

THE SOUTHERN SOTHO RELATIVE IN DISCOURSE

by

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submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the subject

AFRICAN LANGUAGES

at the University of South Africa

SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR L J LOUWRENS

NOVEMBER 1997

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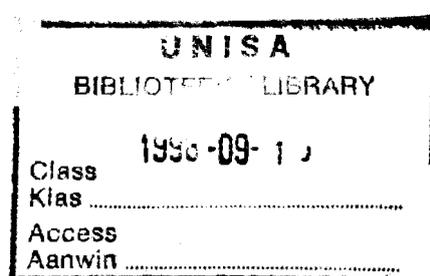
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DECLARATION

"I declare that *The Southern Sotho relative in discourse* is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references."

A handwritten signature in black ink, written over a horizontal dotted line. The signature is cursive and appears to be 'L. P. M. K. O.'.

The financial assistance of the Centre for Science Development (HSRC, South Africa) towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the Centre for Science Development.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to:

Prof. L.J. Louwrens for his exceptional academic and moral support.

My colleagues Rosemary Moeketsi, Prof. L.M. Lenake and Prof. C.F. Swanepoel. What would I have done without you!

Cathy Greaves and Petro du Preez for their skilful and meticulous proofreading and editing.

My husband, Carl, who knows everything I don't.

All members of the Department of African Languages for their friendship.

The Lord to whom I owe my existence.

DEDICATION

Carl, Martemie, Rentia and Isabel:

“The family is one of nature’s masterpieces.”

(George Satanya)

SUMMARY

Southern Sotho verbal relative clauses are, on discourse-pragmatic grounds, categorised as **direct** and **indirect**. The pragmatic factors that govern the occurrence of these two types of relatives within a particular discourse context are investigated.

An analysis of relative clauses occurring in live conversations as well as in the dramas *Bulane* (Khaketla, 1983) and *Tjootjo e tla hloma sesela* (Maake, 1992) reveals that **direct** relative clauses usually modify the reference of **predicate nouns** (i.e. nouns used as the complements of copulative predicates), while **indirect** relative clauses modify the reference of **object nouns**.

Theories which suggest that both predicate as well as object nouns generally convey **new** information, but that the reference status of predicate nouns is **non-specific indefinite**, while that of object nouns is **specific indefinite**, are discussed. A hypothesis suggesting that there is an interrelationship between the reference status of a head noun and the type of relative by means of which it is qualified, is proposed.

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Relative; Relative clause; Qualificative clause; Direct relative; Indirect relative; Function of relative clause; Restrictive relative clause; Non-restrictive relative clause; Identifying relative clause; Descriptive relative clause; Characterising relative clause; Reference; Denotation; Referring expression; Head noun; Predicative noun; Subject; Object; Predicate; Copulative; Copulative complement; Discourse analysis; Discourse pragmatics; Identifying characteristics of referents; Attributes of referents; Interrelationship between function and structure.

Chapter 1

Southern Sotho verbal relative constructions

1.1 Introduction

One of the undeniable incentives of human communication is the desire to discuss the people and objects which share our space under the sun. During the process of sharing our experience of life with our fellow human beings, we largely communicate to them information regarding the environment in which we work and play. From a linguistic point of view, such conversations are of an intricate nature: On the one hand, they involve a speaker/an author who refers to the people/objects s/he wants to discuss by means of referring expressions, i.e. by words (often nouns) which signify things which occur in the real world (Lyons, 1981a : 95 – 99); and an addressee (listener/reader) who has to interpret such referring expressions by identifying or conceptualising the real world entities to which reference is being made. On the other hand, however, speakers also refer to the deeds, or other identifying characteristics of people by means of non-referring expressions or expressions which refer in a different way (Lyons, 1981 : 185 – 187; Bhat, 1979 : 127 – 133).

Successful communication between interlocutors, therefore, depends not only on the transparency with which a speaker/an author refers to entities in the real world, but also on the way in which the actions/states of such entities are predicated. It goes without saying that such a process of successful reference is an intricate one, and that the speaker/author will often have to utilise various linguistic means in order to assist the addressee in the identification or characterisation of the entity to which reference is

being made.

One of the linguistic means which can be employed in this regard is highlighted by Stockwell (1977 : 59) when he remarks:

"When the reference of a noun cannot be clarified satisfactorily by any determiner, then languages use a device known as the **relative clause**, which is a sentence embedded into a noun phrase, and marked in some way as subordinate to the particular noun for which clarity of reference is sought." (Emphasis mine)

Research for this study, however, established that Stockwell's observation that relative clauses are used to clarify the reference of their head nouns, only reveals one aspect of the relative's functional use and that the relative clause is, in fact, also sometimes used to predicate the identifying characteristics of discourse referents (see 2.4.3).

The following conversation between two middle-aged childhood friends who had not seen each other for a very long time, illustrates that while relative clauses, in Southern Sotho, are often employed to clarify the identity of the referent of a head noun, such clauses do also at times occur as part of a copulative predication, i.e. as part of a predicate noun phrase (Trask, 1993 : 213 – 214) which does not necessarily refer to real world entities, but which predicates something about the identifying characteristics of real world entities. Compare, for instance, how the speaker *Latjie* uses the nouns *monna* (man) and *ngwana* (child): both *monna* and *ngwana* (where the latter occurs for the first time) are used to refer to particular individuals who exist in the real world. However, where *ngwana* (child) occurs for the second time it appears as part of a noun phrase which predicates something about the **identifying characteristics** of the child, i.e. *ke*

ngwana ya balang¹ hantle (he is a child who studies well). The primary function of qualifications of this nature is to establish successful communication:

"Latjie: Sebetsi, o ntse o mo hopola monna eo ntatemoholo wa hao a itseng o thunya dinone tsa hae?"

Mmamosebetsi: O bua ka Fanie?

Latjie: Ee, yena Jwale, le ngwana wa hae o na le moya oo.

Mmamosebetsi: E e tjhe!

Latjie: Ke sono hobane ngwana eo ke ngwana ya balang hantle" . (Extract from live conversation)

"Latjie: Sebetsi, do you still remember the man whom your grandfather said shoots his blesbuck?"

Mmamosebetsi: Are you referring to Fanie?

Latjie: Yes, him. Now, his child also has that nature (takes after him).

Mmamosebetsi: Oh no!

Latjie: It is a pity because that child is a child who studies well." (i.e. that child

¹ The verb *ho bala*, which is normally translated as "to read" is, in the Tweeling district, regularly used with the implication "to study".

is a good student)

As she is aware that the addressee, *Mmamosebetsi*, has long lost contact with the referent to whom *monna* (man) is intended to refer to in this particular context, *Latjie* uses the relative clause *eo ntatemoholo wa hao a itseng* (whom your grandfather said), to re-establish the identity of *monna* (man) in the consciousness of her listener. She, in other words, identifies the referent of the referring expression *monna* (man) by means of the information supplied by the relative clause *eo ntatemoholo wa hao a itseng* (whom your grandfather said). That is, the referent "man" is identified due to the association which is established between the noun *monna* and an accusation which was made by the addressee's grandfather, viz. that this particular man shoots his blesbuck. A certain individual is thus identified by associating him with observations made by another individual who is mentioned in the relative construction, i.e. *Mmamosebetsi's* grandfather (see 3.3.1). The relative clause *ya balang hantle* (who studies well), on the other hand, is used as part of the noun phrase *ngwana ya balang hantle* (a child who studies well) which occurs as the complement of the copulative *ke ngwana ya balang hantle* (he is a child who studies well) and which predicates something about the study habits of the identified man's son. In contrast to the qualification supplied by the first relative clause, this relative clause is not used so much to qualify its head, but is, in fact, used together with its head to predicate that the referent of *ngwana* (child) is a particular type of child, viz. a child who is a good student.

Without the information supplied by these respective relative clauses the addressee, *Mmamosebetsi*, is unable to singularly identify the referent of *monna* (man) from the whole existing class of men, and is unaware of the particular identifying characteristics of the man's son which the speaker wants to highlight. If such a state of affairs is allowed to persist, the result would be a breakdown in successful communication.

The use of the relative clauses in the quoted conversation does not only illustrate a phenomenon which has not received much attention in African languages, viz. the fact that relative clauses sometimes have predicating heads, it also highlights the occurrence of more than one structural type of relative based upon a verb in Southern Sotho. Compare *eo ntagemoholo wa hao a itseng* (whom your grandfather said) and *ya balang hantle* (who studies well) which are respectively based upon the verb stems *-itse* (said) and *-bala* (study).

One of the most prominent differences between these two relative constructions is the fact that the first one is introduced by means of a relativiser (Poulos & Louwrens, 1994 : 104) which corresponds with a Southern Sotho demonstrative, cf. *eo*, and which is called a "subordinating conjunction" by Moeketsi & Swanepoel (1995). The second one, on the other hand, is introduced by means of a relativiser which is called a relative concord by Doke & Mofokeng (1957 : 127, 422) and Moeketsi, Mischke, Kock, Sibeko & Swanepoel (1994 : 70), cf. *ya-*. Despite these structural differences the two relatives have one thing in common, namely the fact that they are both based upon a verb stem which is suffixed with the relative suffix *-ng*. It is, however, also remarkable that the relative clause introduced by a subordinating conjunction qualifies its antecedent by involving another referent in the qualification, while the relative clause introduced by means of a relative concord does not involve any entity other than its own head. For an indepth discussion of the differences between these two types of relatives see 1.4.2.1 and 1.4.2.2.

The primary objectives of this study emanate from the difference in the qualificative properties of these relative types. The remainder of this dissertation will strive, therefore, to: (a) clarify some confusion which exists amongst Southern Sotho grammarians regarding the grammatical categorisation of these structurally and

pragmatically different types of relative clauses; and (b) determine the discourse factors which govern the occurrence of a particular type of relative with a particular type of head noun. In so doing, the first structural type of relative will be referred to as an "indirect" relative clause and the second one as a "direct" relative clause, following Doke & Mofokeng (1957 : 421) for Southern Sotho, Cole (1975 : 171) for Tswana and Poulos & Louwrens (1994 : 104) for Northern Sotho. When these relatives are referred to simultaneously, they will be called "verbal relatives" or "relative clauses".

1.2 Aim

(a) An explanation based on discourse phenomena has up to now not been given for the fact that some antecedents are qualified by means of direct relatives, while others are qualified by means of indirect relatives. Therefore, the **main aim** of this dissertation is to test the hypothesis that there is an interrelationship between the discourse status of a head noun and the structure and function of the Southern Sotho relative clause which is used to qualify it.

(b) During the process of illustrating the abovementioned interrelationship, this dissertation intends to illustrate that grammatical as well as discourse-pragmatic factors support the validity of the terms "direct" and "indirect" when they are used with regard to relative clauses.

(c) Southern Sotho grammarians are not in agreement about the grammatical status of the direct and indirect relatives in this language. Doke & Mofokeng (1957), for instance, are of the opinion that both these relatives are syntactic clauses, whereas Moeketsi & Swanepoel (1995) only acknowledge the clausal status of the indirect relative. According to Moeketsi et al. (1994 : 49) the direct relative should be regarded

as a "linguistic word" and not as a clause. In order to be able to refer to the two different structural types of verbal relatives in this language in an acknowledged way, this dissertation will also try to clarify issues relating to the clausal versus word status of the Southern Sotho direct relative.

1.3 Southern Sotho relatives

If the whole spectrum of Southern Sotho relatives is considered, it is observed that relatives in this language can be based upon one of the following:

- A **radical relative** stem, e.g. *-batsi*:

"Tsela e batsi" (Moeketsi et al., 1994 : 68)

"A/The road **which is wide**" (i.e. "A/The wide road")

- A **noun**, e.g. *bohlale* (wisdom):

"Ngwana ya bohlale" (Moeketsi, et al., 1994 : 69)

"A/The child **who is clever**" (i.e. "A/The clever child")

- An **adverb**, e.g. *ka ntle* (outside):

"Ke bua le bana ba kantle" (Moeketsi, et al., 1994 : 70)

- A **verb stem** e.g. *-tseba* (know) and *-romile* (sent) respectively in the following

examples:

"Ke rata batho ba tsebang" (Moeketsi, et al., 1994 : 70)

"I like people **who know**"

"Motho eo ke mo romileng, " (Moeketsi & Swanepoel, 1995 : 95)

"The person **whom I sent**,

- One or more **auxiliaries** + a **verb stem**, e.g. *-ne* (deficient verb used to form imperfect tenses) + *-tla* (will) + *-mamela* (listen) and *-ntse* (deficient verb used to indicate continuity of an action) + *-batla* (seek) respectively in the following examples:

"Pulane: Hona ha eba ke ne nkile ka bua, ke mang ya neng a tla mamela" (Khaketla, 1983 : 31)

*"Pulane: So even if I had talked, (who is it) **who would have listened**"*

"Modise: ke ena nkgo eo re ntseng re e batla." (Maake, 1992 : 60)

"Modise: here is the claypot which we are looking for."

- **Copulative** elements, e.g. *ha se* (it is not) in the example:

*"Bulane: borena bona ke ba ka ke bo tswaletswe, **ha se bo kgomeleditsweng ka letsopa."*** (Khaketla, 1983 : 14)

"Bulane: this sovereignty is mine, I acquired it at birth, it is not glued to me by means of clay."

Relatives based upon a verb stem, an auxiliary plus a verb stem, and copulative elements, however, differ from relatives based upon radical relative stems and nouns in the sense that: (a) the former display typical verbal characteristics in as far as they occur in the normal conjugations of the verb regarding tense, aspect and positive and negative; (see 1.4.2.1); and (b) they can either occur in a direct or an indirect relative construction. It will become more apparent during the course of the following discussion that the classification of relatives as "direct" or "indirect" is a means by which the relationship between the head noun and the verb stem upon which the relative is based, is expressed (see 1.4.1).

This dissertation will focus on relatives based upon **verb** stems, i.e. on direct and indirect relatives. Special attention will be paid in this chapter to the grammatical and syntactic categorisation of the "direct" relative as it is this structure in particular which causes a difference of opinion amongst linguists.

1.4 Southern Sotho verbal relative clauses

The differences which exist between scholars regarding verbal relatives revolve mainly around two issues:

Firstly a grammarian such as Poulos (1982), questions the validity of the distinction "direct" versus "indirect" on logical grounds.

Secondly, the categorial status of the direct relatives is disputed. Whereas, for example, Doke & Mofokeng (1957 : 421) regard such relatives as "clauses", Moeketsi et al. (1994 : 49) are of the opinion that they are "words".

1.4.1 Direct versus indirect relatives

The Southern Sotho **direct** relative at its most basic level consists of a relative concord (Doke & Mofokeng, 1957 : 130, 422; Moeketsi et al., 1994 : 70) which functions as a relativiser² (Poulos & Louwrens, 1994 : 107) + a verb stem (which may be extended) + a relative suffix *-ng*. Compare, for instance, *tse-* + *-tshwana* + *-ng* and *ya-* + *-qadile* + *-ng* in the following examples:

"Monna I: Ho bolaya ngwana ha ho tshwane le ho mo amoha lefa;

Monna II: Ke ntho tse pedi tse tshwanang hantle " (Khaketla, 1983 : 1)

"Monna I: To kill a child is not the same as to disinherit him;

²

In Southern Sotho there is a structure which reminds strongly of the direct verbal relative since the suffix *-ng* appears in the verb. A notable difference between this form and the verbal relative is, however, the absence of a *relativiser*. Compare the examples *ke wena mofu a neng a re* (it is you the deceased said), and *ke ka hona o fumanang ke ntse ke bua* (that is why you find me talking) in the following dialogues:

(a) **"Marora:** *Ho thwe o na hlile a lla ka wena haholo, hobane ke wena mofu a neng a re o sale o mmolokile.*" (Khaketla, ibid:24)

"Marora: It is being said that she really cried a lot because of you, as it is you who the deceased said should care for her."

(b) **"Pulane:** *Ha ke tsebe hore na ekaba se tla pitla, hobane ke lwana ntwana e kgolo; ke ka hona (wena) o fumanang ke ntse ke bua ke le mong.*" (Khaketla, ibid : 42)

"Pulane: I do not know if it will succeed, because I am fighting a big battle; that is why you find me talking to myself."

At first glance, these structures appear to be common direct verbal relatives, however, closer investigation reveals that this is not the case, because when a relativiser is inserted in these examples, the structures become ungrammatical, e.g.:

(a) **"Marora:** *Ho thwe o na hlile a lla ka wena haholo, hobane ke wena mofu ***ya neng a re** o sale o mmolokile.*" (Khaketla, ibid : 24)

(b) **"Pulane:** *Ha ke tsebe hore na ekaba se tla pitla, hobane ke lwana ntwana e kgolo; ke ka hona (wena) ***ya fumanang** ke ntse ke bua ke le mong.*" (Khaketla, ibid : 42)

The ungrammaticality of these examples shows that these structures do not have the same discourse-pragmatic function as direct verbal relatives and that they can, therefore, not be treated on a par with the structures which are focused upon in this study. Consequently, these forms will be excluded from the present analysis.

Monna II: They are two things which are very similar "

"Tefo: Ke ne nka tla ho wena ke le mong jwang motho ya qadileng taba ena a le siyo?" (Maake, 1992 : 50)

"Tefo: How would I have come to you on my own if the person who started this thing is absent?"

The first relative clause, i.e. *tse tshwanang hantle* (which are very similar), is used as part of a predication relating to the comparison which was made by the first speaker, viz. that the murder of a child is not the same as to disinherit her/him. The relative clause expresses the nature of the comparison. The second relative clause, i.e. *ya qadileng taba ena* (who started this matter), on the other hand, modifies the reference of the head noun *motho* (person). The relative concord/relativiser establishes agreement between the respective head nouns *ntho* (something) and *motho* (person) and the verbal relative stems (i.e. verb stem + suffix *-ng*) *-tshwanang* (be similar) and *-qadileng* (started). There is, therefore, a **direct** morphological relationship between the verbal stems upon which these relatives are based and the head noun.

Arguing from the point of view that the term "direct" derives from the fact that the antecedent of the direct relative clause is the subject of the verb upon which the direct relative clause is based, Poulos maintains that the classification of relative clauses in the categories "direct" and "indirect" is "a fallacy" (Poulos, 1982 : 162). He observes that the "direct" relationship between the antecedent and the relative verb is, for instance, semantically lost when the verb is passivised, and therefore rejects the validity of the distinction "direct" and "indirect". This viewpoint can be illustrated by means of the following examples:

Nkgono ya fepang ngwana ...

(The grandmother who feeds the child ...)

Ngwana ya fepuwang ke nkgono ...

(The child who is fed by the grandmother ...)

In the active sentence *Nkgono ya fepang ngwana* (The grandmother who feeds the child) the noun which is qualified by the relative clause (i.e. the antecedent *nkgono*) is also the agent of the action expressed by the relative verb. This direct involvement of the antecedent in the process denoted by the relative verb prompted traditional scholars to characterise such structures as "direct relatives". Poulos's (1982 : 162) argument that the "direct" versus "indirect" distinction is invalid, is based on the observation that in the passive counterpart of this example, i.e. *Ngwana ya fepuwang ke nkgono* (The child who is fed by the grandmother), it is no longer the antecedent which is responsible for the carrying out of the feeding act. Looked at in this way, one must concede that the distinction between "direct" and "indirect" relative clauses indeed seems to be a superficial one.

However, viewed from a discourse-pragmatic angle, this dissertation would like to propose an alternative interpretation of the concepts "direct" and "indirect" which can, for the moment, be characterised as follows: If the antecedent noun (irrespective of whether it is the semantic subject or the semantic object) is directly qualified by the relative clause, i.e. if the qualification of the antecedent does not depend on another noun which acts as the subject of the relative verb, such a structure should be regarded as **direct**. This is the case in, for example, both the active sentence *Nkgono ya fepang ngwana* (The grandmother who feeds the child) and its passive counterpart *Ngwana ya*

fepuwang ke nkgono (The child who is fed by the grandmother). However, if the antecedent is qualified by means of a relative clause which has as its grammatical subject a referent other than the antecedent itself, the structure should be regarded as **indirect**. So, for example, in the structure *Ngwana eo nkgono a mo fepang* (The child whom the grandmother feeds) the antecedent *ngwana* is qualified by a relative clause which has *nkgono* (grandmother) as its grammatical subject, i.e. the referent of the antecedent *ngwana* (child) is qualified indirectly via the referent of the grammatical subject *nkgono*. It will be shown in later sections of this study that if the notions "direct" and "indirect" are interpreted in this way, this distinction becomes a useful tool in the description of the discourse pragmatic factors which govern the application of these two relative types in Southern Sotho.

The indirect relative is structurally more intricate to describe than the direct relative (see 1.4.2). Its multifaceted nature can be ascribed to the fact that its antecedent/head noun can stand in various indirect relationships to the relative verb. Its basic structure could, however, be summarised as a relativiser (which agrees concordially with the antecedent) + a subject concord (which does not agree concordially with the antecedent) + a verb stem (which may be extended) + an object concord + the relative suffix *-ng*. The relativiser of the indirect relative differs from that of the direct relative in the sense that the former is similar in structure to the Southern Sotho demonstrative. This relativiser corresponds in most instances to the demonstrative indicating position two.

Compare, for instance, *boo + a- + -i- + -kakasa- + -ng* and *tseo + a- + -ntse- + -ng + -a- + -di- + -ja* in the following examples:

"Mohapi: Setulo se dutsweng ke Bulane ke sa ka; borena bona boo a ikakasang ka bona ke ba ka; ditjhelete tsena tseo a ntseng a di ja le tsona ke tsa ka; " (Khaketla, 1983 : 30)

"**Mohapi:** The chair upon which Bulane sits is mine; the very leadership which he is boasting about is mine; this money which he is still eating/using that also is mine;

The relative clauses *boo a ikakasang ka bona* (which he is boasting about) and *tseo a ntseng a di ja* (which he is still eating/using) modify the reference of the head nouns *borena* (leadership) and *ditjhelete* (money) respectively. It is of importance to note that there is no concordial agreement between these antecedents and the relative verbs *a ikakasang* (he is boasting) and *a ntseng a di ja* (he is still eating/using), with the result that the relationship between the antecedent and the relative verb is an **indirect** one.

Chapter Three will show that in contrast to direct relative clauses which are mainly used to characterise a referent by expressing its usual attributes/identifying characteristics (see 3.2.2), the indirect relative qualifies its head by anchoring the referent of the head to another referent (see 3.2.1.1). The relative verb agrees concordially with the noun representing this other referent, which results in the relative relationship being **indirect**.

In view of these observations the distinction "direct" versus "indirect" relative clause will be retained in this study despite objections raised by some scholars. (It is interesting to note that whereas Poulos (1982) objects to this distinction, the concepts "direct" and "indirect" form the basis for the discussion of verbal relatives in Poulos & Louwrens (1994).

1.4.2 The grammatical status of Southern Sotho verbal relatives

Strictly speaking, the theoretical issue as to whether such relatives are words or clauses has very little bearing on discourse pragmatics, which means that the pragmatic factors which govern the use of relatives together with head nouns can very well be investigated

without taking a stance on this point. Nonetheless, it is felt that due to the controversy surrounding this matter, it should be addressed in order to substantiate the terminology which will be employed in the analysis of the structures concerned.

As has been mentioned (see 1.2) Doke & Mofokeng (1957 : 421 – 428) classify both the direct as well as the indirect relative as relative clauses, while Moeketsi et al. (1994) and Moeketsi & Swanepoel (1995) only regard the indirect relative being a syntactic clause. They (Moeketsi et al., 1994 : 49) classify the direct relative as a linguistic "qualificative" word. This difference of opinion results from the fact that Doke & Mofokeng (1957) categorise the semantic core of the direct relative, i.e. the basic structure as: relativiser + verb stem + relative ending as a "verb", while Moeketsi et al. (1994) do not acknowledge that this structure has verbal status. Moeketsi (unpublished notes, 1996) presents the absence of an overt subject concord and the function with which the direct relative is employed as her main argument in support of her contention that the direct relative cannot be awarded clausal status.

In contrast to Southern Sotho verbs, which are generally prefixed with a subject concord (Van Eeden, 1941 : 79; Doke & Mofokeng, 1957 : 145; Moeketsi, et al., 1994 : 74), the Southern Sotho direct relative takes a non-typical verbal prefix. Furthermore, since this prefix results in the verbal relative having a qualificative function, Moeketsi (personal communication) is of the opinion that it would not be correct to categorise it as a verb. They (Moeketsi et al., 1994 : 49) consequently suggest that the direct relative should be classified in the same way as the adjective, possessive, enumerative and the relatives based upon radical relative and nominal stems, namely as what these authors collectively call "qualificative words".

As far as particularly the direct relative is concerned, the student of Southern Sotho is faced with a category which, on the one hand, displays nominal properties, whereas on

the other, it exhibits most of the structural features which are required for a category to be classified as a verb. Functionally this structure can either be used qualificatively or nominally. In this regard, this dissertation would like to align itself with the view propounded by Hendrikse & Poulos (1994). They adopt a continuum approach to word categories according to which nouns and verbs form the extreme poles on the continuum. As word categories occur on the continuum further away from these two poles, they start to reveal fewer and fewer features of the one prototypical category (e.g. "verb"), assuming more and more features of the other (e.g. "noun"). According to them (Hendrikse & Poulos, 1994) the adjective is an example of a word category which forms a bridge between verbs and nouns.

In view of the fact that both verbal and nominal characteristics are combined in the relative, the possibilities offered by this approach to an investigation of the direct relative are explored in the following exposition. Since the difficulties surrounding the categorial status of the direct relative can only be fully appreciated if the structural and pragmatic differences between direct and indirect relatives are clearly understood, the discussion will start with an exposition of the indirect relative. Afterwards, the direct relative will be addressed with a view to presenting a possible explanation for the uniqueness of this structure in Southern Sotho.

1.4.2.1 Indirect relatives

The multifaceted structure of the Southern Sotho indirect relative is discussed in detail by linguists such as Gerber (1955 : 6 – 24), Doke & Mofokeng (1957 : 423 – 427) and Moeketsi et al. (1994 : 95). It has been illustrated (see 1.4) that the indirect relative is introduced by means of a relativiser which is called a "demonstrative" by Doke & Mofokeng (1957 : 424) and a "demonstrative which functions as a subordinating conjunction" by Moeketsi & Swanepoel (1995 : 95). Furthermore, its semantic base is

a verb which is prefixed by means of a subject concord. The verb in indirect relative clause constructions adheres to the general morphological pattern of Southern Sotho verbs as proposed by Doke & Mofokeng (1957 : 145 – 184) and Moeketsi et al. (1994 : 73 – 88), the only exception being that it is suffixed with the relative suffix *-ng*.

The clausal status of such indirect relatives is, therefore, not debated. Both Doke & Mofokeng (1957 : 421) as well as Moeketsi & Swanepoel (1995 : 94) classify such structures as "qualificative clauses" when they occur in complex sentences such as the following:

"Direko: a ko mamele keletso ya mosadi wa hao, yeo o mo nyaletseng"
(Khaketla, 1983 : 15)

"Direko: please listen to the advice of your wife whom you married"

"Mmadisebo: O tlohele ntho tsena tseo o neng o mpoella tsona." (Maake, 1992 : 17)

"Mmadisebo: Leave alone these matters which you were telling me."

"Letona: Ntate Sebota, na o na le mantswe ao o ka a behang?" (Maake, 1992 : 75)

"Letona: Father Sebota, do you have any words which you can present?"

"Thankga: a hatikela molao oo le o tsebang ka maoto," (Khaketla, 1983 : 3)

"Thankga: by so doing he disregarded the law which you all know,"

The relative clauses *yeo o mo nyaletseng* (whom you married), *tseo o neng o mpolella tsona* (which you were telling me about), *ao o ka a behang* (which you can present) and *oo le o tsebang ka maoto* (which you all know) are based upon the verbs *o mo nyaletseng* ((you) married), *(o neng) o mpolella* ((you) were telling), *o ka a behang* ((you) can present), and *le o tsebang* ((you) know) respectively. They modify the reference of the respective nouns *mosadi* (woman/wife), *ntho* (matter/thing), *mantswe* (words) and *molao* (law).

These examples show that the antecedent of the indirect relative clause is never the subject of the relative verb, i.e. this antecedent is qualified by associating it with, or anchoring (see 3.2.1.1) it to other referent/s.

Syntactically, the indirect relative can also fulfil a **nominal** function. It can, for example, be used as the object of a sentence as is the case with *seo ke itseng o se etse* (that which I said you should do) which stands in an object relation to the verb *o phetise* ((you) should repeat) in:

"Selepe: O phetise seo ke itseng o se etse ntle le ho fanya." (Maake, 1992 : 36)

"Selepe: You should repeat that which I said you should do without any mistake."

The indirect relative can also function as the complement of a copulative, as in the following example where *tseo ke di nkileng ho mohatsa Marora* (that which I got from *Marora's* wife) serves as the complement of the identifying copulative *ke* (to be):

"Dipuo: Ho jwalo mme; ke tseo ke di nkileng ho mohatsa Marora, yena a re o di utlwile molomong wa Pulane." (Khaketla, 1983 : 21)

"Dipuo: It is like that mother, that is **what I got from Marora's wife**, who says that she got it from *Pulane's* mouth."

In these examples, the relativisers *seo* and *tseo* refer to the deleted antecedents *selo* (something) and *dilo* (things), and since these antecedents are not the subjects of the relative verbs *ke itseng* ((which) I said) and *ke di nkileng* ((which) I took), such relatives are categorised as indirect.

1.4.2.2 Direct relatives

The observation was made in 1.4 that Southern Sotho direct verbal relatives basically consist of a relativiser + a verb stem + a relative suffix *-ng*, e.g.

"Bulane: empa bathonyana ba teng ba ratang ho re qabanya "
(Khaketla, 1983 : 47)

"Bulane: but there are some people **who wish to set us against each other** "

"Majara: Setjhaba sa Mokgatjhane, kajeno ke kgwedi e tlatseng re aparetswe bofifi " (Khaketla, 1983 : 2)

"Majara: People of *Mokgatjhane*, today it is a full month (i.e. a month **which is full**) since we began to mourn ..."

These examples reveal a marked difference between the structure of the relativiser of the direct relative and that of the indirect relative. Whereas the relativiser in indirect relatives resembles the *demonstrative*, it corresponds with the demonstrative minus its suffix *-o* (in the case of the position 2 demonstrative) in the direct relative. Another obvious difference between these two structures is the lack of an overt subject concord in the case of the direct relative. Although no other entity is involved in the qualification of the antecedent of the direct relative, the lack of a subject concord in this structure not only raises the question as to whether the relationship between the antecedent and the direct relative can be viewed as one of "subject" : "predicate", but also whether the direct relative should be regarded as a word or a clause.

There are several indications that the relativiser of the direct relative of modern Southern Sotho is the product of coalescence which took place between the demonstrative and the subject concord at an earlier stage. The form of the relativiser which resulted from this process in Southern Sotho can be summarised as is done below. It should be noted that the subject concord which is presented in this summary is that of the participial mood, since scholars such as Doke & Mofokeng (1957 : 422), Cole (1975 : 178) and Moeketsi et al. (1994 : 129) maintain that the verb in relative constructions occurs in this mood.

	Demonstrative	Subject concord	Relative concord
1 st p. (sg.)		<i>ke</i>	<i>ke-/ya-</i>
1 st p. (pl.)		<i>re</i>	<i>re-/ba-</i>
2 nd. p. (sg.)		<i>a</i>	<i>ya-</i>
2 nd. p. (pl.)		<i>ba</i>	<i>ba-</i>
Class 1	<i>ëo³</i>	<i>a-</i>	<i>ya-</i>
Class 2	<i>bao</i>	<i>ba-</i>	<i>ba-</i>

³ Raised mid-low vowels are indicated by means of an umlaut.

Class 3	<i>öö</i>	<i>o-</i>	<i>ö-</i>
Class 4	<i>ëo</i>	<i>e-</i>	<i>ë-</i>
Class 5	<i>lëo</i>	<i>le-</i>	<i>lë-</i>
Class 6	<i>ao</i>	<i>a-</i>	<i>a-</i>
Class 7	<i>sëo</i>	<i>se-</i>	<i>së-</i>
Class 8	<i>tsëo</i>	<i>di-</i>	<i>tsë-</i>
Class 9	<i>ëo-</i>	<i>e-</i>	<i>ë-</i>
Class 10	<i>tsëo</i>	<i>di-</i>	<i>tsë-</i>
Class 14	<i>böö-</i>	<i>bo-</i>	<i>bö-</i>
Class 15	<i>höo-</i>	<i>ho-</i>	<i>hö-</i>

This exposition suggests that historically the demonstrative also served as the relativiser in direct relative constructions (as is still the case with indirect relative constructions) whereas the original subject concord marked the syntactic relationship "subject" : "predicate" between the antecedent and the relative verb. The two functions of relativiser and subject agreement morpheme which were vested in two separate structural elements then merged through a process of coalescence with the result that these functions are presently fulfilled by a single element, namely the relative concord or relativiser. Stated in different terms, this implies that the current relativiser in direct relatives does not only mark the relationship "head noun" : "qualificative", but also the *semantic* relationship "subject" : "verb", despite the fact that no overt subject concord is synchronically discernible.

This view is supported by the structure of direct verbal relatives in languages such as Northern Sotho, Tswana, Xhosa and Zulu. In Northern Sotho (Poulos & Louwrens, 1994 : 103 – 104) and Tswana (Cole, 1975 : 171 – 172, 178), for example, the direct relative is characterised by both a relativiser which corresponds with the first position of the demonstrative, as well as a subject concord, e.g.

Northern Sotho

motho yô a sepelago

(a/the person who walks)

batho ba ba sepelago

(people/the people who walk)

Tswana

motho yôotsamayang

(a/the person who walks)

dintja tseditsamayang

(dogs/the dogs which walk)

In Zulu (Taljaard & Bosch, 1991 : 104 – 105) and Xhosa (Dyubele, Jones, Keva, Kritzinger, Mfusi, Moropa & Motlhabane, 1994 : 63 – 64), on the other hand, the relativiser and subject concord coalesce to form a single element which results in a structure which is very much akin to the one encountered in Southern Sotho today, e.g.

Zulu:

*umuntu + *(a- + u- + -hambayo) > umuntu ohambayo*

(a/the person who walks)

*izinja + *(a- + -zi + -hambayo) > izinja ezihambayo*

(dogs/the dogs which walk)

Xhosa:

*abantu + *(a- + ba- + -hambayo) > abantu abahambayo*

(people/the people who walk)

*usana + *(a- + lu- + -hambayo) > usana oluhambayo*

(a/the baby who walks)

Southern Sotho:

*ntja + *(ëo- + e- + -boholang) > ntja ë boholang*

(a/the dog that barks)

Against this background, it seems justified to ascribe the uniqueness of the direct relative in Southern Sotho, when compared to that of Northern Sotho and Tswana, to Nguni influence. Recall, in this regard, the occurrence of clicks in Southern Sotho as well as the presence of a variety of items in the Southern Sotho lexicon which are clearly of Nguni origin. The coalescence of the relativiser with the subject concord in direct relatives is also reported by Cole (1975 : 172) for Tswana, although the process is far less productive in Tswana than in Southern Sotho. Cole observes:

"When the second element of the direct relative concord consists of a vowel only there is a tendency to contraction".

The instability of the relativiser in direct relative constructions has also been observed by Kotzé (1995 : 364) in Lobedu. In this Northern Sotho dialect the relativiser is deleted from the relative construction when the absolute pronouns of the first and second person serve as the antecedent of a direct verbal relative, e.g.

"Nna ge hodêho " (I who am old)

"Yêna a hodêho " (He who is ill)

Observations made by Kotzé (1995), Poulos (1990 : 141) and Van Warmelo (1940 : 62; 1974 : 77 - 78) suggest that this could be the result of Venda influence.

If it is accepted that a word boundary originally existed between the relativiser and the relative verb in the original Southern Sotho structure, and, furthermore, that this word boundary disappeared due to the coalescence of the relativiser and the subject concord, it becomes evident that the direct verbal relative presently represents a category which lies on the border between the categories "clause" and "word". Efforts to simply attach labels such as "word" or "clause" to the direct relative of Southern Sotho without taking cognisance of the historical development of this structure, therefore, will remain questionable. For the purposes of this dissertation the position will be adopted that direct relatives are non-typical words with a clausal function. As is explained by Crystal (1994 : 386), the term *zero relative* has been suggested by some scholars to refer to instances where a morpheme which usually occurs in relative structures is absent. Contracted or elliptical variants of relative structures, therefore, are not uncommon in other languages of the world.

Since it will be necessary in the remainder of this dissertation to refer to the nature of the relationship between a direct relative and its antecedent and, since the characterisation

of this relationship will often depend on whether the relative is regarded as verbal or non-verbal, it is necessary to reflect in more detail upon the nomino-verbal character of the direct relative.

(a) The *qualificative* nature of the direct relative

The qualification of a noun by a relative involves the modification of the referential properties of the noun. According to Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech & Svartvik (1985 : 65) "Semantically, modifiers add "descriptive" information to the head, often restricting the reference of the head", e.g.

"Bulane: Ka nnete, ngwaneso, ha o ka ya ka batho, o ka lahleha! Ke o rata haholo, Mohapi, o a utlwa? Ke re ke o rata haholo madi eso, hobane ka mehla o a mmamela; empa bathonyana ba teng ba ratang ho re qabanya"
(Khaketla, 1983 : 47)

"Bulane: Really, my brother, if you listen to people you might go astray! I love you very much, *Mohapi*, do you understand? I say that I love you very much my brother, because you always listen to me; but there are some people **who wish to turn us against each other."**

"Selepe: Re ka arohana ha o se o qetile.

Maphuya: Ntho e setseng e nngwe feela." (Maake, 1992 : 47)

"Selepe: We may part when you are ready.

Maphunya: There is only one thing (which is) left."

In these particular examples the direct verbal relative *ba ratang ho re qabanya* (who wish to set us against each other) and *e setseng* (which is left) modify the meaning of the head nouns *batho* (people) and *ntho* (thing) by respectively characterising the referent of the head noun *bathonyana* (a few people) and describing the state of a particular thing.

Depending on the discourse context in which they occur, direct verbal relatives can, however, also be used as referring expressions; a phenomenon which suggests that they also have nominal characteristics.

(b) The *nominal* nature of the direct relative

Crystal (1994 : 233) remarks that the term "nominal" "refers to words which have some of the attributes of nouns but not all". These "attributes of nouns" involve, amongst other things, the performance of specific syntactic functions, the correspondence to pronominal forms, the ability to occur as the complement of a copulative predicate and the ability to display number. The following examples illustrate that the direct verbal relative meets these requirements:

(i) The direct verbal relative can occur as the **subject** or **object** of a sentence, a very typical syntactic feature of nominal forms (Poulos & Louwrens, 1994 : 43). Compare the following example in which the direct relative occurs as the object of *ho tla sireletsa* (to protect):

"Kajeno setjhaba hase (sic)⁴ se ngata hoba batho ba tshaba ntwala ya maoba, empa ho tlile maponesa a mmuso ho tla sireletsa ba ka tshwanang ba

⁴ should be *ha se*

tlatlapuwa." (Maake, 1992 : 70)

"Today there are not many people because they fear the battle of the day before yesterday, but the government's police have come to protect **those who might be harrassed.**"

In the following example, on the other hand, the relative *Ya neng a hlile a o henahena* ((The one) who really manhandled you) is used as the subject of the predicative copulative *ke yena enwa Tefo?* (is this very *Tefo?*):

"*Selepe: Ya neng a hlile a o henahena ke yena enwa Tefo?*" (Maake, 1992 : 32)

"**Selepe:** (The one) **who really manhandled you**, is this very *Tefo?*"

(ii) Like other nouns, the direct verbal relative also has corresponding pronominal forms, e.g.

Ya mpitsiseng yena, ke mohatsaka.

((The one) **who called me** is my husband)

The verbal relative *ya mpitsiseng* (who called me) can be deleted in which case there would be an anaphoric relationship between the deleted relative and the pronoun *yena* (he).

(iii) The direct verbal relative can, moreover, occur as the complement of a copulative predicate, e.g.

"Bulane: Taba tsa basadi ha se tse ka qetwang ke motho "
(Khaketla, 1983 : 12)

"Bulane: Female matters are not (things) those which a person can exhaust"

The direct verbal relative *tse ka qetwang ke motho* (which a person can exhaust) occurs as the complement of the copulative *ha se* (are not).

While fulfilling a qualificative or nominal function, the direct relative, however, displays so many verbal characteristics that its clausal status can hardly be denied.

(c) The *verbal* nature of the direct relative

According to Binnick (1991) the ancient Greeks identified a word as a verb when it occurred as "a composite sound with a meaning indicative of time" (Binnick, 1991 : 3). The temporal features of verbs are currently regarded as one of their outstanding characteristics. Crystal (1994) supports this point when he remarks:

"The formal definition of a verb refers to an element which can display morphological contrasts of tense, aspect, voice, mood, person and number."
(Crystal, 1994 : 371 - 372).

Compare, for instance, how direct relatives satisfy such criteria:

(i) In the following example, the verbal suffix *-ile* indicates that *ya qadileng* (who started) expresses an action which took place in the past, e.g.

"**Sebota:** *ho bonahala hantle hore mora wa Tumedi ke yena ya phoso⁵ ya qadileng moferefere ona.*" (Maake, 1992 : 72)

"**Sebota:** it is quite clear that *Tumedi's* son is the one who is at fault, **who started this trouble.**"

(ii) *-e etswang* in *e etswang ke motho e mong* is passivised by means of the verbal extension *-w-*, e.g.

"**Tumedi:** *Ntho e nngwe le e nngwe e etswang ke motho e mong o ne a e halala a e nyatsa ka ho tella.*" (Maake, 1992 : 41)

"**Tumedi:** Everything **done by somebody else** was belittled and rejected with contempt."

(iii) The morpheme *ka-* which can occur as part of the structure of the relative, is indicative of the potential **aspect**, e.g.

"**Kakana:** *Ha se ntho e ka lokelang Morena yeo;*" (Khaketla, 1983 : 12)

"**Kakana:** That is not something **which would suit that leader**"

(iv) All the above-mentioned relatives occur in the positive conjugation of the verb. Consider, however, the following negative form:

⁵ should be *phoso*

"Monna I: Ho bolaya ngwana ha ho tshwane le ho mo amoha lefa; o etsa papiso e sa utlwahaleng monna!" (Khaketla, 1983 : 1)

"Monna I: To kill a child is not the same as to disinherit him; you make a vague comparison (i.e. a comparison **which cannot be understood)."**

(v) The direct relative can occur as part of a compound predicate (Moeketsi & Swanepoel, 1995 : 41 - 44). The verb *ba lahlilwe* (were lost/confused) in *ba neng ba lahlitwe* is the complement of the auxiliary *ba neng* (expressing continuous past tense), e.g.

"Monna I: Ke ne ke le e mong wa banna ba neng ba lahlitwe ke dipuo tsa boMalokobe, " (Khaketla, 1983 : 7)

"Monna I: I was one of the men **who were confused by the talks of Malokobe and company."**

The observations made above reveal that the direct verbal relative cannot merely be characterised as either a word or a clause due to the fact that its historical development does not permit such a discrete categorisation. These observations also reveal that the direct verbal relative cannot simply be classified into one specific word category, since it has the features of more than one word class. It is for reasons such as these that the view is adopted in this study that the direct relative is a non-typical, qualificative word with a clausal function.

1.4.3 Summary and conclusion

Southern Sotho verbal relatives can be classified into two different structural types, viz.

those introduced by means of a relativiser which resembles the core element of Southern Sotho demonstratives (see 1.4.2.1) and those in which the relativiser has the same phonological make up as the demonstrative (see 1.4.2.2). The first structural type of relative is classified as *direct* and the second one as *indirect*. According to Doke & Mofokeng (1957 : 421 – 427) both these structural types of relative can be classified as syntactic clauses. They (Doke & Mofokeng, 1957 : 127), however, also acknowledge that the direct relative can, in some instances, be classified as a linguistic word. Moeketsi et al. (1994) and Moeketsi & Swanepoel (1995) differ from Doke & Mofokeng (1957) in this regard. While they do not challenge the clausal status of the **indirect** relative, they regard the direct relative to be a non-predicative word (Moeketsi et al., 1994 : 49). It can, therefore, not function as a syntactic clause.

In this chapter it was argued that due to the historical development which this structure has undergone, it is not possible to discretely categorise the direct relative in terms of notions such as "word", "clause" and "word category". The view which is adopted in this study, namely that the direct relative should be regarded as a non-typical qualificative word with a clausal function, seems sufficient to warrant an investigation of those discourse related phenomena which govern the relationship between a head and its qualification. Chapters Two and Three, therefore, will investigate the interrelationship between the discourse status of a head noun and the function and structure of Southern Sotho direct and indirect relatives.

Chapter Two will follow an approach based on existing theories regarding the interrelatedness of the syntactic position in which a noun is used and the discourse status of such a noun. These theories will be applied to Southern Sotho data in order to generate a hypothesis regarding the interrelationship between the discourse status of a head noun and the structure of the relative which qualifies it.

Chapter Three will adopt a discourse-analytic approach to test the hypothesis propounded in Chapter Two and to determine the relationship between the function and structure of verbal relatives.

In Chapter Four a summary of the most important findings generated by this study will be given, and final conclusions will be drawn.

Chapter 2

The interrelationship between the syntactic function and discourse status of Southern Sotho nominals

2.1 Introduction

As has already been observed (see 1.1), communication involves *inter alia*, the linguistic presentation of real world entities and their identifying characteristics (see 2.4.3) by speakers/authors to addressees in order to make some or other comment about them. Lyons (1981a : 33) refers to such a process as the intentional transmission of information by means of some established "signalling-system" with the purpose of making "the receiver aware of something of which he was not previously aware". The "signs" which constitute such a "signalling system" are referring expressions, and are relevant to this dissertation in the sense that they signify concepts which a speaker/author categorises as being "given" or "new" for the addressee (Halliday, 1967; Chafe, 1976, 1980, 1987; Givon, 1979; Du Bois, 1980; Prince, 1981). What is of particular interest to the main aim of this study, is the fact that the "packaging" of given and new information, and the organisation of discourse material into subjects and predicates relate to the manifestation of intricate cognitive processes (Stockwell, 1977 : 59).

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the way in which the occurrence of direct and indirect relative clauses relates to the manifestation of such cognitive processes i.e. to establish if the givenness or newness of a noun determines the type of relative by means of which it is qualified.

Since a striking relationship exists between packaging phenomena such as the syntactic distribution of direct and indirect relatives, on the one hand, and the status of their heads as either subjects, objects or copulative complements, on the other, this chapter will focus on **theoretical** aspects such as the **linear ordering and syntactic function** of head nouns and the cognitive processes which underlie them (Friedman, 1976; Givon, 1976; Chafe, 1976, 1987; Li & Thompson, 1976; Schachter, 1976; Louwrens, 1979; Bernardo, 1980 and Lyons, 1981b).

The validity of conclusions which are drawn regarding the interrelationship between the discourse status of a noun and the type of relative by means of which it is qualified, will be tested in Chapter Three within a discourse-pragmatic framework.

2.2 Method of research and organisation of material

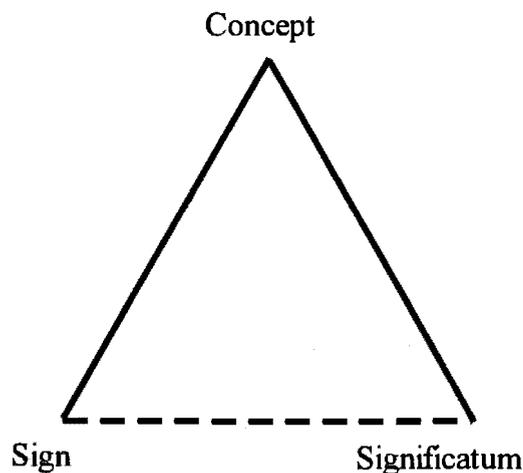
Through a simple count, 286 relative clauses consisting of "head" and "verbal relative" occurring in (a) live conversations with mother tongue speakers of Southern Sotho in the Tweeling district; and (b) in two Southern Sotho dramas, i.e. *Bulane* (Khaketla, 1983) and *Tjootjo e tla hloma sesela* (Maake, 1992), were identified. These served as the primary data corpus for the investigation of the main aim of this dissertation (see 2.1). One of the objectives with this method of data collection was to ascertain whether or not relatives in free conversation behave similarly to those in edited texts.

This chapter will: (a) clarify the term "discourse status"; (b) discuss, by referring to appropriate Southern Sotho examples, theories regarding generalisations which could be made in respect of the interrelationship between the discourse status of nominals and their syntactic use as **subjects, objects and predicate nouns**; (c) present statistics which reflect the number of head nouns which occur in each of the different syntactic positions

under discussion; (d) present statistics which illustrate the interrelatedness between the syntactic position of a head noun and the type of relative by means of which it is qualified; and (e) draw conclusions regarding the interrelationship between the discourse status of a head noun and the structure of the relative by means of which it is qualified.

2.3 The discourse status of nominals

In semantics (Palmer, 1976 : 24 and Lyons, 1981a : 96) it is common practice to explain the referential properties of referring expressions in the form of a triangle, e.g.



This triadic representation is primarily aimed at expressing the relationship which exists between a word (which is a linguistic *sign*) and an entity in the real world. According to Palmer (1976 : 240), both the sign theory as formulated by De Saussure, and Ogden & Richards' semiotic theory accept that words are linked to their referents via an abstract mental concept or thought. This relationship which exists between a word, which is part of language, and an object or thing in the natural world, is characterised as a **referential** one. However, when considering the referential properties of nouns, it is important to draw a distinction between what Palmer (1976 : 18) calls a noun's **denotation** and its

reference. He formulates this as follows:

".....a useful distinction can be made between denotation and reference....., the former being used to indicate the class of persons, things, etc., generally represented by the expression, the latter to indicate the actual persons, things, etc. being referred to by it in a particular context. Thus, *cow* will denote the class of all cows, but *that cow* will refer to a particular cow. Unfortunately, there is no consistency among scholars in the use of these terms....."

Reference, therefore, has first and foremost to do with the **identification** of a referent within a particular context, as is also observed by Chafe (1976 : 39) and Hurford & Heasley (1983 : 25). The denotation of a referring expression on the other hand, relates to its reference in the sense that it involves the relationship between a linguistic unit and the non-linguistic entities to which it refers (Crystal, 1994 : 97), yet this relationship is of a non-identifying nature. Crystal (op.cit.) observes that "the denotation of *dog* is its dictionary definition of "canine quadruped"."

The denotation and reference of a noun are directly related to the discourse status of such a noun as far as successful communication depends on certain assumptions which a speaker makes regarding the **grade of consciousness** which a listener has with respect to the concept denoted by a particular noun in a particular context and/or the ability of an addressee to singularly identify the referent to whom the noun is referring.

As both the referential properties as well as the givenness or newness of the concept denoted by a noun determine its discourse status within a particular context, this chapter will investigate both these phenomena. A distinction will be drawn between the addressee's perception of the definiteness/indefiniteness of a referring expression, on the

one hand, and the speaker's/author's judgement regarding the givenness/newness of such an expression, on the other. The former will be referred to as the **reference status** and the latter as the **information status** of nominals.

2.3.1 *The reference status of nominals*

Christophersen (1939) gave impetus to the study of the **reference** status of referring expressions which has led to the publication of a vast body of material on this topic in ensuing years. Chafe (1976, 1980, 1987), Halliday & Hasan (1976), Lyons (1981a + b), Hawkins (1978), Du Bois (1980), Prince (1981), Hurford & Heasley (1983), and De Haan (1987) are but some of the scholars who have occupied themselves with the topic of **reference**, and these sources will serve as the basis for the discussion of the reference status of referring expressions in this dissertation.

According to Chafe (1976 : 39), the whole concept of referents having a particular reference status is based on a process of categorisation. He is of the opinion that referring expressions are categorised by the addressee as having either **definite** or **indefinite** reference, depending on the identifiability of the entity to which reference is being made. Thus a definite noun would be a noun which refers to a referent which can be uniquely identified in the real world, while the referent of an indefinite noun would be unidentifiable.

Lyons (1981a), however, observes that the referential properties of signs/nouns are multifaceted and points out that the terms "definite"/"indefinite" fail to adequately capture the essence of a noun's actual reference status. He proposes terms such as "definite", "specific indefinite" and "non-specific indefinite" to give a more accurate account of nouns' referential properties. He (Lyons, 1981a : 177 – 197) is of the opinion,

for instance, that when a speaker/an author employs a referring expression to refer to an entity which exists and which is identifiable by the addressee, the reference status of such a referent is **definite**. On hearing it, the addressee will know which particular referent to pick out of the class of potential referents called forth by the referring expression which the speaker has used, e.g.

"Thankga: Morena yeo wa ka ke ne ke mo rata haholo, empa eitse ha ke bona a kgeloha tsela, a hatikela molao oo le o tsebang ka maoto, "
(Khaketla, 1983 : 3)

"Thankga: I loved that chief of mine very much, but when I saw him leave the road, and trample on the law which you all know, "

The referring expression *molao* (law) has **definite** reference. As the law of the Basotho is known to all members of the tribe, the addressees would all know exactly what the speaker is referring to by means of this referring expression.

According to Lyons (1981a) speakers/authors can, on the other hand, employ a referring expression to refer to a particular entity which exists, but which the addressee cannot identify. In such instances, the reference status of the expression is characterised as **specific-indefinite**, i.e. the addressee is aware of the fact that reference is being made to a specific entity, yet s/he is unable to identify the particular individual or object (Lyons 1981a : 188), e.g.

"Tumedi: Empa eitse ha mora a fihla ka mo hloma dipotso ka yona taba ena, ka mmotsa ke sa potapote hore o ile a kgaoletsa moradi wa Ramarema ka nokeng na. Jwale hoba ke erwa o teng, ke ne ke tla kopa ho mo fa sebaka hore

a phete mantswe ao a mpoelletse^{ng} ona." (Maake, 1992 : 25)

"Tumedi: But when my son arrived I questioned him on this matter, I asked him without hesitation whether he intercepted *Ramarema's* daughter at the river. Now, as he is here, I would ask that he be given a chance to repeat the words which he told me."

In this extract, the noun *mantsw*e (the words) is qualified by the relative *ao a mpoelletse^{ng} ona* (which he told me). Without the qualification provided by the relative clause, the noun *mantsw*e (words) has **indefinite** and **non-specific** reference. What the relative clause does, is to restrict the referential properties of *mantsw*e (words) to specific words, namely those uttered by *Tumedi's* son. However, the qualification supplied by the relative is not sufficient to restrict the referential properties of *mantsw*e (words) to the extent that the addressee/reader can uniquely identify the words in question. The referent of *mantsw*e (words) therefore remains indefinite despite the fact that it is specified.

Instances also occur of referring expressions which are used as denotations of particular concepts. Such nouns are, for instance, used to denote the identifying characteristics of a particular entity, without referring to the entity itself, in which case the reference status of the particular expression is "non-specific indefinite" (Lyons, 1981a : 187), e.g.

"Letona: Na ho na le e mong wa ba lekgotla ya ratang ho botsa dipotso?"
(Maake, 1992 : 27)

"The councillor of the court: Is there any councillor who would like to ask questions?"

The noun phrase *e mong wa ba lekgotla* (any councillor) refers to a person who does not necessarily exist. It merely carries the denotation of "a human male in court". While uttering this referring expression the councillor of the court does not refer to any particular individual, but to a whole class of possible referents who answer to these identifying characteristics. He, in other words, uses the NP *e mong wa ba lekgotla* (any councillor) to refer to a **non-specific indefinite** referent.

All these various terms which are used to signify the reference status of nominals are of relevance to this dissertation and will be used in Chapter Three to indicate that there is a specific correlation between the specificity of a nominal and the structure of the relative by means of which it is qualified.

2.3.2 The *information status* of nominals

The theory that the denotation of a noun, i.e. the mental concept which is evoked by a particular word in the consciousness of a listener, can either be given or new within a particular context, is based on a two-part analysis of utterances in terms of information structure which was initiated by scholars of the Prague School before the Second World War (Brown & Yule, 1991 : 153 – 189). Halliday (1967) brought the insights developed by these linguists to the attention of the Western academic world by elaborating upon particularly those aspects of the Prague School linguistics which he could relate directly to his own interest in texts. He adopted the theory that the information status of referents that are introduced in a conversation, can either be classified as given, or as new, depending on the information which the **speaker/author** assumes is, or is not, in the consciousness of the addressee at the moment of speaking/writing.

Linguists such as Kuno (1972, 1976, 1979), Chafe (1976, 1980, 1987), Clark &

Haviland (1977), Givon (1979), Du Bois (1980) and Prince (1981) are but a few of the scholars who expanded the given/new theory. In his approach to this theory, Prince (1981) points out that the terms "given" and "new" are used in different ways by linguists. According to him (Prince, 1981 : 228 – 230) Chafe (1976) uses the term "given" to categorise "salient" knowledge, while the terms "old" or "given" are used by Halliday (1967), Halliday & Hasan (1976) and Kuno (1972, 1978, 1979) to refer to information which Prince (1981 : 226 – 228) prefers to classify as "predictable" or "recoverable". Prince (1981 : 230 – 231) furthermore observes that Clark & Haviland (1977) regard information to be either given or new depending on whether or not the speaker/author regards the addressee as sharing the same knowledge as s/he.

Prince (1981 : 225), however, maintains that the concepts represented by the terms cited above are not suitable to linguistic theory as a speaker/author can hardly be objective in her/his evaluation of what is, for instance, "recoverable" or "predictable" by an addressee, or of what an addressee would regard to be "shared knowledge". Therefore, he (Prince, 1981 : 233 – 252) proposes a taxonomy in which discourse entities, i.e. discourse referents, are categorised as being either given or new on the grounds that they are respectively "evoked"/"inferrable" or "brand new"/"unused".

As the distinction offered by this taxonomy became very useful in the execution of the main aim of this dissertation, these terms need to be explained in more detail.

2.3.2.1 *Given entities*

It becomes clear from Prince's (1981) discussion that **given** entities are of a dual nature, viz. **evoked** and **inferrable**.

He argues that if some noun phrase is uttered whose referent has already been established within the discourse context, such a noun phrase represents an **evoked** entity (Prince, 1981 : 236). Evoked entities are cognitively identifiable by the addressee since their saliency is established on linguistic (i.e. textual) as well as extra-linguistic grounds. See, for example, the following extract from the drama by Khaketla (1983). The tribe is called together for a court case. *Thankga*, one of the members of the tribe, is addressing the gathering. He uses the referring expression *morena* (lord), *lekgotla* (members of the council) and *setjhaba sa ntate* (people of my father) to refer to entities which are given due to the fact that they are situationally evoked, e.g.

"Thankga: Morena le lekgotla, le setjhaba sa ntate se hlomphehang!"
(Khaketla, 1983 : 3)

"Thankga: My lord and members of the council, and **respected** people of my father!"

As has been mentioned earlier, discourse entities can also be given on the grounds of being **inferrable**, i.e.

"A discourse entity is inferrable if the speaker assumes the hearer can infer it, via logical – or, more commonly, plausible – reasoning, from discourse entities already evoked or from other inferrables." (Prince, 1981 : 236)

See, for example:

"Mookgo: Na o lebetse hore le wena o modumedi? O ne o kolobetswa o kulela lefu; kajeno ha Modimo o o thusitise o fumane bophelo o itebatsa wona?

Bulane: Kereke e hananang le kenelo ke lesaka lesele la baditjhaba, mme ha ke bone hore na nka ya ka melao ya yona jwang" (Khaketla, 1983 : 15 + 16)

"**Mookgo:** Have you forgotten that you too are a Christian? You were baptised while you were very ill; today when the Lord has helped you to acquire a life, you forsake Him.

Bulane: A church which prohibits taking as one's wife the father's youngest widow is a foreign institution. I cannot see how I could go by its laws "

Within this particular discourse context the information status of the noun *kereke* (church) is **inferrable**. Although no reference was made to such an institution before, the semantics of words such as *modumedi* (believer) and *O ne o kolobetswa* (you were baptised), renders the information status of *kereke* (a church) as given in this context.

This study will interpret and use the terms "evoked" and "inferrable", following Prince (1981 : 236) to differentiate between the finer nuances of the givenness of head nouns.

2.3.2.2 New entities

Prince (1981 : 235) is of the opinion that:

"When a speaker first introduces an entity into the discourse, that is, tells the hearer to "put it on the counter", we may say that it is new."

New entities can, according to this taxonomy, be categorised as being either **brand-new** or **unused**. "Brand-new" referents are those which do not form part of the conversationalists' communal point of reference. "Unused" entities, on the other hand, are those entities which form part of the conversationalists' communal point of reference, yet the speaker/author needs to provide the addressee with some "anchor" by means of which the referent is made relevant to the conversation. According to Prince (1981 : 236) a discourse entity is **anchored** if the noun phrase presenting it is linked by means of another noun phrase, or "anchor" properly contained in it, or to some other discourse entity.

The notion "unused" was found to be very useful in the study of relative clauses since the **indirect** relative clause serves as a discourse "anchor" by means of which unused entities are revived and re-established within a particular context. Compare, for example, the effective way in which *Latjie* employs the anchor *eo ntemoholo wa hao a itseng* (whom your grandfather said) in the conversation quoted earlier in 1.1 to re-establish the unused referent *monna* (man) in *Mmamosebetsi's* consciousness when she asks:

"Latjie: Sebetsi, o ntse o mo hopola monna eo ntemoholo wa hao a itseng o thunya dinone tsa hae?" (Extract from live conversation)

"Latjie: Sebetsi, do you still remember the man whom your grandfather said shoots his blesbuck?"

As the speaker *Latjie* has forgotten the proper name of this "man" she would like *Mmamosebetsi* to identify, she resorts to a substitute sign (referring expression) viz. *monna* (man). She is aware that although this man is known to both of them, they have

not spoken about him for a very long time and that the particular referent will have to be re-established in *Mmamosebetsi's* consciousness. Such re-establishment is achieved by means of the **anchor** *eo ntatemoholo wa hao a itseng* (whom your grandfather said), which links the unidentified referent "man" to a remark which the addressee's grandfather had made about him on a previous occasion. *Latjie* thus uniquely identifies the referent of the specific-indefinite noun phrase *monna* (man) for *Mmamosebetsi* by utilising the anchoring capacity of the indirect relative construction.

2.3.2.3 Interrelatedness between the *reference status* and *information status* of nominals

Even though it cannot be stated as a rule that there is a one-to-one correlation between the information status of nominals and their reference status, linguists such as Jespersen (1933), Chafe (1974 & 1976), Givon (1976), Halliday & Hasan (1976) and Lyons (1981a) observe that, in the overwhelming majority of cases, given referents tend to be definite, whereas new referents tend to be indefinite. So, for example, Chafe (1976 : 42) remarks that there is "a strong tendency for indefiniteness and newness to go together".

This relationship between the givenness and newness of referents, on the one hand, and nouns' status as definite and indefinite, on the other, is of primary importance for this study, since, as will be shown, it is precisely these discourse-pragmatic factors which determine the type of relative construction which should be used together with a particular type of nominal head.

2.4 Some generalisations regarding the interrelatedness of the discourse status and the syntactic function of nominals

It has been mentioned (see 2.1) that linguists such as Friedman (1976), Givon (1975), Chafe (1976), Schachter (1976), Bernardo (1980) and Lyons (1981a + b) give an account of the interrelatedness of the information status and syntactic function of nominals. Research by these linguists reveals that, in the vast majority of instances, a speaker/author introduces referents whose information status s/he regards as being "given" in the **subject** position of the sentence. Referents that are regarded as being "new" are, on the other hand, normally introduced as the **object** of the sentence. Although these are not hard and fast rules, languages show a universal tendency in this regard. The subject position of the sentence, in other words, differs from the object position in the sense that the occurrence of new referents is notably lower in the subject slot.

The observation that the syntactic function of a referring expression involves more than merely the grammatical relationship between such an expression and the verb, is stressed by Chafe (1976 : 42) when he points out that it is hardly likely that the cognitive status of a referring expression would not interact with its syntactic role. He remarks:

"There is a view, still widely held, that the status of a noun as surface subject of a sentence is a strictly syntactic status, with only indirect cognitive relevance at best. I would suggest that it is a priori unlikely that a status which is given such prominence in English and many other languages would not do some work for the language, and would be only arbitrary and superficial in its function. And just as a matter of procedure it would hardly seem advisable to discard the possibility that subjecthood has an important cognitive role ... "

Bernardo (1980 : 280) also reflects on the interrelationship between the grammatical status and cognitive roles of referring expressions when he writes:

" one individual, the one that is first to be extracted, the one that is easiest to activate sufficiently for extraction, is the one that gets expressed as the clause subject."

As far as the South African Bantu languages are concerned, the interaction between the discourse status and linear ordering of Sotho nominals only seems to have been researched by Louwrens (1979). He remarks:

"Daar bestaan 'n direkte verband tussen die liniêre ordening van elemente in Noord-Sothosinne, enersyds, en naamwoorde se status as ou of nuwe diskoersinformatie, andersyds. So, byvoorbeeld, kan slegs ou informasie-naamwoorde in Noord-Sothosinne pre-verbaal verskyn, terwyl nuwe informasie-naamwoorde, wat hulle sintaktiese distribusie betref, tot die post-verbale posisie beperk is." (Louwrens, 1979 : ii)

This observation entails that not only verbal agreement, but also the linear ordering of nouns in sentences is governed by discourse-pragmatic factors.

Although the interrelatedness of the discourse status of nouns and the syntactic position which they occupy has not as yet been investigated to the same extent as for Northern Sotho, this study suggests that Southern Sotho nominals reveal the same tendencies in this regard and that the following generalisations can be made for this language.

2.4.1 Some generalisations regarding the discourse status of *subject* nouns

Quirk et al. (1985 : 726) remark that the subject "typically refers to information that is regarded by the speaker as given."

The notion that **subjects** have a particular discourse status, is supported by a linguistic analysis in which the **theme** of a sentence (that which the sentence is about) is regarded as that part of the sentence which contributes less to the advancement of the conversation, i.e. it largely carries old information (Lyons, 1981b : 500 – 511; Brown & Yule, 1991 : 134 – 138; Steiner & Veldman, 1988 : 76 – 79; Crystal, 1994 : 351), etc. Although the syntactic category "subject" and thematic roles of nouns do not necessarily overlap, there is a tendency towards such a correspondence, with the result that it can be concluded that subject nominals largely refer to referents which the speaker/author regards as being known to the listener. However, the possibility is not excluded that when there is nothing that is given/known which can serve as a communicative point of departure, the speaker can decide to topicalise an expression referring to something other than what is given (Lyons, 1981b : 508).

The following example, however, illustrates that the reservation of the subject slot for given information is so strong that even at the communicative point of departure Maake (1992 : 1) introduces a given entity as the subject of the sentence, while new entities are then introduced in the object slot:

"Disebo o tsamaya le banana ba bang ho ya kga metsi nokeng. Ba tselaneng e suhlang hara mofero wa jwang ho leba nokeng. Ba rwetse dinkgo mme ba ntse ba bina. Ha ba fhla nokeng ba beha dinkgo fatshe ba qala ho bapala"
(Maake, 1992 : 1)

"Disebo and other girls are on their way to the river to fetch water. They are on a path that cuts through tall grass. They are carrying claypots on their heads and are singing. When they arrive at the river they put their claypots down in order to start playing

In the first line of the didascalies to the first scene of Maake's (1992) drama, the reader is introduced to the referent of the proper name *Disebo* as referring to *moradi wa Selepe* (*Selepe's* daughter). As this *dramatis personae* has already been presented in an informative way (Van der Merwe, 1992 : 36) to the reader in the character list of the drama, the information status of this noun is **given**. The NP *banana ba bang* (other girls) is presented as new information after the verb *o tsamaya* ((she) walks). As from the second mention both *Disebo* and the other girls are pronominalised by means of the subject concord. This suggests that the noun phrase *banana ba bang* (other girls) attains given information status through its association with *Disebo*. Givon (1976 : 157) remarks in this regard that "All Bantu languages have obligatory subject-verb agreement, where the pronominal origin of the agreement morpheme is established without any shred of doubt." Reference by means of subject concords, therefore, highlights the givenness (and definiteness) of the entities which are being referred to, as only nominals referring to given entities can be omitted.

The author, henceforth, continues to refer to *Disebo* and the "other girls" in the subject position of the following sentences, thereby reserving the object position for possible new referents (see 2.4.2). In other words, the given referents are used as the "peg" on which the rest of the discourse is hung (Lyons, 1981b : 507).

In summary then: Subject nouns generally function as the themes of sentences, and as such present given information. The referents of such nouns are uniquely identifiable

as they are known, and hence are definite.

2.4.2 Some generalisations regarding the discourse status of *object nouns*

According to Halliday (1967 : 200) the speaker is obliged to build up a discourse out of different information units. Characteristically the speaker will order given information before new information. This implies that **given** information will largely occur in the **subject** position of the sentence, whereas **new** information will, with more than chance frequency, be introduced in the **object** position.

The observation that new referents are usually introduced in the object position of sentences does, however, not imply that all object nominals refer to new referents. It merely suggests that when a new referent is introduced in the discourse, this introduction will most probably occur in the object slot. Using concordial agreement, word order, and the use of pronouns as indicators of the information status of Northern Sotho nouns, Louwrens (1979 : 96) observes that when the object noun is cataphorically referred to by means of an object concord, the discourse status of the referent of the object noun is "given". The discourse status of object nominals is, however, not necessarily marked in this manner.

The phenomenon that the information status of nouns introduced in the object position of the sentence can be either "new" or "given", can also be illustrated by the same example that was quoted under 2.4.1, e.g.

"Disebo o tsamaya le banana ba bang ho ya kga metsi nokeng. Ba tselaneng e suhlang hara mofero wa jwang ho leba nokeng. Ba rwetse dinkgo mme ba ntse ba bina. Ha ba fihla nokeng ba beha dinkgo fatshe ba qala ho bapala"
(Maake, 1992 : 1)

"Disebo and some other girls are on their way to the river to fetch water. They are on a path that cuts through tall grass. They are carrying claypots on their heads and are singing. When they arrive at the river they put their claypots down in order to start playing

The author introduces three nouns in the object position in this extract, viz. *metsi* (water), *dinkgo* (claypots) and again *dinkgo* (claypots). Having constant reference (Hurford & Heasley, 1983 : 77), the entity referred to by *metsi* (water), is **given**. The object noun *dinkgo* (claypots), however refers to entities which have not been introduced in the discourse previously, and its information status is therefore **new**. The second mention of *dinkgo* (claypots) is, however, also in the object position. As this is no longer an initial mention, its referent is **given**.

As was stated earlier, subject nouns which refer to known referents do not contribute much to the development of a discourse since they tell the addressee/reader very little he/she does not already know. Object nouns, on the other hand, serve as active agents in discourse expansion because they add new information to what has already been said. This difference in the discourse and reference status of subject and object nouns results in differences in the ways in which these two syntactic categories are qualified when qualification is deemed necessary. As will become evident, the qualification of object nouns is usually of a restrictive nature, i.e. it is aimed at restricting the referential properties of the noun in order to make its referent uniquely identifiable for the addressee/reader. Subject nouns, in contrast, are much less frequently qualified than object nouns, and when qualification does become necessary, it is usually of a non-restrictive nature since the referents of subject nouns are already known. The different ways in which restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses are utilised in Southern Sotho to qualify subject and object nouns will be investigated further in the next chapter.

Apart from the object nouns which productively contribute to the expansion of a discourse, predicate nouns also seem to fulfil a similar function. There is, however, a notable discourse-pragmatic difference between subjects and objects, on the one hand, and predicate nouns on the other, namely that whereas the former two categories are used to refer to *discourse referents* (be they old or new), predicate nouns are utilised to verbalise certain *characteristics or attributes of such referents*. This aspect is addressed in the following paragraph.

2.4.3 Some generalisations regarding the discourse status of *predicate nouns*

Doke & Mofokeng (1957 : 299) remark that when parts of speech other than verbs are used predicatively, they become copulatives in Southern Sotho. They consequently define the copulative as "a word which does the work of a predicative ...". Such predicative nouns often occur as the antecedent of Southern Sotho relative constructions and, therefore, are relevant to this chapter. The term "predicate noun" (Trask, 1993 : 214) or predicate nominal is used here to refer to a nominal in a predicate position, i.e. a sentence constituent which combines with a subject to make up the complete sentence, as is the case in a copular sentence, e.g.

"Tumedi: *Empa pelo ya motho ke ntho e tebileng hampe.*" (Maake, 1992 : 40)

"Tumedi: But the heart of a person is something which is very deep (has many facets)"

Ke ntho (is something) is the predicate of the sentence *pelo ya motho ke ntho* (the heart of a person is something). The predicate noun *ntho* (thing) is qualified by the direct

relative *e tebileng* (which is deep/has many facets).

Three different types of copulative predicates are generally distinguished in Southern Sotho, viz. the identifying copulative, the descriptive copulative and the associative copulative (Moeketsi et al., 1994 : 95). This study found that provision should also be made for existential copulatives in Southern Sotho, i.e. copulatives with the form *ho na le* (there is). Structurally, all these copulatives consist of a predicative element and a copulative complement, which may be a noun. The discourse status of predicate nominals is a rather complicated matter. Owing to the high occurrence of copulative complements that are qualified by relatives it is, however, of vital importance for the testing of the hypothesis presented in this study that the reference and information status of such nouns be clarified.

Referring to an example such as "Giscard d'Estaing is the President of France", Lyons (1981a : 185) points out that there are two interpretations for the reference status of predicative nouns. The predicate noun "the President of France" can either be seen as a non-referring expression which predicates something about Giscard d'Estaing, or it can be argued that both "Giscard d'Estaing" as well as "the President of France" could be taken as being referring expressions (in this case definite referring expressions), in which case it is an appositive copulative, i.e. the referents of the subject noun and that of the complement of the copulative are identical. The copulative serves the function of asserting the identity between the two referents/equalising the two referents. According to such an interpretation, the two referring expressions are interchangeable and the definite article is an obligatory part of "the President of France".

However, Lyons (1981a) points out that such an argument is a fallacy as it is based upon the assumption that the verb "to be" is an equative copular, which it is not. The

misinterpretation derives from the fact that in English the predicative and equative copula are the same. According to Lyons, the phrase "is the President of France" has a predicative rather than an equative intention, i.e. it predicates the existential fact that the subject "Giscard d'Estaing" fills the position (spends his energy in his capacity as) "the President of France". He points out that the definite article is, in fact, optional in such a predication.

Bhat (1979) also observes that the reference of copulative nouns may be viewed in two different ways. According to him, the distinction is not one between referring and non-referring nominals, but in fact one of nominals referring in different ways (Bhat, 1979 : 156). He illustrates his point by means of the examples "John is the president" and "John is a doctor" (Bhat, 1979 : 131). He regards the first copular as expressing an identification, in which case the definite noun phrase "the president" is then an expression referring to an individual in the real world. The second example, however, predicates a characteristic of John without identifying him. In such an instance, the noun "doctor" is not referring to an individual in the real world, but to a characteristic of that individual.

Bhat (1979 : 129) refers to Kuno (1969) who regards such predicative nouns as "property noun phrases". He (Bhat, 1979 : 129 – 130) says:

"Thus, in the sentence *he is a fool*, the predicative noun phrase *a fool* (along with the verb *is*) has the function of predicating that the individual referred to by the pronoun *he* has the property "of being a fool"."

According to Bhat (1979 : 155), such structures provide "the possibility of referring to an object through a name without committing oneself to any of its characteristics, and

also of indirectly predicating a set of characteristics of the object through a predicatively used name, without directly committing oneself to any of those characteristics."

He substantiates his point of view that both the so-called non-referring predicative noun phrases, as well as the referring ones should, in fact, be viewed as being referential, by means of two arguments. The first argument is based on the theory of pronominalisation, while the second one is based on a theory of hyponymic substitution.

Bhat (1979 : 156) remarks that "by considering the noun phrases as referential rather than non-referential, one can provide a basis for this coreference." The referential properties of the noun phrase *a fool* in the sentence *he is a fool* is, for instance, illustrated by the fact that the noun phrase *a fool* can be replaced by the anaphoric pronoun "it". After having made the statement *he is a fool* one can, for instance, say *being called it is never nice*, in which case *it* refers to the characteristic of being a fool.

Bhat uses a theory of hyponymic substitution to illustrate that some predicative noun phrases refer to "identifying characteristics" and not to entities in the real world. He points out (Bhat, 1979 : 148 - 151) that there are directional differences in hyponymic substitutions between nouns which refer to objects, and nouns which refer to identifying characteristics. When reference is made to real world entities, hyponymic substitution can take place from the superordinate hyponym downwards, or from the the various hyponyms upwards towards the superordinate term without changing the truth conditions of the statement, e.g.

- (a) John wants to eat a red apple
- (b) John wants to eat an apple
- (c) John wants to eat a fruit

However, when reference is made to the **identifying characteristics** of a discourse entity, replacement by hyponyms can only take place in an upward direction, i.e. by moving towards the superordinate term. If replacement would take place in the other direction, the identifying characteristics are changed. This phenomenon can be illustrated by means of the following examples:

- (a) One of the objects on the table is a red apple
- (b) One of the objects on the table is an apple
- (c) One of the objects on the table is a fruit

He (Bhat, 1979 : 150) remarks that:

"When a noun phrase is used for referring to a particular object, the intention of a speaker is simply to establish the identity of the object under consideration, so that something additional can be shared about that object. Whereas when a noun phrase is used for referring to its underlying set of characteristics, the intention of the speaker is to do something *with* those characteristics, such as asserting them of an object, associating additional characteristics with them, and so on."

A look at the following examples of Southern Sotho copulatives illustrates how the predicative nouns of this language predicate the identifying characteristics/usual attributes of a referent other than the predicate noun:

"Selepe: Le re le isa bana dikolong athe le ba isetsa hore ba ilo⁶ ithuta boitshwaro bona bo bobe! Ngwana enwa wa hao o mekgwa e nyonyehang."
(Maake, 1992 : 11)

⁶

correct form is *ile ho-*

"Selepe: You say you send children to school whereas you send them to acquire bad habits. This child of yours has manners that are despicable."

"Selepe: *Le etse le fihle e sa le nako. Le a tseba hore letona ke motho ya tshwarang nako.*" (Maake, 1992 : 18)

"Selepe: Be sure to arrive on time. You know that the councillor is a man who is punctual."

The noun phrases *mekgwa e nyonyehang* (manners that are despicable) and *motho ya tshwarang nako* (a man who is punctual) refer to the identifying characteristics of *ngwana* (child) and *letona* (councillor of the court).

The following example illustrates that a small number of predicate nominals refer to entities/concepts in the real world. During the course of the research such nominals were generally found to be the complements of existential or associative copulatives, e.g.

"Mafafa: *Wena ha o tsebe, Morena, empa nna ke a tseba, hobane ke Mafafa. Ho na le puo e buehang motseng mona, ya hore Matete o na laele Mohapi ho boloko (sic)⁷ Pulane,*" (Khaketla, 1983 : 18)

"Mafafa: You do not know, oh leader, but I know, because I am Mafafa. There are rumours which are going around here in the village, that Matete ordered Mohapi to take care of Pulane,

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should be *ho boloka*

Puo (rumours) refers to an indefinite matter in the real world.

The following generalisations are made regarding the discourse status of predicate nouns:

Being part of the **rheme** of a sentence (the part that adds most to the advancing of communication, i.e. which expresses the highest degree of extra meaning), the predicate is generally regarded to present **new** information (Brown & Yule, 1991 : 126, 127; Steiner & Veldman, 1988 : 76 - 79; Crystal, 1994 : 302).

Du Bois (1980 : 213) and Fox & Thompson (1990 : 308) are of the opinion that the reference status of a "categorising predicate nominal", which is more or less the English equivalent of the Southern Sotho copulative complement, is **indefinite** (its information status is therefore likely to be "new" (Chafe, 1976 : 42)).

According to Louwrens (1979 : 15), Gary (1976 : 2) remarks:

" ... in the **LEAST MARKED** sentences the subject of the sentence will convey old information, i.e. information assumed to be known, while the **predicate** (including verbs and adjectives, and presumably prepositions and adverbs) and any attendant nouns will convey new information." (Emphasis mine)

As a copulative complement does not generally refer to a discourse entity, but to the attributes/characteristics of such an entity, research for this study revealed that its discourse status is, in fact, **new and non-specific indefinite**.

It is important to note that what are being referred to here as predicate nouns, are nouns which appear as the complement in copulative constructions and not as the subject, e.g.

mekgwa (manners) in *Ngwana* o *mekgwa e nyonyehang* (The child has manners which are despicable), *motho* in *letona ke motho ya tshwarang nako* (the councillor is a man who is punctual), etc. In this regard, an important discourse-pragmatic difference between the subject and the complement in copulative constructions ought to be noted, namely that whereas complements which are used to express attributes or characteristic features of a referent are indefinite, subjects of copulative constructions can refer to known referents and can hence be definite. Compare, in this regard, the difference in the discourse status and referential properties of the nouns *letona* (councillor), which occurs as the subject of the copulative construction, and *motho* (man/person), which serves as the copulative complement, in:

"Selepe: Le etse le fihle e sa le nako. Le a tseba hore letona ke motho ya tshwarang nako." (Maake, 1992 : 18)

"Selepe: Be sure to arrive on time. You know that the councillor is a man who is punctual"

In this particular context, *letona* (councillor of the court) has definite reference and refers to a given entity. *Motho* (man/person), however, does not refer to the same referent as *letona*, but to the attribute/characteristic of being punctual and supplies new information. The predicate noun *motho* (man/person) does not refer to a specific person, but is used together with the relative *ya tshwarang nako* (who is punctual) to express the fact that punctuality is a human characteristic which the councillor of the court possesses. The reference status of *motho* (man/person) is, therefore, **non-specific indefinite**.

2.4.4 Conclusion

It seems to be generally accepted that speakers/authors employ nominals which refer to given referents in the **subject** position of a sentence, while **object** nominals refer to either given or new referents. The referents of both subject as well as object nouns are introduced in the conversation with the purpose of developing them as discourse referents. Although such referents may be specific in as much as it is an individual member of a class which is being referred to and not the class as a whole, such an individual is often not uniquely identifiable when it is introduced for the first time. A linguistic means must, therefore, be resorted to in order to establish the identity of the referent concerned.

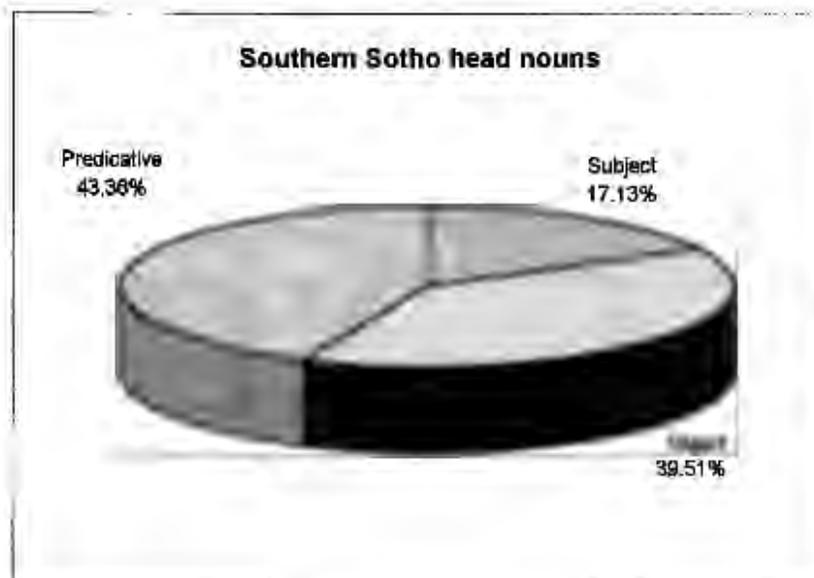
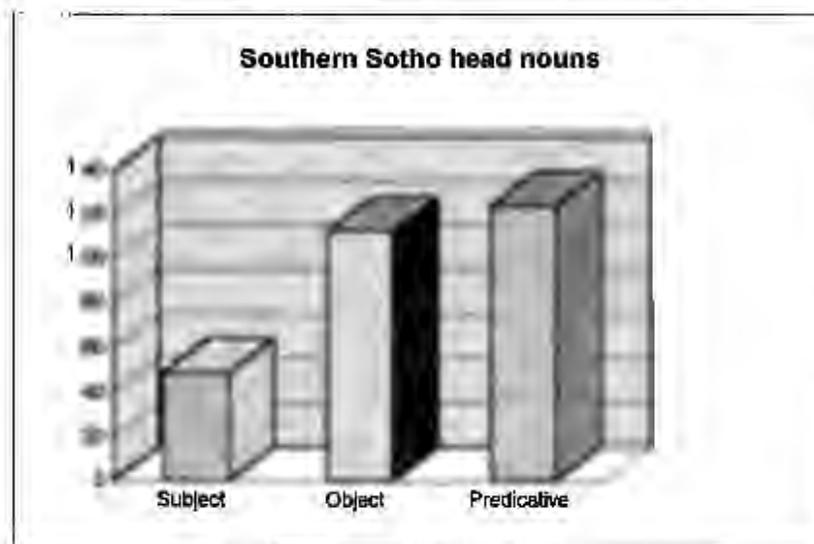
The sources that have been consulted for the purposes of this dissertation reveal that the discourse status of **predicate** nominals have not been investigated to the same extent as those of subject and object nominals. However, the conclusion is drawn that the referents of predicate nominals are not generally introduced in the conversation with the purpose of developing them as discourse themes, but to predicate something about the characteristics of one of the discourse referents. The referents of predicate nouns which serve as relative heads are largely unidentifiable and hence indefinite. This observation is not only supported by existing theories, but also by an analysis of the discourse status of predicate nouns occurring in the discourses under discussion.

In view of the findings arrived at at this point, the oral and written texts which served as the data corpus for this dissertation were analysed in order to determine the extent to which the discourse status of a head noun determines the selection of a particular type of relative. This was achieved by (a) counting and calculating the number of relative heads which occur in the texts; and (b) by noting the structural type of the relative which

co-occurs with each head when it acts as subject, as object and as predicate noun. Graphic representations and a discussion of the most important findings appear on the next and following pages. (A bar chart as well as a pie chart is used to depict the same information schematically in all instances).

2.5 A statistical exposition of the syntactic positions occupied by subject, object, and predicate nominal heads in Southern Sotho

Subject heads	Subject	49	17.13%
Object heads	Object	113	39.51%
Predicative heads	Predicative	124	43.36%
TOTAL		286	100.00%



In view of the theories which have been presented, the following conclusions can be drawn from these statistics:

2.5.1 Conclusions regarding the qualification of *subject* nouns

Only 49 out of a total of 286 head nouns, i.e. 17.13% of the antecedents, occur as the **subject** of a clause. It has been pointed out that linguists regard the subject noun to largely denote information which is perceived by the speaker/author as being **given** (see 2.4.1). Addressees generally perceive the referents of such nouns as being definite (see 2.3.1 and 2.3.2). It is, therefore, not surprising that such a small number of subject nouns are qualified by relative clauses. It will be illustrated in Chapter Three that the qualification of 17.13% of the subject nouns by means of relative clauses is not an indication of the newness and indefiniteness of nouns which occur in this syntactic position, but reflects the number of subject nouns which are re-established as the theme of the conversation by means of relative clauses (see 3.2.1.2).

The observation that the majority of subject nouns are not qualified by relative clauses, is in accordance with the findings of De Haan (1987 : 189) who established that "indefinite NPs are less often found to function as subjects of the clauses of which they are immediate constituents than definite NPs are."

The phenomenon is also illustrated by statistics presented by Fox & Thompson (1990). Using relative clauses culled from transcripts of American English face-to-face as well as telephonic conversations, they investigated, amongst others, the syntactic patterning of non-human head nouns. Their statistics reveal that only 39, i.e. 14.49%, out of a total number of 269 head nouns, were subjects. They, in other words, also established that nouns occurring in the subject position of a sentence are not generally qualified by

relative clauses (Fox & Thompson, 1990 : 302).

2.5.2 Conclusions regarding the qualification of *object* nouns

A total of 113 of the 286 head nouns that were identified in the researched discourses, i.e. 39.51%, appear in the direct **object** position of a sentence. Current theories suggest that object nouns can denote new as well as given referents (see 2.4.2). Such referents are introduced in the conversation with the purpose of developing them as discourse referents. Their referents are therefore specific, though not always definite. The conclusion can be drawn that the relatively high number of object nouns which is qualified by relative clauses suggests that: (a) the reference of nouns occurring in the object position of the sentence is often specific indefinite and needs to be modified in order to become definite; and (b) the general assumption that object nouns denote given as well as new information is correct, because if the discourse status of object nouns was only the expression of new information, the reference of a much larger number of the object nouns would have needed modification. If, on the other hand, object nouns referred exclusively to given entities, such a relatively high number of them would not have been qualified by relative clauses.

In their investigation of non-human object head nouns which are qualified by relative clauses, Fox & Thompson (1990 : 302) studied both direct object nouns as well as objects nouns following upon the verbs "have" and "have got" (Fox & Thompson, op cit : 306). They established that 41.26% of the head nouns occurring in these positions (i.e. 111 out of a total of 269) were qualified by relative clauses. Once again this number corresponds largely with the findings of this dissertation.

The observation that relative clauses are more often inclined to qualify nominals

occurring late in the sentential linear order, is supported by the research of De Haan (1987). He established (De Haan, op cit : 184) that the general tendency is that noun phrases which incorporate relative clauses occur in the final positions of sentences.

2.5.3 Conclusions regarding the qualification of *predicate nouns*

124 out of a total of 286 head nouns that were investigated for the purpose of this dissertation, i.e. 43.36%, occur as copulative complements, i.e. in the predicate position of the sentence. Current theories suggest that such nouns refer, in the majority of cases, to the identifying properties of antecedents and that they represent new, non-specific, indefinite concepts (see 2.4.3).

It can, therefore, be concluded that the high number of predicate nouns which is qualified by relative clauses suggests that: (a) nouns occurring as part of the copulative predicate of the sentence largely have indefinite reference, with the result that the referents of such nouns need to be modified in some or other way; and (b) nouns which form part of the predicate generally denote new information, as suggested by existing theories. If this was not the case, such a high number of predicative nouns would not have been qualified by relative clauses.

Owing to the fact that English copulatives differ largely from those of Southern Sotho, the statistics presented by Fox & Thompson (1990) in this regard cannot be compared with the results of this dissertation. They excluded from their count what they call "existential nouns", i.e. the equivalent of Southern Sotho nominals which occur as the complements of the copulative predicate *ho na le* (there is), and nouns following the verbs "have" and "have got".

2.6 Interrelationship between the syntactic function of head nouns and the structure of the relative which qualifies them

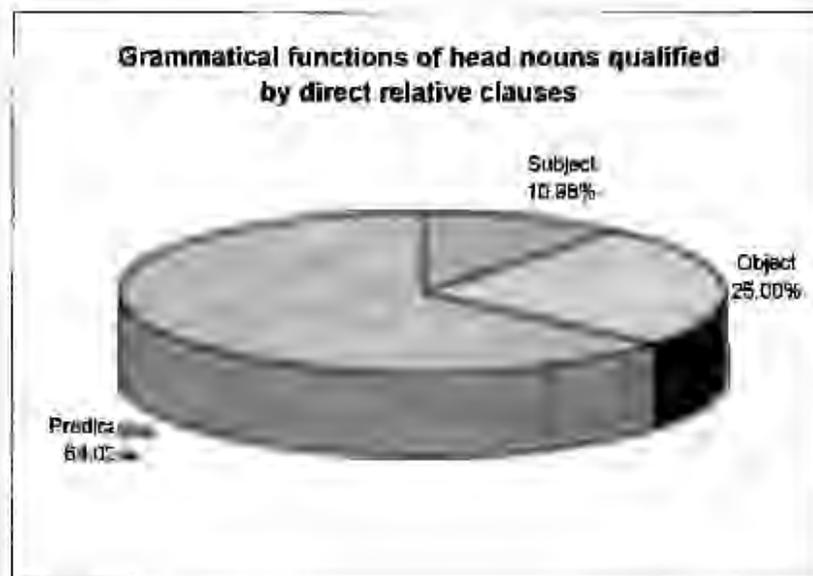
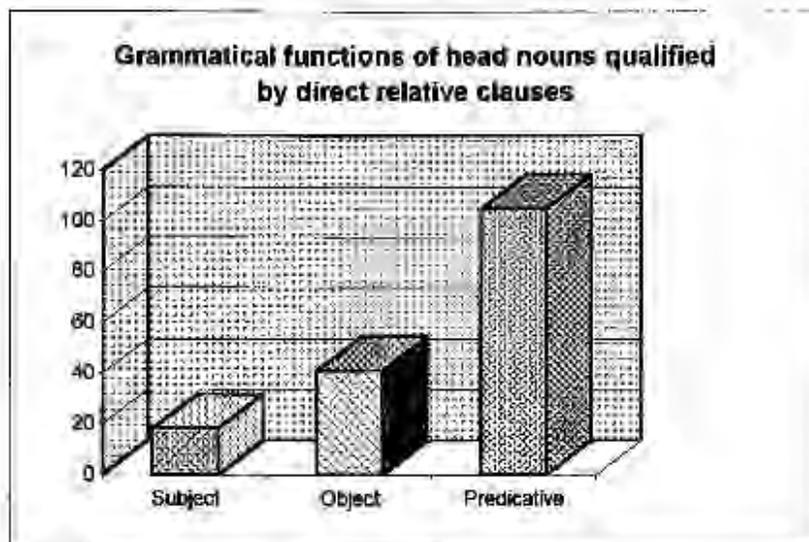
2.6.1 Introduction

It was illustrated in par. 2.5 that the discourse status of antecedent nouns largely determines the syntactic position in which such nominals occur. In order to establish whether there is a correlation between the **syntactic function** of an antecedent noun and the **structure of the relative** which qualifies it, and therefore between the discourse status of a head noun and the type of relative by means of which it is qualified, the frequency of occurrence of a particular type of relative with a head fulfilling a particular syntactic function was investigated. The results are as follows:

2.6.2 A statistical exposition of the interrelatedness of the structural type of the relative and the syntactic position of its head noun

2.6.2.1 Head nouns qualified by *direct* relative clauses

Subject heads	Subject	18	10.98%
Object heads	Object	41	25.00%
Predicative heads	Predicative	105	64.02%
TOTAL		164	100.00%



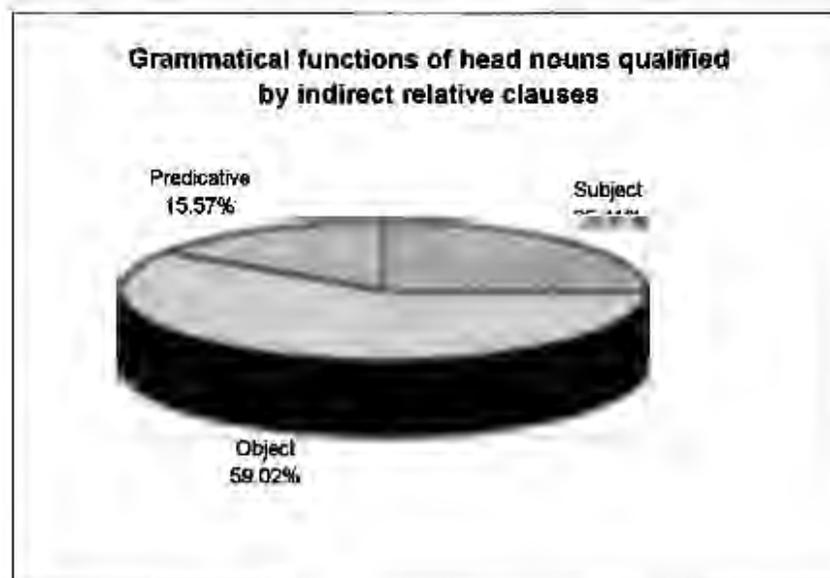
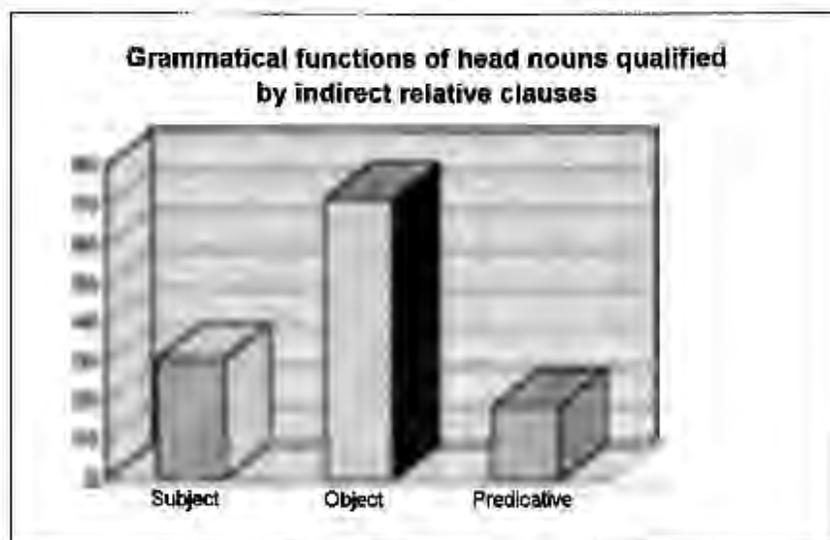
These statistics reveal that it is largely **predicate nouns** that are qualified by means of **direct relative clauses**. A total of 105, i.e. 64.02% of the head nouns qualified by direct relative clauses are predicate nouns.

A discussion of the **discourse status** of predicate nouns (see 2.4.3) demonstrated that such nouns largely convey new and non-specific indefinite information. It could, therefore, be concluded that **direct relative clauses** mainly qualify new, non-specific indefinite referents. Such an observation concurs with the conclusions arrived at by Fox & Thompson (1990 : 308) who established that it is largely indefinite head nouns which are qualified by a relative construction of which the head is the semantic subject in English. The equivalent of such a relative would be the Southern Sotho direct relative clause. As predicate nouns do not generally refer to discourse participants, but to the identifying characteristics/usual attributes of such referents, it must be concluded that the function of the direct relative clause is not to identify a referent, but to express its attributes. Direct relative clauses do, in other words, not generally fulfill a restrictive function (see 3.3).

A count of the head nouns qualified by **indirect relative clauses** reveals the following:

2.6.2.2 Head nouns qualified by *indirect* relative clauses

Subject heads	Subject	31	25.41%
Object heads	Object	72	59.02%
Predicative heads	Predicative	19	15.57%
TOTAL		122	100.00%



The statistics presented above reveal that, in contrast to **direct relative clauses** which largely qualify predicative heads, **indirect relative clauses** are, in the vast majority of cases, employed to qualify **object nominals**, i.e. nominals referring to either new or given discourse entities which the addressee perceives to be specific, but not necessarily definite. 72 out of a total of 286 head nouns, i.e. 59.02% which were investigated, occur as the objects of sentences. The fact that object nominals refer to specific, though not necessarily identifiable referents, is very significant with regard to the type of qualification rendered by indirect relative clauses. Owing to the particular structure of this type of relative clause (see 1.4.2.1) indirect relatives anchor (see 3.2.1) new, unidentifiable referents to given referents with the purpose of making such referents identifiable. It can, therefore, be concluded that the qualification of the indirect relative clause is of a restrictive nature; an observation which will be perused in greater detail in the next chapter.

2.7 Conclusion

Predicative nouns, i.e. nouns of which the discourse status is theoretically proposed to be new and non-specific indefinite due to the fact that such nouns predicate the identifying characteristics of a discourse referent, are largely qualified by **direct relative clauses**, while **object nouns**, i.e. nouns of which the discourse status is theoretically proposed to be either new or given, but which refer to specific (though not always identifiable discourse referents), are generally qualified by **indirect relative clauses**.

Such conclusions suggest that: (a) there is without any doubt, an interrelationship between the discourse status of a head noun and the structure of the relative which qualifies it; and (b) direct relative clauses are non-restrictive in nature, while indirect relative clauses restrict the reference of their heads. As conclusions drawn in this

chapter are largely based on syntactic grounds, Chapter Three is intended to show that text analyses conducted in accordance with accepted discourse-pragmatic principles support these findings.

Chapter 3

A discourse-pragmatic investigation of the relationship between relative clauses and their nominal heads

3.1 Introduction

Fox & Thompson (1990) remark that interlocutors constantly make decisions about their fellow discourse participants' state of knowledge during the process of communication and that it is on the basis of these decisions that they then make choices about how the "flow" of the information contained in their message should be managed (Fox & Thompson, 1990 : 297). They thus acknowledge that the speaker who decides to enter into a discourse has a complex task in the sense that s/he should not only decide **what** to tell, but also **how** the information which involves her/his message should **literally** be put into words (Downing, 1980 : 89).

This dissertation aims to illustrate that a variety of discourse-pragmatic factors lie between the "what" and "how" mentioned in the previous paragraph. In other words, it could be said that this dissertation intends to illustrate that the way in which a message is literally put into words depends on a whole array of linguistic as well as extra-linguistic factors.

The concept that syntactic structures and the way in which they operate are governed by much stronger extra-linguistic phenomena than merely the rules of grammar, is not a new one. Longacre (1979) had already proposed that grammatical structures should be

viewed within the discourse context in which they occur in order to acquire greater explanatory power regarding the forces which govern them. Givon (1979 : 31) is of the opinion that:

"If language is an instrument of communication, then it is bizarre to try and understand its structure without reference to communicative setting and communicative function."

Chafe (1976, 1980, 1987), Givon (1979), Du Bois (1980), Fox & Thompson (1990) and Prince (1981) also acknowledge the intrinsic relationship between formal as well as informal linguistic factors and the "packaging" of linguistic elements on the grammatical and syntactic levels.

The validity of the assumption that there is an interrelationship between Southern Sotho grammatical forms and the context of the discourse in which they are used, is confirmed by Demuth (1985, 1987). She remarks:

"It is (also) observed that a particular discourse context can greatly influence the use of complex grammatical forms." (Demuth, 1985 : 114).

The provisional observations made in Chapter Two that speakers/authors seem to show a tendency to use **direct** relatives when they qualify predicate nouns with **non-specific indefinite** reference and **indirect** relatives when they qualify objectival heads which can either be **definite** or **specific indefinite** (see 2.3.1 and 2.7), also support this view.

It is against this background that this chapter intends to establish within a discourse-pragmatic framework the extent of the interrelatedness between the discourse status of

a head noun and the function and structure of the relative which qualifies it.

In order to achieve this goal, the same research material that was used in Chapters One and Two will again serve as the basis for discussion.

Since the discourse functions of Southern Sotho relatives have up to now received scant attention, some of these functions of relative clauses will be discussed before the interrelatedness between the discourse functions and the structure of relative clauses is investigated.

3.2 Some discourse functions of relative constructions

The first notion which generally comes to mind when reference is made to the **function** of relatives, relates to the well-published, rather formal, categorisation of relative clauses into two different semantic categories, viz **restrictive** and **non-restrictive** relative clauses (Quirk et al. 1985 : 1247 – 1250; Crystal, 1994 : 297; etc). The restrictive capability (or lack thereof), of English relative clauses refers to the capacity (or lack thereof) of such clauses to **identify** the referent/class of referents to which reference is being made using a particular noun phrase.

Quirk et al. (1985 : 1239) observe that modification can be restrictive and non-restrictive as far as (a) the referent of the head can be viewed as a member of a class which can be linguistically identified only through the modification that has been supplied (restrictive); or (b) the referent of the head can be viewed as unique or as a member of a class that has been independently identified (for example, in a preceding sentence). A further qualification of such a head is additional information which is not essential for identifying the head, and is therefore non-restrictive.

See, for instance, the following Southern Sotho relatives which, respectively restrict/fail to restrict the reference of their head nouns:

(a) "*Selepe: Ngwana enwa wa hao Mmadisebo ha ke tsebe hore o kenwe ke bohlanya ba mofuta nngwe. Ho batleha hore ke mo ise dingakeng di ke di mo hlahlobe A ka nka nkgo eo ke nwang jwala ka yona a ya kga metsi ka yona nokeng?*" (Maake, 1992 : 56 – 57)

"**Selepe:** I do not know what the nature of your child's madness is Mmadisebo., I ought to take her to the doctors in order for them to diagnose her How can she possibly take the claypot with which I drink beer and go and fetch water with it at the river?"

(b) "*Mmadisebo: Bua hle ke tsebe ho o thusa haeba⁸ ho na le tabanyana e itseng pakeng tsa hao le bona.*" (Maake, 1992 : 7)

"**Mmadisebo:** Please speak so that I can help you if there is a matter of any nature between yourself and them."

The indirect relative *eo ke nwang jwala ka yona* (with which I drink beer), occurring in example (a), **restricts** the reference of the noun *nkgo* (claypot) to such an extent that it becomes clear that **this** noun does not refer to any claypot, but specifically to that claypot from which the speaker drinks beer. The direct relative clause *e itseng* (of any nature), occurring in example (b) on the other hand, does not restrict the reference of the noun *tabanyana* (some matter) to the extent that the "matter" which is being referred to here

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should be *ha eba*

becomes uniquely identifiable. This relative merely specifies of what nature the hypothetical referent of the head may be.

Southern Sotho relatives have up to now, however, not been classified according to their function. Neither Doke & Mofokeng (1957) nor Gerber (1955), Moeketsi et al. (1994), or Moeketsi & Swanepoel (1995) refer to the *restrictiveness* or *non-restrictiveness* of Southern Sotho relatives when they discuss these structures. These linguists view relative constructions from a syntactic point of view, i.e. from the perspective that a relative construction "qualifies" its referent (Gerber, 1955 : 1; Doke & Mofokeng, 1957 : 421; Moeketsi et al, 1994 : 49; Moeketsi & Swanepoel, 1995 : 94) without reflecting on the pragmatic purpose of such qualification.

Research undertaken for this study revealed that while speakers/authors generally use **indirect** relative clauses to **restrict** the reference of head nouns in order to be able to discuss such referents without loss of comprehension from the addressee, **direct** relative clauses are, on the other hand, largely of a **non-restrictive** nature and are used to **characterise** or **describe** discourse referents. It was established that the restriction which is achieved by the qualification of the indirect relative clause is the result of a process whereby (a) the unidentified referent of a head noun is **anchored** to a given referent in such a way that the referent of the head noun becomes identifiable (see 3.2.1.1), or (b) a given referent is anchored to another given referent in order to **focus** upon the referent (see 3.2.1.2).

3.2.1 The *anchoring* function of relatives

It is the opinion of Fox & Thompson (1990) that in effective communication referents are presented as being relevant for addressees at the point at which they are introduced in the discourse. They observe that the relative clause is used to "ground" referents whose relevance is not clear from prior mention or from the extra-linguistic context. According to them:

"To ground a noun phrase is to locate its referent in the conversational space by relating it to a referent whose relevance is clear, that is, to a Given (sic) referent in the immediate context." (Fox & Thompson, 1990 : 300)

Three kinds of grounding are discussed by them, but the type which Prince (1981) calls **anchoring** will be singled out for the purposes of this dissertation. He observes that:

"A discourse entity is anchored if the NP representing it is linked, by means of another NP, or "Anchor", properly contained in it, to some other discourse entity." (Prince, 1981 : 236)

The structural composition of the indirect relative makes it ideally suited to perform an anchoring function. Chapter One illustrated (see 1.4.2.1) that the referent of the head of the relative clause is not the same as the referent which is the subject of the relative clause. The qualification rendered by the indirect relative clause is, therefore, of such a nature that the referent of the head is associated with, or anchored to the referent which is the subject of the relative verb, e.g.

"Maphunya: Ke re ha ke fihla lekgotleng mane ke ile ka bona sebopeho sa

batho bao o reng ba o lwantsha e le se fapaneng hole le seo ke neng ke se hakanya." (Maake, 1992 : 47)

"**Maphunya:** I say, when I arrived over there at the court I observed that the nature of the people **whom you say are fighting with you**, was completely different from what I imagined."

The indirect relative clause *bao o reng ba o lwantsha* (whom you say are fighting with you) qualifies the referent of *batho* (people) by **anchoring** it to a remark made about them by the addressee, i.e. it anchors the referent of the head to the second person or addressee, who, as a discourse participant, is known or given.

3.2.1.1 Anchoring relatives which fulfill an *identifying* function

It was mentioned (see 3.2) that the anchoring function of relatives is of a dual nature in as far as the anchoring either serves as a means whereby a referent is uniquely identified, or as a means whereby a referent is thematised/focused upon.

An **identifying** relative clause is one which **restricts** the reference of its head noun to such an extent that the particular member of the class which is being referred to can be identified only by decoding the modification supplied by the relative. Such a relative cognitively activates the information denoted by the head noun for the addressee. Compare, in this regard, the following two examples:

(a) "*Selepe: Na ho na le motho ka thung ka mona?*

Mmadisebo: Tjhee, ha ho motho ka thung, ntate. Hobaneng ntate a botsa?

Selepe: Taba eo ke batlang ho e bua le wena hona jwale ha ke batle hore e tsejwe ke mang kapa mang, ke batla hore e be taba e tsejwang ke rona re le babedi feela. Le moholwane ha a no tseba letho ka yona.

Mmadisebo: (E ka o a tshoha hanyane.) Ee, ntate

Selepe: (O buella fatshe.) Ke batla hore o nthuse ke laye ngwana enwa hantle.

Mmadisebo: Ho lauwa teng o ila lauwa, jwalo ka ngwana Mosotho e mong le e mong. (Maake, 1992 : 83 – 84)

"Selepe: Is there somebody here in the house?

Mmadisebo: No there is nobody in the house, dad. Why do you ask?

Selepe: I do not want anybody to know about the matter **which I wish to discuss with you right now**, I want it to be a matter which is known by the two of us only. Even my older brother will not know anything about it.

Mmadisebo: (As if she is frightened.) Yes, dad

Selepe: (He whispers.) I want you to assist me in counselling this child nicely.

Mmadisebo: The counselling will be handled in the same way as for every Mosotho child."

(b) *"Jakob: Mmamosebetsi, o bonne hore re e lokisitse jwang heke eo*

le neng le sokodiswa ke yona?" (Extract from live conversation)

"**Jakob:** Mmamosebetsi, did you see how we repaired the gate **which caused you trouble?**"

In these examples, the relative clauses *eo ke batlang ho e bua le wena hona jwale* (which I would like to discuss with you right now) and *eo le neng le sokodiswa ke yona* (which caused you trouble) singularly **identify** the referents of the heads *taba* (matter) and *heke* (gate). In other words, it could be said that these indirect relative clauses **restrict** the reference of the respective heads to such an extent that the addressees *Mmadisebo* and *Mmamosebetsi* are enabled to identify the exact "matter" and "gate" under discussion.

3.2.1.2 Relative clauses which bring head nouns into *focus*

Crystal (1994 : 139) observes that discourse information which is presented as being at the centre of the communicative interest of the speaker, is being focused upon. Such information is given "prominence" (Givon, 1975; Chafe, 1976) by, for instance, moving it to the front of a sentence. Within certain linguistic frameworks such a process is also described as "thematization" (Crystal, 1994 : 351).

Relativisation is a focusing strategy in as much as it either changes the theme (switches the topic) of the discourse by giving prominence to a referent other than the one which had been focused upon up to a certain point, or because it reveals the attitude of the speaker with regard to the referent of the head (see "evaluative" focus which is discussed later).

The following example illustrates quite clearly how the referent of the head noun *masela*

(the cloths) is **focused** upon, or thematised, by moving it to the front of the sentence. The initial theme of this particular discourse is the "cloths" to which *Matshediso* has to attend. The conversation then moves on to other topics. It is only when *Letia* and *Mmamosebetsi* leave *Mmatshediso* that the conversation returns to the cloths. *Mmamosebetsi* asks *Letia* to identify the cloths for her. In the process of doing so, *Letia* first has to refer to the fact that a shop was opened in town, and when she then re-establishes the cloths as the theme of her sentence, she employs the relative clause *ao re buang ka ona* (which we are talking about) to shift the focus from the shop to the cloths, e.g.

(a) "*Letia: Tshedi, sala hantle ngwanaka tswela pele ka masela ao.*"

Matshediso: E e we mmeee (sic)⁹ Haikona le ya ditabeng dikukung, empa nna ke tshwanetse ho ikgotisa ka papa le mosebetsi o lokelang seroki. Mohau o kae?

Letia: Hau, Tshedi, o botswa wena, hape o motho ya leshano ka ho fetisisa. Eja french eo Sebetsi a e tlisitseng maobane.

Letia: E re re ye, Sebetsi!

Mmamosebetsi: Le bua ka masela afe?

Letia: Ha ke re Mientjie wa Klasie o butse kgwebonyana toropong kwa. Masela ao re buang ka ona ke a rekiswang moo." (Extract from live conversation)

⁹

apparently a contracted form of *mme wee*

Letia: Tshedi, goodbye my child do continue with those fabrics.

Matshediso: No mother! No you are going to conversations to refreshments, but I have to satisfy myself with porridge and do work which suits a seamstress. Don't you have any mercy?

Letia: Goodness, Tshedi, you are lazy, moreover you are a terrible liar. Eat the french (polony) which Sebetsi brought yesterday.

Letia: Let us go, Sebetsi!

Mmamosebetsi: Which cloths are you talking about?

Letia: By the way Klasie's Mientjie has opened a small shop over there in town. The cloths **which we are talking about**, are cloths which are sold over there."

Compare also:

(b) *"Thankga: Morena le lekgotla, le tjhaba sa ntate se hlomphehang! Ke nthwana e eisehang, e ke keng ya lokela ho bua (sic)¹⁰ sebokeng se kang sena, (seboke) seo monamane wa ha Kgudu o robellaneng ho sona."* (Khaketla, 1983 : 3)

"Thankga: My lord, and members of the council, and respected people of my father! It is a minor case, **which is not suitable to be discussed** at a meeting

¹⁰ should be *ho buuwa*

such as this one, (a meeting) **where important citizens are gathered.**"

During this conversational turn the insignificance of his own being is the first theme of *Thankga's* conversation. He then shifts the focus from his own insignificant state to the grand stature of the meeting. He does this by **foregrounding** the stature of the meeting by means of the information supplied by the **indirect** relative clause *seo monamane wa ha Kgudu o roballaneng ho sona* (where important citizens are gathered).

This focusing strategy of relatives is often of an evaluative nature. Chafe (1980 : 19) observes that focus is **evaluative** when the way in which the entity is focused upon depends upon the attitude of the speaker/author towards that particular event/entity. It is, therefore, not uncommon for different interlocutors to present the same entity in different ways, each expressing her/his own feelings about the entity under discussion.

Grimes (1975 : 323) remarks in this regard that:

"Every clause, sentence, paragraph, episode, and discourse is organised around a particular element that is taken as its point of departure. It is as though the speaker presents what he wants to say from a particular perspective."

Evaluative focus is illustrated by the way in which *Mohapi* focuses upon the things which *Bulane* inherited from their father in the following examples:

(c) "*Mohapi*: *Hojane o utlwa se ka pelong ya ka mona, o ka be o sa kgotse jwalo. Setulo se dutsweng ke Bulane ke sa ka; borena boo a ikakasang ka bona ke ba ka; ditjhelete tsena tseo a ntseng a di ja le tsona ke tsa ka; tsohle tseo a reng ke tsa hae ke tsa ka, hobane e ne e le takatso ya ntate hore borena ba hae*

e be ba ka; empa ka baka la Majara, le dinokwane tsa hae, tsena kaofela di mphonyohile " (Khaketla, 1983 : 30)

"**Mohapi:** If you could feel what is here in my heart, you would not be exclaiming in that matter. The chair upon which *Bulane* sits is mine; the leadership with which he is boasting is mine; these riches which he is still using are also mine; everything which he claims as his is mine, because it was the wish of my father that the leadership should be mine; but because of *Majara* and his accomplices, I have been denied all these."

The heads *borena* (the leadership), *ditjhelete* (the riches/money) and *tsohle* (everything) are respectively qualified by the relative clauses *boo a ikakasang ka bona* (which he is boasting with), *tseo a ntseng a di ja* (which he is still using) and *tseo a reng ke tsa hae* (which he claims as his). The referents of these heads are given and definite, the relative clauses are, therefore, not employed to restrict the reference of their heads; instead, they qualify their heads by reflecting upon the way in which the addressee views the association between the head and the entity to which it is anchored. In this particular example, the qualification rendered by the relative clauses reveals *Mohapi's* negative attitude towards the fact that *Bulane* has inherited everything which was owned by their father.

The thematic shift which is brought about by the indirect relative clause in examples such as these highlights another pragmatic difference between direct and indirect relatives, namely the fact that the direct relative is not usually employed to attain thematic shift – not even when two direct relative clauses are used simultaneously to qualify the same head. A systematic distinction between **focus** (i.e. thematic shift) on the one hand, and **emphasis**, on the other, therefore seems to be necessary in Southern

Sotho discourse pragmatics.

When a speaker/an author uses two relative clauses to qualify a single head, the second relative clause is used to **emphasise** the characteristic expressed by the first relative clause, e.g.

"Maphunya: Ke re hee, ka moo o behileng taba ena ke ile ka bona hantle hore batho bana ba romela mora wa bona hore a kgaoletse enwa moradi wa rona e le hore ke batho ba o qophileng, ba bileng ba le leqhoko." (Maake, 1992 : 46)

"Maphunya: I dare say, the way in which you put this matter illustrated clearly to me that these people sent their son to intercept our daughter being people **who are harassing you, who are ready to fight.**"

Both the relative clauses *ba o qophileng* (who are harassing you) and *ba bileng ba le leqhoko* (who are ready to fight) are used to **characterise** the referent of the head noun *batho* (people), thus **emphasising** that the people who intercepted the girl on her way to the river were vindictive.

3.2.2 Relative clauses which *describe/characterise* the referents of their head nouns

It became clear during an investigation of the functions of direct and indirect relative clauses that although the functions fulfilled by these structures overlap to an extent, **direct** relative clauses largely *describe/characterise* referents in a non-restrictive or "partly restrictive" way. The referents which are described/characterised can be (a) the referents of the heads of the relatives; or (b) another referent which is described/characterised by means of an identifying or descriptive copulative. In both

cases, however, the direct relative clause describes/characterises a referent without singularly identifying it.

The descriptive function of the relative clause is of such a nature that it generally denotes the **physical state** of referents, or in the case of humans, often also denotes typical characteristic traits of the individual concerned. Compare, for instance, the following set of examples which illustrates how the referents of *sefate* (tree), *konyanyana* (little lamb) and *mosadi* (woman) are described/characterised by the direct relative clauses *se neng se wele* (which had fallen down), *se shwang ka lekgwegwe* (which dies of scab) and *ya fokolang jwalo ka nna* (who is as weak/powerless as I am) with the view of providing a more vivid picture of (a) the disposition of a fallen tree; (b) the relationship between *Mohapi* and his brother *Bulane*; and (c) the disempowered state of *Pulane*:

(a) "**Tumedi:** *Jwale re tshwanela ho tshela noka. Hona moo ho ne ho le sefate se neng se wele se entse borokgo, " (Maake, 1992 : 38)*

"**Tumedi:** Now, we were supposed to cross the river. Right there was a tree which had fallen over and made a bridge, "

(b) "**Mohapi:** *Ke rialo hobane dintho tsohle tsa ntate di ho yena feela, mme ha a eso nnee le ha e le konyanyana e seng e eshwa ke lekgwegwe.*" (Khaketla, 1983 : 24)

"**Mohapi:** I say so because everything of my father's is only with him, and he has not even given me a little lamb dying from scab."

(c) "**Malokobe:** *Na ha nka o supisa tsela e bobebe ya ho fumantsha Morena*

Mohapi borena ba hae o ka utlwisisa ho thusa?

Pulane: *Mosadi ya fokolang jwalo ka nna, a ka thusa jwang? O Ikatisetsta (sic)¹¹ moqoqo feela jwale.*" (Khaketla, 1983 : 31)

Malokobe: If I show you an ugly way to let *Morena Mohapi* get his leadership, will you agree to help us?

Pulane: How can a woman who is as weak/powerless as I am be of any help? You are just joking."

In contrast to these examples in which the direct relative clauses describe/characterise the referents of their heads, the following is an illustration of direct relatives fulfilling this function with regard to a referent other than their heads:

(d) *"Mmadisebo: Ngwanaka, ke itse o tlohele ho botsa o etse seo o tshwanetseng ho se etsa. Ha ntatao a ka hlolwa ke nyewe ena re tla kena kae? O a mo tseba ke motho ya sa rateng ho hlolwa ke letho, teng ha e le motho, ha ke sa bua."* (Maake, 1992 : 19 – 20)

Mmadisebo: My child, I said you must stop asking and do what you are supposed to do. If your father should be beaten in this court case, where will we go? You know him, he is a person **who does not like to be defeated by anything**, moreover if it is a person, I do not even want to mention it."

¹¹ should be lower case, i.e. *-ikatisetsa*

(e) "*Bulane: Keletso tsa basadi ha di a loka. Ke batho ba hlokang kelello*"

(Khaketla, 1983 : 12)

"**Bulane:** The advice of women is no good. They are people **who lack wisdom**

The relative clauses *ya sa rateng ho hlolwa ke letho* (who does not like to be defeated by anything) and *ba hlokang kelello* (who lack wisdom), are part of the noun phrases *motho ya sa rateng ho hlolwa ke letho* (a person who does not like to be defeated by anything) and *batho ba hlokang kelello* (people who lack wisdom). These noun phrases occur as the complements of the copulatives *ke motho ya sa rateng ho hlolwa ke letho* (is a person who does not like to be defeated by anything) and *ke batho ba hlokang kelello* (are people who lack wisdom) and are used to **describe** or **characterise** the referents of *ntatao* (your father) and *basadi* (women) by predicating that the referent of *ntatao* (your father) is a person who reacts badly to defeat and that women are ignorant people. None of the relatives cited above singularly identify their referents.

3.3 Conclusion

The structural composition of the indirect relative enables this structure to anchor referents to each other. This anchoring is of such a nature that it either (a) results in the identification of referents, in other words, the restriction of the reference of a head noun, (b) shifts the focus of the addressee from one referent to another, or (c) enables the speaker/author to reveal her/his feelings regarding the association between the two referents that are anchored to each other.

Direct relative clauses on the other hand, describe/characterise referents without singularly identifying them.

3.4 A discourse-pragmatic investigation of the interrelatedness of the discourse status of a head noun and the function and structure of the relative which qualifies it

The ease with which people converse may tempt the observer to overlook the intricacies which underlie even the simplest of conversations. These intricacies will be pointed out in the following discourse-analytic investigation of the interrelatedness of the discourse status of a head noun and the function and structure of the relative clause which qualifies it.

While there may sometimes be an overlap in the functions of direct and indirect clauses, it became evident from this study that the differences between the pragmatic functions of these two structural types of relative are much more dominant.

As it became apparent that the relative clauses of Southern Sotho are used for the same pragmatic purposes in oral as well as in written texts, the results of the investigation will be illustrated by means of brief extracts from some of the conversations and an extract from the drama by *Khaketla* (1983).

3.4.1 Extracts from live conversations

In example (a) of the following conversation (also see 1.1), the speaker *Latjie* uses one indirect and one direct relative clause. Compare *eo ntatemoholo wa hao a itseng* (whom your grandfather said) and *ya balang hantle* (who studies well), respectively. She thus modifies the referential properties of the noun *monna* (the man), and predicates a particular identifying characteristic of the referent of the noun phrase *ngwana wa hae*

(his child). See for example:

(a) "*Latjie: Sebetsi, o ntse o mo hopola monna eo ntatemoholo wa hao a itseng o thunya dinone tsa hae?*

Mmamosebetsi: O bua ka Fanie?

Latjie: Ee, yena Jwale, le ngwana wa hae o na le moya oo.

Mmamosebetsi: E e tjhe!

Latjie: Ke sono hobane ngwana eo ke ngwana ya balang hantle".

"**Latjie:** Sebetsi, do you still remember the man **whom your grandfather said** shoots his blesbuck?

Mmamosebetsi: Are you referring to Fanie?

Latjie: Yes, him. Now, his child also has that nature (takes after him).

Mmamosebetsi: Oh no!

Latjie: It is a pity because that child is a child **who studies well** (i.e. that child is a good student)."

Latjie introduces the referent of *monna* (the man) as the **object** of the sentence *Sebetsi, o ntse o mo hopola monna* (*Sebetsi, do you still remember the man*). This referent is

new (see 2.3.2.2) as the addressee, *Mmamosebetsi* cannot uniquely identify it. The fact that *Latjie* asks her to recall this referent (see "do you still remember") signifies to *Mmamosebetsi* that *Latjie* uses the noun *monna* (the man) to refer to a particular man. The reference status of the noun *monna* (the man) is, therefore **specific-indefinite** (see 2.3.1). As *Latjie* is aware that *Mmamosebetsi* will not be able to realise exactly which referent she has in mind, she restricts the noun's referential properties by means of the **indirect** relative clause *eo ntatemoholo wa hao a itseng* (whom your grandfather said).

The **anchoring** (see 3.2.1) of the referent of *monna* (man) to the addressee by associating the two of them with each other via a remark which *Mmamosebetsi's* grandfather made about this individual, enables *Mmamosebetsi* to **identify** the referent of *monna* (man). The information supplied by this indirect relative clause **focuses** on the head in an **evaluative** way (see 3.2.1.2). That is, it evaluates the character of the man with reference to the accusation that he steals a few blesbuck. As the topic of *Latjie's* conversation is actually the fact that this particular man has a son who also has the inclination to steal, she uses this initial remark to pave the way for the evaluative nature of the conversation.

The second relative clause, i.e. *ya balang hantle* (who studies well) is a **direct** relative. It modifies the meaning of the predicative noun *ke ngwana* (is a child) and is used to **predicate an attribute** of the referent that was referred to by means of the NP *ngwana wa hae* (his child). In this instance, the noun *ngwana* (child) in *ke ngwana ya balang hantle* (he is a child who studies well), does not refer to a particular individual in the real world and is, therefore, non-specific indefinite. It denotes a "a non-adult human being" and some of its typical characteristics (Bhat, 1979 : 129 – 137), i.e. it predicates that the referent of *ngwana wa hae* (his child) is a **juvenile** who is characterised as being a good student.

Compare, in the same vein, the circumstances under which the speakers *Letia* and *Matshediso* use the relative clauses *eo Sebetsi a e tlisitseng maobane* (which *Sebetsi* brought yesterday), *ao re buang ka ona* (which we are talking about), *o lokelang seroki* (which suits a seamstress) and *a rekiswang moo* (which are sold there) in the following conversation (also quoted in 3.2.1.2a):

(b) "*Letia: Tshedi, sala hantle ngwanaka tswela pele ka masela ao.*

Matshediso: E e we mmeee (sic)! Haikona le ya ditabeng dikukung, empa nna ke tshwanetse ho ikgotisa ka papa le mosebetsi o lokelang seroki. Mohau o kae?

Letia: Hau, Tshedi, o botswa wena, hape o motho ya leshano ka ho fetisisa. Eja french eo Sebetsi a e tlisitseng maobane.

Letia: E re re ye, Sebetsi!

Mmamosebetsi: Le bua ka masela afe?

Letia: Ha ke re Mientjie wa Klasie o botse kgwebonyana toropong kwa. Masela ao re buang ka ona ke masela a rekiswang moo." (Extract from live conversation)

"*Letia: Tshedi, goodbye my child do continue with those fabrics.*

Matshediso: No mother! No you are going to conversations to refreshments, but I have to satisfy myself with porridge and work which

suits a seamstress. Don't you have any mercy?

Letia: Goodness, Tshedi, you are lazy, moreover you are a terrible liar. Eat the french (polony) **which Sebetsi brought yesterday.**

Letia: Let us go, Sebetsi!

Mmamosebetsi: Which cloths are you talking about?

Letia: By the way Klasie's Mientjie has opened a small shop over there in town. The cloths **which we are talking about,** are cloths **which are sold over there."**

The speaker, *Matshediso* uses the **direct** relative clause *o lokelang seroki* (which suits a seamstress) to modify the reference of *mosebetsi* (work). This referring expression occurs as part of an adverbial construction (see 4.2 for adverbial heads). The information status of *mosebetsi* (work) is **inferrable** (see 2.3.2) in the sense that *Mathsediso* assumes that *Letia* can infer, via reasoning, that the concept of "work" is evoked by *Letia's* reference to *masela ao* (those cloths). The reference status of *mosebetsi* (work) is, therefore, **definite**.

Owing to the fact that *mosebetsi* (work) is already anchored in the conversation, it does not need to be grounded again. The direct relative clause *o lokelang seroki* (which suits a seamstress) is not used to identify a referent, but is introduced to **describe** the work which has to be done. *Matshediso* feels sorry for herself as she will not be accompanying her mother and *Mmamosebetsi* on their visit. Her reflection that the work "suits a seamstress" is merely an attempt to express her dissatisfaction with the position

in which her mother has placed her. The work she has to do is, in fact, of a very simple nature (she has to stitch duvet covers).

The **indirect** relative clause *eo Sebetsi a e tlisitseng maobane* (which *Sebetsi* brought yesterday) is, in turn, used to **anchor** the referent of the noun *french* (french polony), which is introduced as the **object** of the sentence, in the discourse. This noun has constant reference, but is **new** as it is **unused** in the current conversation. *Latjie* focuses upon the polony by means of the relative clause in order to remind *Matshediso* about it. She does so by **anchoring** it to *Mmamosebetsi's* deed of the previous day (i.e. the fact that she brought the polony).

Letia's qualification of the head NP *masela* (the cloths) by the **indirect** relative clause *ao re buang ka ona* (which we are talking about), on the other hand, illustrates how the **indirect** relative clause can be used to **thematise** the referent of a noun referring to a **given** referent.

In a bid to singularly identify the cloths for *Mmamosebetsi*, *Letia* shifts the focus of the conversation from the cloths to a particular shop that has opened in town. In the process of re-establishing the cloths as the topic of conversation, i.e. of **foregrounding** the cloths, *Letia* uses the indirect relative clause *ao re buang ka ona* (which we are talking about). Being **textually evoked**, the information status of "the cloths" is **given**. As *Letia* does, however, still not have a given referent to which she can anchor the cloths in order to identify them, she resorts to **describing** the cloths with reference to the fact that they are sold at the shop to which reference has already been made. As the head *masela* (cloths) occurs in this instance as the complement of a copulative, it is not used to refer to a real world entity, but to those characteristics which make the topic under discussion uniquely identifiable, i.e. *Masela ao re buang ka ona ke masela a rekiswang moo* (the

cloths we are talking about are cloths which are sold over there). Having this characterising function, the reference status of the noun *masela*, where it appears for the second time in this example, is **non-specific indefinite**.

3.4.1.1 Summary

It is clear from these extracts from live conversations that:

(a) **Given** referents are introduced as either the **subjects** or as the **objects** of sentences, while **new** referents are introduced as either the **objects** of sentences or as the complement of a copulative in a predicative construction.

(b) Speakers use **indirect** relative clauses to **anchor** referents in the conversation. The purpose of this anchoring process may be (i) to singularly **identify** new referents referred to by heads with **specific indefinite** reference; (ii) to **focus** upon **given, definite** referents; or (iii) to focus on a referent in an **evaluative/emotive** way.

(c) **Direct** relative clauses are largely used to **characterise/describe** a particular referent by predicating its **characteristics/regular attributes**. As the head of the direct relative clause is, in such instances, the complement of a copulative, its information status is **new** and its reference status **non-specific indefinite**.

The following is an illustration of the circumstances under which the author *Khaketta* (1983) employs relative clauses.

3.4.2 Analysis of an extract from *Khaketla*

The following conversation quoted from *Khaketla* (1983) centres around *Malokobe* and *Mohapi's* cunning plan to murder *Bulane* who has inherited the throne of *Matete*, the father of the brothers *Bulane* and *Mohapi*. In order to steal the throne from *Bulane*, *Mohapi* and his accomplice *Malokobe* want *Bulane* to be murdered. As the two of them do not want to involve themselves in such a despicable deed, however, they try to convince *Pulane*, one of the wives of the late *Matete*, to commit the murder on their behalf.

During the following discourse, *Malokobe* attempts to trick *Pulane* into agreeing to help them with their nefarious plan without actually informing her exactly what it is she has to do. As *Pulane* suspects that they might have a hidden agenda, she is cautious about committing herself to the burden which they want to put upon her. As a sign of her hesitation she expresses her doubts about whether "a woman", who is as frail as she is, can be of any use to them. She achieves this by means of the noun *mosadi* (woman) which she uses as the **subject** of the sentence and the **direct** relative clause *ya fokolang jwalo ka nna* (who is as frail as I am). This relative clause is employed both to **describe** the physical state as well as to **characterise** the referent of *mosadi* (woman). It does so by expressing the characterising properties of the referent. Owing to the hyponymic relationship which exists between *Pulane* and the noun *mosadi*, the discourse status of this head is **inferrable**. The direct relative clause is not employed for the purposes of identifying the referent of its head, but to characterise it in an evaluative way, e.g.

"Malokobe: Na ha nka o supisa tsela e bobebe ya ho fumantsha Morena Mohapi borena ba hae, o ka utlwisisa ho thusa?"

Pulane: *Mosadi ya fokolang jwalo ka nna, a ka thusa jwang? O ikatisetsa moqoqo feela jwale.*

Malokobe: *Tjhe, mohlomong nna ke a bona hore o ka nthusa jwang. Ntshepise hore o tla nthusa.*

Pulane: *Ke sitwa ho itlama ka ntho yeo (sic)¹² ke sa e tsebeng. Hojane wa bolela pele ka utlwa, ere (sic)¹³ ka morao o mpotse hore na ke tla thusa na. Ke tshaba hore ke re ho lokile, ere (sic) ka morao ke fumane hoba mojaro oo oo ke seng ke itlamile ka wona, o a ntshita, ebe (sic)¹⁴ jwale ke fetoha motho ya hlokang nnete*

Malokobe: *Mamela he. Morero wa ka, nna ya ratang Mohapi jwalo ka ha o mo rata, ke hore Bulane a sutha setulong, mme ke rerile ho mo suthisa ka lefu!"*
(Khaketla, 1983 : 31, 32)

Malokobe: If I could indicate to you an easy way to let *Morena Mohapi* acquire his leadership, will you agree to help?

Pulane: A woman who is as weak as I am, how can she help? You are joking.

Malokobe: No, perhaps I know how you can help me. Promise me that you will help me.

12 should be eo

13 should be e re

14 should be e be

Pulane: I am unable to commit myself to something **which I do not know**. If only you could first speak so that I could know, and then ask me afterwards how I could help. I fear to agree and afterwards realise that the burden **which I have committed myself to**, is too heavy for me, with the result that I will become a person **who is untrustworthy**

Malokobe: Please listen. My plan, I who love *Mohapi* in the same way as you do, is that *Bulane* should be removed from the throne, and I have decided to remove him through death!"

In her second conversational turn *Pulane* admits that she would rather like to know exactly what it is which *Malokobe* expects from her before she commits herself to it. She uses the **brand new, specific indefinite** head, *ntho* (something) to refer to the "thing" which *Malokobe* wants her to do. She **anchors** this head in the discourse by associating it to herself by means of the **indirect** relative clause *yeo (sic) ke sa e tsebeng* (which I do not know). She continues her line of argumentation and introduces the referent *mojara* (burden) as the subject of the sentence *mojaro oo o a ntshita* (that burden is too heavy for me). She **identifies** the referent of *mojara* (burden) by anchoring it to herself by means of the **indirect** relative clause *oo ke seng ke itlamile ka wona* (which I have already committed myself to). Owing to the fact that the same referent was referred to by the NP *ntho yeo (sic) ke sa e tsebeng* (something which I do not know), the discourse status of *mojaro oo* is **contextually evoked** and **specific**.

Pulane also expresses the fear that such a state of affairs might force her to become *motho ya hlokang nnete* (somebody who is untrustworthy). She expresses this fear by introducing the noun *motho* (somebody) as the **object** of the verb *ke fetoha* (I become somebody). The discourse status of this noun is **brand new** and **non-specific**

indefinite. She uses the **direct** relative clause *ya hlokang nnete* (who is untrustworthy) to **characterise** the type of person which she might become.

Malokobe realises that he will have to reveal his plan to *Pulane*. Before he does so, however, he **focuses** upon himself in an **evaluative** way in an attempt to convince her that that which he expects from her will be motivated by their love for *Mohapi*. He does so by referring to himself by means of the absolute pronoun of the first person singular, i.e. *nna* (I), of which the referent is **given** and **definite**. He **characterises** himself by using the **direct** relative clause *ya ratang Mohapi* (who love *Mohapi*).

3.4.2.1 Summary

The conversation cited above illustrates that authors of dramatic texts use direct and indirect relative clauses under the same circumstances as speakers in live conversations. **Indirect** relative clauses, for instance, are also used by authors with the purpose of **anchoring** a referent in the conversation. This anchoring process serves the purpose of **identifying** referents that are **new** and **specific indefinite** and of **focusing** upon **given** referents in an **evaluative** way. **Given** referents are introduced either as **subjects** or **objects** of sentences, while **new** referents are introduced as the **objects** or adverbs (see 4.2) of sentences.

In contrast to indirect relatives, **direct** relative clauses are largely used to **characterise** or to **describe** the referents of **new, non-specific indefinite** referents by verbalising their **regular attributes/characteristics**. The heads of such clauses are, in other words, often used as property noun phrases. If the direct relative clause occurs with a **given** referent, the purpose of the clause is to modify the meaning of the referent in an **evaluative** way and not to identify it uniquely since it is already known.

3.5 Conclusion

The preceding discourse-analytic investigation of the interrelatedness of the *discourse status* of a head noun and the *function* and *structure* of a relative clause revealed that a speaker/an author largely uses **direct** relative clauses to **characterise/describe** the referents of heads with **non-specific indefinite** referents. This qualification is typically of a **non-restrictive** nature. **Indirect** relative clauses are, on the other hand, used to **restrict** the reference of head nouns with **specific indefinite** reference. These functional properties of the different structural types of relatives do sometimes overlap, however, with the result that this dissertation would like to propose that there is a remarkable, but rather loose relationship between the discourse status of a head noun and the function and structure of the relative by means of which it is qualified. The looseness of this interrelatedness confirms the observation by Vendler (1980 : 209) that:

"..... the rules of syntax and semantics are open and undetermined, to suit the exigencies of actual communication. Language is like a game, we are often told; but if so it is a game with soft rules: not like chess, played on a board of abstract geometry, but rather like in golf, to be played on this actual course or that."

Chapter 4

Summary and concluding observations

4.1 Summary

In Chapter One it transpired that Southern Sotho relative clauses can, on structural as well as functional grounds, be categorised as being either **direct** or **indirect** (see 1.4.1). The differences between the two categories pertain to the following: (a) differences in concordial agreement between the antecedent and the relative clause; and (b) differences in discourse-pragmatic function in as much as the direct relative clause predicates a characteristic feature or trait of the antecedent, while the indirect relative clause contextualises its antecedent by anchoring it to another referent. The pragmatic relationship between the antecedent and the verb in the case of the direct relative clause is therefore **direct**, while this relationship is **indirect** in the case of indirect relative clauses (see 1.4.2.1).

The occurrence in Southern Sotho of these structurally different verbal relatives inspired the main aim of this study, namely to determine which factors prompt a speaker/an author to select a particular one of these relative clause types to qualify a particular referent.

In pursuit of this objective, Chapter Two examined the possibility that the discourse status of a head noun impels a speaker/an author to qualify its referent by means of a particular type of relative clause in order to enable an addressee to identify the entities to which reference is being made. This was a theoretical investigation in which existing

theories were used to interpret statistical data which had been gathered for this particular purpose. This probe clearly revealed that: (a) there is an interrelatedness between the discourse status of **object** head nouns and their qualification by means of **indirect** relative clauses (see 2.6.2.2); and (b) the discourse status of **predicate** head nouns, i.e. nouns referring to the attributes/underlying characteristics of a particular discourse entity, governs their occurrence with **direct** relative clauses (see 2.6.2.1).

Object nouns have been found to present either given or new referents in a discourse. Although the new referents are not always identifiable by the addressee, their reference status was found always to be **specific**, and, therefore, the reference status of such nouns was characterised as **specific indefinite** (see 2.4.2). **Predicate** nouns, on the other hand, generally have been found to predicate particular characteristics of a referent, i.e. the predicate head noun is not generally used as a referring expression, but as a part of a qualificative predication. The information supplied by such a noun is new, and since predicative heads do not refer to actual or identifiable referents in the real world, their reference status has been characterised as **non-specific indefinite** (see 2.4.3).

The discourse-pragmatic analysis which was undertaken in Chapter Three supported the findings of Chapter Two, namely that the interrelationship between the discourse status of a head noun and the structure of the relative which qualifies it, is governed by the **specificity** of the reference of the head noun. To be more explicit, it has been shown that nouns referring to **existing/specific** (though not necessarily identifiable) referents are generally qualified by **indirect** relative clauses, while **direct** relative clauses are usually employed to qualify nouns referring to **hypothetical/non-specific indefinite** referents. Furthermore, it became evident that the **function** of the relative clause interacts with its structure, i.e. the interrelatedness between the discourse status of a head noun and the structure of the relative has a direct bearing on the function of such a

clause. This interrelatedness/interactiveness results in the fact that: (a) heads with **non-specific indefinite** reference generally occur with **direct** relative clauses as part of a noun phrase which supplies information which is of a **descriptive/characterising** nature and hence, **non-restrictive**; (b) heads with **specific indefinite** reference are modified by **identifying** such referents by means of **indirect, restrictive** relative clauses which **anchor** the referents of their heads to other, given discourse entities; and (c) heads with **definite** reference are not qualified by **indirect** relative clauses primarily for the purpose of anchoring (because the head is already definite), but for the purpose of **evaluative focus**.

Viewed from a pragmatic point of view, the qualification of **non-specific indefinite** referents by means of **direct** relative clauses and **specific indefinite** referents by means of **indirect** relative clauses is a logical one. Since the reference status of predicate nouns is largely **non-specific indefinite**, a speaker/an author has no other option than to qualify them by means of their own attributes. The unidentifiability of these referents suggests that they are not introduced into the discourse as discourse participants *per se* but, in fact, to predicate some identifying characteristics of another discourse referent.

Nouns with **specific indefinite** reference are, on the other hand, introduced in the discourse with the purpose of utilising their referents in the further deployment of the discourse. The referents of such nouns are **new**, in the majority of instances, and, therefore, are typically anchored to another known referent in order to establish their identity.

4.2 Concluding observations: more data supporting the proposed hypothesis

While Chapter Two reveals statistics which relate to subject, object and predicative heads (see 2.5 and 2.6), it is noteworthy that nouns which occur as part of possessive and adverbial constructions are also qualified by both direct as well as indirect relative clauses in Southern Sotho.

Nominals occur as part of a **possessive** construction in examples such as:

"Ho utlwahala mantswe a batho ba buelang hodimo le modumo wa dieta tsa bona." (Khaketla, 1983 : 45)

"The words of people speaking very loudly and the sound of their shoes are audible."

"Bulane: Le tlile hantle re ke re tlo ikoka maseba a bohlatlisa ba ntwana yeo re tswa e hlola." (Khaketla, 1983 : 11)

"Bulane: it is good that you have come, now we can lick the wounds of the war which we have just won."

The nouns *batho* (people), and *ntwana* (war), occurring in the direct and indirect constructions above, serve as the complements of the possessive concords *a-* and *ba-* in *a batho* (of people) and *ba ntwana* (of the war). However, the occurrence of relative constructions in possessive structures is so limited, that no reliable deductions can be made regarding the discourse-pragmatic factors which govern their usage. An analysis

of available examples does suggest, however, that discourse-pragmatic factors much the same as those which have been discussed thus far, also play a role in possessive constructions. Note, for example, that the direct relative in the first example above qualifies its head in respect of a particular attribute, whereas the indirect relative in the second example contextualises or anchors its head via the first person plural which is situationally given.

Adverbial constructions, on the other hand, more vividly support the claim that indirect relative clauses are essentially **restrictive**, whereas direct relatives are **non-restrictive**. Compare, for instance:

"Tefo: E re ke potlake ngwana batho o nkemetse ka matshwafo a phahameng." (Maake, 1992 : 54)

"Tefo: Let me hurry, the poor child is waiting for me with lungs which are disturbed (i.e. anxiously)"

"Selepe: Ke batla ho mo etsa ntho eo a sa tlo e lebala ka ntho eo a nkentseng yona kajeno lena." (Maake, 1992 : 35)

"Selepe: I want to do something to him which he will not forget because of the thing (which) he did to me this very day."

The nouns *matshwafo* (lungs) and *ntho* (thing) occur as the complements of the adverbial prefix *ka-* in *ka mathswafo* (with lungs) and *ka ntho* (because of the thing).

The **direct** relative clause *a phahameng* (which are disturbed) **describes** the state of the

"lungs". Owing to the "part-whole" (Lyons, 1981a) relationship which exists between the addressee and her lungs, the referent of *matshwafu* (lungs) is given and does not need to be identified. The direct relative, therefore, is not used here to establish a referent within a broader context of discourse, but merely to supply a more detailed qualification of an already established referent. The indirect relative clause *eo a nkentseng yona kajeno lena* (which he did to me this very day), on the other hand, singularly **identifies** the referent of *ntho* (thing), by anchoring it to the first person speaker who is situationally given.

Being a structural part of the verb phrase, i.e. part of the rheme of the sentence (the part which has the highest degree of new information), it could be assumed that **adverbial** nouns carry **new** information (Gary, 1976 : 2). Such an observation is supported by Louwrens (1979). He identifies the slot in which the agentive adverbial nominal occurs, i.e. the slot after the passivised verb, cf. *buka e balwa ke mobadi* as one of the slots in which **new** information can be introduced in Northern Sotho discourses. This explains another observation that was made in this dissertation, namely that only a very small number of adverbial nouns is qualified by direct relative clauses. The number of adverbial nouns qualified by indirect relative clauses, however, is notably higher. This observation supports the conclusions which have been reached, namely that indirect relative clauses primarily have a restrictive function, whereas direct relative clauses are essentially non-restrictive.

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