DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND SPEECH VARIETIES IN NORTHERN SOTHO : A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY

BY

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, in the Department of Northern Sotho in the Faculty of Arts, University of the North.

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Dedicated to my late grand-father

Kgoši Sekhukhune II.

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation, **Discourse Analysis and Speech Varieties in Northern Sotho : A Sociolinguistic Study**, for the degree Master of Arts at the University of the North hereby submitted, has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university, that it is my own work in design and in execution and that all material contained therein has been duly acknowledged.

Signed: .....

Date : ....1988:01:11.....

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CHAPTER 1

1.0.0.0 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1.0.0 Theory of Sociolinguistics

1.1.1.0 The concerns of sociolinguistic theory in the Northern Sotho language cover a wide field. The primary focus is on the speech community and how it manipulates its language. Whilst the socio= linguistic theory marks the existing relationship between the society and its language, the scope grapples with the field covered by the functions of language in the everyday on-going verbal interactions. The important factor in the analysis of these language fragments is the influence of the social context. According to some scholars (Gumperz and Hymes 1972, Neubert 1976 Hudson 1980) the term 'Sociolinguistics' is not problematic to define. It simply relates to the study of language in relation to its society. The definition advanced by Neubert (1976:152) best defines the scope and the theory of socio= linguistics thus:

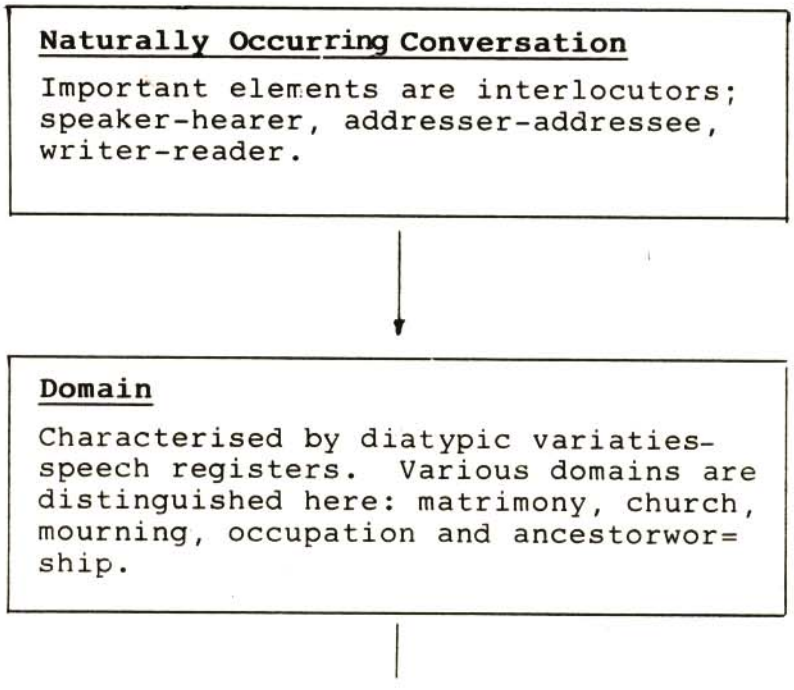
> Practical questions of how language is an intergral part of society and, above all, how social or rather extra-linguistic

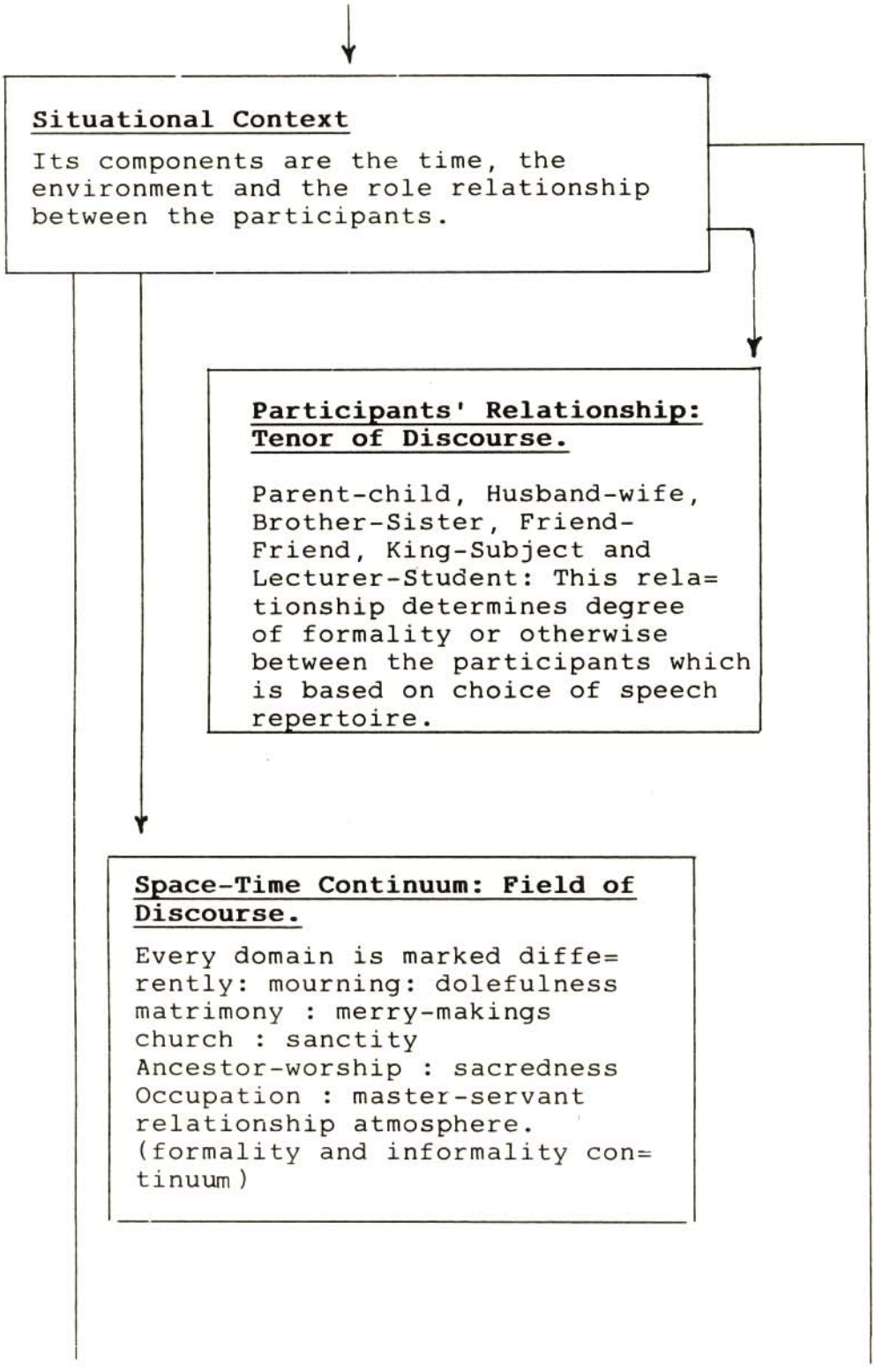
> factors have shaped and are shaping language particularly words and meanings, were in fact the concern of linguistic research long before the term 'sociolin= guistics' was coined, so that linguistics has always had a social aspect;

Further he (1976 : 155) cogently concludes that:

> Sociolinguistics, then, or the sociolingui= stic trend in modern linguistics, can be interpreted as a follow-up to the social functionality of the language.

The theoretical construct emphasized by the above definition in essence reflects the pragmatics of these sociolinguistic principles. A schematic representation on the scope and theory of sociolin= guistics may be summarized as follows:




Situational Context
Its components are the time, the environment and the role relationship between the participants.
Participants' Relationship: Tenor of Discourse.
Parent-child, Husband-wife, Brother-Sister, Friend-Friend, King-Subject and Lecturer-Student: This relationship determines degree of formality or otherwise between the participants which is based on choice of speech repertoire.
Space-Time Continuum: Field of Discourse.
Every domain is marked differently: mourning: dolefulness
matrimony : merry-makings
church : sanctity
Ancestor-worship : sacredness
Occupation : master-servant relationship atmosphere.
(formality and informality continuum)

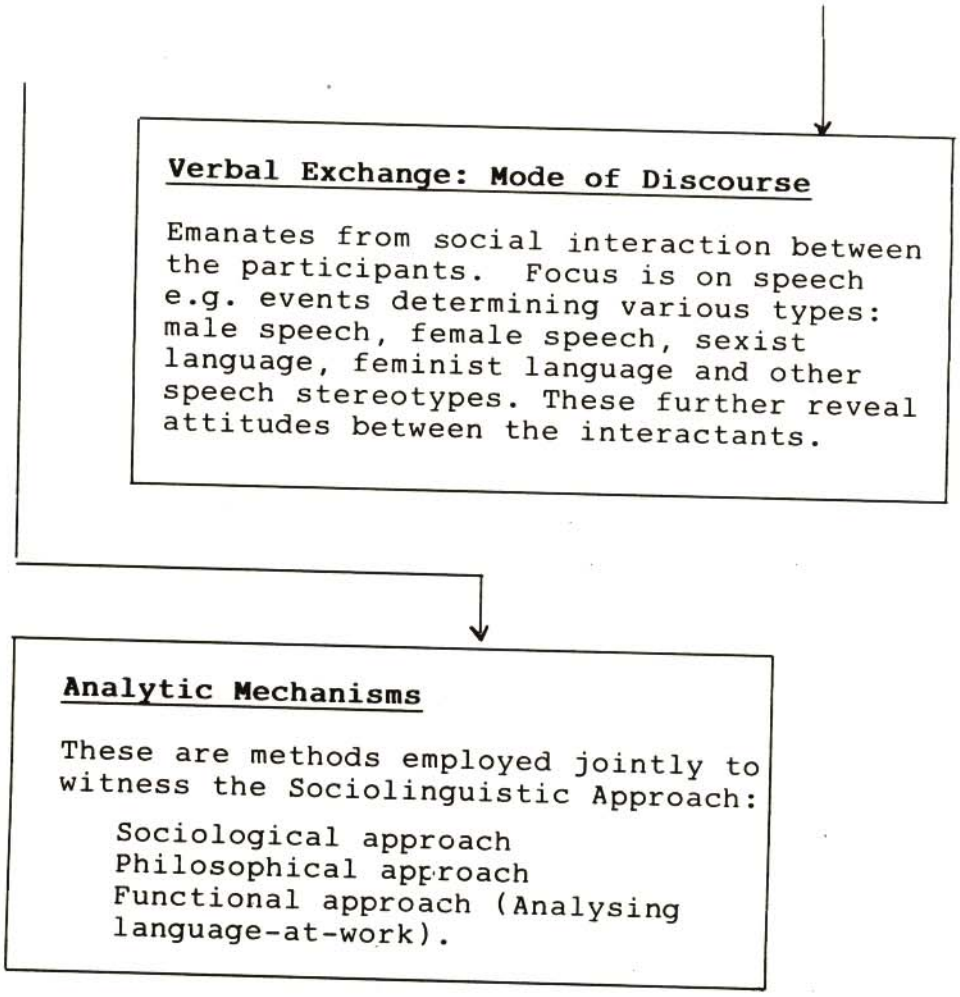


Fig. 1 **Schematic Representation of Sociolinguistic Theory Relating to the Current Research.**

1.1.2.0 The above schematic representation attempts to outline the trend followed in the analytic framework of this research. The idea is not to give a synopsis of what is actually contained herein, but to simplify the intricate network involved and particularly the approach used. This simplifies the theory and defines the scope better.

1.1.3.0 Another aspect in the theory of sociolinguistics which at this stage should not be overlooked is the integration of the sociological approach and socio= linguistics. In order to understand properly the language of a particular community one should first know their culture. It is generally maintained by both sociologists and sociolinguistics that the knowledge of such culture augments the analyst's insight. The sociological approach is the essence of the sociology of the language - the study of the society in relation to language (Hudson 1980:5). This sociological approach must be seen to be an integral part of or complementary to sociolinguistics. This research, therefore, is intended to intergrate these approaches in the analysis of Northern Sotho discourse and speech varieties and to show that they both apply to one common discipline, viz. Sociolinguistics.

1.1.4.0 The theory of sociolinguistics will still remain incomplete if reference is not made to its philoso= phical implications. Resulting from these probabi= lities, the Gricean Cooperative Principle has been implied in the analysis of features of discourse. In his own words Grice (1975:45) writes:

> I wish to represent a certain subclass of nonconventional implicatures, which I shall call **conversational** implicatures, as being essentially connected with certain general features of discourse; so my next step is to try to say what these features are.

This Cooperative Principle consists of maxims which are categorized into four types, namely; **Quantity, Quality, Relation** and **Manner.**

1.1.4.1 **Quantity** implies that one's contribution should be made as informative as is required and that it should not be more informative than is required.

1.1.4.2 **Quality** implies that one should try to make one's contribution one that is true and that it should not lack adequate evidence.

1.1.4.3 **Relation** implies that one should be relevant.

1.1.4.4 **Manner** could be understood as relating not to what is said but, to **how** what is said is to be said and the supermaxim included here is that of being perspicuous. Simply this could be given the following interpretations:

(a) Avoid obscurity of expression

(b) Avoid ambiguity

(c) Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity)

(d) Be orderly. (Grice 1975:pp.45-47)

The above summary represents the Gricean Cooperative Principle which seeks to give the implied interpre= tation of ordinary and performative utterances. This is so because other than conversational impli= cature, semantic analysis starts with surface and ends up with deep structure. The implicature is immediately sought as further interpretation from the deep structure. In order to have the utterance clearly understood the analysis considers the contextualization cues more than the sense-relation obtained between words in an utterance. These cues create the environment which brings about the perspicuity in the analysis that follows. The analysis of the following proverb taken from the language of sexism cites a good example:

> Mmago ngwana o swara thipa ka bogaleng. (lit. a child's mother handles a knife on side with a sharp edge, i.e. In times of life-saving the child's mother must accept the challenge.)

In formulating the proverb the traditional man realised unusual circumstances where the woman will

face the challenges of life-saving. The philosophy of a traditional man maintains that a child belongs to a man and not to a woman, yet in times of life= saving a mother is looked upon to perform the duty. Scrutinizing the proverb one realizes the defence mechanism man invented to avoid cuddling a baby- the act that will be seen lowering his dignity. Seemingly the child belongs to a man when he or she is of age but not when the child is still a toddler. This idea represents the philosophy of the sexist language and the following exerpt from Matsepe (1972:29) bears testimony to that idea.

> Mosadi o kile a ba le ngwana a etla kae? Goba o mo rwele ngwaga woo a o bolelago goba o hlomane bjang, ga se wa gagwe ke wa monna, yena ke mphepi feela.
>
> (Has a woman ever had a child? Whether she experienced discomfort during that period or otherwise, the child is born of a man and she remains a nanny for that matter).

The above quotation seems to confirm that the cuddling of a baby, in as far as Northern Sotho traditional society is concerned, is the work assigned to women-folk.

Whilst in this research the influence of contextua= lization cues is seen to be dominating, the Coopera= tive Principle uncovers those submerging implications in the analysis throughout. Without the application of this critical principle in this work the analysis of most of the conversational and performative utterances would have been superficial.

1.2.0.0 Aims of the Study.

1.2.1.0 One of the aims of this research is to increase the impact of study methods on the present Northern Sotho syllabuses by brining about the sociolinguistic approach. The discussion of the influence of the social context on language usage will complement the functional analysis emphasized in the current core syllabus for African Languages. Once this has been established at the primary level it will permeate to secondary and tertiary education.

1.2.2.0 This research presents a beginning in the investiga= tion of sociolinguistic aspects of Northern Sotho language. The mode of investigation used here can be used to analyse the sociolinguistic features of other African languages.

1.2.3.0 An attempt will be made to show that Northern Sotho is a living and dynamic language, consequently the study of this language through the sociolinguistic approach is comparatively more fascinating than following the method of traditional transformational grammar. In other words the solution of whatever riddle is derived with the help of the socio-cultural context whereas in traditional transformational grammar the answer to the question is rule-dependent. As Botha (1987:9) aptly puts it:

> A linguist practises transformational grammar if he holds a particular substan= tive view of linguistic structure, namely that transformational rules are fundamental to natural langauges.

The significance attached to the influence of social context on language usage should not be considered as total rejection of transformational grammar, but as a way of comparing the two aspects of language study.

1.2.4.0 On the day of accepting the chair of the Department of Northern Sotho of the University of the North Mokgokong (1978:16) pledged himself:

> Mr Vice-Chancellor ... I give you the assurance that I will exploit to the full this most intriguing aspect of language study - sociolinguistics.

These words goaded me to undertake this research. It is the aim of this work to have the field chosen for investigation, namely: **Discourse Analysis and Speech Varieties in Northern Sotho,** 'exploited to the full' and have the way in the field of socio= linguistics paved for future research in this language.

1.3.0.0 The field of Study

The present study is divided into five chapters which consist of an introductory chapter, the three content chapters and a concluding chapter.

1.3.1.1 Chapter Two gives a critical exposition of Northern Sotho speech registers. The general trend in the study of sociolinguistics reveals that there are language varieties associated with particular situational contexts. These speech varieties consist of vocabulary and other linguistic features such as idiomatic and proverbial expressions. This

study hopes to find the difference in style-shifting in most of the speech domains such as ancestor-worship, church, mourning, matrimony and occupational domain.

1.3.1.2 Chapter Three is concerned with the functional analysis of conversational and discourse utterances across the rite of passage and including the realm of matrimony. Language varieties analysed concerning puberty include taboo utterances, speech-plays and performative utterances used as fragments of verbal exchange in matrimony. Because of the intensity of the degree of formality in matrimonial situations the utterances used abound in a variety of metaphors. This vein of formality is highly regulated by illocutionary forces surrounding each of these utterances.

1.3.1.3 The Fourth Chapter analyses language varieties according to sex. The sex rôle influeces the meaning of each word or expression. In this way a Northern Sotho community distinguishes between male and female speech. The nature of these types reveals masculinity and femininity through word forms and word images. Further analysis of other

forms of speech according to sex is made. This comprises differentiation of interjections, semantic derogations, sexism in language, language of maternity and some snippets from initiation language according to sex. In this way the analysis will reveal also the attitudinal relations involved between the sex groups, particularly, with regard to sexism in language and semantic derogations.

1.3.1.4 The last chapter evaluates the analysis made and recommends further research in unexplored fields of sociolinguistics in Northern Sotho and other African Languages.

1.4.0.0 Towards Research Methodology

As a member of the same speech community I have not found it a difficult task to accummulate data for analysis. Most of the information was collected from individual informants with the use of the record cards. The information received is not generally regarded as secretive. The problem encountered was research done on initiation language. Whilst men willingly and generously made some contributions in this field, though only a few

analyses were made; a handful of women after a long struggle could afford some few recordings. One would conveniently say that the acquisition of this type of language was a real challenge, yet it remains the treasure of Northern Sotho cultural heritage.

The meanings revealed by the analysis in this research represent the sole interpretation of the matter given to the writer by the informants and not the ideas of renowned scholars in sociolinguis= tics. Some ideas acquired from the source of reference were intended to support the argument that is presented. Otherwise these referential resources in sociolinguistics only provided the necessary principles for further critical analysis. The greater part of this investigation is, therefore the outcome of direct analysis and appreciation of discourse and language varieties in Northern Sotho.

CHAPTER 2.

2.0.0.0 SPEECH REGISTERS

2.1.0.0 Introduction

The word **register** is a sociolinguistic term which could be estimated to have been in use since the inception of the study of language in relation to society. Verma (1969: p.295) points out that the term has been put into currency by Firthian linguists in Great Britain though some references to registro-stylistic variations in the writings of the American linguists often appeared. However, contrary to the term **register** the Americans prefer **style** to refer to a language variety peculiar to a specific situation type. In essence, these two schools of thought do not run parallel in both conceptual and functional understanding of **register** , but only on the grounds of lexical difference. The inference should not at this stage be drawn that these two terms are interchangeable in this work. Preference from the outset, is given to 'register' and shall remain applicable throughout the present investiga= tion. The general assertion is that **style** is more of a literary than a linguistic term; for it

is often used to describe the authors' idiosyncra= sies in literary studies. Elaborating on the definition of 'style', Turner (1979 pp.22-23) makes reference to others in this way:

> This brings us to another definition of style, to Buffon's celebrated 'Style is the man himself', or, as William Putten= ham wrote in an earlier age, with emphasis on the habitual nature of such apparently random choices, 'Style is a constant and continual phrase or tenour of speaking and writing.'

For the sake of consistency and to avoid any con= fusion the term 'register' will be used in this research. This could be one of the reasons that urged some of the sociolinguists (Gregory 1967, Saville-Troike 1982, Halliday 1984) to resort to the current coinage, viz. 'speech register', as much as the contemporary American sociolinguists (Labov 1972, Gumperz 1972, Fishman 1971) prefer the use of 'speech style'. In addition to reasons forwarded earlier, Destefano (1972 p.32) still, on the part of this investigation, takes a firm and definite stand:

> One reason I chose 'register' was to be able to use a term not so fraught with many denotations and connotations 'style' seems to have.

It is interesting to note, that there is still controversy today concerning the acceptance of the term 'style' as truly synonymous with the term 'register'. This idea is expressed by Dembetembe (1982 p.2) when he writes:

> Some linguists prefer to employ the term register for types of language that corre= late with situation, and use the term to signify individual variation with each register. Others have reserved the term register for the different sub-types of language that people use when they act in different social roles. In other words it is the type of linguistic variation which bears a mutual relation with context in a wide sense of the term, including both textual context and situational context ... Furthermore, the term register is preferred here to style for the simple reason that, although style is a concept which is common and widely used, it is also elusive. It should however be stressed that register is a national term and not a linguistic prime, that is, it is a term that can be defined in terms of other more basic notions.

2.2.0.0 Towards a Conceptual Definition of Speech Register

The study of 'speech registers' in Sociolinguistics has given rise to numerous definitions which, above all, revolve around the functionality of language variables in the socialization process. In other words, this type of language variety emerges as a

result of the relationship between language behaviour and social interaction. In view of this, speech register then, becomes a situation type language, obtained from a common linguistic repertoire which occasionally undergoes semantic change within certain speech domains in a community. This semantic change varies from a slight to a complete shift depending on pragmatics of social functions of language, i.e. the ways in which language is used to accomplish its various functions in our everyday life. This type of a speech variety does not singularly refer to mere chosen linguistic variables in an ordinary grammatical structure, but to the entire lexico-grammatical system ranging in context of a specific social situation. By lexicogrammatical system, in this context, it must be understood to mean a diversity of language variety within the level of internal organisation of language, the network of relations of linguistic form , (Halliday 1984, p.43) that 'operates as the realization of semantic system, which is what the speaker **can mean**'(Halliday 1984: p.39). The semantics of the said linguistic system is regulated by the whole complex of social inter= action for effective communication. On this score, one would rather observe that it is the situation

that determines the type of register and not vice versa. This is so because in a meeting of two or more individuals engaged in any discussion, or social interaction of some kind, there are other extra - and paralinguistic contextual factors that influence the meaning of the language used, namely: fields, modes and tenors of discourse. Any definition of 'register' then, seems to take cognisance of and follow conclusively from these three dimensions. An intricate relationship of these contextual factors as well as their influence on speech registers will be analysed in the subsequent paragraphs. The attention is presently focussed on the conceptual analysis of the definitions of these diatypic varie= ties. Of all the definitions that Verma (1969, p.296) gives one finds that the one formulated by J.C. Catford best defining the term 'register' as saying:

> By **register** we mean a variety correlated with the performer's social rôle on given occasions. Every normal adult plays a series of different social roles - one man for example, may function at different times as head of a family, motorist, cricketer, member of a religious group,

> professor of biochemistry and so on, and within his idiolect he has varieties (shared by other persons and other idio= lects) appropriate to these rôles. When the professor's wife tells him to 'stop talking like a professor' she is protes= ting at his misuse of register.

There are a few important notions made in this regard. Firstly, the prevailing husband-wife relationship between the participants. Secondly, the lodged protest at 'a misuse of register' brings us to the notion of misappropriation of language usage which marks the mode of discourse. In the third instance, the field of discourse is, unfortunately not defined, because 'stop talking like a professor' does not tell anything about the topic under discussion. What this protest perhaps implies, is that the husband, at one stage or another, could have been formal in the course of their conversation. The general observation illus= trates the extent to which extra-linguistic contex= tual factors can influence meaning of a given speech repertoire in a particular situational context. The analysis made in respect of the above assertion, overtly indicates that language variety differs according to social situation. These diatypic varieties always define the situation in as much as the situation is capable of determining

them. In other words, the general assumption should be such (Crystal & Davy 1969, p.62):

> that there is a one-for-one correlation between linguistic features and situation, or that the language can be predicted from situation and the situation from the language with the same degree of certainty.

2.3.0.0 Componential Analysis of Situational Context

2.3.1.0 An interplay between language behaviour and social interaction in communication gives rise to what could be termed space - time continuum. This exis= tential moment of space and time in any life-world is usually attributed to situational context. Sociolinguistic approach toward the study of any language is bound to examine this phenomenon in terms of its component elements commonly referred to as extra-linguistic contextual factors, namely, field, mode and tenor of discourse. These three dimensions could be seen as the sole determinants of various linguistic variables in different speech domains. Linguistic study of any social interaction in Northern Sotho, as in other languages, be it in the form of a dramatic dialogue, conversation, textual analysis or interpretation, or formal address, always reveals the notion of these contex=

tual factors outside language structure and the extent to which they influence the meaning of every utterance. This assertion does not dispute the fact that every language, including Northern Sotho, has 'meaning potential' (Halliday 1984) but indicates why ethnographic studies consider these factors as an integral part of social context for sound and effective communication.

2.3.1.1 Field of Discourse

The field of discourse is commonly known as the topic or the subject under discussion. In other words this simply refers to what could be termed 'the social action' that ultimately captures the verbal exchange as well as the mood created in the course of social interaction. It could be that in writing, conversation or discourse of some sort in Northern Sotho, as in the case of creative writing, discursive or narrative essay, critical analysis or interpretation, we always find the existing relation= ship between the writer or the speaker on the one hand, and the reader or the hearer on the other hand, in terms of informality and formality conti= nuum. The role relationship between the participants is determined by their social stature and converges

in the 'on-going' social activity which represents the field of discourse. The creative imagination will always find itself committed to the choice and the use of language suitable for the topic. It is this type of selected speech variety that creates the necessary and relevant milieu. Consider the following passage extracted from Mminele (1976, p.1):

Mphegolle	:	Tamang bohloko, Bahunoto.
Banna	:	Dumela manyami, Mohwaduba. (Ka moka ba homola sebaka= nyana ...)
Kgalema	:	Mohwaduba ga go bolelwe selo fa.
Mphegolle	:	Le reng le hloka se le se bolelago?
Kgalema	:	Motse wola wa mokgotse wa gago o swele.
Mphegolle	:	Mangana, taba yela e napile e ba thereše?
Kgalema	:	Ke thereše, mokgonyana yola wa gago ke mogologolo lehono ge re bolela re ilalo.
(Mphegolle	:	My condolence to you, Bahunoto!
Men	:	Grieve with us, Mohwaduba! (They all pause for a moment...)
Kgalema	:	Mohwaduba we are all stunned.
Mphegolle	:	What makes you all dumbfounded then?
Kgalema	:	The house of your daughter's, in-laws, is reduced to ashes.
Mphegolle	:	Oh, God! Is that rumour true?
Kgalema	:	Yes, your son-in-law has passed away).

Seemingly what makes the reading of the above dialogue more appealing and typical of language variety associated with mourning situation, is the recurrent (Gregory and Carroll 1978 p.34) 'use of euphemism to conceal the real nature of experience that is being verbalized.' The pensive mood created throughout, including the constant and formal touch of a sad note among the participants' talks, adds to the doleful painting of the situation. Owing to the solemn situation, the reader, subconciously finds himself lamenting the dead with the bereaved. This usually results from the use of the language appropriate to the respective domain. An analysis of a few words and expressions from the above extract reveals registers which define the field of discourse clearly:

Take for instance, a simple form of address 'tamang bohloko, ...' used by Mphegolle in the passage to extend a formal greeting to the gathered mourners, and note the semantic shift revealed. An appendage 'bohloko', to the greeting 'tamang' (greetings, to you!) which is normally used in any social inter= action, serves to contextualize the situation. The real meaning of the word 'bohloko' which has reference to 'sheer physical pain' shifts to 'grief'. Now

the whole expression is understood as figuratively saying 'my condolence to you,' or 'I lament with you for the one you have lost.' The hyperbole 'motse ... o swele' literally means 'the house is burnt down' yet, the idiomatic expression is used to elevate the death of the son-in-law referred to in the passage. Because of the fact that the deceased was the head of the family, and, could have been the sole breadwinner, the author could find no better way of expressing it, other than indulging in this metonymy. The metaphor 'ke mogologolo' (He is an ancestor) further exaggerates the standing of the person who has just died to that of 'an ancestor.' The author uses the expression in order to revive the indigenous belief that whoever dies, remains with the ancestors and becomes one of them. In Nòrthern Sotho, negation is some= times used to make the affirmative more effective as in; 'Mohwaduba, ga go bolelwe selo fa' (Mohwaduba, we are all stunned), yet according to Gricean conceptual meaning of **implicature** (Grice 1967, p.43); such is a place at which people virtually never stop to express their surprise, instead continue with their verbal exchange in an attempt to diffuse the situation. This on-going conversa= tion between members of the mourning group cannot

be underestimated because it is normally taken as a way of giving vent to people's emotional distress. The above negation, then, indirectly invites the person addressed to share the experience with them. Taken literally 'dumela manyami, Mohwaduba,' (accept sorrow, Mohwaduba) exhorts oxymorously, for no one can persuade the other to rejoice in a doleful situation while he is expected to mourn with the bereaved. In reality the reply seemingly invites sympathy from the speaker and the figurative meaning is understood as saying 'grieve with us, Mohwaduba.' All these words and expressions analysed mark the text as belonging to this field of discourse: mourning domain.

2.3.1.2 **Mode of Discourse**

Mode of discourse, on the other hand, refers to the writer's or the speaker's relationship with his medium. This relationship is determined solely by the strength of his stylistic choice between the spoken and the written language. It may happen that the writer, for instance, uses his regional dialect and subconsciously avoids the use of the standard language. As a result it is likely that his work will suffer literary demerit, and it is this mode of discourse which will eventually dis= credit his expected communicative and linguistic

competence. Ultimately this discrepancy will strain the relationship between him and his readers. The mode of discourse could be functionally defined as the rhetorical channel because the aspect of stylistic choice in the entire lexicogrammatical system attempts to highlight and at the same time reveal the attitude of the writer to his subject. A choice between two linguistic alternatives always uncovers the emotive value the author attaches to each of them. It is this emotive value of words which in turn influences the reader. For purposes of illustration consider the following single sentences:

Dithutlwa ke **setlaela** (Dithutlwa is a fool)
Dithutlwa ke **seota**(Dithutlwa is an idiot).
Dithutlwa ke **segatsekana** (Dithutlwa is a bashful, stupid person).

The above illustration of the choice of style variables relies on the influence of syntactic context; otherwise the influence of extra-linguistic contextual factor, such as mode of discourse, is quite limited. It is in textual analysis that this principle is found to have permeated the total range of meaning. Considering the above examples

with special regard to the bold written words, one realises the semantic differences. The word 'setlaela' is a common word which generally refers to anybody who is naturally regarded a fool, without emphasis on the degree of stupidity. 'seota', on the other hand, is connotative of a person who is more foolish than the one in the first example. The degree of stupidity is extreme. Lastly, 'segatsekana' becomes synonymous with the above variables only in one common semantic element, viz. foolishness. Otherwise this word has far-reaching implications such as bashfulness in the individual described. This modesty in the individual is usually coupled with the element of stupidity, and the term in Northern Sotho is used to describe bashful girls and seldom male indivi= duals. To this extent, light is shed on how the choice of style variables is executed in the context of single sentences. This, then, intro= duces the modal techniques and how they are applied in the context of textual analysis. It is a common tendency amongst our authors, though this might be in their subconsciousness, that most of them find themselves committed to consider this mode of discourse in their writing activities. An appreciation of a discursive extract (Moloto:1972,p.11)

that follows demonstrates this modal system very clearly:

> Ke kgarebe e tshehlana ya go ema ka maoto. Moriri wa gagwe o moso, o swanelana kudu le dintšhi tša gagwe tše o ka rego ke tša maitirelo. O na le nkwana ya ntlhana, le mahlwana a maswana a bogajana. Ditsebe ke tše kgolo tša go ema, gomme di nyalana gabotse le sefahlego sa gagwe sa go ela. Molomo ke o monnyane wa go itshoka, gomme o na le tšhenamare menong a pele ka godimo, ka go la ntsogohlo. Mohlomong leino le le tšwele ka go bolaya, goba le ntšhitšwe ka boomo, bjalo ka ge le tseba mekgwa ya makgarebe ya go ikgabiša e sa fele. Mmeleng gona e dio ba mobu, gomme mesepelo e dio ba go elela. Ba re le dikgogo di be di mmoga ka go kekela ge a feta. E be e le kgarebe ya go tswalwa ke badimo le batho. Ga se masogana a makae a a nago le sebete sa gagwe. Ka boripana re ka fo re: o filwe ngwana wa batho.
>
> (She is beautiful, pretty tall and slender. She has black hair and matching eye-lashes that almost resemble the artificial. She has a Caucasian nose and black but fetching eyes. Her ears always looked big, cocked and match her charming face. The mouth appears tiny and small with a gap on the left-hand side of the front upper teeth. Probably the gap resulted from tooth-decay or else the extraction is deliberate. Her physical build resembles that of a wasp, while she walks majestically. It is said that on seeing her even hens would cackle. A beauty! Very few lads would dare court her. In short one would say: She is really blessed.)

Moloto's mode of discourse presents a simple and straight-forward language drawn from everyday speech

repertoire. The description becomes more and more vivid as it emphasizes her outward physical appearance, presenting one attribute after another. He refers to her light complexion that gives her the attractive look, then her pretty-black hair with matching eye-lashes, a sharp little nose resembling that of a Caucasian, and once more, her black fetching eyes, etc. What really makes the description absorbing is not the graphic presentation, but the choice of style variables appropriate to the field of discourse. It is the emotive value attached to every word used that renders the language capable of capturing the whole sensory appeal. An appreciation of the rhetorical channel should help analyse a few intricacies in the preceding passage. In the first instance, the most striking feature is the very graphic description coloured with phonological frequencies, such as 'o na le nkwana ya ntlhana, le mahlwana a maswana' (she has a Caucasian nose and little black eyes). Culminating in the use of the diminutive presents, in this register, an emotive value that is indicative of admiration. The use of 'a bogajana' (fetching eyes) has a compara= tive function. The expression places her in the category of 'modern girls' - the type of girl that is not modest and shy but as sly and cunning as a

jackal. The use of the diminutive suffix-**ana** on the word 'bogale' tones down the harsh meaning of the word and gives it the feminine colouring that suits the context. In addition to that, the term further describes the girl as full of wiles. The metaphor 'mmeleng ke mobu' (she physically resembles a wasp) brings into the mind of the reader, a picture of a wasp, and surely she must have a slender waist with projecting hips. The whole description is contracted into the hyperbole 'le dikgogo di be di mmoga ka go kekela ge a feta' (On seeing her passing even hens would cackle). This hyperbole further provokes laughter in the reader and by so doing relieves one of the intense concen= tration sustained throughout the description.

The possibilities of confusing modes of discourse with fields of discourse are great. In drawing a line of distinction between the two, one would state that while fields of discourse describe the situation in terms of various social activities and their manifestations, modes of discourse grapple with the choice of style variables for clear and effective communication. It must be admitted that the two types of discourse seem to overlap each other.

2.3.1.3 Tenor of Discourse

The third dimension, tenor of discourse, refers to role relationships between the speaker or the writer on the one hand, and the hearer or the reader on the other hand, in terms of formality and informality continuum. The mediating factor in this regard is the instrumental functional aspect of language which serves to interpret these relationships between the participants. In other words, language has to be considered as one aspect of the whole behaviour pattern. For instance, when a mother, who is a teacher by profession, talks to her child at home, the language used by her differs from that used to her pupils in a classroom situation. The person becomes more intimate and informal at home than when she is in the teaching situation. The general implication is that the meeting of two or more individuals engaged in social activities at a particular time and place create a situational context. The same applies to the situation where a king talks to his subjects addressing his kinsmen at a secret meeting or tribesmen at an open air meeting. Formality, in this case, still reigns supreme. Gregory and Carroll (1978: p.52) cite a similar example of a formal situation that illustrates tenor of discourse:

> The relationship of after-dinner speaker to his audience or of the Queen in her annual end-of-the-year Commonwealth address, is revealed as one of formality by markers like; 'Mr Chairman, Honourable delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen', or 'My fellow Countrymen', or even 'To my most loyal subjects'. These greetings indicate immediately the roles to be played by both the addresser and the addressee.

Tenors of discourse, then, are determined by an individual's social standing such as, rank, kinship terminology and sex. In the case of the preceding quotation the Queen is the head of the State and she is accorded the highest status. Her relationship to the members of the Commonwealth equates that of a king and his subjects in the context of Northern Sotho cultural tradition. The use of such forms of address has many purposes. For a king to address his subjects in the same way as the Queen does to the members of the Commonwealth, strengthens his exhor= tation and at the same time wins him their confi= dence. It also gains him glory and preserves his dignity. These are some of the extended functions of tenor or discourse, notwithstanding its socio= linguistic function as a speech marker.

The following cross-examination from Matsepe (1977 p.18) further illustrates the point:

" O go thopetše lešaka ka moka? "
"Taurabatho."
"O re molato ke eng? "
"Ga ke tsebe, sebatakgomo."
"Ge o mmotšiša o reng?"
"Mošate a nke o mpotšišetše yena."
"Lebala mošate monna, nke re kwe gore naa o ile ge o mmotšiša a reng! Mošate o tla be o mmotšišetša eng a se a o tshwenya? "
"Ke ile ge ke mmotšiša a re nna ke a tseba, thobela."
"A re o tseba eng?"
"Ga ke tsebe, sebatakgomo."

("Has he captured all your livestock?"
"Yes, my lord."
"What does he allege provoked him? "
"I really do not know, my lord."
"What did he tell you when you asked him? "
"I wish the king would do it for me."
"Leave the king out of it, and tell us exactly what he told you when you approached him. Why should the king take him to task when he has not been troubled?"
"On approaching him he alleged that I know, my lord."
" That you know what? "
"I do not know, my lord!")

The above dialogue airs the formal relationship decreed between the king and his subject. In

replying to his king, the speaker uses a variety of metaphorical forms of address, such as, **sebatakgomo, taurabatho, mošate** and **thobela**, which collectively betoken submissiveness on the part of the addressee. These honorific tags forever maintain the mutual courtesy and air of detachment between the partici= pants. Above all, they earn the king, in particular, much respect. The use of these politenesses not only extends the rich metaphor but strives to maintain the essence of those cultural customs that are present in the traditional royal circles of Northern Sotho speech community. According to Northern Sotho culture 'sebatakgomo' refers to ravenous carnivore such as a lion, leopard, or tiger; 'taurabatho' is a compound noun formed of 'tau' (lion), 'rrago' (the father of) and 'batho' (the people). The whole neologistic construction refers to the king as a lion - father of the people as much as the lion is regarded as the 'king of the jungle'. At some stage the addressee applies metonymy and refers to the king as 'mošate' (the palace) to acknowledge his kingship. This culminates in the fact that the king is seen to remain the supreme head of a nation. In the last instance, the addressee refers to the king as 'thobela' - an

expression normally used to extend greetings to anybody regardless of social standing. The word 'thobela' has reference to Thobela - the name of the first king of the Bapedi nation who ruled during the pre-historic era. It becomes interesting to note the honour extended even to a passer-by in the use of the expression as a form of greetings. Instead of finding this speech act as unduly compli= mentary and full of irony, a Northern Sotho speech community regards it with high esteem. With regard to the analysis made in respect of the above extract, the functional tenor puts the king in the social standing he deserves and yet keeps the loyalty of the subject. It is now evident that the extra-linguistic contextual factors under discussion, are so interrelated that at times they tend to overlap in situational context. Pragmatics of discourse and registral analysis in Northern Sotho take cognisance of these factors resulting from the influence of everyday social interaction. Notwith= standing the fact that language has (Halliday 1984) 'meaning potential' it must be emphasized that the social meaning attached to it renders it open to sociolinguistic analysis - analysis which always

promotes the functional approach in the study of any language. In endorsing Halliday's suggestion about the interpretation of a particular situation type, Gregory and Carroll (1978 p.88) say:

> He maintains that field, mode and tenor can, from this point of view, now be considered as more than just 'kinds of language use', or simple 'components of the speech setting'. He sees them rather as a 'conceptual framework for representing the social context as the semiotic environ= ment in which people exchange meanings', and register can then be seen as 'the configuration of semantic resources that the member of a culture typically asso= ciates with a situation type'; he points out that 'both situation and the register associated with it can be described to varying degrees of specifity' and that 'the existence of registers is a fact of everyday experience - speakers have no difficulty in recognizing the semantic options and combinations of options that are "at risk" under particular environ= mental conditions.

The above quotation briefly summarizes componential analysis of a situation type occurring in a Northern Sotho speech community with references to language varieties associated with different speech domains.

2.3.2.0 Para-linguistic Contextual Factors

Considering para-lingusitic contextual factors, the extra-linguistics are, by far, more alienated from language structure than the semantic aspect in Northern Sotho. The para-linguistic speech markers, such as toneme pattern, punctuation phonological frequencies (assonance, consonance and allitera= tion), form part and parcel of language usage, particularly in - and outside syntactic and textual contexts. In addition to these para-linguistic features, one is made to reconsider, what could be termed 'the attitudinal tone' which normally accom= panies the voice of the speaker. This emotive tone does not carry formal contrasts as with those mentioned in 2.3.1.3, instead it serves to regulate the speaker's voice modulation and at the same time blends it with a variety of undertones. It is not difficult, therefore, to measure the extent to which this emotive tone influences meaning in some of the behavioural domains as it, at times, becomes persuasive, coercive, harsh, agitative, or denuncia= tory. The semantic significance of this behavioural pattern, though abstract, becomes more significant to the ears of the hearer than the eyes of the reader. This brings us to the notion that it is more discernible in the spoken than in the written

language. It is again normally observable in such speech domains as ancestor-worship, political compaigns, matrimony, mourning domains, and church domains. To cite but one example in Northern Sotho taken from the abovementioned, the church domain provides the most comprehensible illustration.

2.3.2.1 **Missionary Tone**

Owing to the influence of the Berlin Missionaries who spread the Word of God amongst the Bapedi in a Northern Sotho speech community, we still find some black pastors adhering to their authoritive tone of preaching. They try as far as possible to discard their natural way of speaking, presumably, in an attempt to make the whole situation holy and sacred. It is from this background that expressions such as 'go bolela seneri' (to speak in the missio= nary tone) originated. The adoptive 'seneri' is a derivation from the German 'mein Herr' meaning 'my lord' which refers to a 'pastor' today. Unfortuna= tely this 'missionary tone' today has permeated several denominations amongst the Northern Sotho speaking people to the extent that it has now been accepted as the usual tone associated with every church service. In describing Charles Kingsley's mode of preaching, which runs parallel to the one presented above, Muller (1979 p.3) puts it as follows:

> An impression of power is produced by the impetuous verbal flow, the rough, energetic feeling, the lacerating language which is nevertherless softened by a vein of tenderness - of concern for young Christians - and the denunciatory statements. But the repetitive rhetoric, the exaggerated sense of threat, and what one might call a declamatory relish, make one ask if Kingsley was not being carried away by a form of emotional intoxi= cation rather than religious fervour. No doubt the young Christians who comprised the congregation were petrified by the almost melodramatic style, their hearts literally 'failing them for fear' as they were made aware of the ominous danger of a ravenous devil, if the obtrusive theatricality of the preacher's manner was not self-defeating, that is, in destroying the illusion of reality.

Surely, this is highly typical of most of the preachers found amongst the Northern Sotho congre= gations - the preachers who allege they are posse= ssed of the Holy Spirit, yet they unconsciously strive to use speech repertoire that is typical of the church dcmain. These include other religious fanatics who go about pretentiously preaching in the streets. Such people tend to assume a harsh and commanding tone as if they are 'being carried away by a form of emotional intoxication rather than religious fervour'(Muller, 1949 p.3). It is, therefore, unfortunate that para-linguistics operate most clearly within the frame-work of naturally occurring

conversation or address of some kind. Were it possible to make registral analysis of a text of these preachings in order to show how far these factors can influence meaning, an attempt would be made.

In conclusion, the analysis made, thus far, in respect of componential analysis of situational context has demonstrated how this network of both extra- and para-linguistic contextual factors influences the meaning of everybody's language usage. On the whole, these factors are not indepen= dent of each other but interwined. Though it was stated earlier that para-linguistics are compara= tively closer to language structure than to its semantic aspect, they are seen to be more related to modes and tenors of discourse than fields of discourse. An analysis of any given passage without consideration of all these factors is, on the whole, futile and meaningless. They must all be implemented, wherever possible, in order to render the appreciation more meaningful. The other factors which have just been mentioned cannot be dealt with in this analysis since they do not feature pominently in everyday speech.

They can only be considered as analysable speech markers in the context of a written text, otherwise situational context makes it impractical for them to be subjected to the same analysis as the emotive tone.

2.4.0.0 Registral Analyses in Speech Domains

Language variety associated with particular social settings is common in real life situations but less common in the formal study of African Languages. With the release of the few publications on socio-linguistics in these languages (Mokgokong 1975, Dembetembe 1982, Sekhukhune 1986) the study of language in situational context calls for further attention. With regard to occupational situation (Trudgill 1974 p.104) 'the language of law, for example, is different from the language of medicine, which in turn is different from the langauge of engineering - and so on'. The Northern Sotho speech community is no exception to this style-shifting as long as the varied social situations experienced in our every= day life are characterized by these linguistic peculiarities. Register differentiation in Northern Sotho language is wholly determined by social con=

text at a given time and space. This line of thought owes much allegiance to Fishman's key concept 'domain' - the term which has since been regarded as the most appropriate and relevant in the description of the language patterning occur= ring in various situational contexts. He (Gumperz et al. 1972 p.441) defines 'domains' as:

> institutional contexts and their congruent behavioral co-occurrences. They attempt to summate the major clusters of inter= action that occur in clusters of multi= lingual settings and involving cluster of interlocutors.

Despite the fact that a Northern Sotho speech community does not provide a net-work of multilin= gual settings, the concept domain, as a matter of sociolinguistic analysis, remains applicable. This is so because the concept referred to, descri= bes language choice found within the frame-work of a particular social interaction. In addition to this, Destefano (1972 p.36) further defines 'domain' in this way:

> In socio-linguistics, a domain is often thought of as a cluster of social situations which are related by common set of behavioral rules. Scientists behave in certain 'scientific', techni= cal ways when in their work domain,

> while they may behave in quite different ways, (non-technical could we say?) when in their roles as father or mother in the family domain.

Emphasis, in the above assertions, falls on the general influence of social interaction on language usage. The field of discourse which is represen= ted by the on-going social activity during the interaction provides fertile ground for the choice of the right register by the interlocutors. A change from one situation to another may allow the participants to assume certain roles which in turn influence the social activity in which they find themselves. This constant change from one social standing to another automatically prompts elocutionary change between the addresser and the addressee. A classic satirical example, is given by Matsepe (1968 p.99) whereby the author lucidly illustrates this elocutionary change:

> E lego seo se ilego sa ba godiša ke ge ba ile ba bolaya nkwe le tau, gona fao morwarrago Nthumule a be a nona le lona letšatši leo, a re go nona, mosegare woo le bošego bja ntshe a hlwela go ithuta go kgamakgametša le go fela a befedišwa ke taba e nnyane ka ge go thwe morula o a hlaba.

> (For the fact that they made a great achievement by killing a lion and a tiger, they felt so big that Nthumule's brother gained weight henceforth. Since that day he spent day and night practi= sing stammering. At times he was enraged by triviality in order to be lauded by an old maxim: A king never tells a lie.)

As background, the author first enables the tribe to acquire a royal kaross for Nthumule's brother who has been nominated as king. The author, then, satirizes his recognition as king by making him practise stammering. The sociolinguistic variable of defective speech contextualizes the delineation of Nthumule's brother as emulous of indigenous kings in a Northern Sotho speech community; particularly, those found in the Central dialect. The process of contextualization in this instance is observed as the influence of something para-linguistic - the tendency to stammer. In addition to this, the expression 'morula o a hlaba' (lit. the morula tree is prickly i.e. as a king, you are not expected to lie), is typical of a register found within the speech repertoire of traditional royal circles. It is in the light of this analysis that one becomes aware of a diversity of speech domains in

a Northern Sotho speech community comprising a variety of speech registers. Some of the domains accessible for analysis, are ancestorship, church domain, mourning domain, matrimony, and occupational domain. A detailed study of the pragmatics of discourse in some of the above domains follows in the subsequent chapter . According to Trudgill (1974 p.104) 'registers are usually characterized solely by vocabulary diffe= rences: either by the use of particular words, or by the use of words in a particular sense'. The analysis of these lexical differences is the ultimate intention of this part of the investiga= tion. This linguistic taxonomy, however, should not be regarded as an attempt to categorize certain linguistic patternings which the social context always calls for. It is not a move to select a specialized language to suit a particular social situation; it is rather an attempt to illustrate the extent to which everyday speech in Northern Sotho loses and sometimes acquires, new meanings resulting from the influence of such extra - and para-linguistic contextual factors. An analysis of speech domains in Northern Sotho follows:

2.4.1.0 Ancestor-worship Domain

The Northern Sotho speech community has ancestor-worship as the key indigenous religion. The ritual activity is universally known as 'go phasa' (to make a sacrifice). The head of the tribe or family, with the assistance of medicine-men, normally takes the lead in conducting this ritual activity. **"Badimo"** (Ancestors) are believed to be omnipresent and as a result they are worshipped everywhere but preferably where the dead are buried or in a brackish spot known as 'sebatlabadimo'. 'Sebatlabadimo' is a place believed to have been prepared by the departed themselves. The act of 'go phasa ' is generally multi-purposeful. Amongst some groups it is executed for the purpose of asking for rain in times of drought and famine; curing, and alleviating pain from the sick and protecting the community from any epidemic. There is no special prayer designed for communi=cation. There is only a standing pattern with a wording that varies from one regional dialect to another. It is in this communicative event that we find appropriate registers associated with the ancestor-worship situation. The

following overtly illustrates the **modus operandi:**

> Hlabirwa a Bauba; ke nna yo Phatudi,
> Ke tlile go phophotha
> Ke kgopelela ngwana thari
> Aga le yena kua a lego gona, gaMphahlele.
> Ke go swaretše mahlatswaleselo,
> Maphoroma šea, ke nwa nago,
> Motšoko šo, ke soba nago,
> Nama ya lešimego le yona še, ke ja nago.
>
> (Hlabirwa of Bauba; here am I Phatudi,
> I come to pray
> For my barren daughter to procreate
> Give her peace and prosperity in her place
> of domicile - Mphahlele
> Here is a measure of grain for you,
> Please drink with me this unstrained beer,
> Take with me this snuff
> Share with me the **sosatie.**)

In an attempt to make the meeting a natural and everyday occurrence, the speaker first greets the ancestor with his usual praise, 'Hlabirwa a Bauba'. In addition he introduces himself by his first name to make the situation more friendly and intimate. The whole approach has humble undertones throughout the communication. One wonders whether the attitude as regards the manner of addressing is true of Mönnig (1967:59) when he asserts:

> The first thing we should notice about these rituals is the manner of addressing the ancester spirits ... The attitude is certainly not one of humble worship or of a sorrowful approach towards omnipotent supernatural beings.

This attitude is not always true for all these rituals. For intance, in praying for the sick, a harsh tone always accompanies communication. In analysing the language used we find that the speaker strives to maintain the necessary idiom couched in rich metaphor, as in 'phophotha' (pleading for mercy, as if one has wronged the world) instead of using a simple word like 'rapela' (pray). The use of metonymy in the word, 'thari' which normally refers to a skin used to carry a baby on the back, is used to mean 'children' in this sense; moreover it serves as a collective noun. The expression 'aga le yena' has nothing to do with the literal meaning 'build with her' but implies something that in a general sense is 'give her peace and prosperity' particularly in her place of permanent residence. The use of an archaic word such as 'mahlatswaleselo' cannot escape our attention. Instead of making direct reference to 'a measure of grain' with which to appease the ancestors, the speaker uses another hidden metonymy. This is a humble way of telling the ancestors he has brought along with him a handful of grain and the implication is that he is asking for more as his people are still starving.

The word 'mahlatswaleselo' brings into the mind the process of winnowing the grain which usually leaves the woven flat-basket (leselo) clean. It is, therefore, the wish of the supplicant that at the end of the prayer the ancestors may remain happy with them. 'MotŠoko' has reference to tobacco in general but the use of the word 'soba' (pinch) tends to contextualize the substantive to refer to 'snuff' in particular. The climax of supplication comes with the use of 'nama ya leŠimego' (a meat that is roasted i.e. **sosatie)** which contains the idea of bits and pieces of meat comprising all the parts of the sacrifice.

The above analysis reveals a subtle use of a register that is aimed at keeping the whole situation sacred. Though the atmosphere could be seen to be that of a man to man worldly conversation, the language variety employed is highly tenor-dominated. The supplicant addresses the ancestors with an air of detachment and tries to be courteous at all times.

2.4.2.0 Church Domain

When one talks of a church domain one considers the situation that prevails during church sermons.

Though the church has its roots in Western culture, a Northern Sotho speech community holds fully esta= blished registral features associated with its situational context. Such language behaviour tends to become permanent register of some ministers of religion and evangelists. They have, other than the missionary tone (cf.2.3.2.0), a language choice associated with their daily preachings which cannot be mistaken for any other social activity. Their manner of addressing the Almighty varies in much the same way as their manner of addressing their congregation does as far as lexical choice is concerned. One often hears such references as 'Ramaatlaohle' (The Almighty) Mmopi (The Creator) etc., whereas fellow christians are collectively addressed as 'Bana beše Moreneng' (Fellow worshippers in Christ). 'Bana ba Modimo' (The Lord's children), etc. In an attempt to exemplify a similar situa= tional context Destefano (1972 p.36) writes:

> For example, church goers probably expect certain registral features in the ministers' sermon and prayers which they may not be able to produce themselves.

The following excerpt taken from Maredi (1968 p.81) provides an appropriate example in support of the above assertion:

(**Moruti o a rapela**). A re rapeleng: Wene Modimo wa Mabobo a sa feleng, Wene o lego tsela, o lego thereŠo, o lego bophelo, a nke o be tsela ya rena leetong le, o be thereŠo ya rena morerong o, gomme o be bophelo bja rena lapeng le. Re bonegele re sepele seetŠeng sa Gago ge re etŠwa, e mongwe le e mongwe leetong la gagwe a babalelwe ke Wene, ka Yena Jesu Kriste MopholoŠi le Mmoloki wa rena. Amen.

(The minister prays). Let us pray: The everlasting God of the everlasting blessings, you are the Way, You are the Truth, You are the Life; be our way in this journey, be the truth in our service, and our life in our family. Let Your light shine upon us so that we may walk in your light as we depart from here, let each one of us receive Your protec= tion in his journey. Through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Keeper. Amen.)

It is quite common that whoever is engaged in earnest prayer within the Christian Faith, first acknowledges the name of the Lord and then defines it in a variety of ways. Common registers such as; 'He is the Way, the Truth and the Life'are all asso= ciated with the sermon and prayers we regularly hear in church services. To a true Christian these biblical expressions are not redundant but pertinent to all the individual members of the holy congregation. Powerful preachers will always adopt this mode of discourse to invigorate their religious fervour. The use of the word 'mabobo'

compares the Lord to 'motho wa mabobo' (a generous person) - a person who extends his hand at his own free will. This brings no hyberbole but a confession of His sacrifice to the only begotten Son who was crucified. The use of the expression 're bonegele' creates an impression that worldly people have no vision, and so, the need to give them guidance is sought. Scrutinizing the given text, one is struck by the subtle use of paralinguistic features such as the use of capital letters in all the words referential of the Lord. These immediately draw the attention of the reader as they are in contrast with some of the rules of traditional transformational grammar. For instance, that capital letters may be used at the beginning of a sentence. Such a devia= tion tells the reader that the Lord is omnipotent. He is equal neither to the supplicant nor to any other person. In so doing Maredi acknowledges the Lord's supremacy... This further indicates tenors of discourse in a written text. A mention of 'Jesus Christ our Savour and Keeper' at the end of the prayer marks a standing protocol in the Christian religion, and in addition, brings the Son to us as a mediator. Lastly, the use of the Hebrew word **Amen** expresses a strong

wish that let everything be as requested. An extract of this nature can in no way be associated with any social situation other than church domain.

2.4.3.0 Mourning Domain

Lexical choice related to this domain in a Northern Sotho speech community is pertinent to ritual activities such as murder, funerals and cleansing activity to round off the mourning period. Regarding the analysis of registers relating to these activities Saville-Troike (1982 p.47) maintains that 'their meaning is dependent on shared beliefs and values of the speech commu= nity coded into communicative patterns, and they cannot be interpreted apart from social and cultural context.' A short report on a funeral in a Northern Sotho speech community showing vocabulary differences in a mourning domain, may enjoy verbal transmission in this way:

> Bahunoto ba tšweletše pele le ge ba sa ganeletše segagabo bona. Ba rile go kwa gore o robetše ba mo hlabela mogoga. Ka le le latelago, ka mahube a banna, ba mo rwalela ka tlaweng, ba mo phuthetše ka kobo ya wona. Ba mo epetše kgamelo. Kgauswi le yona go be go kgobetšwe mafata mola kobo le yona e le totolo ka

thoko ye nngwe. Tlou yeo ya batho o robadišitšwe le rragwe. Le ge boati bo tlile, bangwe ba tla šala ba bokolela.

(Though they still adhere to their traditional modes of life, Bahunoto are advanced people. Having received the bad tidings about him they slaughtered a beast in honour of his death. Wrapped in a hide, in the early hours of the following morning, he was carried into a traditional kings' cemetry. They had dug his grave. Next to it there were gathered stones on the one side and a heap of soil on the other. Poor person was laid to rest next to his father. Though many have paid their respect some will still come to mourn.)

Language variety associated with the mourning situation shows an exaggerated metaphor blended with euphemism. This is so because a Northern Sotho speech community is inclined to respect the dead more than the living. Two things compared in a form of metaphor are bound to retain slight similarities in order to maintain this mutual identity. This is evident in the above passage. The word 'kobo' (blanket), for instance, appears twice and in each case it is compared to a different entity. It is only in the case where the word refers to a blanket that its comparison with a hide shows some connection as they both serve the

purpose of clothing. The idea of sleeping which is brought about by the use of 'robetše' (slept) is part of the Christian philosophy which anticipates resurrection. The soil that usually covers the dead is then referred to as 'a blanket'. For the sake of the honour and respect extended to the leader of tribes and nations, there is a special place assigned for their burial. This is called 'letlawa' hence the adverbial 'tlaweng' or 'letlaweng'. The use of the word 'kgamelo' (pail) referring to a grave, brings into mind of the reader the shape of a real pail which is transferred to the shaping of the grave. This immediately brings the image of traditional way of burying the dead, whereby corpses normally take a squatting position. The word 'mafata' is not denotative of anything wooden but has reference to stones used to close down the grave. The deceased is never addressed by his name, instead an exaggerated metaphor such as 'tlou' (an elephant) is used as a sign of respect. Not everybody is addressed in this manner, only the adults and people of high social standing. It is common knowledge that a cow bellows, but with the use of the word 'bokolela' (bellows) the word may imply saturated with grief.

The vocabulary employed in the above passage represents a true register in the context of indige= nous life. The situation provides a wider range of verbal taboos than in ordinary conversation. The excessive use of avoidance language tends to be poetic at all times because it deals with the richest metaphor ever used in poetic language.

2.4.4.0 Matrimony Domain

The activities of matrimony include the various formal meetings in which members of the family and affected relatives attend. For instance, at one sitting they may be called upon to take part in a formal discussion of 'magadi' (bride-price) or 'lobola', as it is sometimes called. Makgaleng (1971 p.29) provides a scene of the traditional presentation of 'magadi' in the exerpt to follow:

> Mohaduba 1 : **(O boela Bakgaditsing, o dula fase pele ga Mokgaditsi I)** Mokgaditsi, ke boile, kgoši. Ka re Bahwaduba ba re ka namane e khulwana le nku tše tharo le pudi re tswaleng.
>
> Mokgaditsi 1 : E fela selo se, bolata, ke bogaga. Le bona gore ngwana wa mokgo= mana a ka no le alela legogwa ka dilwanyana tše ka **(o phurulla menwana ye e tshele= tsego)**? Le tla tsoga le mpoga ka moswana go sele. Re tla bonana ka seedi sa letšatši.

Mokgaditsi 1 : Šedio, Mokgaditsi, Bahwaduba ba re a ge re hlatlagantše ka putšane tše pedi malao re ka se a hwetše?

Mokgaditsi 2 : Re tla reng bjale, batho ke bana ba lena. Ngwato, bana ba lena ba re re na le putšane tše pedi godimo ga tšela ba di badilego pele. Di a tshelela ka moka.

(Mohwaduba 1 : (He goes back to the Bakgaditsi and sits in front of Mokgaditsi I) Mokgaditsi, I have come back, Sir. I wish to express that the Bahwaduba have nothing more than a red heifer, three sheep and two goats with which they marry.

Mokgaditsi 1 : In essence, to be a commoner is to express one's poverty. Do you think that a daughter of a kinsman is worth marriage by these few things, (Indicating by six fingers)? You will witness my true colours tomorrow morning. I will confront you by day light.

Mokgaditsi 1 : There you are, Mokgaditsi Bahwaduba still further ask whether it won't be enough if they add two more goats.

Mokgaditsi 2 : We can't do anything to the contrary, because they are allies Ngwato, your people humbly say, they have two more goats in addition to the former. In all, there are six.)

The language used in the above extract is undoubtedly tenor-determined. The two parties seated side by side are persuading one another to compromise. What makes this verbal exchange more lively is the

lexical choice employed which maintains a formal tone throughout the presentation. It is only after the formal acceptance of the visiting party that there is what is known in sociolinguistics as 'code-switching'. This marks a change from formal speech to a convivial one which is always accompanied by ululations within this situation. Mokgaditsi 1 who presumably acts as a mediator, is addressed by Mohwaduba 1 (who might be a mediator for the other party) as 'kgoši' (a king). Note this shift of meaning from 'king' to 'Sir' which simply alienates Mohwaduba 1 from Mokgaditsi 1. It makes him appear unfamiliar and consequently highly submissive. The payment of magadi, is a means of establishing a new matrimonial relationship with another party. The use of the expression 're tswaleng' (let's be your relative henceforth) has lost its literal meaning of 'giving birth'. A Northern Sotho speaker normally uses the word 'bodiidi' to refer to poverty in the general sense. The word 'bogaga' which converges by connotation with bodiidi (poverty), brings the difference in the degree of poverty. Because the Bahwaduba, in the eyes of Mokgaditsi 1, are unable to present the expected quality of **lobola** they are

said to be extremely poor and this penury is brought about by the fact that they are commoners. A plea to be allowed to marry is expressly under=lined by such words as 'malao' (lit. a bedding) and 'legogwa' (lit. a mat made from rushes). Both words are symbolic of seeking a woman's hand in marriage in the host family. The employment of the word 'mpoga' (witness my true colours) recap=tures the Spartan endurance which used to prevail in the initiation school atmosphere. It happens at some stage that the initiates are taught certain formulae by means of representative concrete symbols in order to enable them to remember. Every time this is carried out each must be beaten once with a switch. The use of the word is, therefore, suggestive of some kind of reprimand that is to follow the next day. Otherwise, the use of the word, as in this instance, is representative of a male speech which Bahwaduba understand better than if the speaker had used 'mpona' (see me). Perhaps by now the point has been made that language usage in matrimonial situation varies from one stage to another during the course of the event.

2.4.5.0 Occupational Domain

It is possible to make reference to social activi= ties organised at tribal level such as hunting expedition, free labour services of a weeding party, harvesting party, etc. as creating occupa= tional situations with a language variety peculiar to them. With regard to these, Trudgill (1974 p.102) illustrates:

> For example, if the speaker is talking to the people he works with about their work, his language is likely to be rather different from that he will use, say at home with his family.

The analysis of such a language, associated with a particular working class in a particular work situation, is inclined to reveal local allusions as well, which form integral part of the whole register. These local allusions recur in order to illustrate language changes as a result of other external forces such as acculturation. The impli= cation becomes pragmatic in the linguistic movement of adoption whereby foreign words and expressions are gradually incorporated and acclimatized into the host language. This linguistic tendency is evident in Northern Sotho and it is viewed as

characteristic of language usage in a tradi-modern milieu. Should the speaker, who takes the place of a character or a participant in social interac= tion, be compelled to talk to the people he is working with, in the language congruent with their work situation; the writer of any text too, or say an essayist is bound to do the same. The following represents part of a verbal exchange picked up from a conversation relating to the working conditions to which I was once exposed; and the analysis that is to follow aptly reveals the awaited register:

> "Mokgadi wena, re ile ra sokola ge re bereka maburung kua Mmabololo. Re be re tsoga ka mahube a basadi ra ya go phaka nkeketane ka sopho. Ke ona marakana ao. E tlo re ge re weditše mmorogo wa khathune ya ba gona re eja marakana. Go tloga fao ngwana ga a sa le anywa go fihla ge re lamolwa ke matena. Ka yeo nako le yona re ya go phaka. Ba bangwe ge ba eja mapetlo ba bangwe ba hwela go sekham= pelene ka mpunyana - senkgwa sa maemo ge re le gona kua. Ke gona mo go tšwelego mmolelwana wa go re : 'o se re go ja mpunyana wa lebala wa hloka le, magagešo dumelang! Re be re ipshina fela ka Sontaga, mowe bangwe ba yago go kweira, mola bangwe ba eya go gata setepe, gwa re yo a yago mosakong le yena a ya ..."

> ("Mokgadi, my dear, we feebled through= out our working session under the White farmers in Marble Hall. We used to wake up when the sun was about to rise and

> rush for one big slice of bread and soup. That made our full breakfast. It was only after we had plucked off cotton on a morgen that we could eat our break= fast. Then followed a laborious session of hard-work until we stopped for lunch time. Then came another time during which we lined up for food. Some went for a mixture of food remnants while others prefer red sweetened cold water with hard-baked scones - the favourite in outskirts from which the saying, 'better (high) social standing should not influence one to look down upon others' crigin. We rejoiced on Sunday when some took a leisurely walk while others went for a brisk one, and those who prefer wrestling would opt to witness it!")

The most striking linguistic feature is the etymc= logy of the name of the workers' nearby town - Marble Hall which changes to Mmabololo. Like most of the etymological words and expressions, the name does not bear any semantic significance other than being the name of the place. The use of the word 'nkeketane' (from 'nkeketa' meaning 'a chunk') alludes to a sizable piece of bread given to them each day as part of their breakfast. The use of the diminutive is wholly indicative of admiration without reference to smallness. The word 'sopho' is an English adoptive 'soup' or Afrikaans 'soep' which refers to the type of soup prepared as part

of the speaker's stable food. It has no reference to any other type of soup. In other words the meaning of the word is narrowed to refer to the everyday soup served to them during that time. The meaning of the Afrikaans adoptive 'bereka' (werk) which Mokgokong (1975 p.39) explains as 'specifically used to refer to working for remunera= tion or working under a White employer' cannot escape this semantic narrowing. It is commonly used by many Northern Sotho speakers as a register associated with a work situation. The Afrikaans 'morg' which is phonologically adapted to 'mmcrogo' in Northern Sotho has become so common amongst the members of the weeding parties employed on the White farms, that it no longer refers to the real morgen but any piece of land which approximates the size of a morgen. What matters in this instance, is not the scientific measurement but the estimated size of the field meant to be worked on for the day. The word 'matena' adopted from the word 'dinner' has acquired a different meaning altogether. It does not refer to the heavy meals the English normally partake of in the evenings but to those that are served during the day. Alternatively,

the word is used to refer to lunch time estimated to be the thirteenth hour (13h00) of the day. Some words like 'mapetlo' (mixture of food remnants) and 'mpunyana' (hard-baked scone) are neologisms coined for local allusions and have no other reference apart from what they actually mean. They are mostly used by people working on farms and in the mines, and are conventional at all times. Regular contact with other racial groups precipitates adoption from languages outside the Sotho Language Group. The case in point, is 'sekhampelene' - a word acquired from the Zulu lexicon, namely, 'siham= beleni' (For what have we gone thus far?). 'Siham= beleni' is semantically persuasive of members of the group to seek compensation for their distant walk by enjoying the sweet drink together. Northern Sotho speakers, on the contrary, adopted the word to refer to a sweetened drink of cold water taken with bread or cakes. The Afrikaans word 'kuier' is again adopted by Northern Sotho speech community as 'kweira' - a word showing greater shift of meaning. Whereas the original word in the source language means 'to pay a visit' the host language attaches a different meaning. The word, particularly as it is used by the people in the occupational domain,

means 'to take a stroll.' Another shift of meaning is highly discernible in the English adoptive 'step' which is Sotho-ized to 'setepe'. The word usually denotes a type of dance performed by an organized group of boys and girls trotting on the main road while playing a Jew's-harp. A simultaneous setting down of their feet as a mode of dancing is kept to the rhythm of the played instrument. Thus, their Sunday leisure time is whiled away.

2.5.0.0 On the whole and against the above background, the analysis of language-in-action clearly shows a diversity of shifts of meaning. This has been quite evident throughout the speech domains. Speech registers analysed thus far have indicated that language varieties are differentiated accor= ding to situational contexts. Some domains could be described as abitrary and to a certain extent linguistically artificial as they contain more local allusions than words of the everyday speech repertoire. Occupational domain and church domain are such typical examples. Perhaps the reason behind this is that they are more involved with modern trends and tendencies than their counterpart

domains. A fundamental issue about the nature of register associated with domains, is the excessive use of metaphor which seems to employ shift of meaning at all times. Registral analysis, then, remains purely pragmatic in the study of language behaviour patterns and can, therefore, be regarded as functional throughout.

CHAPTER 3

3.0.0.0 PRAGMATICS OF DISCOURSE

3.1.0.0 Introduction

It is common knowledge in Northern Sotho today as with other languages, that whenever two or more individuals are engaged in a natural conversation they tend to understand one another without first understaking formal linguistic analysis of sentences and utterances they normally use. The whole verbal interaction follows from a natural flow of everyday communication and carries a logical and mutual intelligibility. Some philosophically oriented principles applied earlier in evaluating the pragmatic base of discourse analysis, **inter alia,** Co-operative Principle (Grice 1975:45) endorse this notion of mutual understanding between the speaker and the hearer. This concept of mutual intelligibility must be seen taking place as a result of the in= fluence of other illocutionary forces which are part and parcel of the entire semantic system. These illocutionary forces comprise a net-work of pragmatic implications or what Gumperz (1977) calls 'contextualization cues' such as traditional

customs, beliefs, values, knowledge, purposes and even intentions, all of which form an integral part of the social environment. In other words, discourse analysis, which according to Stubbs (1983:11) 'provides an essential basis of a functional view of language as action', cannot be satisfactorily carried out without taking into account the influence of the social context. The pragmatic approach towards linguistic analysis of discourse in Northern Sotho reveals much of this influence which in the final analysis renders the method wholly functional. A simple analysis of the following whispered utterance, taken as representing a statement from two men's gossip about a passing young man, clearly illustrates the above hypothesis:

> **Le ge a tswetšwe ke Matime, ke morwa Matsobane.**
>
> (Although he is born of Matime, he remains the son of Matsobane.)

The composite meaning of the above utterance unfolds two viewpoints viz. while Matime is taken to represent the biological father on the one hand, Matsobane takes the place of a sociological

father on the other. For anybody who is a non-native speaker of Northern Sotho, one would wonder how possible this might be. Ethnography in a Northern Sotho speech community reveals that according to marriage custom children of the same mother are differentiated according to paternity. It makes one to cite an instance of such a marriage custom as **'go tsoša lapa'** (to revive the family name) which is suggestive of the following subsidiary customs:

Go tsoša leina la mohu.

(To revive the deceased's name i.e. posthumous marriage). In the event of the death of an unmarried young man it is customary in Northern Sotho to seek marriage on behalf of the deceased in order to perpetuate his name.

Go nyalwa ke lapa.

(To be married by a family i.e. marriage in effigy.) This is the type of custom whereby a woman is married on behalf of the supposed son who has never been but ought to have been. The aim is to perpetuate the standing name which is likely to die out. A seed-bearer from the patriarchy is normally appointed to

facilitate procreation whereby the off-spring are henceforth called in the name of the supposed father.

Go tsenela.
(Levirate custom). In the event of the death of a husband, the younger brother of the deceased is appointed to enter into levirate union with the deceased's wife. The children who follow, together with those born of the late husband, are all referred to as the children of the deceased and are always called by his family name.

The propinquity of the idiomatic expressions just analysed stands as the embodiment of **'go tsoša lapa'** (to perpetuate the family name). Moreover, these endorse another standing traditional maxim which is protective of progeniture in Northern Sotho, viz. **ngwana ke wa dikgomo** (lit. a child belongs to a herd of cattle i.e. a child belongs to a particular family unit despite his consanguinity with the man who is alleged to be the biological father). The general idea expressed is that marriage business in a Northern Sotho speech community is a communal affair whereby relatives and intimates wilfully contribute materially towards the marriage

goods in favour of the one who marries amongst them. Another idea expressed is that Northern Sotho traditional custom does not attach any significance to, nor recognise such a thing as illegitimacy. Should it happen that someone addresses or refers to another person as **hlaba** (an illegitimate child), it would be under such circum= stances as extreme anger or repugnance. Otherwise, under normal circumstances, it is taboo to do so. Should it come to the knowledge of a traditional Northern Sotho family man that his wife bore a child out of wedlock, the tendency is to seek for another linguistic cover such as **a ba tswalwe, ba ate, monalepelo ga a tsebje** (the more children a man has, the greater the probability that one of them will look after his parents in their old age.) All the idiomatic expressions analysed thus far echo the conversational implications which might come into the mind of the confidant. They are also intended to obviate whatever may be misconstrued as semantically offensive and logi= cally unacceptable in **le ge a tswetšwe ke Matime, ke morwa Matsobane.** (although he is born of Matime, he is the son of Matsobane). On the other hand, the act of whispering constitutes the illocu= tionary force which influences social context and

in so doing puts the confidant in a position to accept the telling as a closed secret. It is with the aid of extra-linguistic forces, such as those mentioned above, that interlocutors understand pragmatic analysis of naturally occurring conversa= tions in everyday communication.

3.1.1.0 Meaning of 'Pragmatics' in Relation to Discourse Analysis.

Despite numerous definitions formulated by various scholars (van Dijk 1977, Brown & Yule 1983, Levinson 1985, to mention but a few) it is unwise to regard the meaning of any of them as absolutely precise. Levinson (1985:1) quotes the definition of 'pragmatics' by simply saying it is the study of "the relation of signs to interpreters." Taking the above-stated definition as a starting point, the first notion implied is that of a relationship of interlocutors (interpreters viz the speaker and the hearer) to the signs (sentences or utterances) they frequently use. Secondly, the notion of the mere presence of the participants in the verbal interaction constitutes a social environ= ment. In the third instance, there is another implicit notion of paradigmatic relation between linguistic features in a sentence or utterance

which constitutes, once more, a semantic unit. The logical inference, then, should be that pragma= tics of discourse in Northern Sotho, as it is the case with other languages, calls for an inter= grated form of functional approach in the interpre= tation of sentences and utterances used in our everyday world of conversation. The emphasis, however, encompasses the influence of social context which redirects surface and deep structures of such communicative events. In co-ordinating pragmatics with discourse analysis Brown and Yule (1983:26) write:

> Any analytic approach in linguistics which involves contextual considerations, necessarily belongs to that area of language study called pragmatics. 'Doing discourse analysis' certainly involves, 'doing syntax and semantics' but primarily consists of 'doing pragma= tics'... In discourse analysis, as in pragmatics, we are concerned with what people using language are doing, and accounting for linguistic features in the discourse as the means employed in what they are doing.

Since pragmatics cannot be demarcated from discourse analysis, it follows conclusively that 'pragmatic' accounts of language understanding will at least need access to sociolinguistic information' (Levinson 1985:28). The 'sociolinguistic informa=

tion' referred hereto undoubtedly points at the social meaning which always complements the senten= tial meaning in the course of verbal interaction. The implication here does not disprove the ineffi= ciency of whatever linguistic competence that lies inside the purview of isolated fragments of dis= course; rather, it overemphasizes the essence of the external influence of the social environment over them. Consider the pragmatic analysis of the following Northern Sotho utterance which illustrates summoning of relatives together after the burial ceremony of a husband:

> **Ka moswane <u>re tla bothana</u> go tla <u>go kgopela legare.</u>**
>
> (Tomorrow we will gather together to negotiate the ritual shaving of the widow).

The expression **go kgopela legare** has nothing to do with the surface meaning of 'asking for a blade'; instead it conveys the cultural meaning of asking for permission from the relatives in-law to carry out the ritual ceremony of shaving widow's hair as a sign of mourning. On the other hand, the expression indirectly asks, as part of conver= sational implicature, whether the widow's relatives

in-law have more to demand regarding any residue on the part of **magadi** (dowry goods). Should it be so, the right to refuse permission to conduct the ritual, becomes significant. It is only after the demands expressed by the opposing party have been met that the ritual may be performed. The illocu= tionary forces which constitute the context of the implied mourning domain enable the expression to convey this cultural meaning. Considering the paradigmatic relation of linguistic features in the discourse, namely, 'ka moswane re tla bothana' (tomorrow we will formally gather together) and 'go kgopela legare' (to ask for a blade) one becomes puzzled as to how the expressions converge. Under the prevailing circumstances, 'go kgopela legare' further contextualizes 're tla bothana'. Had the speaker used 'kgobokana' (to come together) in the place of 'bothana' (to gather formally together) the former could have diffused the formal connotation expressed by the idiomatic expression. This again points out the significance of lexical choice on the grounds of contextual meaning. In summing up, one may still point out that, though pragmatics for so long belonged to the philosophical tradition of analysing speech acts, it integrates both ethnographic and socio=

linguistic approaches to the study of discourse analysis. Levinson (1985:374) further elucidates the meaning of pragmatics by relating it to other part-disciplines in this way:

> Indeed pragmatics and sociolinguistics share many areas of common interest, and sociolinguists have contributed much to certain areas of pragmatics, especially the study of social deixis and speech acts and their use. However pragmatics in turn has much to contribute to socio= linguistics; for in trying to undertand the social significance of patterns of language usage, it is to understand the underlying structural properties and processes that constrain verbal interac= tion.

3.2.0.0 Pragmatic Analysis of Discourse.

It is fully realized from the preceding paragraphs that, pragmatics of discourse in Northern Sotho presents context-bound systems of communication in everyday social interactions. Accompanying these social interactions are verbal and non-verbal communications the apt interpreta= tions of which are accomplished by those pragmatic implications mentioned earlier in this chapter. It is evident that without consideration of these extra-linguistic contextual factors, sociolinguis=

tic analysis of discourse is likely to supersede grammatical analysis. Leech (1983:76) seems to concur that language has two complementary linguistic properties for communicative purpose. He writes:

> Language consists of grammar and pragma= tics. Grammar is abstract formal system for producing and interpreting messages. General pragmatics is a set of strage= ties and principles for achieving success in communication by the use of the grammar. Grammar is functionally adapted to the extent that it possesses properties which facilitate the operation of pragma= tic principles.

The act of viewing grammar as a tool for conveying messages at surface level can be ascribed to the process of studying language scientifically. Functional adaptation referred to implies the influence of the social context which manipulates the grammar of such linguistic variables for more effective communication. This brings the present investigation to pragmatic analysis of discourse in Northern Sotho to the rite of passage which encompasses a range of social activities and interactions. These social activities and inter= actions have language variety associated with each and everyone of them and it is this language variety which will be analysed as a form of discourse.

3.2.1.0 Taboo Utterance as a Form of Discourse.

Language varieties associated with puberty in Northern Sotho embody some of those conventional deterrent formulas used to encourage the young minds to conform to the norms of the society in which they live. These are commonly known as **diila** (taboos). Current researchers in Sociolingui= stics (Haviland 1979, Trudgill 1974, Finlayson 1984(a),Zungu 1986) have analysed language restric= tions which call for the use of avoidance language in everyday conversation . Such linguistic or verbal taboos are governed by the values and customs of those societies which do not allow a speaker to use specific speech sounds or syllables in some words or names. In order to use such words or names the speaker is rather advised to devise certain phonological or lexical strategies which substitute words or names with permissable speech sounds or syllables. Northern Sotho speech community has reached this point of observing language restriction. It is only occasionally that a Northern Sotho speaker realizes words or syllables as belonging to vulgar language. For instance, the word **ntsho** (sweet cane) is preferred to **nyôba**, for the simple reason that the latter

could at times, as a result of missing the correct toneme pattern, be misconstrued for the verbstem **-nyôba** (to have sexual intercourse with). This is to illustrate the lexical strategy mentioned earlier, otherwise, on the whole a Northern Sotho speech community employs euphemism where the use of avoidance language is required.

Diila in Northern Sotho are different in form and in content from verbal taboos as they are not based on individual words or word-groups but on utterances. The utterances command restraint by way of upholding coercion and threat in the teenage world. They are distinctly characterized by **o se ke ...** (don't) and a possible coercive consequence **gobane o tla ...** (lest you will ... i.e. such and such a misfortune will befall you.) Though the probability of experiencing such misfortune is an idea far removed from reality, a Northern Sotho traditional child accepts it as true and in turn he is persuaded to conform to the verbal order. Remarking on the attitude of the hearer towards taboos, Saville-Troike (1982:199) writes:

> Neither are linguistic taboos arbitrary: they relate integrally to culture-specific beliefs and practices in religion or magic, decorum and social control.

Similarly Zungu (1986: 13) expresses the same idea regarding the general influence of beliefs and practices on language restriction when she says:

> The types of words which are taboo'd in language are a good reflection of the system of values and beliefs of the society in question.

Though emphasis here falls on linguistic taboos, there is some point of convergence with Northern Sotho traditional **diila** on the fact that both of them are regulated by culture-specific belief and practices comprising a system of values. On the other hand Northern Sotho **diila** concentrate largely on social control throughout the developmental stage of the youth while that is dominated by subconscious belief in, and fear for, the superna= tural. This idea is lucidly illustrated by the rhetoric of Treimer (1954) as Adler (1978:(a)41) quotes him:

> Well, would anybody in our society in case of mourning walk about differently than in a dark suit, would he eat horse meat, except in great need, not to speak of dog meat, would he utter prohibited words, would he address his parent with Christian names ..., would he touch without good reason on infected person or his belongings, would he cut his finger nails or his hair in a strange home, would he loosen a woman's hair in front of strangers?

A simple answer to this tedious but exhortative eloquence is undoubtedly 'No!'. Similar to Northern Sotho traditional **diila**, the imperative 'don't' is repeatedly used and thereafter followed by 'lest you will' in each case. This means that the speaker tells the hearer what not to do and subsequently suggests a threat to ensure that the hearer conforms to the command . The following analyses of some of these taboos should prove the point.

O se ke wa ora mollo o o fularetše gobane o ka mela mosela.

(Do not sit by the fireside with your back lest you will grow an animal tail, i.e. If one sits by the fireside with one's back to the fire the likelihood of burning oneself remains with one.) With the belief that the danger is likely, the young ones refrain from transgressing the taboo to disprove it. This then saves the youth from the possible danger.

O se ke wa taboga mollo;o tla rota madi.

(Do not jump over the fire lest you urinate blood i.e. do not run the risk of jumping over the fire as you may fall into it).
If one jumps over the burning fire one may

accidentally fall into it and get burnt. For fear of urinating blood, children, simply refrain from such a silly action and in so doing they remain safe while seated around the fire.

O se ke wa lesa maswi a falalela mollong gobane dikgomo di tla hwa matswele.

(Do not leave boiling milk spilling on fire lest the cows' teats will die i.e. take care of the boiling milk to avoid its spilling.)

The underlying truth of the taboo is that if the young ones leave boiling milk spilling on fire they may remain without it in the end. With this likelihood in their minds the young ones will always attempt to save this loss. The taboo is undoubtedly maintained because it gives them a sense of responsi= bility.

O se ke wa hlapologa tseleng gobane baloi ba tla go tšea dihlotlo.

(Do not urinate on the road lest you be enchanted i.e observe public decency.

The fear of being bewitched avoids such irregularities as urinating in open and public places, and in so doing persuades the youth to become acceptable members of the society. Presumably the taboo is maintained to secure public decency. In other words youth is taught to have respect for open

paths and roads and so find secluded places to relieve themselves.

O se ke wa swara ntepa tša basadi gobane o tla bolaya nonyana ya go bola.

(Do not touch women's loin-skirts lest you kill a rotten bird, i.e. Do not be very intimate to women otherwise you become stupified).

It is not possible for a live bird to be rotten. Because the Northern Sotho traditional boy is involved in hunting activities during his early life, to safe-guard himself against any indignity relating to his failure to achieve his goals, particularly in his hunting activities, the boy will excuse himself from touching women's underwear. The philosophical implications underlying the taboo seem to teach the young man to refrain from courting while still under age. In addition he is discouraged from keeping women company for fear that he may, according to Northern Sotho culture-specific belief, be stupified.

O se ke wa goelela bošego gobane baloi ba tla go tšea lentšu.

(Do not call at the top of your voice in the night lest the witches get hold of your voice i.e. it is improper of one to make noise at night).

One of the precautionary measures the Northern Sotho traditional society would take was to maintain as much silence as possible in order to secure its safety. Anything that would break the desired silence, such as the bellowing of a cow or the crying of a baby, was viewed with dismay because that would alert the enemy. For fear of unexpected invasions and attacks Northern Sotho tradi= tional society threatened its youth with "witches that would get hold of its voice" should it call, talk or scream at the top of its voice at night. In short the taboo is maintained to ensure total security of the tribe or nation against enemies.

O se ke wa šupa lebitla ka monwana gobane o tla koropana.

(Do not point a finger at a grave lest your finger will shrivel. i.e. give the dead the honour they deserve at all times.)

The general belief amongst the members of the Northern Sotho traditional society is that the spirits of the dead are immortal and they are always with the living; yet they are to be met at their graves. In view of the fact that a grave is a sacred entity and worthy of respect the youth are taught to accord it due respect at all times. The taboo is, therefore, maintained for both humanitarian and religious reasons.

O se ke wa gora dikhuduo gobane o tla thoka matswele.

(Do not lick cooking utensils lest you grow breasts, i.e. boys should not interfere with women's work at home.)

The cooking business is traditionally ascribed to women-folk while men-folk are entrusted with other heavier tasks outside the home. The upbringing of boys and girls is channelled along the same lines. Boys, in particular, are therefore, warned against indulging in women's domestic duties for fear that they will neglect their manly responsibilities. The essence of maintaining the taboo seems to suggest the curbing of social incongruity amongst boys.

O se ke wa dumela ba go taboga mola o sa nabile, gobane o tla hlapologa dilaong.

(Do not let others jump across your out= stretched legs lest you urinate in your sleep, i.e. a boy should always look sharp and quick.)

A typical Northern Sotho traditional boy is expected to squat rather than sit in order to be quick . In order to avoid others jumping across his outstretched legs for fear of passing water in his sleep the boy will unintentionally conform to the set social norm. In the long run the boy shall

have freed himself from indolence and laziness. Similarly, the taboo is maintained to safeguard the upbringing of boys against social incongruity.

O se ke wa jela ka pitseng gobane ka lenyalo la gago pula e tla na letsatsi ka moka.

(Do not eat directly from the pot for that may portend heavy rain throughout your marriage day, i.e. avoid greed and avarice).

Northern Sotho speech community has no set conven= tions for table etiquette. In order to discourage avarice and greed amongst its youth, a threat of this nature in a form of a taboo is always upheld. This could be regarded as another measure of control on human behaviour.

The fore-going analysis within the framework of Northern Sotho traditional taboos reveals the following remarkable notion: avoidance language, as a distinct language variety relating to behaviour control and restriction could be termed 'the adult language' for the simple reason that it is only used and observed by older people. On the other hand, Northern Sotho **diila** be regarded as belonging to 'the teenage language' on the grounds of its short life-span.

3.2.2.0 Refrain as a Form of Discourse.

Coupled with **diila** are other deterrent formulas presented in the form of nursery rhymes. These serve to mock those who misbehave amongst the members of the peer-group. In the event of any of them violating any social norm amongst them, a group of individuals would stand to sing such a rhyme indicating either social incongruity, indo= lence, truancy or any other form of social misbeha= viour. During the song every member of the group will undergo self analysis. The singing does not end until someone guilty of improper behaviour corrects himself. This implies that such nursery rhymes have more persuasive effect than taboo utterances because they are full of action which accompanies the rhythmic music underlying them. The following are some which call against indolence, irresponsibility and truancy amongst herd-boys:

Mathinyane pat'e swana
A re go bona di goroga
A patapata dikgamelwana
Kgamelwana tša baloyi

(Truant little herd-boy
On seeing them coming back home
Furtively grabs the little pails
Pails of the little sly ones).

Some truant herd-boys have the tendency of feigning innocence and pretending to co-operate with their elders. In so doing they destroy evidence of their truancy and mistrust. Knowing well that they have not been to the veld to look after the cattle they pretend to display their trustworthiness and responsible character. On realizing such an insolent misrepresentation, those who have rendered such services would report to their elders by means of singing the refrain to mock the culprit intermittently. Without mentioning his name, his behaviour will reveal his shirking conduct, and the elders will immediately identify and reprimand him.

The following refrain is sung to make the irresponsible herd-boy aware of the devastation caused by his neglected herd:

Ga di je di a hlagola
Di bona mabel'a motlalo,
Setlalatlala le maŝemo
Di bona mabel'a motlalo.

(They aren't destroying but hoeing the corn-field.
On seeing the field so thickly sown,
So thickly sown all over the field,
On seeing the field so thickly sown).

Though the sole idea of singing such a refrain is to alert the slothful herd-boy to the devastation, its pragmatic base cannot be without reference to its stylo-linguistic organization. The striking feature is in the wording of the first line which sounds highly hyperbolic yet oxymorous in highligh= ting the mockery - 'ga di je di a hlagola' (they are not destroying but hoeing the corn-field). The ridicule extended by the use of irony in the second line is intensified by the fact that the destructive cattle are similarly compared to members of a hoeing party who help thin out the crop in the interim. The duplication that follows in the use of the word 'setlatlala' (thickly sown all over) sharpens the irony just revealed. The total impression gained from the analysis of the above refrain is that almost all the cattle invaded the corn-field and the destruction is immense. With the type of humiliation that accompanies ridicule, the indolent is inclined to weep as a means of acknowledging his failure to perform his duties as a responsible and trustworthy herd-boy.

Some of these refrains are used to strive against social incongruity particularly, in the event of a

member of peer-group transgressing a social norm. The name of a wrong-doer is never pronounced. On seeing one of the members misbehaving, for example, continually indulging in the company of members of the opposite sex, the remainder of the group who have kept guard against disorderly behaviour, is inclined to sing the following:

> Mmabannyaneng, kgatlampiping,
> Mmabasimanyaneng, kgatlampiping,
> Mmabannyaneng, kgatlampiping,
> Mmabasimanyaneng, kgatlampiping,
>
> (You that dally with girls, play the fool,
> You that linger around boys, play the fool,
> You that dally with girls, play the fool,
> You that linger around boys, play the fool.)

The singing of the above is usually led by one of the members while the remainder form a chorus that sings the line play the fool . The emphasis is felt to be on these tag-words - the words which express ill-feeling for the addressee, and that he or she must blunder in all his or her attempts henceforth. On hearing the mockery, anyone of the peer-group who finds himself or herself comfortably seated amongst members of the opposite sex, soon realizes that the mockery is directed at him or her. In response he or she shamefully with= draws from the seated group and apologeti= cally goes to join the standing party that

sings with ridicule and scornfulness. In acknowledging his or her act of reconciliation the group abruptly stops the mockery and welcomes the culprit with applause.

Pragmatic analyses of the above refrains reveal characteristics similar to those of natural conversation. Such refrains in the puberty language take the form of ordinary everyday verbal exchange where two or more individuals are involved; secondly they are capable of applying the rhetoric which takes the form of tag-words. Refrains such as the ones above, call for indivi= duals to seriously observe the general moral code that governs both the male and female world in a Northern Sotho speech community. As much as it is expected of a boy to abstain from feminine company during his early life, a girl is subject to the same abstentions from masculine company. The general fear is that if precautionary measures are not taken to deter intergration in the early upbringing of such individuals the likelihood of acquiring either masculine or feminine mannerisms becomes greater and in turn such personal qualities may render them obtuse and sheepish. For fear of

infringing the custom the Northern Sotho teenage world abstains from mixed company.

Again, it is indecent of anyone to sit carelessly amongst his play-mates as he may unconsciously display his nakedness. This also happens amongst the grown-ups as Mokgokong (1975:33) points out:

> Nakedness is severely censured and one is alerted against such a state by such expressions as madi patleng!
>
> (blood on the forehead,i.e. your fly is open), kgomo di a timela! (cattle are going astray!), kgogo di ja mabele! (the fowls are eating the corn!).

The point to make in the analysis of the above expressions is that the adult language prefers to indulge in the use of profound metaphor rather than the ordinary everyday language. Such metaphorical, euphemistic usages are not meant to conceal the idea expressed, but to guard against the use of vulgar language. The urge to call to order those individuals who sit carelessly amongst playmates occurs in the teenage world. In order to alert others and invite them to join in the ridicule and mockery of such

individuals a member of the group stands aloof to sing an allegory about someone's protruding private parts. This act of communication is more common amongst boys than amongst girls. The following refrain further illustrates the point:

Nonyan'aka šele ka molapong
E na le mae mabedi ka molapong
Nonyan'aka šele ka molapong
E na le mae mabedi ka molapong

(There nests my little bird down
in the valley,
With two eggs down in the valley.
There nests my little bird down in
the valley.
With two eggs down in the valley.)

The picture of a 'little bird down in the valley' undoubtedly makes direct reference to the little boy's nakedness that is protruding from the side of a torn loin-skin. Furthermore, 'two eggs' referred to in the subsequent line, portray a complete picture of a protruding scrotum. As the singing continues the rest of the members of the peer-group begin to look about and swathe them= selves. The singing only comes to an end, when the one who has been sitting carelessly, corrects himself. The use of refrain as a form of discourse in puberty finds a way of applying euphemism rather than bluntly using an obscene type of

language. The traditional peer-group in Northern Sotho society is accustomed to the use of this mode of discourse as it finds it appropriate and decent. As much as the use of vulgar language is highly tabooed in a Northern Sotho speech community, euphemism is generally employed. Acknowledging the essence of the use of euphemism Aldler (1978(a):66) quotes Mackensen (1973) as saying:

> Euphemisms indicate tabus; they unmask them in every case. For he who makes use of them acknowledges the validity of the tabu for himself, i.e. he incorporates himself into a society (class) which assumes the importance of just that tabu. Euphemisms are social markers; he who does **not** use them indicates by this fact that he does not belong, i.e. as one who rejects this social norm.

The use of the above allegory definitely implies the use of euphemism. It could have been offensive to the hearer had the speaker plunged into direct reference to him. Such an allegation would be humiliating and could possibly result in personal confrontation. In order to avoid such petty squabbles the use of euphemism is always preferred.

3.2.3.0 Discourse Analysis in Marriage Rites

The end of puberty in a Northern Sotho speech community is often marked by the act of undergoing an initiation ceremony. At the end of the ceremony boys and girls are regarded as men and women who may be entrusted with responsibility. Above all they are eligible for marriage. It must be pointed out, however, that marriage in Northern Sotho tradition could be inaugurated even before the child is born or immediately after birth. The latter is commonly referred to by anthropolo=gists, Mönnig (1971) amongst others, as 'infant betrothal' whereby the prospective relatives in-law will always present a bull to symbolize their intent. The delivery of 'poo' (a bull) or 'powana' (a bullock) seals the agreement and further, debars anybody with similar intention of asking for the girl's hand in marriage. The rites of marriage in a Northern Sotho speech community are fully entrusted to an appointed intermediary delegated by the groom's party. **Batseta** (the intermediaries) conduct the necessary negotiations set forth in the process of match-making, while conforming to the traditional norms common to both parties. In the range of subsequent meetings,

held from time to time, there is a net-work of utterances and other metaphorical expressions used in defining and describing the various processes in the on-going social interaction. It is the pragmatics of this nomenclature that awaits an indepth study.

3.2.3.1 Betrothal

The social phenomenon of betrothal has been briefly referred to above in terms of 'infant betrothal.' The concept 'betrothal' must be viewed from two perspectives, viz. one from the side of the royal circles and that from the side of the commoners. The formal execution of betro= thal within the realm of royal circles is expressed in two ways:

go aba bana (to distribute one's offspring)
go sola bana (to dish out one's children)

Both expressions imply the idea of determining one's daughters for marriage to some other family, tribe or nation. It must be also pointed out that only the daughters from a senior house of a **kgoši** (king), are destined for marriage in another **kgoši's** tribe or nation, while those from the junior

houses are assigned for minor **dikgoši** (kings). It must be mentioned further that this betrothal, which is normally carried out during infancy emerges in the tradition of royal circles as a result of the following defence motives in Northern Sotho society:

> go thiba difata
>
> (to close down the ports, i.e. determining one's daughter for marriage in another kgoši's tribe or nation for purposes of evading future invasions).

At times, another expression with a slight linguis= tic difference but similar social meaning is used to express the same idea:

> go šiba morumo
> (to deter anticipated invasions)

The idea of evading anticipated attacks comes about in this way: once a traditional Northern Sotho tribe has destined a woman for marriage in another country, it often becomes more difficult for the said country to take up arms against it. This is so because the said woman will secretly send out someone to alert her people beforehand.

This brings us to the cultural origin of such a proverb as:

Diradisebja ga di hule motse

(Armies that are gossiped about do not capture a village, i.e. forewarned is forearmed).

The only point of concurrence regarding the concept betrothal between royalty and the commoners in Northern Sotho, is found in the functional meaning of the following contrasted idiomatic expressions:

go ya garakgadi

(Betrothal to one's paternal aunt's family for purposes of looking after her during old age).

go ya gamalome

(To opt for marrying one's maternal uncle's daughter).

In case the married woman is barren, the responsi= bility of providing a substitute rests with her parents who must surrender her younger sister. The act of doing so is expressed as:

go ba tlhatswadirope

(to become the washer of the thighs, i.e. to be married for purposes of becoming a seed= bearer).

Sometimes the brother of the barren woman is entrusted with the responsibility of betrothing his own child for a seed-bearer. The pledge to do likewise is expressed in:

go tswalela motho ngwana
to give birth on behalf of someone, i.e.
(to raise up a child for someone).

The above betrothal is destined to bring a dying family to life by way of perpetuating procreation and extending a helping hand to the disabled. The act of doing so is expressed by any of the following:

go ya go goletša mollo
(Destined to keep the fire burning).

go ya go gela meetse
(Destined to draw water for someone).
go ya go apeela (rakgadiagwe).
(Destined to cook for one's paternal aunt).

The idea imbued in the above expressions whereby one's brother's daughter is destined for a seed-bearer in one's paternal aunt's marriage, becomes controversial when perceived outside the context of Northern Sotho cultural tradition. In other societies, such as the Western society, this is regarded as highly incestuous.

This practice however, takes place amongst the members of various dialect groups in a Northern Sotho speech community but more often within the royal circles. It is out of this cultural background that a pro= verb such as the following orginated:

> Kgoši ga e ile mohlana
> (lit. a king knows no placenta , i.e. a king may marry the daughter of his age-mate).

Similarly, after the death of his father, the eldest son from the most senior house of the extended family is legitimately allowed to cohabit with his father's youngest wife and hence the saying:

> Ke lala le mmane, ke hloboga dinathomo, dinathamagana tšešo.
>
> (I cohabit with my father's youngest wife in despair of forlorn dowry.)

The same idea is expressed by Matsepe (1968:2) in a slightly different way when he says:

> Thagaletswalo, ngwana wa pele ke thaka ya rragwe,
> Ge e le dipitša ke yena a fagago tse di belago,
> Gwa se be bjalo o tla ja maganogano a thaka tša gagwe.
>
> (The eldest son is his father's age-mate
> In times of need he is the one to help himself i.e. with his father's youngest wives.
> Otherwise his contemporaries are readily prepared to deceive him).

On the side of the commoner, betrothal varies in both concept and implementation. It is basi= cally precipitated by a variety of factors and cultural norms. Failure to deliver the required **magadi** in full on the part of the groom, counts amongst such factors. It is conceived as the simplest way of keeping discreditable matters secret, such as barrenness, in related families. In the event of the above failure to present the said **magadi**, Northern Sotho tradition urges the groom's family to seek security in the following pronouncement:

> ngwana o nyala mmagwe
>
> (lit. a child marries nis mother, i.e. the residue of the dowry can still be paid at the time when her first daughter gets married).

Should the relatives in-law continue to insist on full payment of dowry the groom's delegation may reply in disgust:

> mokgonyana ga a fetše go nyala.
> (marriage business never ends in the delivery of **magadi** alone for the goodwill of the groom is enjoyed throughout life.)

On the whole the general assumption encoded in the above utterance implies that the bridegroom

will, as bound by moral obligation, be in a position to extend his services to his relatives in-law from time to time. Such tendencies are informally regarded as suggesting payment of the remaining part of the dowry.

The idea behind the concept of betrothal suggests a variety of purposes other than the ones mentioned earlier. It perpetuates and entrenches the esta= blished relationship between the two family groups or tribes. It is believed, on the other hand, that the ever-present consanguinity will preoccupy the married couple and by so doing minimize their everyday petty squabbles and preserve their relationships. Amongst other things betrothal guarantees personal safety in one's marriage or national security in the event of royal marriage contracted between two nations.

3.2.3.2 Choosing a Marriage Partner

The choice of a spouse was traditionally the task of the parents. It is only through the passage of time that the tradition is gradually fading away. This is so as a result of the obvious in= fluence of modern tendencies. A young man, instead, is the one who tells the parents, parti=

cularly the father, that he needs a wife. This is accustomed by the following expressions:

Ke godile

(I am a grown-up, i.e. I am mature enough to marry).

Ke bone mosadi

(I have seen a woman, i.e. I have courted a woman).

Ke bone mmutla o letše

(I have seen a hare in the lair, i.e. I have made a choice of the one to marry).

Ke fahlilwe ke morwedi wa ...

(I am blinded by the daughter of ... i.e. I wish to marry the daughter of ...)

Ke bone.

(I have seen. i.e. I have made a choice of a marriage partner).

Ke ratile morwedi wa ...

(I would love to marry the daughter of ...)

The parent still has the exclusive right to turn down the plea and offer an alternative. Should he accept what his son tells him, then he is obliged to share the good news with the immediate relatives who must be seen to be practically involved in the organization of the coming ceremony because marriage in Northern Sotho is a communal affair. This further implies that in Northern

Sotho tradition married woman is not supposed to be addressed as **mogatša wa semangmang** (the wife of so and so) but should better be referred to as **mosadi wa kgoro ya gore le gore** (a woman that belongs to such and such a court, i.e. family group). Similarly, the husband is viewed as a seed-raiser delegated by a particular **kgoro**, and his offspring are likewise viewed in the same way.

In the case of **setimamello** (tribal wife or a queen) the choice is not individualised but rests solely in the hands of the king and his kinsmen in collaboration with the entire tribe. Further= more there remains a long standing commitment that a particular tribe or nation marries from a particular tribe or nation. A woman married within such formalities is viewed as **mosadi wa setšhaba** (the tribal wife) or **mmago (lit. the king's mother)** not **mosadi wa kgoši (the king's wife).**

3.2.3.3 Engaging the Intermediary

Upon the readiness of the groom's parents an intermediary is sent to engage in matrimonial talks with the other family group. This creates

a situation which is characterised by utterances worthy of analysis. On his arrival at the prospec= tive in-law's domicile he usually makes use of the following expressions in introducing the issue:

ke tlile go kgopela sego sa meetse.
(I came to ask for a water calabash.)

ke tlile go kgopela nkgašana
(I came to ask for a worn out gourd.)

ke tlile go kgopela mpša ya lena
(I came to ask for your dog.)

ke tlile go kgopela mootlelwana
(I came to ask for a puppy.)

These represent the most common metaphoric expre= ssions used to ask for one's daughter's hand in marriage in a Northern Sotho speech community. With formal gesticulations accompanying any of these expressions the daughter's father quickly under= stands the message and responds accordingly. While these are commonly found amongst the ordinary people, royalty have their own peculiar expressions to convey the same idea, as with the following:

re tlile go kgopela serumula
(we came to ask for a fire brand.)

re tlile go kgopela gore le re timele mello
(we came to ask for your assistance to extin= guish our fires.)

re tlile go kgopela setimamello
(we came to ask for a queen).

The use of the substantive **re** in the utterance signifies the honorific plural whose intrinsic value expresses the highest degree of formality. This extreme formality is further accomplished by the paradigm of the other linguistic features in context, such as **serumula, gore le re timele mello** and **setimamello.** One wonders whether one is not justified in regarding this mode of discourse in Northern Sotho as belonging to what is currently known as diglossia. Diglossia, a sociolinguistic term coined by Charles A. Ferguson (Hymes 1964:435), is broadly defined as:

> A relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialect of language (which may include a standard or regional standards) there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation.

Though Ferguson tried to cover a much wider area in his definition he has touched on the most salient points which are common to the language

used around areas of **mošate** (royal courts)in a Northern Sotho speech community. Expressions such as those cited above are divergent; as much as they employ lofty euphemism centred around the concept of fire. They are highly codified as long as their grammaticality is compatible with their semantic system, and they are associated with the highest social class in a Northern Sotho speech community - royalty, moreover, they are (Hymes 1964:435) 'not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation.' Once the intermediary has completed his task and the two family-groups have reached consensus then the first stage of mediation will have been completed. The next step is that of the delivery of **magadi.**

3.2.3.4 Magadi and other Marriage Goods

The concept **magadi** and the manner in which it is organised and executed, clearly reveals the universal meaning of marriage custom in Northern Sotho. The conceptual meaning of **magadi** regarding the indigenous custom in Northern Sotho, as viewed by Kupa (1980:16) remains the one to which moral obligations, solemn alliances and social

recognition are attached. The general assumption is that marriage business is a communal affair in which all relatives, friends and acquaintances of the bridegroom feel obliged to contribute toward the marriage goods. A preliminary stage of **magadi** is realised in initial gifts offered to the bride-to-be, known as:

go iša dipute
(to give presents to the bride-to-be).

The purpose of abiding by this custom is to deter any other person who may intend to marry the said woman. Besides that it acquaints the groom's party with the prospective in-laws. The presents consist mainly of garments and ornaments designed to be used by the bride-to-be. Should the groom's party find itself at some later stage unprepared to deliver **magadi**, the alternative of verbal agreement is provided. This is contracted by means of the following expressions:

go agelela motšhidi
(lit. to encircle ximenia caffra.)
go iša diroto
(lit. to present the baskets.)
go thiba sefero.
(lit. to close down the entrance).
go iša maswara.
(lit. to present the cutlets.)

When the time is ripe that **magadi** should be deli= vered the groom's party constitutes itself once more to set forth the marriage goods. This formal institution of **dikgomo**, which shall hence= forth be known as **magadi**, is based on the custom commonly known as **go tšwela** (to contribute gene= rously). **Magadi** consists of the following compo= nent tributes known by the following phrasal names:

dikgomo tša lapa.
(the cattle of the family, i.e.
the key marriage goods; those contributed by the bridegroom and his family.)

kgomo ya malome.
(the uncle's beast, i.e.
a beast contribution from the maternal uncle's family.)

According to Northern Sotho tradition, a nephew is generally required to marry his cross-cousin. Should the maternal uncle owing to reasons beyond his control fail to provide his daughter for a wife he becomes obliged to surrender **powana** (a bullock) as a symbol, telling the counter-party that the groom still waits to marry his uncle's daughter; hence the following expression used to explain the state of affairs: **ngwana o sa na le gamalome** (the groom still waits to marry at his uncle's family.)

Should the prospective son-in-law deflower his fiancée before the delivery of **magadi** he becomes virtually liable for the payment of a beast.

> Kgomo ya go thiba pherwana.
> (lit. a beast intended to close down the backyard entrance, i.e. beast paid in acknowledgement of defloration).

The payment is understood as an admission of guilt, as well as a gift of consent to marriage on the part of the son-in-law. The beast, however, counts amongst those destined for **magadi.**

> kgomo ya go bula sefero goba kgomo ya go kokota.
> (lit. a beast meant to open the entrance, or a beast destined for knocking at the door; i.e. a beast presented to mark the formal opening of the discussion of **magadi).**

On their arrival, the members of the groom's party usually find a gathering consisting of members of the bride's party already awaiting them at the **kgoro** (gathering place). It is customary for the interme= diary from the visiting party in consultation with one representing the host party to present a beast that marks the formal opening of the talks. The beast is also meant to constitute the gathering and count amongst those selected for **magadi** thereafter.

kgomo ya go beka
(a special beast given to the bride's family to round up **magadi** and ask for permanent release of the bride.)

At the end of formal discussion of **magadi**, the groom's party usually proceeds to ask for permanent release and formal transfer of the bride. This is not only accomplished by mere verbal interaction. It is customary to give away a beast that would formalize the request and at the same time symbolize the act. Similarly, the beast stands to count amongst those selected for **magadi**. In the event of more cattle being requested by the bride's party, it is usual to ask the groom's party to contribute two or more head of cattle under the seal of a different traditional custom. These are customarily referred to as:

kgomo ya lerumo
(lit. a spear beast.)

kgomo ya mphaka
(lit. a knife beast.)

Both beasts are intended to accomplish different purposes. For instance, **kgomo ya lerumo** is taken to symbolize the real spear with which to slaughter

the beast destined to honour the coming festive occasion; whereas, **kgomo ya mphaka,** stands to symbolize the actual knife with which to skin the beast. All the same, both beasts are accredited by the groom's party as part of **magadi.** Failure to surrender such head of cattle on the part of the marrying party, en= titles the bride's party to bring the whole process of presenting marriage goods to a halt. It further accords the host party the exclusive right to refuse merry-making altogether until such demands are met. Owing to the fact that the act is intended to satisfy the existing Northern Sotho traditional custom and belief, the visiting party feels compelled to meet the request. In an answer to the presentation of the above beasts the host party then slaughters one of **magadi** cattle to grace the matrimony. Immediately after the end of the subsequent festivity, the formal transfer of the bride takes place.

The above analysis of **magadi** and other marriage goods uncovers a net-work of social interactions from which utterances with a variety of interpretations are deduced. For instance, giving one's hand to a nubile woman could be implied by petty gifts extended to one's fianceé, or the giving

away of a beast in customary payment of defloration charges before the actual marriage; all those are implicitly regarded as part of **magadi**. The following proverb expresses the idea clearly and accurately:

> mogwe ga a fe, o a nyala
> (the bridegroom does not give presents but marries, i.e. presents given before marriage are regarded as part of **lobola**.)

It is quite common today that when the groom's party fails to meet payments of the required **magadi**, the general tendency is to confront the **kgoro** (the constituted kinsmen) and declare:

> lapa le a tseba (the bride's family knows better i.e. the settlement is better known to the family).

The analysis further reveals that nuances of meaning attributed to the various utterances are accomplished by contextualization cues manisfest in Northern Sotho culture. This, then, brings us to the notion that interpretation of utterance is not an arbitrary exercise but a functional one. It is worthy of note again that the institution of **magadi** in general is not a sectional activity but somewhat universal since it is equally practised by both people of ig= noble birth as well as those occupying high standing

in the social hierachy. Above all, one would declare the idea of **magadi** custom as indigenous in the history of Northern Sotho speech community.

3.2.3.5 Formal Transfer and Permanent Release of the Bride.

This constitutes the last lap in the marriage rites. The act of doing so is generally expressed as:

> go beka ngwetši
> (to take the bride to her in-law).

This represents another formal ceremony in which only family members of the bride and the bridegroom take part. It is traditionally held on the day following the one for merry-making. Nowadays, however, the function is always postponed to a later stage. There are two important rituals which a maternal uncle of bride must publicly perform, and the first one is commonly expressed as:

> go phapha hlogo ya moswe
> (lit. to chop off the **meerkat's** little head i.e performing the ritual presentation of the bride's gift - the slaughtered beast).

It is a common practice on the part of maternal grandmother to grace occasion with a pot full of

homebrew and a beast to slaughter. The uncle retains the head and the hide of the slaughtered beast and takes as a tribute (sebego) to the grand= mother. He leaves the hide with the grandmother and takes the head for consumption. It is from this background that he attained his cultural name of **majadihlogo** (lit. the one who eats heads-meat). While the name moswe literally means **meerkat,** investigation reveals that moswe is the contracted form of **moswemogolo** which means either niece or a nephew. **Go phapha hlogo ya moswe** then should imply the act of devouring the head of the beast slaughtered specifically for traditional wedding feast by maternal uncle.

The maternal uncle is entrusted with the responsi= bility of taking the ritual gifts to the function. The beer is intended for the people to drink in celebration with his niece's in-laws. In other words, it is his duty to see to it that the welfare of his niece is always promoted. After the skinning of the beast the maternal uncle draws the few sinews just below the fillet and prepares what is traditionally known as **tšhima.** The sinews are

tanned with hard but waxy fat and tied around the neck of each of newly weds. The symbol is intended to tell the outside world that each of the couple is a married person. **Tšhima** could be equated to the Western wedding ring. The act of performing the ritual is known as:

go tlema tšhima.
(to tie the couple with somewhat tanned sinews i.e. blessing the marriage).

Then follows the greatest moment of spiritual depression on the part of the bride:

go laya ngwetši
(talking strongly to the bride i.e. to instruct and advise the bride of marriage life).

Given the opportunity, the parents of the bride usually do not have much to tell their daughter. They may only congratulate her on her marriage and give away a complimentary beast traditionally known as:

letswele la ngwana
(lit. a teat for the child, i.e. a beast destined for milk production in supplementing the upbringing of the first child.)

Then follows the appearance of the key figure commonly addressed as **kgadi** in her formal capacity-

presumably being the contraction of **kgaetšedi** (the sister). **Kgadi** refers to the most senior paternal aunt of the bride. She is the most priviledged in the delegation amongst all those blood relatives who have the opportunity to attend the ceremony; and she is the one to give the last word of advise to the bride about married life. In most cases the speech by **kgadi** takes the form of an epiloque that epitomizes the whole festive session. An appropriate example of this nature is cited by Maredi (1968:57) as Babuni speaks:

> Reshoketšwe, ngwana kgaetšedi ya ka, lehono o itše mobu o ituletše, wa ya wa o hlotha. Lešaba le le tletšego mo ke mebu, ke boman= tlhakane, ba tsoma yo ba ka mo lomago, gomme ba bone wene ...
>
> (My brother's child, Reshoketšwe today you found a swarm of wasps at ease and you blew it away. This multitude resembles wasps, they are looking for someone to sting, and so, you are the only target ...).

There is no doubt that the speaker employed this metaphor of a wasp, knowing very well that she will rightfully capture not only the attention of the gathered jubilants, but of the bride in particular. On the other hand, the sting of a wasp is incomparably sharp and ends in physical and mental pain. The bride begins to associate the image of a wasp with everybody present there. Knowing very well that the words are

directed to her, she feels the speaker is speaking from the bottom of her heart. She has no alternative but to feel dejected. In the end her eyes are glitte= ring with tears. As the speaker continues to talk, a word of warning is also extended to the bridegroom to enable the bride to give vent to her emotions (1968:58):

> ...boMarulela, re le fa mmele, eupša hlogo ke ya rena.
>
> (... people of Marulela, we offer you the body, yet the head is ours i.e. people of Marulela you are entitled to stay with her and procreate, but in times of death and family disputes, consult with us).

A few months after the bride has been transferred to the domicile of her relatives the tradition has it that she must temporarily visit her people. This does not demand a formal and tedious procedure. There are, however, some expressions which are used to name such a short visit:

> (i) go ya boenyane
> (lit. to go for a shor visit).
>
> (ii) go tšholla bongwetši.
> (lit. to pour out brideship).
>
> (i.e. the going back home of the bride after marriage, where she remains for approximately a week before returning for good to her in-law).

Except in the case of last custom expressed, the whole procedure of formal transfer and permanent release of

the bride, is also observed by royalty in a Northern Sotho speech community. It is a common route that may allow a few insignificant diversities depending on regional dialects.

3.2.3.6 Conjugal Infidelity and Concubinage

Once there is talk of the immoral phenomena such as those mentioned above in a Northern Sotho, as in other speech communities, the question of marital status comes into one's mind. A young man is generally pro= hibited by social norms from indulging in such immoral behaviour while he is unmarried. Should this immoral behaviour occur, it takes place while everybody including the target person is fast asleep. There are no formal negotiations entered into before-hand, but it is a matter of pouncing upon the target person and forcing sexual relations. The young woman is likely to co-operate to satisfy his sexual desires. The act is neither regarded as a serious offence nor rape but as an indication to the old people that he desires to marry. This is unanimously expressed as:

> go hlohloma
> (to force an unmarried woman into sexual inter= course).

Conjugal infidelity and concubinage in a Northern Sotho traditional sense, unlike the one just analysed above, is acknowledged by the entire society as a normal practice. This type of practice, however, encourages polygamy in the end. Unfortunately polyandry, which is the direct opposite of the latter, is foreign and unknown to the community. It is not unethical of a traditional Northern Sotho married man to befriend another man's wife and cohabit with her in secret. Though it is maintained that the tendency is acceptable, it cannot be done openly because that would naturally make the husband angry. The idea of doing so is then expressed as:

> go aga motse godimo ga o mongwe.
> (lit. to build a house on top of another i.e. to cohabit with another man's wife).

In support of the idea, Sekele (1966:26) writes:

> A man may know who his wife's 'friend' is and vice versa, without any offence taken at it. It is common knowledge that when a man approaches his residence at night he sings loudly so as to warn whoever might have come to usurp his conjugal rights. This is done presumably to forestall possible confronta= tion that could ensue in the absence of any such warning.

It does frequently happen that some nubile woman may live permanently without acquiring a husband but manage

to beget children. Numerous reasons could be adduced for this occurrence. There might be a serious allega= tion that her family is popularly accused of witchcraft so that even relatives become afraid of marrying either her or anyone in the family; or it is claimed that since the parents are notoriously known as unmanageable personalities, their young daughter might be more incorrigible. These are but some of the reasons; there could be many more. Such women would stay without husbands but acquire paramours who keep them for the best part of their lives without marriage. The practice is expressed in various ways, such as:

go kaola
(to have a mistress)

go tlabola
(to take someone for a harlot.)

go fepiša
(lit. to help someone in the upbringing of children, i.e. to sojourn with someone you love without marrying her.

Royalty are not exonerated from this tendency. One might say they are more indulgent than the commoners. This reminds one of an incident whereby one **kgoši** was subjected to cross-examination by his top kinsmen on account of numerous seductions and it was reported he replied in defence:

> Na ge kubu e tšwele bodibeng gomme e fula hlakanoka la khwiti ya noka yabo yona, o gona yo a swanetšego gc bclaela?
>
> (lit. If a hippotamus has come out of the water and feeds on the reeds along the river-bank, should there be anybody who takes exception to that? i.e. Don't poke your nose into other people's affairs).

Probably, that was enough to silence everybody present. A similar idea is expressed by Matsepe (1971:21) in a slightly different way although the rhetoric is the same:

> Morago ga go fulara ga gagwe, Mabothe le mogwe wa gagwe (morwa wa kgoši Ngalang yo a tlilego go yena) ba tšipana ka mahlo ka tsebo ya gore lentle bjale ke la bona ba noši, ka gore ke mang wo a ka kgohlolago sehuba selebaneng sa bona? Ke mothepa ofe yo a ka iphetošago kgagarapane go mong wa mobu wo a dulago go wona?
>
> (Being fully aware that they won't be trapped by anybody, Mabothe and his brother-in-law (the son of king Ngalang - his host) immedia= tely after his departure winked at each other with the intent to sneak away to commit adultery; for who would dare make a noise about it? which of the young women would vacillate if wooed by her king?)

The whole idea of infidelity and concubinage could be summed up in the maxim that seems to suggest the philo= sophy of Northern Sotho tradition: **letolo le thekga motse** which means 'concubinage fortifies marriage bond.'

3.3.0.0 In conclusion the pragmatic analysis of utterances and situation-based sentences in a Northern Sotho speech community takes greater cognisance of the influence of social environment than the influence of paradigm. The contextualization cues that help in the interpretation of these utterances direct the conveyed meaning from the literal meaning. This has been very clear in the analysis of taboos and speech-plays, such as refrains. Coupled with contextualiza= tion cues, it is the influence of culture on Northern Sotho metaphor which reveals itself so much in 'Dis= course analysis in marriage rites.' Conversation implicatures inferred from the analysis become so evident that had we confined ourselves to the appli= cation of modern techniques, i.e. Co-operative Principle (cf. Grice 1975), this part of the investi= gation would not have had the impact it has.

CHAPTER 4

4.0.0.0 LANGUAGE AND SEX

4.1.0.0 Introduction

Linguistic sex varieties in most of the traditional societies, including a Northern Sotho speech community, are generally governed by cultural beliefs and customs. This reveals a variety of causes some of which are deeply rooted in the principles of language restriction and avoidance. These principles are responsible for everyday code-switching whereby an individual speaker prefers one language variety to another in an attempt to conform to the social norms of his society. **Hlonipha** language (Finlayson 1978, 1982, 1983; Zungu 1986) among the Xhosa and the Zulu is a case in point. Other scholars (Trud= gill 1974, Lakoff 1972, Key 1975) regard the attitude of men towards women as the general cause of the language differentiation. This negative attitude towards women results in psychological characteris= tics ascribed to them. The women-folk are then described as non-assertive, weak, undecisive, emotional, demure and affectionate in everyday language behaviour whereas men always reflect

aggression, authority, assertion, competition and courage in their everyday discourse. It is further alleged (Key 1975) that women are accorded inferior status in their lives and this makes them appear quite humble and submissive before men-folk. Regarding these language divergencies Trugill (1974:94) points out the cause as follows:

> Linguistic sex varieties arise becuase, as we have already seen, language as a social phenomenon, is closely related to social attitudes. Men and women are socially different in that society lays down different social roles for them and expects different behaviour patterns from them. Language simply reflects this social fact.

In a vast number of instances Trudgill's observations are valid. Indeed, one is further induced by Adler's (1978(b):74) double-standard type of counter= action:

> However, we must not forget that the difference between men's and women's speech go back into the past of which, in most cases, we have no detailed knowledge. Thus, many of the causes indicated are, at worst, conjecture, at best, the conse= quence of a known historical development.

From the foregoing quotation, one is made to believe that **Hlonipha** language is, by sheer inference, 'the consequence of a known historical development'

found among the Xhosa, the Zulu and the Sotho. That a wife, for instance, is tabooed from pronouncing the name of her father-in-law or his brothers' among these societies, is one of the historical conventions and not mere conjecture. Another logical inference could be drawn from the same line of thought from Haviland's (1978) **Brother-in-law** language which assumes another type of restricted code in Guugu Yiimidhirr - the type of language spoken in South Australia around New Queensland. It is worth remarking that the sociolinguistic idiosyn= crasies analysed by above scholars, are more common in European than in African languages. The above introductory analysis suggests that Northern Sotho as one of the African languages, is an exception to this type of language differentiation.

4.2.0.0 Towards the Meaning of Linguistic Sex Distinction in Northern Sotho.

Linguistic sex divergencies in Northern Sotho take a completely new and different dimension. The most important aspect in the process of differentiating the various linguistic variables (i.e. words and expressions) remains the influence of the sexual element which determines the classification of such

varieties as belonging to male or female speech. The incidence of such linguistic sex properties enables the speaker to choose between alternatives without making them speech registers associated with either sex group. The embodiment of the sexual elements, however is not intended to draw an exclusive linguistic dichotomy between sexes, but to alert the Northern Sotho speaker of possible misuse of a register in the course of a conversation. This implies that, at times men as well as women in Northern Sotho may use the same speech without revealing linguistic sex distinction. The analysis of the following utterances further illustrates the general perspective of the hypothesis:

Ngwanamohube o tswetšwe ke yena.
(Ngwanamohube is born of him.)

Ngwanamohube o belegwe ke yena.
(Ngwanamohube is born of her.)

It can be assumed that the above utterances are uttered by the same speaker. Each of these refers to a man and a woman respectively. It is conven= tionally understood in the context of Northern Sotho tradition that a woman gives birth to a child

whilst a man only contributes to conception. It can be concluded from the above that it is a misuse of register for a man to say; **ke belege Ngwanamohube** (lit. I gave birth to Ngwanamohube; rather than the appropriate form. I fathered Ngwanamohube'). Similarly it is incongruent for a woman to say; **ke tswetše Ngwanamohube** (Lit. I fathered Ngwanamohube, instead of 'I gave birth to Ngwanamohube'). The use of the word **-nyala** (to marry) is yet another example which poses a sociolinguistic problem of a similar nature. The following examples of utterances reveal another semantic difference based on sex distinction:

O nyala lehono (He marries today.)
O nyalwa lehono (She is being married today).

The use of the passive form in the second utterance reveals sex differentiation in the dyad. Moreover, it is the influence of Northern Sotho cultural belief and custom that the man is always the one who initiates and advances the act of marrying. This leads to the question; who marries the other? Owing to the Western influence where either a man or a woman is said to be marrying, the modern

tendency today has influenced Northern Sotho speakers to utter such an unnatural statement as:

Ba a nyalana.
(Lit. They marry each other, i.e. they marry).

Though the utterance has come to mean that there is a marriage taking place somewhere, the paradigmatic structure of the utterance remains highly unacceptable. This is so because the accompanying reciprocity in the word (**nyala + -an- = nyalana**, lit. marrying each other) debases the natural flair of Northern Sotho idiom. The paradigm of the verb stem **-nyala** in the utterance cannot be attributed to either male or female speech; it puts the couple on an equal footing. Presumably, it is this struggle for social equality amongst men and women in the present Northern Sotho society that gives rise to language of sexism.

4.3.0.0 Analysis of Language Varieties According to Sex.

Structural analysis of speech varieties according to sex occurs at all levels, namely: phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. These linguistic aspects reveal the influence of the social meaning they acquire in their everyday use. The general

implication is that they are, as Geertz (1937:361) maintains, 'independent but not self-sufficient' and he goes on to insist that they must be seen:

> as acting and having impact only within specific social context to which they adapt by which they are stimulated, but upon which they have, to a greater in lesser degree, a determining influence.

It should be noted that the sexual element of each speech variety does not completely convey the intended meaning. Other ingredients of 'specific social context' commonly referred to as extralinguistic contextual factors are part of the whole process of contextualization. Without these factors the varieties are likely to convey either the literal or the referential meaning.

4.3.1.0 Word Forms.

Choice of vocabulary and word formation denoting differentiation according to sex in a Northern Sotho community can be likened to the sides of the same coin in so far as the relationship of the speaker to the hearer is concerned. Regarding lexical choice the most important human quality on the part of the speaker is communicative competence,

whereas word formation, on the other hand, could be coupled with his linguistic competence. In other words the ability to choose the right word and use it appropriately implies the ability to form new words and expressions. The following example of hotch-potch in the wording of the expression used by Maloma (1972:68) provides better illustration:

> ... kgomo ye ntsho ya lengopa.
> (lit. a black barren ox).

While the substantive **lengopa** has reference to a barren cow, the adjective **ntsho** (black) with which it is used, is not compatible. The incompatibility of the descriptive word with its substantive is brought about by the use of the non-correspondent sexual element contained in it.

In spite of all, the utterance should read '... **kgomo ye swana ya lengopa** (... a black barren cow). The following grammatical constructions illustrate the feminine influence of the diminutive suffix **-ana** on some of the speech variables outside context:

- so (black) - motho yo mosw**ana** a black female person).

- šweu (white) - motho yo mošwa**ana**
  (a light female person).
- hlaba (dark) - motho yo mohlab**ana**
  (a dark female person).
- sehla (tawn) - motho o mosehl**ana**
  (a tawny female person).

There is a general consensus that the function of the diminutive in some instances is to indicate admiration and love. Whilst this is accepted as valid, it can still be argued that this depends solely on the mood of the speaker and not on mere paradigmatic relation of words in an utterance. It therefore appears that only reduplication in the use of the diminutive with similar adjective stems is suggestive of endearment. The following examples in word formation illustrate the point:

- so (black) - **nas**wa**na** (a black beauty).
- šweu (white) - **nat**šhwa**ana** (a light beauty).
- hlaba (dark) -**na**hlab**ana** (a dark beauty).
- sehla (tawn) -**na**tshehl**ana** (a tawny beauty).

Whilst the foregoing examples in their social contexts reveal endearment and admiration; the key notion and role they serve is to manifest feminine qualities.

Whether used in context of a sentence or seen in isolation, the above word forms will always be viewed in the light of the relationship between language and sex.

Similarly, the use of the nominal suffix **-gadi** with some words, either in context or in isolation, shows some sexual reference other than it being augmentative. Nominals denotative of human beings are the most appropriate examples:

tlhala (divorce) = tlhala**gadi** (divorcee)
mohlolo (widower) = mohlolo**gadi** (widow).
kgoši (king) - kgoš**igadi** (queen).
morutiši (teacher)- morutiš**igadi** (lady teacher).
mohlomphegi (gentleman) - mohlomphe**gadi** (lady; missus).

Some female praise names take the suffix **-gadi** in order to distinguish themselves from male praise names. At times the suffix is not clearly visible because it takes the form of **-adi** instead of the common form. The following examples give a fair comparison of men's versus women's praise names in Northern Sotho culture:

Mosebo cf. Mosebjadi

Nape cf. Napšadi

Napo cf. Napogadi

Gosebo cf. Gosebjadi

In some instances the men's praise names are affixed with a free morpheme such as **-mosadi** to engender femininity. The following examples are compared:

Ngwato cf. Ngwato**mosadi**

Moloto cf. Moloto**mosadi**

Phaka cf. Phaka**mosadi.**

The morphology of some of these word forms in the study of their sociocultural meaning is inevitable because of **linguistic sex distinctions** (Adler 1978(b): 54). This brings the present investigation to the morphological analysis of contracted forms of family kinship terms in order to reveal their indigenous source. Most of these terms are but compounded constructions formed thus:

noun + noun

noun + verb

noun + adjective

noun + noun + noun + verb

The cultural meaning of each kinship term is based on or named in accordance with a particular genealo= gical origin. The term is either of the patrilineal or matrilineal descent. Northern Sotho distinguishes amongst the following terms:

- **rakgadi** (paternal aunt) is supposed to refer to **kgaetšedi ya rare** (my father's sister) but it may also refer to those female persons that are said to be parallel and cross-cousins of one's father.

- **mmamogolo** (one's aunt) is a general term encompassing a diversity of references relating to **mogolw'abo mma** (lit. one's mother's elder sister i.e. one's maternal aunt) or one's father's senior wife in the event of polygamous marriage. Today it may also refer to one's elder paternal uncle's wife.

- **mmane** (one's aunt) simply refers to **monyanan'abo mma** (one's mother's younger sister and all others who are younger than her in the matrili= neal descent including the so called half-sisters). Today the term has acquired another social meaning of referring to any of one's

father's younger wives.

- **mmangwane** (one's aunt) has acquired a specialised meaning which refers to **mogatša wa rangwane** or **mosadi wa ngwan'abo rare** (one's younger paternal uncle's wife). In other regional dialects, such as Pedi and adjacent dialects in Sekhukhuneland, the term has come to mean one's maternal aunt who is younger than one's mother.

- **mogwegadi** (parent-in-law) is a controversial term in as far as its meaning is concerned. Some informants assert that it has the superla= tive denotation of parents-in-law which implies their supremacy above all other in-laws. The point of convergence is that the term may refer either to mother- or father-in-law. These informants draw their inference from the morphological analysis of the term: **mogwe** meaning one's in-law and **-gadi** - the nominal suffix which is augmentative in connotation, hence **mogwegadi** - the most senior or supreme parent-in-law. Others maintain the contracted form is derived from **motswadi wa bogwe goba bogadi** (a parent from one's in-law's place)

from which the prefix **mo-** and the stem **-gwe** and **-gadi** were consecutively taken to form the term. Their substantiation overemphasizes the use of the term by both sexes to refer to either father or mother-in-law.

- **mmatswale** (mother-in-law) implies the contracted form of **mma tswala** (lit. mother, give birth! i.e. dear person, give me a nubile person.) The use of the key word **tswala** in the expression provides the conveyed meaning of surrendering one's child for as or to be a someone's spouse.

- **ratswale** (father-in-law) implies the direct opposite of mmatswale hereabove and it is the derivation or **rare tswala** (lit. father, give birth! i.e. dear person, give me a nubile person). Both **mmatswale** and **ratswale** are used by either daughter - or son-in-law of their own accord.

- **makgolo** (grand-mother) is a contracted form of **mma kgoloka** (lit. mother, shrivel! i.e. mother, become aged). The term, therefore, simply implies a woman's ageing.

- **rakgolo** (grand-father) is the opposite of **makgolo** and seems to have been derived from the same notion of **rare kgoloka** (lit. father, shrivel! i.e. father, become aged). It is generally understood that when a person is aged he becomes wrinkled and tends to take a round shape while bending toward the front.

- **rangwane** (one's uncle) simply denotes **ngwan'abo rare** (one's father's younger brother or the so-called half-brother). Nowadays the term may be used to address even the husband of one's maternal aunt who is by age or social rank lower than one's mother.

- **ramogolo** (one's uncle) implies **mogolw'abo rare** (one's father's elder brother including the so-called half-brother who are by virtue of age or social rank regarded as senior to one's father). The social rank referred to is determined by the status obtained from the position one occupies in the lineage.

The key notion of sex differentiation in most of Northern Sotho kinship terminology seems to be in the affixation of the archaic words **rare** (i.e.

father) and **mama** (i.e. mother). In English, the words uncle and aunt are qualified by descriptives 'paternal' and 'maternal'. This makes the scale of differentiation in Northern Sotho appear wider than that of English. The use of such nominal stems in the contractions reveal a subtle cultural trait regarding the general human relationship between the young and the old people. Mokgokong (1975:32) aptly puts it:

> According to Northern Sotho culture **tate/papa** is not necessarily a biological father, but every male old enough to be one's father is addressed as such. The same applies to **mme** (mother) **koko/makgolo** (grand-mother) and **rakgolo** (grand-father). This principle is embedded in the social organisation of the people, whereby "each person has to respect all people belonging to age-grades older than his own, irrespective of their genealo= gical status" (Mönnig 1967:240).

4.3.2.0 Differentiating the Use of Interjections

The use of interjections by the members of different sex groups in any speech community is undoubtedly not the same. The members of a Northern Sotho speech community are no exception in this regard. The general tendency amongst them is to conform to the observations revealed by studies in sociology of language, which (Finlayson 1982,1984(a)) reveal

different restrictive codes used by each sex group. Like any other linguistic phenomena, interjections are speech stereotypes associated with men and women. Should any member of each sex group be heard displaying the use of interjection associated with another group of the opposite sex, that may lead to his ostracisation. So, in their language use male and females are inclined to be a guard against this misnomer. Summing up the position and the function of interjections in language use, Thorne and Henley (1975:135) write:

> In all languages, interjections are quite peripheral to language structure and some cases are so firmly tied to gesture as to form a bridge between sex distinction in language and non-linguistic behaviour.

The sociolinguistic study of interjections in Northern Sotho clearly shows that they are closely related to and are determined by the accompanying gestures of the speaker. Such gesticulations identify the speaker as male or female, because men and women do not use the same gestures when they exclaim. The struture of interjections in language use varies from single words to full expressions depending on the situational context in which they are used. The choice of analysis of interjections in this research is confined to

different restrictive codes used by each sex group. Like any other linguistic phenomena, interjections are speech stereotypes associated with men and women. Should any member of each sex group be heard displaying the use of interjection associated with another group of the opposite sex, that may lead to his ostracisation. So, in their language use male and females are inclined to be a guard against this misnomer. Summing up the position and the function of interjections in language use, Thorne and Henley (1975:135) write:

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expressions which contain more than one word since those represented by single words, can, at times, be used by both sexes. Moreover, whatever sexual allu= sion is contained in each of these speech markers, is unfortunately not clearly defined. The paralinguis= tics, such as intonation and pitch, are secondary markers so far as their meaning is concerned; and on the whole, these interjectives are used to express emotions. They could be alternative means of expressing surprise, emphasis or stating something on oath. It is in so far as these emotional reactions are concerned that one is able to understand the functional aspect of the interjective without reference to their formal linguistic analysis. The expression of astonishment in Northern Sotho male speech is realised in the following contexts:

Kom'abanna! Kgomo yela e hwile.
(lit. By males' initiation! i.e. God bless me! That beast is dead).

Thak'a banna! Ba utswitše.
(lit. By my regimental group! i.e. God bless you! They have stolen).

Komatona ya banna! Mosadi yela o rwele thoto.
(lit. By sacred oath of men! i.e. God bless me! That woman is gone, lock, stock and barrel).

The manifestation of the sexual allusion is realized by the use of masculine terms such as **banna** (men), **rare** (my father) and **komatona** (the sacred symbol of men). Contrary to the above women use some of the following interjectives which are typical of them when expressing surprise:

Kom'a basadi (lit. by females' initiation!)
Thak'a basadi! (lit. By womens' regimental group!)
Mme a hwile! (lit. By my late mother !)
Sešane sa basadi! (lit. the sacred symbol of women initiation!)

The inclusion of the words **basadi** (women), **mme** (my mother) and **sešane** (the sacred symbol of females' initiation) in the above interjectives, marks them as distinctly femine. In saying something emphatically or on oath, a native speaker of Northern Sotho employs the instrumental formative **ka** with the interjective to modify its original functional aspect in order to suit the intended meaning. In both sexes the inter= jectives reveal the following speech behaviour:

Male speech interjectives in context of emphasis.

Ka kom'a banna! O tla mpona gabotse.
(lit. Indeed, he will see me well i.e. I will

deal accordingly/ cruelly with him).

Ka thak'a banna! O tla topa dipampiri.
(lit. Indeed, he will go about picking up papers, i.e. he will go insane).

Ka rare a hwile! A ka se tle mo.
(lit. By my late father! i.e. Indeed, he won't turn up here.)

Ka komatona ya banna! Ba tla tšhaba.
(lit. By sacred oath of men! i.e. God bless, they will run away).

Female speech interjectives in context of emphasis.

Ka kom'a basadi! Banna ba ile.
(By sacred oath of men i.e. Good gracious! Gone are the men)

Ka thak'a basadi! Tša ka di tla tla.
(By the name of my contemporaries i.e. Indeed. mine will be recovered).

Ka mme a hwile! A ka se di je tše.
By my late mother! i.e. Indeed, he won't partake of this food).

Ka sešane sa basadi! Ba šwahletše.
(lit. By sacred symbol of women! i.e. Indeed they have invaded the place).

Despite this variety in the use of interjections, the pragmatics of each exclamation is enhanced by con= textualization through use of the appended clauses. Withou these subsequent clauses it would be difficult for the hearer to grasp the intended message conveyed by the speaker. An interesting linguistic phenomenon which makes some of the constructions appear unique is the use of some archaic words and other word forms taken from the jargon of initiation. This brings us to the use of **rare** in the place of **tate** (my father), including the incorporation of such initiation terms as **koma** (initiation ceremony).

komatona and **sešane** (sacred symbols of males' and females' initiation respectively). These interjective expressions help the Northern Sotho language retain its essence.

After a tedious and discursive mockery uttered by Mahulo against the pitiable Kgano, Ramaila (1962:5) could still leave the speaker with such words as:

> Ga wa na wa se ke wa dira ka mokgwa owe, batho ba tlo kwa go lla wene. O hlokomele taba yewe Thobejane. **Ramatome** (Rabatome) **a se we, ka tatane ka Tšhweu ya Magasa, kgano e tlo golola.**
>
> (Should you not take heed of my advice, people will ridicule your outcry. Take care, my dear man. By the late Ramatome (Rabatome) my father, the chief bearer of Magasa regiment; the red meerkat will mew bitterly i.e. Kgano, the culprit will be severely reprimanded).

With the use of such exclamatory words towards the end of his passage Ramaila managed to capture the spirit of surety on the part of the reader. These types of interjectives enable the reader to determine the sex of the speaker without reference to the whole text.

4.3.3.0 Semantic Derogations and other Word Images.

Both men and women in Northern Sotho have attitudes which are not so easily reconcilable with one another. Men have the tendency to dominate the women-folk, and even their language usage reflects this tendency. It can be derogatory. Schulz (1975:65) may possibly shed light on general cause of the use of derogatory language by males:

> An analysis of language used by men to discuss and describe women reveals something about male attitudes, fears and prejudices concerning the female sex.

In attempt to answer the question; why do men tend to have negative attitude towards women? An answer can be sought in the Lakoff's psycho-analytic findings which characterize men as assertive, authoritative and competative, notwithstanding the fact that some are naturally mesogamistic. Whilst women may show gibberish character as the result of male dominance they may still use their own derogatory language to retaliate. Most of these derogatory terms in Northern Sotho evolve around the sex and sexuality. A debauchee or any extremely sensual man in Northern Sotho may be described or referred to in the following ways:

sephayathetho (lit. the one who peeps through a loin-skirt now and again i.e. a fornicator).

sehlotlolo (lit. the one who gropes in the dark with intention of forcing sexual relation with a woman).

tlhephišalekgeswa (lit. one who is fond of letting his loin-skin go loose all the time, i.e. a fornicator.)

kgesweng (lit. one who always rushes to untie his loin-skin in preparation for the sexual act i.e. lecher.)

maerobela (lit. one who leaves it (penis) broken inside implying the one capable of im= pregnating me i.e. an illicit lover.)

sehlohlomi (lit. one who forcibly indulges in extra-marital relations i.e. sex-maniac.

sekatabatho (lit. one who pounces upon others and forces sexual relations i.e. a rapist).

On the contrary men have the following derogatory terms to describe women for their unbecoming sensual behaviour:

Kalelane (lit. one who goes about preparing a bed for every man.)

mmalegogwane (lit. one who goes about carrying a floor-mat in readiness for sexual rela= tions.)

kobaobane (lit. one who goes about seducing every man.)

nonyana (lit. a bird; implying one who flies about, i.e. a whore.)

tswiri (lit. a streaky-head seed-eater type of a bird; implying one who goes about chir= ping like the above bird i.e. simply a whore.)

seotswa (an archaic word for 'seutswi' lit. one who steals i.e. one who habitually indulges in extra-marital relations. Cf. **bohlapadiotswa** an initiation term denoting a pool set aside for those who begot children before they underwent initiation for females. This segregation is intended to humiliate them for their transgression.

motlabo (lit. one who is denied from enjoying the whole, i.e. a mistress).

Some terms amongst those analysed above are sometimes commonly used by both sexes without any prejudice. It is only when any of them is used in the case of reference to third person that the term assumes derogatory connotation. In context of the speaker - hearer relationship or unless dictated otherwise by illocutionary forces in the verbal interaction, the meaning of such words as **maerobela** and **motlabo** remains unoffending and acceptable. The following utterances illustrate the point:

O **maerobela** yo bjang Malose, o bago le sekgapho?
(What kind of an illicit lover are you, who becomes so harsh?)

Motlabo wa motho o bolela bjalo, ngwaneŠo.)
(One's mistress talks the way you do, my dear).

The above utterances occur during face to face conversation in an amicable atmosphere of a normal love affair. No air of suspicion, only the spirit of mutual understanding and trust prevails.

Apart from the terms analysed above which detail the semantic derogations of men and women in Northern Sotho, there are still others which may be used to display a sense of appreciation and admiration. A vast number of these terms is used mostly by males rather than females. This indeed becomes interesting when one considers the alleged male dominance (Thorne & Henley 1975, Bosmajian 1974), and that the sterner sex convincingly realises that the weaker sex can easily appreciate flattery without noticing its detrimental effects. The other probability could be such that Northern Sotho men, like those of other speech communities, are naturally poets 'who could see beauty even where there is none'. The following are some of the descriptive terms Northern Sotho uses to evoke the image of beauty:

sehlapakamaswi (lit. the one who takes a bath with milk, i.e. implying her light complexion).

nkuserekwamosela (lit. a sheep we buy the one with a fat tail, i.e. a better choice of a wife goes to the one with a sizeable bottom - bluntly put 'the one with big buttocks').

morihla (lit. the brawny one i.e. moderately fleshy but not obese.)

leragathetho (lit. the one who kicks a loin-skirt, i.e. the one who has begotten a child already. The implication of beauty here, is not associated with her physical outlook, but with her capability of bearing children.)

senoinoi (lit. the one who is fresh and luscious i.e. young and pretty.)

senanana (lit. the one who is young and tender i.e. a modern concept referential of a pretty girl who is still in puberty. Cf. **sekgalabje senyalasenanana** i.e. an old dandy who may still opt for marrying an underage.)

The concept of beauty in Northern Sotho could be seen as a complex phenomenon that is conveyed by a variety of metaphors. The admirable physical attribu= tes are not the only criteria. For instance, a woman who shows fertility by bearing children, is worthy of beauty like others.

Gossip is another form of verbal interaction in which, according to Northern Sotho culture, women are the main interlocutors, whereas men seldom indulge in such futile and trivial activity although nowadays men are also found taking active part in it. Both sexes sometimes enjoy it together without fear of any public opinion about them. This results in the individual tag-names underlined by contempt and derogation. A woman who is fond of these immoral activities is labelled by various equivalents:

mmamakana (lit. one who enjoys telling lies and other things that are not supposed to be told to other people in exchange of fishing for more gossiping, i.e. a female gossip.)

maratahelele (lit. one who enjoys general gossip and other forms of unfounded rumour, i.e. an inquisitive female.)

mmamoneanya (lit. one who enjoys witnessing others quarrel resulting from her exchange of their ill-talks about one another, so as to earn herself something material, e.g. food, or beer in most instance i.e. equivo= cator.

Similarly men on the contrary are labelled by other people as:

huwane (lit. one who cannot withhold secrets i.e. a liar, particularly a male person.)

tweša (lit. one who lets others quarrel by way of spreading unfounded rumour about each of them, i.e. a double-dealer.)

tsodio (lit. one who enjoys idle talks and goes about spreading it as real truth, i.e. an idle male gossip.)

A neutral word which is used by both sexes to refer to a faceless person in the act of gossiping in Northern Sotho is **sehwirihwiri** (lit. one who sneaks out for general provocations i.e. an inciter) whereas the term **morara** refers to anyone who generally indulges in telling a white lie without malicious intention. (lit. a vine) **Mmamoneanya** (an equivocator) and **tweša** (a double-dealer) are at times used inter=changeably by both sexes today to refer to either male or female person.

4.3.4.0 Sexism in Language

Semantic derogations and language of sexism are two sides of the same coin. They cannot be studied separately and independently from one another as unrelated linguistic phenomena. This is because the

existing relationship between them is a matter of common cause. The language of sexism, a little unlike the language of semantic derogations, is much concerned with speech stereotypes used to describe the women-folk in the most discreditable manner which evidently implies that men have the tendency to look down upon women. On the other hand, the language of semantic derogations consists mainly of disparagement in describing men and women without the notion of social inequality. It is the type of language behaviour which virtually describes human qualities. In his glossary of linquistic terms Adler (1978:135) defines the term 'sexism' as implying "the negative attitude of men to the equality of women", which according to the above hypothesis, sexism in language should reveal prejudicial attitudes men adopt in the use of language against women. Smith (1985:13) in referring to the above definition of 'sexism' points out social beliefs and values as affecting female-male relations in this way:

... the attitudes transmitted help reinforce the **status quo** - the subjugation of women and dominance of men.

Sexism in Northern Sotho language usage can best be understood in the analysis of proverbs and similar idiomatic expressions about women which seem to put on the surface traits characteristic of them. The following saying which aptly pream= bles sexism in Northern Sotho language is seemingly extracted from male initiation speech:

Motšha, kwa lentšu la banna, o se kwe mmago,
mmago ke mošukudu (tšhukudu).

(lit. Initiate, listen to the voice of men, never give a hearing to your mother, for she is but a rhinoceros. i.e. You, the boy initiate, shall not be tied to your mother's apron strings).

The essence of the above saying expresses the way men indoctrinate the youth with a negative attitude towards women in general. In other words, they should not confide in them at all, in particular with regard to matters of greatest importance, neither should they subjugate their upbringing to women. One of the notorious traits which characterises female speech is, as Kramer (1977:159) puts it 'as containing more gibberish, more trivial topics than male speech' Presumably men's fear is that the on-coming genera= tion, if not properly cared for, may easily take after women and lose their qualities of manhood. It is for these reasons and many more that when a boy does something silly, a Northern Sotho man will vehemently protest in the following expressions:

O kwa mmagwe (lit. he listens to his mother, i.e. he has taken after his mother.)

Ke ngwan'a mmagwe (lit. he is the child of his mother, i.e. he is the mother's son.

Ke ngwan'a mosadi (lit. he is the child of a woman, i.e. he is brought up by his mother.)

Ke ngwan'a mokgekolo (lit. he is the child of an old granny, i.e. he is brought up by his grandmother.)

O fepetšwe dia=tleng. (lit. he is fondled all the way, i.e. he is much spoilt).

Ke mosadi (lit. he (the boy) is a woman i.e. one fails to have confi=dence in him, or alternatively he is sheepish, modest and shy.

A sharp and astute young man who is a success, gets accorded meritorious praise. Some of the following expressions may be used:

Ke ngwan'a monna. (lit. he is the child of a man, i.e. he is brought up the manly way.)

Ke ngwan'a rragwe (lit. he is the child of his father i.e. implying his enthusiasm in taking heed of his father's advice.)

Ke monna (lit. he is a man, i.e. he can be entrusted with responsibility.)

Ke sebata (lit. he is a lion, i.e. he is brave, or alternatively a reliable man.)

Apart from the use of the above expressions in disparaging women and approbating the men's social intercourse with the rest of the community, there are still other speech sterectypes which acccrding to Chinkanda (1984:21) men have coined. These utterances can either reveal a positive or negative attitude towards women. These are the indigencus proverbs used in everyday conversation. Most of them are motive-based and always function interpreting the intended goals and attitudes of man towards a woman. In the light of this, it is necessary to provide an indepth analysis of function of Northern Sotho proverbs relating to women. These will clearly reveal some of the men's intended goals and attitudes:

Mosadi ke tšhwene o lewa mabogo
(lit. A woman is a baboon, her hands are eaten, i.e. the beauty of a nubile woman is weighed in terms of her industriousness and competence.)

A choice of a marriageable woman in Northern Sotho culture is influenced by a complex of additional attributes. Beauty is one, but probably the least

of all her physical attributes which determine her worth. The most important qualities of a woman are hard-work, ability to bear children, sound social and moral background which breed healthy human relations with others. An unattractive woman may earn a good reputation with her industriousness and competence. Unfortunately the total impression gained here, is that a woman is regarded as a means to an end - a person acquired for purposes of fulfilling a certain mission.

Naswa ya mošate e fenya e sa rage.

(lit. A king's black cow that gains victory without engaging in the physical battle i.e. a woman stoops to conquer).

Two meanings may be gleaned; on the one hand the proverb means that knowing very well that she lacks physical strength to fight any man who confronts her, a woman will always devise sly means of overcoming the confron= tation; on the other-hand this is a serious warning to the men-folk against women's God-given deceptive tactics used as defence mechanism against the sterner sex.

Tshupša gôlôla, tša manaka di hlabane.

(lit. You, the hornless cow, do bellow and enable those with horns to fight, i.e. should a woman exclaim for help men are voluntarily inclined to come to her rescue.)

It is culturally imperative among the Northern Sotho that whenever a woman cries out men should voluntarily come to her rescue. This is so because it is generally accepted by all men, including those of other speech communities, that a woman is a powerless being and wholly relies on man's physical protection in times of strife. The metaphor of 'a hornless cow' in this instance, puts a woman not only in her state of helplessness socially but it also alludes to her inferiority.

Lebitla la mosadi ke bogadi.

(lit. The woman's grave is her place of marriage, i.e. marriage perpetuates the woman's place of domicile).

Notwithstanding the petty and serious squabbles the bride experiences with her in-laws she cannot divorce for purpose of going back to her parent. Divorce is a taboo in Northern Sotho culture and it is viewed as depravity. A limited concession of deserting one's spouse as a measure of reprimand

is only accorded to the husband who in the interim is allowed to marry the second wife. The Western concept of divorce is not similar to the above Northern Sotho traditional concept known as **go nyatša** (lit. to despise i.e. to humiliate). To this extent one is made aware of the social inequality implied in the proverb between husband and wife.

Mosadi ke pudi, monna ke nku, o llela teng.

(lit. A woman is goat and a man is sheep that bleats inwardly, i.e. a woman always weeps whilst a man endures pain silently). It is common for a woman to cry out when she is in physical pains whilst a man is always capable of enduring pain and suffering. The metaphorical comparison in the proverb provides cowar= dice in a woman and bravery in a man. This enables man to maintain his upperhand over a woman in their social standing.

If one accepts Chikanda's assertion (1984:21) that men are responsible for coining proverbs, then one has to consider the other side of the coin. This brings the present investigation to another indepth analysis of some of the proverbs about men:

Monna ke thaka, o a nama

(Lit. A man is like a gourd-plant, he stretches out as he grows, i.e. man is culturally liable to indulge in polygamy).

The status of a man in the Northern Sotho traditional society is determined by the number of women he has married. The greater the number of wives, the greater the number of children the man should have. This custom enjoys the stronger support of the senior wives. On the understanding of the above proverb the senior wife would even go out of her way to seek marriage for a woman she has chosen to become co-wife to her husband. The proverb then endorses power and authority a Northern Sotho traditional man has over a woman.

Monna ga a hlabje ka lerumo le tee.

(Lit. A man never dies with ease if stabbed once with a spear, i.e. give a man his second mug of beer.)

In extending his authority and power, man craves for a lion's share even in food and drinks. The

proverb alludes to his toughness as metaphorically incomparable to anything. This special reference to man depreciates the woman's stature.

Modiša ga a rarele mothetlwa

(lit. In plucking the fruit of **Grewia,** a herdboy does nct go round it, i.e. a good worker concentra= tes on his work.)

Some proverbs about men are both didactic and dogmatic. As in the one just cited, a herdboy is realised as a future man to whom one day the respon= sibility wil be entrusted. So he must be prepared against delay, indolence and irresponsibility in order for him to surpass femininity in future. The general implication could be lack of strict control over girls for the future of the nation lies not in their hands.

Monna ke phoka, o wa bošego.

(Lit. Man is dew he falls during the night i.e. the early bird catches the worm).

Man, as the head of family, is supposed to be the first to wake up early in the morning for his

routine work while women and children are still asleep. The cultural origin of the proverb, however, is alluded to a polygamist whose nocturnal visits to his wives cannot be predicted. Similarly, it cannot be said with utmost certainty in which house he spent the night. In this way he remains the overseer of his extended families.

Kgwale ya monna e sekwa e le thekeng

(lit. Man's patridge remains negotiable whilst at the waist i.e. there is no case for any man who has eloped with a girl). A man who does not have **magadi** (marriage goods) to marry a woman can still elope with her for purposes of keeping her with him. It is understood that marriage will still be contracted when he is ready for that. The latitude given to a man in this context suggests the obvious acknowledgement of his superiority over his fianceé.

The analysis of speech stereotypes of males and females in Northern Sotho utterances thus far, reveals few remarkable notions which indicate very clearly the immeasurable influence of sexism. Most of these stereotypes which are, for the moment,

exemplified by idiomatic and proverbial expressions relegate the social status of a woman to that of a nonentity. The sex role stereotypes of men have acquired aggressive qualities and command absolute power and authority while those of women demonstrate lack of assertiveness and certainty. This results in, on the part of Northern Sotho women, submissive= ness and self-humiliation because most of the time they are deprived of the opportunity to protect their own human dignity. The simile always used to describe a woman does not only demean herself but leaves the hearer shocked and horrified. Compare the following metaphors; **mosadi ke tšhwene ...** (lit. a woman is a baboon ...), **mosadi ke pudi ...** (lit. a woman is a goat ...), **tšhupša golola ...** (lit. a hornless cow, does bellow ...) and **naswa ya mošate ...** (lit. a king's black cow ...). Unfortunately the traditional custom favours male dominance over the females. This plague which is realised in most of the world communities, like in Western societies, is about to be vanquished by feminism. Perhaps the words of Bosmajian as quoted by Adler (1978:101) better summarize this sexist element in language usage properly:

> Our everyday speech reflects the "superio= rity" of the male and the "inferiority" of the female, resulting in a master-sub= ject relationship. The lanaguage of

> sexism relegates the woman to the status of children, servants, and idiots, to being the "second sex" virtual invisibi= lity.

4.3.5.0 Significance of Word-order in Linguistic Sex Differen= tiation.

The significance of word-order in word pairs presents another interesting observation regarding the social meaning of varieties differentiation according to sex in Northern Sotho. The pragmatic analysis of word-order in word pairs reveals two basic notions with which to define their symmetrical characteristics. The first notion is that of inseparable unit of non-human things based on sexual ties. The second notion is that of the intimate relationship between human beings because of marital ties. The constant change of the usual order in word pairs suggests uncommon relation between them. Smith (1985:47) makes the following observation about the essence of word-order in word pairs:

> Another asymmetry in the representation of women and men in language is reflected

> in the order of precedence given to males and females when they are referred to together. It seems that the old maxim 'Ladies before gentlemen', is more often honoured in the breach than in the obser= vance.

A comparative analysis of the following word pairs in the following utterance clearly illus= trates the point:

O rekile **pholo le tshadi**

(He bought a male and a female)

O rekile **tshadi le pholo**

(He bought a female and a male)

The word-pair in the first utterance implies, depending on context, the pairing of male and female in terms of sexual bondage, whereas in the second utterance the word pair suggests together= ness of male and female outside sexual ties. In other words there is that element of individuality in the dyad. The following word pairs in context provide further analysis of speech difference in males and females:

Ke ya **monna le mosadi**
(lit. It belongs to man and woman, i.e.
husband and wife.)

Ke ya **mosadi le monna**
(That's for a woman and a man.)

The word pair in the first utterance implies a married couple whereas the one in the second utterance refers to ordinary male and female persons (outside the realm of marital relations) that is, independent individuals.

Go fetile **lesogana le kgarebe**
(lit. A lad and a lass went past.
i.e. a couple went by).

Go fetile **kgarebe le lesogana**
(A young woman and a man went past).

Whilst the word pair in the first utterance suggests a couple the second word pair implies two people who do not share common interest as the former. Even their passing could have been in such a way that one person went first and then the other followed.

Go tlile **mokgalabje le mokgekolo.**
(lit. there came an old man and a woman
i.e. an elderly couple).

Go tlile **mokgekolo le mokgalabje**
(There came an old woman and an old man
i.e. individual old woman and man)

The relationship of the male and female in the first word pair is based on their marital status, whereas in the second utterance the word pair does not suggest any relationship whatsoever. The two people are viewed as independent individuals only.

The foregoing analysis of word pairs seems to overemphasize male dominance more than anything else in linguistic sex distinction. This is a universal feature in most language and it cannot be claimed to be a feature of specific culture or a particular speech community. It therefore seems to be matter of convention rather than abitrariness.

4.3.6.0 Language of maternity

Women's language among the Northern Sotho traditional societies is characterized by a specialized variety of language. Its pragmatic functions are farther removed from those of men's language. The variety relates to the woman's sexual, confine=

ment and maternity experiences. The idiomatic expressions and utterances used in everyday life reflect the general influence of the female rôle. The hearer associates them readily with a woman or anything relating to womanhood. The distinct stylistic device which commonly charac= terizes the whole of the communicative system is use of 'metaphorization'. Mashabela (1979:18) defines this coinage, 'metaphorization' as:

> the expression of similitude by way of, not only metaphor, but also metonymy, synecdoche , hyperbole and other usages with metaphoric and polysemic implications.

This is indeed valid in so far as the language of maternity is concerned. In order (Mashabela,1979:18)'to grasp the symbolism implied' in an idiom or utterance one should first familiarize oneself with the cultural traits of one's people. In this way one will realise that the generous use of figurative language in maternity circles becomes a common tendency. This stylistic device is intended to conceal the obscene nature of things expressed. The element of profanity and obscenity is, however, inevitable since the leading literal translations of the expressions and utterances

analysed will always presage the conveyed meaning. It is, for instance, a taboo for a Northern Sotho traditional woman to indulge in pre-marital relations. The idioms expressing the woman's first sexual experience are:

Go tseba monna

(lit. To know a man i.e. to copulate with a male partner for the first time.)

Go kgaolwa lekgole

(lit. To have ones loin skirt thong broken i.e. to have someone's virginity broken resulting from the first experience of sexual relations).

Go tšolwa lebole

(lit. To have someone stripped of one's loin-kilt, i.e. to have first experience in sexual intercourse.)

From the above expressions one concludes that the end result of sexual relations is that the female partner usually conceives. The newly conceived woman again experiences physiological changes which mark the beginning of her pregnancy. These symptoms are also expressed in euphemistic ways. The following are some of the expressions used by women-folk to describe such a person:

O tshetšwe ke kgwedi
(lit. she has been skipped by a month
i.e. she did not menstruate.)

Ga a sa bona kgwedi

(lit. she does not see the moon any longer
i.e. she does not menstruate any longer, implying
that she is expecting a baby).

O ribogile

(lit. she has bloomed, i.e. she has conceived.)

O swere
(lit. she caught up, i.e. she has conceived.)

O akgotše
(lit. she hurriedly extended her helping hand
i.e. she conceived without delay.)

O selagantše
(lit. she swiftly went across,
i.e. she instantly conceived).

Some symptoms of pregnancy in Northern Sotho culture are so peripheral that they are allegedly ascribed to personality disorders in the expectant mother. It is believed that her attitude becomes affected to an extent of becoming unnecessarily fastidious especially in the partaking of daily food. Should the mother-to-be act against such psychological convictions the result comes in the

form of morning sickness which is characterized by nausea and vomiting. The common expression used to describe such state of attitude is:

Go gantšhwa
(lit. To be made to detest, i.e. to be easily disgusted with.)

The opposite expression would be:

Go ratišwa
(lit. To be made to have love for, i.e. to develop excessive taste or liking for.)

With the passage of time a pregnant woman obviously undergoes physical changes. She normally gains weight. Her complexion becomes lighter and brighter. As time goes on she gradually loses shape so much so that everybody becomes fully aware that she is expectant. Once more the following expressions are used to describe her:

O latswitšwe ke hlware
(lit. she has been licked by a python, i.e. she looks more beautiful than before; im= plying her tenderness resulting from her early stages of pregnancy.)

O a swanelwa
(lit. She looks smart or she is smartly dressed, i.e. she is suited by the pregnant appearance).

O reketšwe
(lit. She made some good sale or other, i.e. at last she succeeded in expecting a baby.)

O a iphepela
(lit. She personally looks after hers, i.e. her child that is still to come.)

O tšhileng
(lit. She is impure i.e. an understatement which implies her sacredness.)

O mmeleng
(lit. She is bodily succumbed i.e. about to reach the advanced stage of pregnancy.)

The present investigation further requires analysis of the ritual speech often used in maternity context; for maternity in itself represents another stage in the rite of passage. There are serious complications in maternity life which pose major health problems that call for medical attention. Such complications are common as well in Northern Sotho society and the sole consultants are tradi= tional healers and medicine-men. Their social interactions provide an obvious platform for on-going

ritual communications. In his definition of ritual communication Akinnaso (1985:333) writes:

> The term **ritual communication** is used to describe the formal and conventional properties of the symbols used in ritual events. Thus by ritual communi= cation is meant the set of communicative symbols used in conventionally specified contexts in which the patterns of interaction and communicative choices are restricted or elaborated along certain definable directions and set apart from those of ordinary, everyday conversation.

He continues to elaborate on the symbols as follows:

> As indicated earlier, the symbols used in ritual communication are of two basic types: They can be linguistic (words) or material (things).

The subsequent analysis is obviously linguistic, for it consists of expressions and utterances contained in the ritual communicative systems obtained from everyday consultations with tradi= tional mid-wives, medicine-men and their clients. Apart from the continuous use of recurring metapho= rization, the whole verbal exchange or whatever description used by interlocutors, is marked by formality. This mode of discourse is elevated to another type of specialised language associated with such people as

mentioned hereabove. It is therefore probable to regard ritual speech in the context of maternity circles as diglossic.

Dissatisfaction in a traditional Northern Sotho family always arises in any husband whose wife gives birth to children of the same sex whereas the one who alternates sex in birth-giving is gladly described as; **O tswaka kgale** (lit. she mixes her measure of grain, i.e. she bears children of mixed sexes). The one who doesn't is described in two opposing ways thus:

> **Go belega thari ye nnyane** (lit. To give birth to minor children, i.e. being blessed with baby-girls only.)
>
> **Go belega thari ye kgolo**(lit. To give birth to major children, i.e. being blessed with baby-boys only.)

Under the circumstances a husband always finds it extremely necessary to seek help from a medicine-man who will be capable of alternating the sex of children still to come. This then enables the speaker to use the correct expressions typical of ritual speech to enable the traditional healer understand:

Go retolla letheka (lit. To turn the waist, i.e. to be on treatment that would influence change from one sex to another in the birth of children).

Go fetola thari (lit. To change progeny i.e. to reverse the course in case of single sex in the birth of children within the same family).

The woman will then be subjected to medical treatment and will be left under the care of the medicine-man. Should the medicine-man find it necessary for the husband to copulate in order to facilitate conception, he will ask him to keep the "woman-patient" company in seclusion. Otherwise the medicine-man or his personal assistant known as **morwadi wa thebele** (the carrier of divination kit) is still liable, under secret agreement with the "woman-patient", to unite sexually with her from time to time until it has been established that she has conceived. Although this may be viewed by non-native speakers of Northern Sotho as violation of another man's conjugal rights, to a Northern Sotho traditional man it is regarded as another part of medical treatment his wife must undergo. This temporal cohabitation is idiomatically

expressed in ritual communication as:

Go felegetša dihlare (lit. To accompany the medicines to the womb i.e. to copu= late in order to facilitate concep= tion.

This is agreeably carried out in view of the fact that the medicines the "woman-patient" is taking day by day are supposed to promote fertility and if possible speed up ovulation. It is not surprising when the world-view of Northern Sotho traditional medicine strikes such a compromise with its external world around it.

Barrenness and infertility pose yet another problem which may require medical attention. It is customa= rily believed, and strongly so, that a woman who finds it hard to conceive can still be helped to surmount the problem. A man is rarely suspected of any infertility and as a result it is the woman who is subjected to medical treatment which is commonly expressed in the following:

Go remela

(lit. To chop for or on behalf of someone,

i.e. to be under treatment for purposes of begetting a child).

While the wife is busy receiving treatment, the husband may at the discretion of the "doctor" receive his prescription readily prepared for him to take along. The effect of the medication is intended to fortify his sexual desire. He will always be told that the mixture is prepared for purposes of :

Go tiiša letheka.
(lit. To strengthen the waist, i.e. to improve virility or potency.)

It does happen out of natural causes at times that a married woman experiences what the modern medicine (Wagman 1986:583-587) refers to as spontaneous and habitual abortions (these experiences are both commonly known as; **Go boa tseleng** lit. to take a short turn on the way. For more expressions cf. Mokgokong (1975:34). The idea that the woman's womb must be subjected to immediate cleansing is usually put into practice. This becomes the

work of the traditional medicine-man again who expresses the act of doing so in the following expressions:

Go hlatswa letheka

(lit. To wash the waist, i.e. to cleanse the womb.)

Go buša noga

(lit. To bring back the snake, i.e. rejuvi= nating the womb.)

The latter expression uses far-fetched metaphor which compares the process of ovulation to a snake that has gone to hibernate. It is true that a disturbed womb usually takes time to regain its conception vitality. Similarly a woman who does not take time to conceive is aptly described by the following expression:

Go ba le nogana ya kgauswi

(lit. To have a little snake in the nearby, i.e. able to conceive with ease.)

At the end of all the womb cleansing rituals, the last lap of medication is aimed at streng= thening the convalescent woman by providing her with out-patient treatment which she will have to take from time to time until she conceives again. The medicines are intended to ensure conception and protect her against future miscar= riage. The idea behind the whole process in Northern Sotho is expressed as:

> **Go bofela**
> (lit. To tie up for or on behalf of, i.e. be subjected to treatment that will ensure conception and protect her against future miscarriage.)

The registers analysed thus far, including the study of maternity speech, prove that the feminine role influences language. Despite this influence however, both sexes can still use the same language. Crosby and Nyquist (1977:34) summarize the whole idea of having the female language used by both sexes in the following:

> Both men and women may use female register. The distinguishing feature of female register is not therefore, that it is used exclusively by women but rather that it embodies the feminine role in our society.

4.3.7.0 Some Snippets of Initiation Language According to Sex.

In the study of initiation language, the pioneers, Mokgokong(1975), Finlayson (1984(b)) and Guma (1967) have succeeded in capturing the social meaning of the lexicon and utterances they have analysed. Since Northern Sotho society practises male and female initia= tion, it can be expected that on the strength of the background that language varieties according to sex are feasible. In light of this, it is therefore necessary to briefly analyse the initiation repetoire used by the males and females in Northern Sotho. The common moral in most of the formulae pertains to sex and its place in the relationship between husband-wife. Some of thse initiation formulae are rendered into or contained in initiation songs. This enables the initiates to remember them throughout. For instance, in indoctrinating the initiates to take care of their future expectant wives the following formula is pitched at the beginning of any song:

Ke re, ke-kee-kee!
E tlang le bone
Molwetši wa pelo e tšhweu,
Ke re ke a mo kgwatha,
O a sega.

(So I giggled with excitement!
And I invite you all;
To witness with me an ill-happy person
who laughs despite her ill-health
As I casually induce her with a caress).

The above formula portrays a man who is charged with emotion of love and excitement for his beloved as he fondles her. The words **molwetši wa pelo ye tšhweu** (a sickly but happy person) implies a vein of an oxymoron. This presents an image of a sickly woman who, despite her ill-health, she still remains happy. The fondling expressed towards the end of the formula elucidates the image portrayed and at the same time tones the image of depression. The general invitation expressed, on the other hand, brightens the excitement expressed in the first line. Surely, there is nothing like serious ailment as experien= ced by 'an ill-happy person' involved in this dramatic situation.

An initiation formula, like the one just analysed, leaves the initiates with a very strong and effective message which they must always recall as future husbands. They are instructed to indulge in conjugal rights until the spouse is due for confinement.

In some instances, they are taught that sexual satisfaction contributes stability in a marriage, particularly where one is married to more than

one. The analysis of the following formula further confirms this view:

Hela! Hela! Basadi ba monnamongwe
Ba rile ba ile kgonyeng molapong
Yo mongwe a le ka mose cla wa molapo
Yola a re; Mmamodiladilane!
Yola a re; Ee!
A re afa tsa gago ba a di kgona dilwanadiswana
Yola a re: Aowaowaa!
Nna ke kgonwa ke phanyaka monn'ageso
Malala-a-ipatile le dirope.

(Hey! Hey! Wives of a certain man!
Down in the valley collecting fire-wood
One stood across the valley
And called on the other: **Mmamodiladilane**
The other one answered: Hallo!
Do they really meet the demands of your
unspeakables?
She answered: Oh, No!
I bow to a man
Who wields the might of his manliness
To warm my thighs to satisfaction.)

The essence of the above formula points out an element of sexism whereby it "relegates women to certain subservient functions: that of sex-object" (Lakoff 1973'46). This could possibly be the general conviction in most of the polygamous marriages in traditional societies that for a man to succeed in married life he should strive to give his wives sexual satisfaction. It is equally true that women enjoy speaking to one another about such 'trivial topics' that are so 'open and self-revealing' (Kramer 1977: 159) to their inner-selves, yet at the bottom of these trivialities lies the real truth. In other words a traditional Northern Sotho married man attaches

greater importance to his conjugal rights in married life than to all other material needs. That is, one can give a woman all that she requires materially but if one fails to offer sexual satisfaction, this may result in discomfort on the part of one's wife. This is regarded as one of the key priorities that stabilize most of the polygamous marriages.

The presentation of the formula is highly stylized. It takes the form of natural conversation between co-wives. This technique is intended to make the dialogue sound more effective to the ears of the initiates. To the uninitiated the formula uses elusive and compact metaphor that makes understanding difficult. From the beginning the dialogue is presented in simple and straight-forward language and towards the end of it the style becomes so lofty and poetic that the whole communicative act 'tends to be obscure and unintelligible to the uninitiated' (Guma 1967:117). The use of the neologistic word such as **dilwanadi=swana** (lit. the little blackish things) captures the apt euphemism which suggests the unspeakables, most probably in an attempt to avoid the use of vulgar language. The answer **ke kgonwa ke phanyaka monn'ageŠo** yields synecdoche. It

euphemistically refers to the male sexual organ. The descriptive utterance **malala-a-ipatile le dirope** further simplifies the metaphor and makes it easier for it to be associated with debauchery. It is from this correlation that one is able to understand the whole discourse as: 'I respect a man who is not only lecherous but can as well give me sexual satisfaction'.

Similarly, the female initiates are taught diffe= rent formulas that are intended to prepare them for womanhood. Most of these formulas are presented as songs. Some of them are intended to be self-consoling in view of the hardships the initiates endure everyday. The following song known as **Matatapela** (lit. that with which to wrap the rock-rabbit, i.e. ragged clothes) clearly exempli= fies catachresis:

Re apere matatapela
Kobo tša marena
Šaba le bolawa ke phefo
Rena re apere.

(We have put on ragged clothes
Clothes of the noble people
The majority endures cold weather
Whilst we, have dressed up.)

The girl initiates go about virtually half-naked for the rest of the session. They only put on loin-skirts around the waist which cover their lower limbs. To show that they really feel the cold weather, they go about with hands covering their protruding breasts while singing the songs. The songs emphasize that they are warmly dressed yet they are in rags. On the other hand, they pity the majority of the country people yet those are in reality the people who are warmly dressed. A close analysis of the entire wording seems to suggest self-pity. The metaphor used in this song is stylistically catachrestical and exaggerating. The first line puts it clearly that they have put on ragged clothes yet describing such clothes in the second line as associated with people of the high class. Comparison with the majority further contracts the catachresis in the opening line. Whilst the song expresses self-pity with cruel metaphor it leaves the singers with a sense of perseverance as the singing continues with lamenting tone that underlines endurance of a biting weather. Some informants, however, maintain that the wording of a song is designed to teach the female initiates to protect their nakedness. The impli= cation is that the body of a grown-up woman remains secret to all but her husband.

The girl initiates are taught as well to honour the men-folk at all times. This is done by way of praising them using eulogues, regiment names and heroic praises. A common device here again is a song. The most popular in Northern Sotho ritual songs for the girls initiation is **Palabala=marena** (lit. the one that counts on the nobles, i.e. the one intended to reflect on one's choice of a spouse.)

K'o bala k'o šia mang?
K'o sia rare a ntswetše!
Segopotše sa Matuba.
Ke gopolela Batubatse
Morutse wa Mankwana,
Morutse mošitatladi,
Mositatladi a Matuba
Mogwerathake tladi'a itia seolo
Mogwerathake masetlaoka a falala
Ka tshela ka reta molobe
Mongbotšha a sa dutše
Molobe wa botšha ke thag'etala, Mohube.

(Whom shall I leave out in my choice
Whom, in the name of my father,
Segopotše of the **Matuba** regiment?
My thoughts anchor on the son of the **Batubatse**
Morutse of **Mankana;**
He who baffled **Tladi** of the **Matuba** regiment;
My friend, **Tladi** the lightning that struck the ant-hill
My friend, all the ants went helter-skelter!
I condescend to praise the head-initiate
As against the master of the initiation school.
The head-initiate is the Yellow Finch, **Mohube.**)

The above song demonstrates the traditional mode; using erotic language. An element of praise predominates the communicative skill. This mode of expression is typical of

both modern and traditional woman. She is endowed with the ability to deign to the person she loves most. She would rather praise him for his prowess and probably regard him as the most distinguished person amongst the members of his regiment. He may be distinguished as a result of his substantial achievements or on the basis of his social status. This implies that the lower the social rank, the slimmer the chances are for one to be considered as a prospective spouse.

Whilst in the beginning the above song is clouded by timidness and gibberish, from the middle and right up to the end of it, the singer articulates with rhetoric the name of a person she loves - the person she adores for heroic deeds. She refers to him as the person who, at some stage, baffled the lightning which ended up striking an ant-hill and the ants went out in a disorderly way. This undoubtedly points out an incident associated with a valiant person **Morutse**, as the singer now and again refers to him as such. He is not only full of values, he is of royal, descent. **Molobe wa botšha** (the head-initiate) reveals his royal birth and it is this expression

which alludes to the fact that he is possibly the son of a king. The copulative **ke thagetala** (lit. he is a yellow finch) further confirms his royal kinship because it is metaphorically asso= ciated with the traditional royal pearl known as **phet'athaga** (lit. a pearl of a yellow finch.) The whole composition can, therefore, be perceived as a plea to be wedded to a future king-**Mohube**, who probably headed the initiation ceremony of the **Matuba** regiment. Most likely the name **Morutse** preceded the heroic name,**Mohube**, which was acquired thereafter. It should be clear from the foregoing analysis of this rhetoric that the element of humble submission on the part of women is equally prevalent even in their co-called 'secret language'.

The significant part of **Language and Sex** analysis shows that sex roles determine language behaviour between men and women. Whilst feminism in Northern Sotho traditional society has not yet gained any ground, sexism still plays a leading role in speech, and women-folk are accorded the lower status compared to men's status. This becomes very clear in the analysis of linguistic stereo= types, particularly the proverbs. On the whole

linguistic sex divergency in Northern Sotho speech community is not a matter of observing language restrictions and avoidance but of func= tional approach. In other words, speech varieties must reflect in themselves the element of either femininity or masculinity in order for them to be classified thus.

CHAPTER 5.

5.0.0.0 EVALUATION AND GENERAL CONCLUSION

5.1.0.0 The analysis in the preceding chapters evidently reveals a variety of sociolinguistic features of the language petternings associated with different situational contexts in a Northern Sotho speech community. The most significant of these findings is the key role played by the social context in determining the meaning of these language varieties. Further discoveries reveal the influence of extra- and paralinguistic contextual factors and how these shape the meaning of these linguistic variables. These factors include, amongst others, the on-going social activity, modality, participants' social roles and toneme patterns. The investigation undertaken in consideration of these factors brings the analysis to the functional understanding of the microlevels of language-in-action. Aptly put by Neubert (1976:154) 'language and society... are not only interrelated, they constitute not only so to say, foreground and background, but the func= tion of language in a social setting is a

necessary ingredient of any theory of language.' Thus far, this has been the general trend in this research.

5.2.0.0 The speech domains discussed in Chapter Two of this work clearly represent briefly the social setting referred to by Neubert. These speech domains briefly introduce the concept 'register' in Northern Sotho. It has, therefore, been realised that each situational context has a langauge variety associated with it and the atmosphere prevailing in the interim is always, and clearly so, marked by these diatypic varieties called 'speech registers'. For instance, listening to a boxing commentary in Northern Sotho, one expects to hear such words as: **letšwele** (a punch), **mohlatloša** (an upper-cut) **malokwane** (referee) and **nkgwete** (champion). All these words and many others of similar nature illustrate the speech varieties associated with boxing.

The foregoing illustration confirms Trudgill's (1974:104) claim that 'registers are usually characterized solely by vocabulary differences: either by the use of particular words, or by the

use of the words in a particular sense'. The principle is partly misleading because the analysis has shown that even expressions and utterances in Northern Sotho may simply mark a text as containing registers. Mourning domain provides a classical example in this work.

5.3.0.0 A further attempt has been made to establish that pragmatics of discourse is context-based and that contextualization cues employed in the analytic process are only complementary. Above all, the social environment provides the overall background because discourse analysis is the end-product of everyday social interactions. Naturally occurring conversations and dialogue are also part of dis= course and are not excluded in pragmatics. Discourse analysis, therefore, stretches across the whole spectrum of the socio-cultural milieu in Northern Sotho and mostly reveals the social functions of language. The analysis of the present investigation then, adopts a sociolinguis= tic approach and in so doing brings us to the analysis of langauge-at-work. When the following utterances occur in ordinary conversation they are appropriated to their communicative situations

without mistaking their meaning:

O llwe ke ntlo (lit. She is devoured by the house) is undoubtedly ascribed to an untimely death of a woman during her confinement, particu= larly in the course of her delivery.

Mabu a utswitšwe. (lit. the soil (land) has been stolen) is an expres= sion commonly used to announce a sudden death of a king in Northern Sotho.

Examples such as these confirm that in every communicative situation, as in speech domain, there are expressions and utterances that constitute discourse.

5.4.0.0 Linguistic sex distinctions discussed so far in Northern Sotho postulate a comparatively far-reaching theory than theories propounded by the leading scholar in **Women's Language** (Lakoff: 1972) and the exponent of **Isihlonipho Sabafazi** and **Isikhwêtha** (Finlayson 1982, 1984(b)). The larger part of discussions is focused on phonological, grammatical, morphological and lexical strategies. These are intended to reveal in outline the re=

stricted codes that mark their linguistic alterna= tives. Northern Sotho applies the same principles including the syntactic strategies as speech markers for sex differentiation. This then accounts for a wider variety of language divergen= cies between men and women.

5.4.1.0 At this point it is perhaps appropriate to mention a related but controversial issue. The traditional man in Northern Sotho never regarded his language in the light of what Bosmajian (1974) refers to as "The Language of Oppression." This re= search shows that this aspect of langauge study is still under-researched. The field that has been covered already indicates that the varie= ties are in abundance in Northern Sotho and for that matter one would encourage more research in this aspect.

5.4.2.0 Similarly, the initiation language in Northern Sotho provides other evidence which invites more researchers to embark on the project notwithstanding the nature of its secrecy. Finlayson (1984(b):3 questions the validity of the secrecy of the language and apparently she does not find any

reason why it should not be divulged:

> The question arises - why the anonymity of **Isikhwêtha** should be preserved...?

Though the majority of the initiated may not accept the persuasion as frank and genuine, some authors such as Serudu (1977:1) have already indicated their willingness to use this secret language in their works and by so doing uncover the hidden heritage of Northern Sotho:

> Ke kitelwa dijo ganong
> Ke re ke betola ba re o a nyankga
> O itshema mothonyana moisa tena!
>
> (Forcing food down my oesophagus
> So bellious and sick as I feel
> They would scornfully humiliate me!)

The above excerpt depicts a stubborn initiate who refuses to partake of his daily sustenance and therefore is forced to do so. The writer chooses to use this cruel metaphor in order to portray Mphaka as a man who adheres to his principles at all times. Similarly Matsepe uses the following expressions, which are typical of initiation language, to refer to pilliwinks:

Ya swara mogopolo wa gagwe ka dipudi.
(Lit. it squeezed his mind with pilliwinks).
(1974:210)

Ba mo swara le ka dithamaga
(lit. they also squeezed his fingers with pilliwinks)
(1971:26).

All these illustrate the fact that the time is ripe to research this type of language which was kept for so long as a secret. Such undertakings will undoubtedly enrich the idiom of the contemporary Northern Sotho.

5.5.0.0 In conclusion one would readily and freely remark: Discourse analysis and speech varieties in Northern Sotho present an interesting and inspiring study of language-at-work. What really makes the whole investigation so stimulating is this modern trend of analysing langauge in context of society - **sociolinguistics** This part-discipline of Linguistics, which emphasizes the social meaning more than the traditional transformational grammar can do, should be found applicable to other African Languages as it has been the case with Northern Sotho in this research. So the aims and the objectives of this scientific work so far only serve to validate the words of Harman (1949:236) about African Languages, and Northern

Sotho in particular, when he writes:

> Many African Languages are sometimes called simple, yet they provide ways of expressing thoughts and ideas which do not exist in the languages of people who are considered to be much more advanced.

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SUMMARY

This study endeavours to establish the extent to which situational context influences Northern Sotho language, particulary, in the speaker-hearer relationship. Similarly, the influence of sex rôle is examined to determine the attitudinal relationship between the participants.

In order to arrive at this point, componential analysis of situational context, in terms of its semiotic struc= ture, is made. The analysis reveals a network of extra= linguistic contextual factors which bring about this influence on language varieties. These factors are fields, modes and tenors of discourse. The paralinguistics, such as the use of capital letters and tonemes as markers accompa= nying situational context in written texts are briefly discussed.

The analysis of these language divergencies further introduces 'institutional contexts and their congruent behavioral co-occurrences' referred to as speech domains. Lexical diversities of vocabulary and expressions determined as Northern Sotho speech registers are resolved in those domains. This shows a variety of style-shifting in every respect. In addition to these diatypic variaties pragmatics of discourse is discussed. This is intended to demonstrate the social meaning inherent in the utterances. Speech varieties according to sex are also

discussed. The meaning of these varieties is sex rôle determined. This mostly reveals the emotive value with regard to the relationship between the addresser and the addressee.

The influence of social meaning in language of every day discourse according to the findings of this research, is highly inevitable.

SAMEVATTING

Hierdie bydrae poog om te bepaal in watter mate Noord-Sotho deur situasionele konteks beïnvloed word, veral in 'n spreker-hoorder verhouding. In dieselfde raamwerk word die invloed van geslagsrolle ondersoek ten einde die houdingsverband tussen die deelnemers vas te stel.

Om hierdie oogmerk te bereik, is 'n komponentanalise van situatsionele konteks in terme van sy semiotiese struktuur gedoen. Die ontleiding ontbloot 'n netwerk van ekstralinguistiese kontekstuele faktore verantwoordelik vir hierdie invloed op taalvariasies. Genoemde faktore sluit in gebruiksfeer, gebruikswyses en registergebruik in diskoers. Paralinguistiese gebruiksmanifestasies, soos die gebruik van hoofletters en toneme as gepaardgaande merkers in situasionele konteks in geskrewe tekste, word kortliks bespreek.

Die ontleding van hiedie taalverskile bring voorts 'institusionele kontekste en hul ooreenstemmende gedragsvoorkomste voort', bekend as spreekdomeine. Leksikale verskeidenheid en uitdrukkings as Noord-Sothotaalregisters word in hierdie domeine vasgelê. Dit toon 'n verskeidenheid van stylverskuiwing in elke opsig. In aansluiting by hierdie diatipe variasies word diskoerspragmatiek

bespreek met die doel om die sosiale betekenis, inherent in die uitsig teenwoordig, aan te toon. Ook taalvariasie volgens geslag word bespreek. Die betekenis van hierdie variasies word bepaal deur geslagsrolle. Dit toon in 'n groct mate die emotiewe waarde met betrekking tot die verhouding tussen spreker en aangesprokene.

Invloed van sosiale faktore in alledaagse diskoers is volgens die bevindings in hierdie ondersoek, onvermy= delik.