing on to replace jackets when attending formal gatherings, be it a church or funeral ceremony.

According to Northern Sotho culture, marriages are arranged and this is seen with the Mphahlele, Mohlaletse and the Mamabolo royal families arranging their marriages. In the example, son of chief Matilwane is to marry a daughter of Kgomogoroga who is not a lady of his choice, but family's choice. This is why in the example (42) on *kgoši* Phentšwe, Tahlego (daughter) and *kgoši* Afakenna, there was disagreement in their conversation between the daughter and the father. Tahlego made a choice of her marriage partner at *kgoši* Afakenna's family, a decision *kgoši* Phentšwe disapproves. Other forms of postures profoundly used in Northern Sotho *Sešate* are kneeling down or taking a bow, facial expressions and eye –contact.



#### **4.3.1.1 Kneeling and bowing down**

In *Sešate*, women are expected to kneel down in front of the recipient of the offerings such as food or gifts and also when making greetings, with their two hands well stretched with the other as a support followed by a brilliantly bright smile. Failure to observe these postures it will be regarded as behaviours of disrespect, dislike or that the other who is making such offerings is in hurry, but this does not involve *Sešate*. In *Sešate* one is expected to take time when making contact because there are other behavioural patterns that are to be observed with kneeling and bowing. These will be things about asking the wellbeing of family members of those greeted and to know if some more will be needed. In *Sešate* it is not expected that one will just pass the plate in silence like that.

In the case of men, they take a bow with a slightly bend right leg on the knee showing a good facial look. Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000:276) confirm this by maintaining that, in certain other cases, a speaker may not stand up straight when addressing a person of a higher rank-chief in the case of this study on *Sešate*. Webb and Kembo-Sure continue to say, out of respect, they should adopt a slightly hunched posture, with drooping shoulders. This is of course completed by upright facial look and a well stretched arm well supported by the other, with no shouting but low pitched voices which is also a stylistic articulation in making greetings welcomed using *Sešate*. The recipients in both sexes are expected, as an address formality, to use their two hands to receive offerings and also to take a bow or make a nod to complete the proper conversational exchange. Therefore, the use of two hands in Northern Sotho *Sešate* accompanied by either kneeling or taking a bow, nodding and a slight bending of the lower right foot, is a polite address to situations as they render themselves to those in discourse. Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000:276) confirm this by saying children should and are expected to kneel when addressing elders.

#### **4.3.1.2 Eye-contact**

In Northern Sotho using *Sešate* register, it is difficult to look directly at the elderly when in conversation. Though not symbolizing a feeling of guilt, it is regarded as a sign of respect and symbol of inferiority which allows the elderly to express their feelings undisturbed by the presence of the subordinate. Thus, when subordinates at *mošate* look at the elderly directly in the face, this is regarded as a symbol of disrespect or that the other is cheeky, adamant, or feel cheated and unfairly treated by those in high ranks.

However, in contrast face-to-face talk among varied individual's social status in Northern Sotho, Western culture does agree with this type of posture as denoting loyalty and respect. This is because according to Mothiba (2005:4), the face is seen as the organ of emotions and people constantly read facial expressions to understand what others are feeling about the state of affairs. This thus, means that the unexplainable can be explained better when interpersonal interaction is involved in a safe, sound, and acceptable human space. Commoners in their talk do look at each other directly in their eyes during conversation because they hunt together, swim together, fetch firewood together and in many other group activities, in that such interaction is intimate more so, there is a sense of innocence in their social contact.

Furthermore, contrary to disrespect through face-to-face talk, McKenna (1997:30) concur with Mothiba (Ibid) and argue that the eyes are an important part of non-verbal communication, speakers who stare off into space or keep their eyes glued to their feet do not inspire much attention or confidence.

In *Sešate*, the common saying is *ditaba di tšwa mahlong* –the truth is in the eyes, referring to the elderly and not youngsters. It is through one's eyes that the truth or lies in the state of affairs can be judged as correct or incorrect for those in discourse to make value judgments of what transpires.

There are moments in discourse as prescribed by proximities, that eyes can reflect emotions such as anger, surprise, happiness or a feeling of being cheated which in *Sešate* will be a feeling of discontent and discomfort about the verdict or judgment passed. Once

these feelings are read from the other, the presiding person will obviously adjust to include the other's feelings into his/her statements in argument for the other not to feel exonerated from the group with which he/she rightfully identifies himself/herself as a member. Otherwise he/she may withdraw in despair since she/he is not been considered. The following is an example of social interaction which reflects face-to-face verbal responses which because of disregard of the other's appeal (Kgagohle) may force the other to despair and disband from the group and abdicate in response, as illustrated in Matsepe (1984:21-22):

(63) *“O tloga o nyakega tše tharo.”*

*“Tše tharo thobela?”*

*“Kgagohle a ka fokoletšwa kahlolo ya gagwe ka go mo nyaka kgomo ya bone yeo e swanetšego go ya ga Sekae le Nkatenwa bao ba bego ba mo fepela Lefao ge a be a mo rakile.”*

*“Afaeya ke phokoletšo ya tefišo yona yeo mong wa ka?”*

*“E tla ba phokoletšo ka gore ke gona o ka se hlwego o tšea lebaka le le telele ge o bala dikgomo tša gago.”*

(Lit.: “You must pay three.”)

“Three, chief?”

“Kgagohle's punishment may be reduced by adding the fourth cow which he must pay to Sekae and Nkatenwa who were nursing Lefao when he expelled her.”

“Is this reduction of punishment chief?”

“It will be reduction since you will not take no more long time to count you heard of cattle.”)

(Com.: “You are fined three herd of cattle and we add the fourth to compensate Nkatenwa and Sekae for keeping your wife.”)

“This is unfair to me.”)

From the above example (63), the accused, Kgagohle, feels unfairly punished in his case for the chief cannot say that he is reducing the number of cattle he has to bring to the chief skraal as a fine by adding the other (the fourth) which the chief said should be given to Nkatenwa and Sekae as compensation for good standing and for having kept his wife at their house during the period of summary expulsion. A punishment of this nature is severe and its severity lies in the chief's addition of the fourth cow to the fine saying will help him count his herd of cattle faster than never since their number is been reduced. A chief cannot pass such a punishment looking at his feet with his eyes glued to or into the space as McKenna (1997) argued. The emotions are high because of chief's anger and this reflects the seriousness of the case against Kgagohle who is the accused. Eye contact had been in use to really send a message of strong warning to others to refrain from perpetuating such ill-fated behaviours in family disputes. Kgagohle did not beat the wife, but chase her for some time away and hence the punishment of four cows is a thorn in his boot, but a lesson to others.

#### **4.3.1.3 Facial expression**

Steward and Frost (1999:82), Vos and Dreyer (1997:54) maintain that in cultures the world over, facial expressions are identical but do differ in accordance with the sort of interpretations attached to them. Facial expression can denote happiness or sadness. In all cultures a bad look is always an indication of being not content with what is taking place around the person. On the contrary, a bright facial look means happiness or a feeling of joy about circumstances around. An example of such bad facial looks is frowning and a somewhat pulled faces accompanied by exceptionally low voice tones and feeling morose. For showing happiness, facial expression is a bright smile from which people at a distance can read of what is deep inside your heart in that utterances which accompany such expressions are of high pitch. This is easily noticed at *mošate* during wedding

celebration whereby there will be lots and lots of drinking and eating, dances accompanied by ululating. However, this is not encouraged in Western cultures.

#### 4.3.1.4 Dress code

According to Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000:277), dress codes are determined by the culture, which is dynamic in its manifestations in all human societies though unique and static. To this, the assumption is that culture is specific in regard to traits it exhibits. Making a comparative study, Webb and Kembo-Sure (Ibid) confirm that women in Uganda wear *busuti*-traditional funeral dress or a piece of cloth known as *lesu*. This is also applicable to Northern Sotho culture during funerals. Women prefer to put on black colours though not necessarily, a hat or a wrapper–*tukwane*. This attire is adapted from the Western cultures, while their male counterparts are compelled to put on jackets. In the case of elderly men–*bakgalabje*, they prefer long coats, a hat and also take wooden sticks–*lehloto* as a symbol of being senior members of the tribe. Elderly women–*bakgekolo*, prefer to put on a blanket–*tšale* over their bodies and a wrapper. They also take wooden stick–*lehloto* as a symbol of being elderly to others. This style of dressing is different from that of young women who would put small blanket–*motsogana* around their hips or waist areas, a shawl and a wrapper and take no sticks with them. This is also practiced when attending *mošate* gatherings, but in this instance colour on the part of women is not an issue, but a shawl or small blanket, which they put around their waist or hips and a piece of cloth on their heads and the other on their shoulders.

In the example from Maserumula (1988:40) hereunder, the extract clearly depicts how men are to dress when called at *mošate* on issues pertaining to the royal family or even to the tribe–*motse*. Women are expected to put on long dresses, a piece of cloth on the head, a blanket on the hips or shawl on the shoulders. Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000:277) define these formalities as dressing code and this applies in our study on Northern Sotho language form, *Sešate*. The following is the example:

(64) “*Ge e le banna bona o bona go tloga dikgatong go fihla matolong.*”

(Lit.: “Is for men you see from the feet to the knees.”

(Com.: “Men are dressed in waist coats or long jackets.”

This means that the formality as for men is to dress or put on each time, jackets when attending to issues at *mošate* as a prescription by *Sešate* culture, though this cuts across some cultures the world over. In the past, men had to put on skins on their shoulders but this is replaced by jackets which is an attire imbibed from the Western culture. Without a jacket at gatherings at *mošate* one will not even be allowed to enter the entrance to join the group. To this, Webb and Kembo-Sure (Ibid) are quick to assert that dress is another non-verbal factor in communication that is of considerable significance in many societies. It is evident that in all cultures people dress to fit the occasions. For example, when attending funeral ceremonies and *mošate* tribal issues. Dress codes depict culture and cultural practices as signifiers of identity. People dress differently in accordance with their cultural roots. This is the case also with *Sešate* dress formalities.

#### 4.3.2 Gestures

The *BBC English Dictionary* (1992:483) defines gestures as movements that we make with our heads or hands to express emotions or give appropriate information. This definition concurs with Yule (2006:172) by maintaining that although signs and gestures involve the use of hands together with other parts of the body, they however differ. To make distinction between the two, Yule (Ibid) says that, signs are used instead of speaking or replaces speech, but gestures are used as attachments to speech and are used mostly while speaking. Research observations reveal that emotional feelings such as greetings, praises, and signs of appreciation and delight are easily expressed using gestures of some kind such as hand shakes, hands waving, and nodding. So it is with the upper body through which these gestures are appropriately and properly expressed. For example, always when *mokgoma* or *mokgomana* or even any senior member of the tribe is to be greeted, utterances such as *tama kgoši*, *eya kgoši* in cases of affirmation are used. In case of appreciation, a repeated shake of hands is noticed to acknowledge and is

always coupled with nodding which is involuntarily innate capability, which involves head movement.

With denial, the gesture is different in that it is indicated by a repeated sideways wave of hands. This is followed by frowned forehead and squeezed eye look. Denial is demonstrated by a head shake from side to side with the head facing down, which is an indicative of disapproval of state of affairs. Affirmation is demonstrated by a repeated up and down head movement with the hand well stretched for reach out, with a bright facial look and a wide smile. So the first action will be just another manner of saying “No” while the latter will be a “Yes”.

Once these sorts of behaviours are noticed, the participants in the discourse quickly know whether to continue with their intended mission or plan of action or not to pursue the issue on discussion since it will be either fruitful or futile exercise.

Yule (2006:173) outlines the following as types of gestures in social communicative interaction:

#### **4.3.2.1 Iconics**

Yule (2006:173) defines iconics as gestures that seem to be a reflection or traces of the meaning of what is said. Traces are imitations of figures or shapes of the entities that the speaker is referring to in the talk. For example, in *Sešate* such gestures are those that refer to round shapes or straight lines in discourse. Furthermore, these can be demonstrated at *mošate* gatherings as when a speaker is commanded to keep quite or stop talking further. This is done by raising the open hand to the speaker who in response must cut his/her speech or by showing him/her the entrance or exit with a pointing finger to indicate “go out”, quit, or leave the gathering. To illustrate this, an example is taken from Matsepe (1982:110):

- (65) “...o ntšhe le pholo le `phooko tšhe pedi o tle o lefe lekgotla. Emelela gona bjale...”  
 (Lit.: “...you take out a beast and two goats to pay this council. Stand up right now...”)  
 (Com.: “Pay the council two goats and a beast. That is all, go out.”)

In the example, *stand up* and *go right now* in the statement, is an instruction of someone whose circumstances force him/her to behave in an emotionally disturbed manner- angry and such utterances cannot be separated from gesture of finger pointing or showing the accused the exit to use when going out as fulfillment of what has been said in the tribal council. The demonstrative *gona bjale*, indicates to the accused that fines charged against him are needed at that time and the tribal court cannot dictate or pronounce anymore any other time different to that one. By this instruction the accused in the trial, is thus compelled to do nothing else other than to stand up and go and no other talk will be listen to by the council. In addition, this shows that there is little freedom of speech on the part of commoners when they engage in discourse with royalty.

#### 4.3.2.2 Deictics

In discourse analysis, deictics according to Yule (2006:173), means pointing at things or people while talking. It is used similarly to iconics but only differ in that with deitics no traces of entities in the speech accompany such talk to emphasize what is meant. With deitics, the speaker is pointing at the referent for those in discourse not to misconstrue the entity or topic of the subject matter to be something else other than what referred to.

- (66) “...ya boraro ke ya lekgotla lekhwi le tlogetšego mehola ya lona ka lebaka la go tla go kwa sello sa gago.”

(Matsepe, 1982: 20)



(Lit.: "...the third is for this council that has lost their duties because of coming to listen to your cry.")

(Com.: "...add the third for this council.")

In the above example, the demonstrative pronoun *lekwhi (le)* is used in the text to refer to that council of the day in question and no other council other than that which the speaker is talking to and which at that time in space took the joint decision of adding to the fine, a fourth cow.

#### 4.3.2.3 Beats

Yule (2006:173) points out that beats are another types of gestures which involve short quick movements of the hand or fingers. Yule (Ibid) further explains that these gestures accompany the rhythm of talk and are often used to emphasize parts of what is being said or to mark a change from describing events in a story to commenting on those events. The following is an example of beats reflecting quick movements by showing with hand how someone was seen dashing away from the scene. This type of utterance is also used at *mošate* with *Sešate* language when giving evidence of what transpired on the day in question by the witness:

(67) a. *Re bone fela ge a re feu, ka legora*  
(Lit.: We only saw him quickly turning that side of the fence.)  
(Com.: We saw him quickly going/dashing away.)

b. *Kgoši Matilwane o ile go tsena, kgoro ya re kgwathi*  
(Lit.: Soon after chief Matilwane has arrived the court was silent)  
(Com.: Chief Matilwane arrived and the proceedings started)

c. *Kgoro mohlang owe e be tletše parephare*  
(Lit.: That day the tribal court was full)

(Com.: The tribal court was attended)

d. *Maswi a tletše kgamelo tswi*

(Lit.: The container was full of milk)

(Com.: Everybody was satisfied)

e. *Ya ba ge ditaba di eme ka lešimelo tsi*

(Lit.: Then the proceedings topped)

(Com.: From there no progress was registered)

From the examples cited above, the demonstratives *feu*, *kgwathi*, *pharephare*, *tswi*, and *tsi* indicate a sudden bodily movement of the hand/s or finger from a given physical point to the other as it is explained, while in discourse. For example, in example (67a) with *feu*, a quick hand signal is shown to the other in interaction to indicate how swiftly the referent escaped or dodged from been seen among the others in the location or space where they were standing or seated. In example (67b) on *kgwathi* as a demonstrative pronoun, the speaker show with a finger on his/her mouth to indicate that no words were thereon uttered after the chief has arrived at the scene or people kept quite in respect to the chief or they stopped their private talks and again this gesture can also indicate silence or keep quite. Example (67c) on *pharephare*, the speaker uses two hands with one forming a tied fist and the other with palm pumping on top of the fist and this done only two times, to reflect that there was little room if any, to accommodate more from outside or to make any more inclusions to the space. This indicates that the court was gem packed as they came to listen to the chief addressing his tribe on *mošate* issues. In example (67d) with the demonstrative *tswi*, the speaker uses two hands. One of which is forming a somewhat loose fist and the other used to pump on top of the other to such extend that the cavity allows a short deep echo. In this instance, the indication is done just once and no more to show that the container was filled to the brink with milk and since this is about nice beverage, an impressed facial look tells more. In the last example (67e), with the demonstrative *tsi*, the speaker will show with two hands forming much tied fists held apart with firm up and down movements of the lower arms pulling towards the

forearms to indicate tiedness or firmness in the moveable entities. In the example, the implication is that of impossibility, nothing could do without the presence of the chief as an authority above all.

#### 4.4 PARA-LINGUISTIC FACTORS

According to Sekhukhune (1988:39), the para-linguistic speech markers, such as intonations and tonal patterns and phonological punctuation frequencies, form part and parcel of language usage, particularly in and outside syntactic and textual contexts. It is noted therefore, that it is the accent or pitch and the frequency of use of other grammatical phonological punctuation marks through which the meaning of a word written the same may change its particularized meaning in the second syntactic structures and become contextual meaning of that word in that sentence. Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000:278) maintains that it is the speed or tempo at which the speaker conducts the communication interaction through which a word can change its meaning. For example:

- (68) a. *“Aowa, o gopotše gabotše ge o re o tsibiše ba mošate  
gobane ge bosasa ba lwele moo morerong, o ka  
palelwa ke go di tliša mono mošate.”*

(Matsepe, 1982: 30)

(Lit.: “No, you have thought so well when you say you want to tell the chief’s people because tomorrow after they have fought at the party, it will be difficult for you to bring them here at the chief’s kraal.”)

(Com.: “Oho well, this is a very good decision to let them know of the occasion otherwise in case they fight each other, you will be on the save side.”)

Reading through the extract, the reader will obviously realize that the comma used immediately after the segment of the sentence “*Aowa*,” indicate that the speaker who in this case is Tamoga took a very brief pause and further signifies and symbolizes a sense

of appreciation on the wise decision Tshetlo took. This is just amicably another appropriate manner of reporting using *Sešate* register. People do not just give fleeting information without artistic gestures like it is the case with universalistic social interaction. So to report or give utterance of any sort using *Sešate*, requires a peculiar style of doing that. Such articulations are recommended as the best way commendable as a symbol of respect in request for positive results. It is apparent, as one reads through the extract (68a) above, that Tamoga's hands are held together and brushing each other in a very soft and steadily manner. This is no harsh utterance or act, but pace taking gesture of request, a complex communicative event. Reporting in this manner is different from, for example:

b. *“Aowa! O gopotše gabotse ge o re o tsibiše ba mošate  
gobane ge bosasa ba lwele moo morerong, o ka  
palelwa ke go di tliša mono mošate.”*

(Matsepe, 1982: 30)

(Lit.: “You have thought so well when you say you want to tell chief's people because tomorrow when they have fought at the party, it will be difficult for you to bring them to the chief's kraal.”)

(Com.: “Oho, this is a very good decision to let them know of the occasion otherwise in case they fight each other you will be on the safe side.”)

In the above sentence (68b), the exclamation mark immediately after “*Aowa*”, gives yet a very totally different meaning than to the semantic meaning as conveyed by the comma in the first sentence in (68a). This phonological punctuation mark signifies loudness, raised or high pitch on the first segment of the sentence. This being the case, “*O*” becomes affected and takes also this high accent and so is the changing mood in the sentence from low to high mood.

Reading from Matsepe, (1982: 72) in the example hereunder, a finger-talk is also displayed in the talk between Diphaphu and Tshetlo when fleeing from *kgoši* Letšaga to the neighbouring tribe to secure military expedition to come and help them in overthrowing *kgoši* Letšaga from the throne of his kingdom:

- (69)        “*Ai! Ai!Homola, homola Tshetlo,*”  
              (Lit.: “Keep quite, keep quite Tshetlo,”)   
              (Com.: Shutup Tshetlo,)”

Assertions of this nature are always accompanied by a frowned facial look to really exercise a serious warning on the part of the listener in discourse. These occur in the use of *Sešate* to bring the attention of the other to appropriate senses and also to demonstrate authority of some kind above and over the other.

#### **4.5    EXTRA-LINGUISTIC FACTORS**

According to Sekhukhune (1988:22), the interplay between language behaviour and social interaction give rise to what could be termed space-time continuum. Sekhukhune (Ibid) further argues that contemporary language studies have to investigate the component elements of extra-linguistic contextual factors herein referred to as field, mode, and tenor of discourse as situational contextual factors. Naude (2005:32) adds that since register refers to language variety used by a speaker in a specific situation, then various registers that may be available to a speaker may be related to and influenced by a specific field of discourse or discourse type, which refers to the topic, type or the kind of action that is relevant to the speaker’s choice of linguistic items, such as sports commentary or political discourse. Naude (Ibid) explains tenor of discourse as a factor referring to the relationship that emanates from participants which may take place in either formal or informal setting, while mode of discourse refers to the content structure, namely speech or essay and the medium of information transfer which may be written or spoken.

#### 4.5.1 Field of Discourse

The field of discourse is in essence the topic of the subject matter under discussion. It is the social action that has to be addressed through the use of words for the fulfillment of the properly set communicative intention in discourse. In the case of this research study on *Sešate*, it is *mokgoma* who will in his approach address and as such lead the discussions for the participants to be engaged on the topic and not *bakgomana*. In this domain, *mošate*, it is therefore impelling for the participants to make appropriate language choice, *Sešate*. It is in this case clear that the dimension that will be followed will be that of formal since field of discourse is dependent on the domain or setting and it is with this reason that it can take either formal or informal dimensions. For example:

(70) “*Di tšholle mokgalabje, di tšholle gore re kwe gore re bokgole bjo bo kae.*”

“*Di wele thalla-di re dikwena di raletše le naga meetse a bilošitšwe keng?*”

“*Aowa, re di kwele di phuthe re tla di bona bosasa.*”

“*Bosasa? Bitša le mošimane... monenyane... morw`a Kgabutla re kwe gore tša gagwe di reng. Dilo tše ga di bolelle gong.*”

“*Di tsholle mokgalabje, di tsholle gore re kwe gore re bokgole bjo bo kae.*”

(Matsepe, 1982: 36)

(Lit.: “Pour them down old man; pour them so that we can know how far we are.”)

(Com.: “Throw them; we want to know of our stand point.”)

“*Di wele thalla- di re dikwena di raletše le naga meetse a bilošitše ke eng?*”

(Matsepe, 1982: 36)

(Lit.: “The fall is bad, they say crocodiles are rounding up and the waters are stirred up and why?”)

(Com.: “Things are bad on our side.”)

*“Aowa, re di kwele, di phuthe re tla di bona gosasa.”*

(Matsepe, 1982: 36)

(Lit.: “No, we have heard, pick them up we will hear again the next morning.”)

(Com.: “I am satisfied.”)

*“Bosasa? Bitša le mošimane...monenyane morw`a Kgabutla re kwe gore tša gage di reng.”*

(Matsepe, 1982: 36)

(Lit.: “Next morning? Call the boy by the name of Kgabutla we want also to hear from him. These things do not have the same fall.”)

(Com.: “No, tomorrow will be too far, call Kgabutla so that we can try his back. These bones do not have the same luck or tell the same story.”)

In the conversation (70) above the field of discourse is intimate and is that of two people who have broken and escaped from their tribe on journey to seek refuge and help form neighbours to overthrow their chief for reasons best known by them. It is the talk between Boditsi and the organic doctor.

#### **4.5.2 Mode of Discourse**

The mode of discourse refers to the relationship between the speaker and the communication tool in use or a tool as preferred for use in that setting by the speakers as appropriate for use at that time. Van Dijk (1998: 238) argues that the mode is the

symbolic organization and explains what part the language is playing in the social interaction, and further what it that is expected of the language in the context is. By this Van Dijk is referring to the functional expectations the participants look forward from the use of the chosen medium in the given situation, which is nothing other than to achieve the communicative goal, understanding. It will be confusing and embarrassing to use inappropriate medium when in discourse, communicating in a setting that does not warrant such medium. For example, at *mošate*, it is not expected of the participants to start relating or expressing their views using a medium that is not understood by greater number of the chief's council. The language used as such, will just cause confusion and serve or accomplish no goal. This kind of language usage will eventually render the communicative event useless.

### **4.5.3 Tenor of Discourse**

The tenor of discourse is the relationship between the speaker and the hearer as it is mediated by the means of communication medium which in this case of our study is *Sešate*. The language people use varies depending on the relationships such as those between the chief and the *mokgoma*, between *mokgoma* and *mokgomana*, *mokgomana* and the commoner, in the case of this study. Baker (1992: 16) support this statement by saying a commoner is unlikely to use swear words in addressing *mokgoma*. To add to this, *mokgoma* is unlikely to make requests publicly to the chief shouting in the presence of the commoners. Furthermore, it will be fruitless to use the language that the hearer does not understand when in essence the communication event is about understanding each other and acting accordingly for goal attainment in discourse. An example of such occurrence will be that of *mokgoma* addressing an *indaba* using Afrikaans as a language. Van Dijk (1998: 238) put it clear by saying tenor of discourse is the role structure of words by those involved in social interaction. This will include social roles, status, and their relationships in that context including both permanent and temporary relationships.

We exhibit the place we inhabit as space and convey emotional feelings as messages in formal or intimate manner through linguistic structures which are optional variables to



suite and ascertain exactness of our thought expressions. It is therefore, in social contexts wherein people say what is meaningful in the situation as it presents itself to them. Emotional feelings are other linguistic variables that group members cannot successfully discard from their interactions. It is hard to conceive of a speech event which is absolutely free of situation in which participants do not know the background of each other. Interaction is thus, carried over in a setting among people over issues, and this in *Sešate* is done in a complex string words in sentences produced to convey thought expressions such as those to indicate happiness, sadness, anger through speech acts such as assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative at differing times. In *Sešate* we greet and introduce each other well before entering into discourse. It is therefore, hard while at *mošate*, to enter into conversation with people who hardly know anything about the other.

## **4.6 SPEECH ACTS**

In *Sešate*, words we use are subjected to rules like in any other languages and these according to Naude (2005: 104) and Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000: 252) are language games. These means that words that people use, follow certain rules and this restrict them from using words haphazardly as they are immediately in their thoughts as structures to attach meanings to. In languages, speech acts are distinguished between locution and illocutionary acts of which this study on *Sešate* will concentrate on.

### **4.6.1 Types of illocutionary Speech acts**

The following are the types of illocutionary speech acts that is found in languages in including also in *Sešate* in communicative event:

#### **4.6.1.1 Assertive act**

In this type of act the speaker in discourse a statement that commits him/her to advocate the truth of a proposition. It includes such acts as stating, affirming, concluding, and

believing. The following is an example of utterance in which the speaker is just making an ordinary statement about the state of affairs. In such statements the other may just give a very short subjective positive answer either as fulfillment of rules of interaction in which an answer is to be given as a form of breaking the awkward silence or to negate the statement in the same way by agreeing or disagreeing.

- (71) a. *Sehuba se wele lehono mma*  
(Lit.: Flu has fallen today mama)  
(Com.: Flu is all over)

#### 4.6.1.2 Directive act

In this type of speech act the speaker is putting pressure on the listener to perform certain duties which the other must do or otherwise the negative will result in disgrace. An example of such speech act is like in the following as commands:

- b. *Emelela gona bjalebjale*  
(Lit.: Stand up nownow)  
(Com.: Go away right now)

#### 4.6.1.3 Commissive act

Commissive acts commit the speaker to do something in the future. The example is such as:

- c. *Le ka moso o lemoge*  
(Lit.: Even tomorrow you must watch-out)  
(Com.: Be clever next time)

#### 4.6.1.4 Expressive act

Expressive acts are those speech acts through which the speaker expresses his/her emotional feelings and attitudes such as anger, pity, anxiety, happiness or make declarative statements. Baker (1992: 13) defines expressive meanings of words in utterances as words which its validity cannot be judged as true or false like it would be the case with propositional meanings we attach to words in the same language to which these words belong. The following are examples of sentences formed with fleeting string of words that may be used to denote one thought of saying – Chief, please forgive me, as an apology.

d. i. *Sebatakgomo, ga e tshwe lebja*

ii. *Sebatakgomo, ngwana`phošadira*

iii. *Sebatakgomo, nkenelng diatla meetseng*

iv. *Sebatakgomo, ke phošitše, thobela*

(Lit.: Chief, I am wrong)

(Com.: Forgive me chief)

e. *Aowi, Hleng bjale go kwala gore le mmagwe o robetše? (pity)*

(Lit.: Oh, isn't that they say the mother I s also asleep)

(Com.: We learn that the mother is also reported late)

f. *E be gona ge o gomile fa, o a nkwa? (anger)*

(Lit.: That should be your last day returning here)

(Com.: I don't want to see you anymore here)

g. *Agee! Le lehono di laletše ka yena. (happiness)*

(Lit.: Good! Even today they will sleep with him/her)

(Com.: Good! We have worn again)

#### **4.6.1.5 Declarative act**

In a declarative statement, the speaker tells whoever has entered into the discussion with, what has to be done as a solution and a resolution to the topic in discourse. A declarative statement, in the case of *Sešate*, is the ruling or verdict which cannot be challenged. In Northern Sotho a saying is – *lentšu la kgosai le ageltšwa lešaka*- what the chief has said is final and takes a form of, or is observed and understood as a command. For example:

*h. Aгаа, go tša magadi a morwediago o swanetše go ntšha tše nne le dipudi tše nne*

(Lit.: Good, from the marriage goods of your daughter you must take out four and four goats.

(Com.: Good, settle your debts with the bridegroom's family)

#### **4.7 FEMINIST THEORY**

Naude (2005: 137) explains feminist theory as a generic label for a perspective that explores the meaning of gender in society. Furthermore, Naude (Ibid) continue to say feminist theorists have observed that many aspects of life are gendered. This means that they are experienced in terms of masculine and feminine, and this is what is contained and discovered upon investigation, in the use of *Sešate* as communicative device among the Northern Sotho language speakers. To further explain this, it is evident that gender across cultures the world over is not defined in terms of sex as a pervasive category but also includes also virtually every facet of human life including language, work, family roles, education, and socialization. In Northern Sotho language, looking at *Sešate* from a vintage point, gender is a social construction that is primarily dominated by male bias and it is particularly oppressive to women, though seldom appointed to occupy positions as chieftainees in the epoch. This being the case, the postcolonial and resistive approaches in feminists theory aims to challenge the prevailing gender assumption of society and achieve more liberate ways for women and men to exist side by side in the world peacefully without endangering the interests of the other.

#### 4.7.1 Language and gender

Feminist critics have become increasingly popular in the study of communication. Feminist communication scholars examine the ways the male language bias affect the relationship between different sex, the ways male domination has constrained communication for females, the ways women have both accommodated and resisted male patterns of speech and language, the power of women's communication forms, and other similar concerns. Traditional research methods are all male biased theories in that they seem to soft paddle or mute the experiences of women and their way of life in regard to communication skills and privileges. This is true with *Sešate*. Women are often relegated to the mute social grouping in as far as language is concerned, communication process at *mošate* and related domains. They are distend or designated to the realms or positions of very humble minors in the society. To demonstrate this standpoint, an example of interaction between a wife and a husband in Sekhukhune (1975: 11) will brightly depict such communicative event taking place.

(72) a. *“Meratha ke ye, rangwan`atšona, gomme re no ba re  
ipolaelwa ke tšhego ya kweno Maribiši. Ga se go ja ke go  
buša mare le go gatiša noga.”*

(Lit.: “Here is food, my younger brother, but we are starving here at Maribiši. It is not to eat but swallow saliva and to let the snake lay.”)

(Com.: “You my younger brother, we are starving here at Maribiši.”)

b. *“O a rereša Hlabirwa ga go swane le tuu. Ke tšie e phala morogo.  
A re ngwathe bo sa fiša samm...”*

(Lit.: “You are right Hlabirwa it is not like silence. It is locust is better than *morogo*. Let us eat while still hot my younger brother.”)

(Com.: “You are right Hlabirwa because this is better than nothing.”)

From the example in (72a), a woman dishes out prepared food to the visitor who seldom visit them and more so he is the younger brother to her husband. In this extract the woman feel guilty for serving the visitor with food that is not that delicious and deserve not to be served to a person of the social status such as that of the younger brother to the husband. For such a visitor in Northern Sotho, a live chicken is caught, killed and nicely prepared. The woman instead cover up her short falls, financial frustrations, by choosing a very much fitting utterance in a form of idioms and properly selected to close her apology by putting such stretch of idiomatic frequency usage and recurrence as in “*Ga se go ja ke go buša mare le go gatiša noga,*” – this is not to eat but to salivate and to press the snake, at the end of the utterance in attempt to wrap up as a form of an excuse. This woman in the passage above in extract (72a) tries her best to assemble as many appropriate idioms as possible to demonstrate her apology. This she further stylistically uses in extract (72b) by saying “*Ke tšie e phala morogo*” – It is better than nothing. Once this happens in a context, it brings into the memory a picture of a woman kneeling down in front of a male visitor as a traditional gesture formula of making offerings in *Sešate*.

#### **4.7.2 Language and power**

According to Naude (2005: 140), one of the well-developed areas in feminist studies is the exploration of sexism in language and the relationship between language and power. For Naude (Ibid) language is central to all human experiences and society, and this means that our experiences are prefigured by language in culture, and therefore culture and language are the principal aspects of human experiences in a society and they therefore share common ground and relationship. This is true in that there is no human society in which the inhabitants are all are dumb and can therefore not talk because they have no language to use to communicate their experiences in life.

What is disappointing is power aspect of this relationship which bears features of patriarchal language. Women are considered to belong to the mute groupings. Even if they are at times in control of the situation in which they are to extend given a platform to air their views, they are, and do at times feel oppressed by the language of the males

which sounds profoundly always dominating. To this end, we look at the example from Matsepe (1983: 39) carefully checking on the discourse as it unfolds over the marriage of the daughter, Tahlego:

(73) Kgoši Phentšwe: “*Ga kgoši Afakenna o ka fo ya, eupa ga ke rate.*”

Tahlego: “*Ga o rate?*”

Kgoši Phentšwe: “*E le gore o latelela ofe wa bagologolo ba geno ka gore bokgole bjoo nna ke bo tsebago, ga se gwa ka gwa nyalwa mmago setšhaba ntshe?*”

Tahlego: “*Ga ke ketšaetšane mokhwi ke le go ntshe, gomme ka ge mmapelo a eja serati, senyakelwa a sa se rate- ke ka fao le nna ke gopotšego ke bilego ke ratile ka gona.*”

(Lit.: Kgoši Phentšwe: “To chief Afakenna she may go, but I do not like that.”

Tahlego: “You do not want?”

Kgoši Phentšwe: “But actually who do you follow of your old people because as far as I know, no one was ever married to be the queen of those people?”

Tahlego: “I do not imitate others here where I am, but because I do what I like, I need nothing from any one, and this how I thought and how I want it done.”

(Com.: Kgoši Phentšwe: “I dislike your idea of getting married to chief Afakenna’s family, but you may go.”

Tahlego: “You are saying you do not want me to be married to that family?”

Kgoši Phentšwe: “I am saying so because none from our family ever got married to that tribe and therefore none is a queen from our tribe. They are outcast.”

Tahlego: “I dislike following what others are doing. I do the way I feel like.”

In the extract (73), *kgōši* Phentšwe disagrees with her daughter regarding her marriage. *kgōši* Phentšwe like many fathers in the family have much influence on who to marry who from which family. So it is with *kgōši* Phentšwe. Tahlego has already agreed with someone to marry her but what is unfortunate in this case is that *kgōši* Phentšwe does not approve of this arrangement saying none from their royal family was ever married to such family. However, Tahlego kept on insisting and resisting the powers of the father saying to the father, *kgōši* Phentšwe, “*Ga ke ketšaetšane mokhwi ke le go ntshe*,”- I dislike what others are doing.” What the daughter is telling the father is that –*Ga kgōši Afakenna gona ke a ya o ka mpe o dire seo o ka kgonago* or *go ka mpe go hlage seo se ka hlagago*- To *kgōši* Afakenna I am going to get married and you rather do as you wishes or come what may.

#### **4.8 USEFULNESS OF *SEŠATE***

Communication process takes place in either a form of single simple symbols and acts varying from mundane to more elaborate dimensions. Usually, communication involves more than just simple utterances and actions. It is therefore noted that messages carry with them three structural properties such as a relatively independent single signs and symbols; language as formal code, and relatively interconnected discourse structures. Analysis on *Sešate* enables participants in that social interaction or communicative event to organize, use, and understands the encoded messages. These interconnected discourse structures changes with the changing times and cultural evolution depending on what the participants want to accomplish. Therefore, communicative event is all about accomplishment of the intended communication goal.

Scholars in sociolinguistics have outlined three discourse problems thus far and they are: meaning problem; action problem, and coherence problem. The problem of meaning is about how the messages are understood and how the information is embedded in the communicative structures, for example, statements. The second discourse problem is about the action or how to get the action done through talk, and lastly the coherence



problem, which is about figuring out how to say something in words or talk that has to be done, as such accomplishing the communication goal.

In principle, for communication to exist and continue, there shall have to be rules that the participants are to understand and follow in their interaction. Once these rules are not understood and adhered to, the communication event will be destined to the doldrums. Examples of rule-based discourse principles are speech-acts which are further subdivided into utterance act or simple pronunciation of words, propositional act that has to do with believe of trust or truth in words as pronounced, illocutionary act designed to fulfill the intention such as making promises, and finally the perlocutionary act designed to have an actual effect on the person`s behaviour.

The above exposition on linguistic behavioural patterns for attainment of communicative goal using *Sešate*, lead us to realize that it is important for those in social interaction at *mošate* to observe these institutionalized behavioural patterns. These are to be embraced in their appropriate speech acts, when using *Sešate* as a device. Failure to comply will result in not been listened to or even chased away with the note that *o a nyatša* or *o nyaditše kgoro* - you are ill-disciplined. Therefore, such linguistic behaviours are always accompanied by appropriate gestures and postures. It is such beneficial and advantageous to always portray positively respectful *go ikokobetša* – to be humble in making requests as a beggar for better benefits from those attending to your claims at *mošate* and related settings.

#### **4.10 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion it is noted that *Sešate* is used exceptionally well in making requests which are expected to be done in a very polite manner showing a sense of co-operation as a member of the tribe to the chief, *bakgoma* or *bakgomana*. This is furthermore witnessed when participants in discourse are near to each other than it will be the case when they are at distance. Evident to this is the use of postures and other related gestures which are symbolic to kindness is talk otherwise such requests would be seen and judged with

divided attention in that the truth of body of information in Northern Sotho is read from the eyes of the teller – *ditaba di tšwa mahlong*.

The body of convincing evidence thus far collected in this chapter, serve to prove that social interaction such as *Sešate* is a subtle process that cannot be easily recorded. *Sešate* as another Northern Sotho language form, a variety much adored by the Northern Sotho language speakers, is one other variety that is so complex to record and to segment. This is because of its multitudes of minute details and aspects of language behaviours such as postures, gestures and vocalization which are artistic utterances involving para-linguistic contextual features. Once these linguistic performances and competencies are practically summoned for use in a setting like *mošate* with an inevitable purpose, no doubt the discourse will reap better results at the end. *Sešate* is an artful, polite and respectful way of talking to others and need and deserve to be inculcated through recordings for later use by younger generations to come. *Rutang bana ditaola le ye le tšona badimong* – teach children divination bones and do not take them along with you to the gods.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the researcher gives a synopsis of the investigation into the research topic, findings and further makes recommendations.

In the first chapter, the researcher meticulously introduced the research topic and amicably explained the aim as well as the rationale and the significance of the research study, mentioning that to pave the influence of semi-urbanization, industrialization and massive language contact, time is ripe for scholars in sociolinguistics to record

indigenous knowledge systems for later use by younger generations and generations to come.

*Sešate* is therefore, singled out as one other indigenous language form that is facing a drastic language shift and which according to the findings in this study, the inevitable language decay or death is possible. Thus the past decades has witnessed the developments of a relatively new era of inquiry the field of social sciences with focus on social interaction in variety of contexts. Basic to these research studies was to make insightful discoveries of how participants in social milieu communicate and how they change as the environments changes. This gave access to the study of registers with attention been focused on field of discourse which is about the topic of the subject matter or action that is taking place or simply what the participants are engaged in. Another componential factor examined is mode of discourse, which is about what part is language playing in the relationship between the participants in discourse. Lastly, investigation was on the tenor of discourse, which is about the participants and their relationships in context.

Although Northern Sotho *Sešate* is subtle and complex as it is, however, a fair attempt has been made to record some of the social interactions much related to *Sešate* hence the success of this study.

**Chapter two** of this research study explores the use of idioms, proverbs as other figurative speech patterns with examples extracted from literary works of Skekhukhune in *Ntlolele*, Matsepe in *Kgorong ya mošate* and *Tšhelang gape*, Kwelapele, Maserumule in *Kgoši le ngaka*, Tseke and Tseke in *Bakantirang*, *Hlatse ke mang*, and *Malepeledi a Bopula*.

These books are chosen because of their stylistic conversations depicting the real field of discourse as it is witnessed at *mošate*. In essence participants in these conversations possess in them artistic way of communicating particularly when handling issues such as

those that are expected at *mošate*. However, even the contexts do differ, otherwise the tenor and the mode led the reader to what is.

*Sešate* is a precious and prestigious language form of the Northern Sotho language speakers conspicuously colored with utterances and articulations densely marked by idioms, proverbial speech patterns and other figurative language forms. These, the participants in interaction purposefully use to identify themselves and to make issues at hand hard for the non-Northern Sotho speakers to understand. Examples of such speech patterning are the following as cited in this chapter:

*“Ge e le dipitša di hlaeditše meetsemagolo.”*

*Maserumula (1988: 17)*

*“Babedi ga ba lwe ke dithaka ba ronana dinta.”*

*Sekhukhune (1975: 50)*

*“Homola, homola Tshetlo, mantšu a gago a phuleletša pelong ya ka gobane ge ruri dira di ka rotoga re tla reng ka gore re a ponapona?”*

*Matsepe (1982: 72)*

Therefore, within each speech community there is a variety of language codes and also ways of speaking available to its members which are its communicative repertoire.

**Chapter three** consist of aspects such as pragmatic perspectives such as politeness, personification, symbolism, and other figurative speech forms such as imagery and metaphors as another way of expressing oneself, and covers emotional ways of communicating in discourse. Since *Sešate* is rich with vocabulary peculiar to those who daily use it, it is very impressing to see and listen to those participating in interaction. A very calm atmosphere is ever prevailing with humble and undisturbed moods when interacting. For every chance they get in the discourse everyone wants to express himself/herself in the most amicable way to identify him/ her with the group.

Utterances are conspicuously framed with interjections as para-linguistic factors in context and bring more glamour into the discourse. Various manners of respect are articulated to comfort who ever is being addressed by the addressee, with usage of and more so frequently utterances like *aowa kgoši, Ke kgonthe taurabatho, mogolle, rangwane`a tšona, mmagobanake*. These are really soothing words and there is no way that discord may easily reign amongst those in discourse. Leave-taking contextual utterances such as *šalang gabotse, re sa fulara, le robaleng, ba robaleng*, and many others are phrases that ascertain that all is well within the group one has identified him/herself with during the day, wrap-up and serves to reassure certainty. Because, if someone is on the bun, utterances like these will be hard to remember such leave-taking conclusions. Thus, these words are words of consolidation and are as such used to keep the bond more and more tied among the group members.

**Chapter four** covers proximity, non-verbal factors, componential analysis, feminist theory, and the usefulness of *Sešate*.

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