

**THE PLACE OF ORAL LITERATURE IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY: A PERSPECTIVE  
ON BASOTHO PROVERBS**

By

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**DECLARATION**

**Student number: 49052721**

I declare that **THE PLACE OF ORAL LITERATURE IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY: A PERSPECTIVE ON BASOTHO PROVERBS** is my own work, and that all sources that I have used or cited have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examines contemporary Sesotho proverbs with an attempt at establishing whether they perform a significant role in society. The research highlighted the fact that they have a role to play in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Although not commonly used as in the traditional setup, contemporary proverbs have their place as a day to day activity. In terms of language development they also add value to language change and providing alternatives in the world of challenges. Through interviews and the questionnaire, the research, indeed, showed that contemporary proverbs' survival is guaranteed. Their survival in this modern world is of great importance in this research.

The observation was that some of these contemporary proverbs are the same as traditional proverbs in many aspects which include their origin and structure. Some of the contemporary proverbs use or adopt familiar patterns to express new truths, thus reflecting on new events or aspects of the modern society. The possibility is that those that adopt the structure of the Sesotho traditional proverbs have all the chance of staying in the language. Some of these contemporary proverbs, however, survive on the premise that they are jokes created for fun by youth and other members of the creative section of the society.

### **Key terms**

Oral literature, contemporary proverbs, future of proverbs, popular acceptance, Functionalism, documenting proverbs, form of proverbs, dynamism of proverbs, meaning of proverbs, functions of proverbs.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Introduction

This study investigates the nature and function of proverbs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It focuses on whether proverbs still perform a significant role in this era of globalisation and language expansion. However, this chapter comprises the following: the background to the study which explicates oral literature in broad and general a precursor to the study on proverbs, statement of the problem, the aims of the research, justification of the study, scope of the study, and thesis lay out.

### 1.1 Background

From time immemorial, Africans like other societies, have had their oral literature. As “an offspring of culture” (Ogunjimi and Rasheed, 2005:36) oral literature has always had a revered place in people’s lives as it is comprised of culturally specific interactive activities, be they visual or verbal, which constitute a continuum where people’s thoughts and actions can be shared (Ajibade 2005:21). According to Shitemi (2009:87) oral literature is fused and integrated in people’s daily interaction through communication, language use and other modes of transmitting knowledge like norms and social ethics. She also points out that celebrations such as weddings, planting and harvest seasons, births, initiations, funeral functions or other calamities such as epidemics or searches for godly intervention also serve as mediums and platforms through which the functional features of oral literature are manifest. Shitemi (2009:87) avers that:

Oral literature is art form that has withstood the weather and storms of time; and the ravages of the convergence and divergence of cultures, languages, lifestyles and environmental dynamism. However, oral literature, being part and parcel of modes of social expression, survives over time as a genre that aptly adapts to changes and challenges. These include creation,

transmission, usage, preservation and emergent orientations that require expression and commentary.

It is clear from the above quotation, that oral literature is not only assumed to be dynamic and resilient, but it is also perceived to be timeless, a hypothesis which the researcher incidentally aims to prove. However, it is imperative to note that a misunderstanding and misrepresentation of African oral literature has been in existence for a long time, even before African nations won political independence from their European colonizers. This has also been observed by Ajibade (2005:20) when he notes:

Some foreign scholars had erroneously denounced African unwritten literature using the lenses of western written literature as yardstick for all forms of literature. But the western yardstick could not be used to measure the literature of other people.

Moreover, words such as savage and primitive were used in describing it and the literary or artistic quality of the oral literature was underplayed and undermined by foreign scholars who had little or no feeling for the language and the attitudes in which that literature was expressed (Okpewho, 1992:239) . Due to the derogatory assumption that African oral literature was relatively undeveloped and primitive, any interpretations of it that were made were completely misinterpreted by non-literate societies (Finnegan, 1970:14).

The same misunderstanding was also prevalent among the Basotho. For example, Mokitimi (1997: xix) notes that when the missionaries first came to Lesotho, they discouraged their Basotho converts from participating in the cultural activities because they regarded those practices as paganism. However, the converts could not divorce themselves easily from their culture as the missionaries had anticipated, mainly because their oral literature was of utmost importance to them as a society (Ajibade, 2005:20). Mokitimi further asserts that as soon as Basotho became literate, they started collecting all forms of cultural activities and oral traditions and had them published. Likewise, Adejumo (2009:3) points out that the introduction of western education by the Church Missionary Society in Nigeria further enhanced the documentation of Yorùbá oral literature because some of the new converts, who had attained literacy in the Yorùbá language, directed their newly acquired knowledge towards the production of various Yorùbá writings. He affirms that in

the process of doing this, they ended up in documenting oral genres like *Ífá* verses, folktales and stories.

It is for this reason that Sunkuli and Miruka (1990:vii) assert that Africa presently is a continent actively rediscovering herself after a debilitating colonial experience and is bringing forth renascent energy towards the appreciation of age-old oral traditions. This argument has been supported by Salm and Falola (2002:60) who claim that:

Oral literature still penetrates some facets of daily life in Swaziland and many parts of Africa. It is true that the occasions for its performance are not as frequent as in the past, but some of its genres, especially folksongs, dirges, modern professional music, topical songs and proverbs as well as the annual performance of the reed dance and *Incwala* ceremonies, are still being used in the moral education of the young.

In defence of the existence and adaptability of oral literature, on one hand Haywood (1966:iv) notes that, “folklore is not survival, but rather a living organism, still growing and developing wherever people live, struggle, hope, despair and die”. This offers evidence that Swazi oral literature is strong enough to stand up to the challenges of globalization, at least for the time being. But some forms of cultural reinforcements are needed to ensure the longevity of oral literature. For instance, Okpewho (1992:293) believes that in order to ensure the survival of oral literature, modern concert parties should incorporate stories from the oral tradition into repetitions of oral theatre and also into transforming materials from contemporary written fiction into peculiar format of oral dramatic performance.

Salm and Falola (2002:60) concur with Okpewho and add that oral literature provides an outlet for social criticism and commentary and contributes to social cohesion. They also observe that although Western education and urbanization have lessened the importance of oral literature, it continues to thrive in many communities because of lack of printed material and because of its prominent role in maintaining traditional culture. Even though Haywood (1966), Salm and Falola (2002) deal with Swazi oral literature, the existence and continuity of oral literature is also present in other parts of Africa.

Mostert and Kaschula (2010:64) argue that traditional knowledge, including oral poetry and many genres of oral literature; have been transported onto the global stage through various developments pertaining to information and communication technologies and the ubiquitous nature of the internet. Although they observe that this is a positive scenario as it opens up many avenues for practitioners of indigenous knowledge, they caution against them as their existence may bring forth threats of abuse and the evaporation of indigenous knowledge which has served human kind for millennia. However, they still believe there is hope for the existence of oral literature in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In the era of globalization, every minute brings great changes and every other decade differs from the previous one as noticeably as never before. Fast developments of new technologies and the appearance of new tendencies in the society also affect peoples' ideologies and customs. Politicians are constantly changing, the role of mass media is growing, and new discoveries and developments in the fields of medicine, psychology and other spheres are constantly being made. According to Valdaeva (2003:379) all these discoveries bring forth a feeling that such changes are sure to affect language because every new idea and new occurrence requires its own bearer, who will promote this idea, to use new, easily understandable and vivid language.

Similarly, Kaschula (2001:xi) observes that we are living in a world of Kentucky Fried Chicken, McDonalds and Coca-cola, a world where globalization, language-death, ethnic cleansing and global cultures have become part of our verbal repertoire. However, the major question he raises is: how is oral literature adapting and functioning within the modern world? Sone (2001:37) concurs with Kaschula (2001) and adds that we are now living in the global era which is posing a serious threat to the very existence of oral literature throughout the world, but especially in Africa. Kudadjie (2006:1) maintains that "this change is inevitable; it is natural, normal and perpetual". He further indicates that the uses of new technology and tools as well as the adoption of new values, practices and institutions are all aspects of change and modernization. Oral literature as part of our language has been affected by the changes that have been indicated above.



Since it is dynamic, it therefore appears necessary to think about its cultural, political and pragmatic relevance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For Chesaina (1997:xi) oral literature is one of the most vibrant aspects of African cultural heritage. He further asserts that if culture is a dynamic process, then it is inevitable that oral literature should be equally dynamic. Meaning that, being the concept of culture, oral literature has also been affected by change. Kaschula (2001:xii) notes that “oral literature exists only insofar as society allows it to exist. It is still the interrelationship between context and text, which permits it to flourish. It is not a static literature, but remains ever changing and dynamic”.

Okpewho (1992:3) defines oral literature as literature derived by word of mouth. This definition has turned out to be a very useful concept for those scholars interested in examining the cultural relationships between those who can read and write. Conversely, Dasyuva (2001:xxii) sees oral literature as a collective expression and a celebration of communal, culture specific related experiences which enhance values in traditional societies. Similarly, Adejumo (2009:1) asserts that:

Oral literature is a creative text delivered by the word of mouth. It refers to the heritage of imaginative verbal creations, stories, folk-beliefs and songs of preliterate societies which have evolved and passed on through the spoken word from one generation to another.

The definitions above are similar in that they refer to oral literature as literature or text delivered by word of mouth. This means that it becomes popular by being communicated. Mirambo (2010:121) asserts that oral literature embodies history, cultural values, philosophy and beliefs of a people. He notes that through this literature we learn a lot about societies. It is therefore safe to state that oral literature is an instrument of cultural education. He further maintains that this literature teaches what society likes and what it hates.

The same observation has been made by Chesaina (1994:8) when he indicates that:

Oral literature depends on artistic or imaginative use of language. However, by virtue of its verbal expression in its authentic form, oral literature has certain stylistic aspects which are peculiar to it. Each genre of oral literature has its own special characteristics just as each piece will have aspects which it does not share with other material from the same genre.

Oral literature comprises riddles, puns, tongue-twisters, proverbs, recitation, chants, songs and stories; in short, it represents the verbal aspect of folklore. Chesaina (1994:viii) further indicates that oral narratives, songs, proverbs and riddles created by people and handed down from generation to generation during traditional historical period and can speak to us and to our children. In the same way, it can help in creating a cultural synthesis between traditional African values and western-oriented values. He therefore, sees Kalenjin oral literature as a living reservoir of the people's culture and as a vehicle through which the society can communicate its hopes, fears and aspirations" (1994:20).

Adejumo (2009:2) argues that oral literature promotes language use because the core of language is embedded in the use of proverbs, pun and other stylistic features which are embedded in it. He therefore argues that listening to oral performance will solve the problem of language extinction. It is the change in oral literature that has sparked an interest in studying proverbs as one of its components.

The study of proverbs has captivated many scholars such as Guma (1967), Mokitimi (1991), Okpewho (1992) Mieder (1993), Finnegan (1994), Mutasa (1999), Ntshinga (2010), Nhlekisana (2010), Possa (2010) and many more who have argued that new proverbs are being coined from time to time and have a place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Dundes (1994:43) also avows that the study of proverbs has fascinated a great many scholars from a variety of disciplines and this may account for the vast bibliography of works devoted to the proverb. Most of the scholarship as opposed to mere reportorial collection has tended to be historical in emphasis.

When defining a proverb Mieder (1993:5) declares that "it is a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorable form and which is handed down from generation to generation".

As one of the components of oral literature, proverbs are also facing many challenges regarding their existence. This has been proved by some scholars like Okpewho (1992:226) who affirms that the value of most of the collections of proverbs has suffered severely from the poor understanding, especially by the earlier foreign scholars, of the cultural and aesthetic backgrounds of the proverbs. He observes that in many cases only a translation into one or the other European language is provided. He argues that in many more, nothing is told of the situations in which the proverbs are used or performed. He further argues that in more recent times, proverbs study has been taken a little more seriously, and the literary as well as the social significance of it has become somewhat clearer. The observation of Goodwin and Wenzel and Okpewho is also prevalent among other scholars. Some scholars and popular writers have claimed repeatedly that proverbial language has passed from usage in contemporary world. They argue that due to modernity, proverbs no longer play a significant role in society.

Correspondingly, Goodwin and Wenzel (1994:144) note that:

One has the impression that proverbs are not so widely used nowadays as once they were. Perhaps this is because proverbs are more likely to appear in the utterance of older members of a community or family and the decline of the extended family has diminished their movement from generation to generation. Perhaps the youthful, hip, urban orientations of contemporary culture militate against the popular use of proverbs.

However, Grzybek (1994:236) maintains that "the proverb continues to live, though partially, in a different form and functions other than in earlier times". Pachocinski (1996:1) says in Black Africa, for all its urgent development, the blood of proverbs still flows swiftly in the veins of people's daily lives.

He maintains that proverbs enshrine much of the cultural heritage of the people, their traditions, history, wisdom, and ethics. They are viable means for transmission of culture from generation to generation; otherwise norms, values and beliefs would have died.

Similarly, Mieder (2009:43) also disagrees with this claim. He testifies that although some proverbs do indeed disappear over time due to their archaic wording, or out dated message, there are newer ones that fit modernity. He believes this is because:

Proverbs are flexible and adaptable to ever new contexts and interpretations because their metaphorical language is not limited to specific context. Changing times require forms of expression that the traditional proverbs can no longer supply. However, it often suffices to adopt and antique proverbs to the modern context (Mieder 1993:xi).

Jegede (2008:178) views proverbs as evocation of cultural displacement, which in modern times, have been creatively adapted to local and global changes and in some cases, have been so altered, imposed and supplanted that they become variations and transformation of traditional sayings. This in turn means that the dynamism of proverbs is prevalent in other languages in Africa and the rest of the world. Nketia in (Finnegan, 1994:11) comments on Ghanaian proverbs thus:

The value of the proverb to us in modern Ghana does not lie only in what it reveals of the thoughts of the past. For the poet today or indeed for the speaker who is some sort of an artist in the use of words, the proverb is a model of compressed or forceful language. In addition to drawing on it for its words of wisdom, therefore, he takes interest in its verbal techniques- its selection of words, its use of comparison as a method of statement, and so on. Familiarity with its techniques enables him to create, as it were, his own proverbs. This enables him to avoid hackneyed expressions and give a certain amount of freshness to his speech.

Basotho have always had proverbs which they have used in various times and occasions. Mokitimi (in Peek and Yankah 2004:375) argue that the Basotho people have always formulated and used proverbs in various times and occasions.

She further indicates that as among many African peoples, Basotho use proverbs extensively. She furthermore notes that proverbs are normally used by older and skillful members of the society in their daily interaction to impart authority and truth to their utterances and communication. This is because culture is learned, which means it is passed on from generation to generation through social interaction and it accumulates overtime (Popenoe, Boulton and Cunningham 1998:24). Correspondingly, Falola (2003:51) affirms that in the discourse on development, culture cannot be ignored. He argues that culture shapes people's perception of themselves and their environments; their values, norms and their general way of behavior. He explained that the past is still relevant even in the twenty-first century.

Proverbs have been influenced by modernity. They have twisted and shifted in order to suit modern age. Sesotho proverbs are also manipulated by this change. Barbara and Mieder (1994:309-310) see eye to eye with the above mentioned scholars by declaring that "changing time and situations require forms of expression which the traditional forms no longer can supply". However, they note that "it often suffices to adapt an antiquated folklore item to the modern context". They further maintain that "this process of innovation on the basis of tradition then becomes the proof of the continuity of the traditional forms". On the other hand, Mokitimi (1991:111) argues that as a society develops, proverbs are affected by change and it is through this change that some Sesotho proverbs have variants with shifted meanings. Mokitimi (in Peek and Yankah 2004:375) further notes that Basotho's use of proverbs continues, with new ones being created to express and come to terms with contemporary issues and new technology. However, they argue that old proverbs are still employed today, even though some proverbs may be regarded as archaic, with no place in the modern world.

Even though the above scholars claim that new proverbs are being coined, which shows their continuity, there is however, a need to find out whether the newly coined proverbs are real proverbs and not "just the sententious utterance of a single individual on a single occasion" (Finnegan 1994:15). Popular acceptance is one of the proverb's characteristics. Finnegan argues that the question of popular acceptance is, however, a more difficult one.

She points out that if one of the marks of a true proverb is its general acceptance as a popular expression of some truth, then the data to decide how far this is indeed a characteristic of the sayings included in collections of proverbs is seldom given.

Finnegan further observes that in many cases sayings, included in collections of proverbs are proverbs in full sense but there is no way of telling whether some of the proverbs included are not just sententious utterance of a single individual on a single occasion which happened to appeal to the investigator. For Mieder (1993:13) a proverb is always invented by an individual at some time and at some given location. That particular statement must exhibit at least one of the proverb markers previously discussed and it must catch on, that is, it must gain some currency among a small circle of family members. A budding proverb must also express an apparent truth in such a catchy fashion that people beyond this individual will adopt it into their proverb repertoire, and soon it will become known in a village, then a city, an entire region, and finally a whole nation.

Still on the same issue of popular acceptance, which is the core of this research, Mokitimi (1991:18) points out that the formulated sentences which became proverbs reveal the feelings, emotions and attitudes of the speaker. She avows that these sentences are later used in other situations, bearing relevance to the first one. Therefore, at this stage, there is a speaker and listener, and if these expressions make an impact on the listener, he/she too uses them in other situations. She further maintains that in this manner, the use of these statements, as expressions of observations and experiences, move from one speaker to another until society accepts them as part and parcel of its collective verbal heritage.

Furthermore, Mokitimi emphasizes this point by indicating that:

It must be pointed out that acceptance of these statements (proverbs) is very important in their inception and survival from generation to generation. This may take several generations and consequently their originators may never be known.

Mokitimi proves beyond any doubt that in order for a saying to be known as a proverb it has to be popular, that is, known by members of the society. It is this popularity that will show that it has been accepted as lore of that particular society.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

As it has been pointed out by some scholars, oral literature seems to be extinct or declining in the modern world. However, this is not true as there are new proverbs that are being coined from day to day in many different cultures. Hence Mieder (1993:x) asserts that “proverbs, both old and new, continue to serve us well as concise statements of apparent truths”. Before the westernization of the Basotho culture, the people naturally used proverbs in daily conversation. These proverbs were known by everybody and were clearly understood between the speaker and audience because of the cultural affinity in the society. This is still the same even in modern day Basotho society. Proverbs are still being newly coined, twisted, modernized and harmonized along with the changing culture to suit the prevailing socio-cultural situations in the society.

The above statement is proved by Possa (2010) who has collected and analysed contemporary Sesotho proverbs. These proverbs without any doubt have satisfied the requirements of the traditional proverb which require that a proverb should entail the following features:

- i) It must express certain truth,
- ii) It must be short,
- iii) It must originate from human observation,
- iv) It must entail metaphorical statements that are in fixed and memorizable form and,
- v) It must be handed down from generation to generation.

Possa's findings revealed that oral literature is dynamic as it has been observed in contemporary Sesotho proverbs. It was shown that new proverbs like old proverbs are coined out of human experiences, situations and circumstances which are observed and described by people who initiated a proverb.

The proverbs were grouped in situations of origin. These fields included natural phenomena flora, insect life, reptiles, rats/mice, animals, fowls, humans, and household. These categories proved that just like old proverbs, new proverbs originate from observations of the community's daily activities. It was also found out that these new proverbs deal with the spectrum for the people's experiences, with the physical environment, including animals and values. Another finding that was made is that new proverbs are thematic summaries of the situations observed and are normally presented literally.

Possa's study further revealed that there is a shift in Basotho's culture. The main purpose of traditional proverbs which encouraged good morality and values, have changed as a result of modernity. Contrary to promoting good moral values, some new proverbs appear to have been designed or created to protect and promote practices and behaviours that undermine transitional moral values and acceptable social norms. In addition, it has been found out that majority of new proverbs are found among the youth and some men who use them to justify their unwanted behaviour. On the other hand, it was also observed that new proverbs encourage individualism and self-assertiveness, which is contrary to what Basotho believed in, which is co-operation.

Another discovery that was made in as far as structure is concerned is that new proverbs have the same form as old proverbs. It has been detected that like old proverbs, new proverbs are also distinguished by their fixed form. They have an established fixed form which is not changeable. An observation that is made is that when they are used in context, the word-order is not changed. The same thing happens with the tenses and all other features. For example, *qaqana se seng le se seng se a iqhomela* (every frog jumps for its own sake) would not be changed and become *qaqana tse ding le tse ding di a iqhomela* (all the frogs jump for their own sake) or *qaqana se seng le se seng se iqhometse*. (Every frog jumped on its own). The tense is fixed.



Another detection that was made is that even though it has been indicated that new proverbs have the same structure with old proverbs, there are some new proverbs that have a different structure from that which is proposed by Guma (1967) and Mokitimi (1991). It has been found out that these proverbs have reduplicated quantifiers which make them different from old proverbs to a certain degree. However, there are other features of old proverbs that those new proverbs possess, as they also have both literal and figurative meanings. They are also elided both internally and at the beginning of a proverb. Finally, they are metaphorical. These features therefore qualify them as proverbs.

As these proverbs were collected in context, it was found out that they have the same word order as old proverbs; which make them easily recalled and recognized because of different stylistic devices. These stylistic features included alliterations, parallelism, compounding, truncation as well as omission and elision. It was further discovered that in the process of proverb performance, the literal meaning is transferred to the metaphorical or figurative meaning.

The investigation showed that the meaning of the proverb depends on its performance and interaction between the speaker and the participants in a given context. It has been found that the context of discourse interaction is important because it is in different contexts that one proverb could be employed, thus affirming its polysemic behaviour. It was noticed that some proverbs may be employed in the same situation, depending on the repertoire of the speaker and his/her intention. In such a situation some degree of synonymy arises.

Last but not least, the finding that was made is that new proverbs carry new-up-to-date ideas of the people. These ideas are more acceptable in our modern life than ones expressed in the traditional way, as modernity seems to prevail at present. These proverbs were collected from many various situations and places being used by people through radios, at funerals and public gatherings. From the above discussion, one would think that the analysis of contemporary Sesotho proverbs is complete; however, it has left out the question of popular acceptance of these new proverbs. Since some of these proverbs are old traditional proverbs that are altered or given new meanings, the term contemporary proverb seems to be more

appropriate. Therefore, this research will refer them as contemporary proverbs. Even though Finnegan (1994:15) considers popular acceptance to be difficult, it has to be dealt with so as to prove that these contemporary proverbs are not passé.

### **1.3 Aim of the study:**

Possa (2010)'s findings indicate that new proverbs like traditional proverbs are coined out of human experiences, situations and circumstances which are observed and described by people who initiated a proverb. This study therefore, intends to re-examine contemporary Sesotho proverbs with an attempt to find out whether they perform a significant role in the society. It plans to find out whether they have a place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Their survival in this modern world is of great importance in this study.

#### **1.3.1 Objectives:**

1. To find out whether oral literature, particularly proverbs have a place in this era of globalisation.
2. To highlight the functions of contemporary proverbs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
3. To investigate whether these contemporary proverbs are known by Basotho throughout Lesotho.
4. To document this genre so that it does not fade away from Lesotho.
5. To find out whether these proverbs are a day to day activity.

#### **1.3.2 Research questions**

1. What is the nature of contemporary proverbs?
2. Are these contemporary proverbs accepted by the society?
3. Do they serve the same function in the society like traditional proverbs?
4. Do they show the development of our language?
5. Do contemporary proverbs have a future in the Sesotho language?
6. What is their future in this world of modernization?
7. Do we have to document them or do they destroy our language?
8. What new features do they have?

#### 1.4 Justification of research

The motivation behind this examination of contemporary Sesotho proverbs emanates from the condition of change affecting African societies particularly Basotho. Documenting these proverbs is very important as a way of complementing orality. This study also helps to enhance the importance of proverbs socially, politically, economically and academically. It is very important to note that modern people are aware of traditional proverbs and they have seen their significance in their society hence they twist, harmonize and coin contemporary proverbs so that they suit modernity. Documenting contemporary proverbs is valuable for a variety of people. These people include proverb scholars, anthropologists of several sub-disciplines, linguists, folklorists, students and people of the language community.

Moreover, the importance of collecting proverbs that have not been collected is increasingly important as this domain of language is being lost in many communities. Mieder (1993:58-59) supports this by indicating that changing times and situations require forms of expression that the traditional proverbs can no longer supply. However, it often suffices to adapt an antiquated proverb to the modern context. He affirms that this process of innovation on the basis of tradition becomes proof of the continuity of such traditional forms as proverbs, and it is constancy in change that makes modern-oriented proverb studies such a challenging field of investigation for interdisciplinary and comparatively oriented researchers. Therefore, it is of importance to confirm that the new proverbs that have been collected and analyzed by Possa (2010) are real acceptable proverbs used by the society. Socially, people have used proverbs to express their understanding of their beliefs, values and their surroundings in ordinary daily conversations.

Proverbs were transmitted by oral tradition as a result of general experiences before they were put on paper. As part of tradition, they are effective elements that transmit human culture. They are historical measurements of human social development, connecting the past with the present. Proverbs fill an important role in the transmission of beliefs, knowledge and social values.

They express nation's principles and concepts about God and how people should behave towards friends, neighbours, parents, and in all situations in daily life. They are connected with people's identity and roots, showing people's understanding of their language and culture to the point that all nations have considered proverbs as part of their national heritage.

Mieder (1993:58) states that traditional proverbs still play a significant role in today's speech, where they continue to be used to moralize, instruct, to advice and to reflect on everyday occurrences. However, more often than not, they are twisted until they fit the demands of our modern age. The collection of contemporary proverbs therefore, becomes crucial in this matter. Dalfovo (n.d.:7) asserts that the social change requests, among the rest, the preservation of cultural memory. He declares that oral literature, of which proverbs are part, is a case in point. He therefore maintains that the preservation of proverbs is particularly crucial because the few words forming them can easily be forgotten, and with them, the abundant wisdom they contain if oral literature is not part in writing, precious elements in the same literature will fade away, not only because of the organic law of growth and decay but also because of the extraordinary rhythm of change affecting modern societies and African cultures in particular. Politically, people use proverbs in Africa and elsewhere to increase the clarity as well as the semantic effect of what they intend to say.

Oluwole (1997:100) in Orwenjo (2009:124) aptly observes that proverbs are the analytic tools of thought, when thought is lost; it is proverbs that are used to search for it. Orwenjo comments by indicating that nowhere is this analytic function of proverbs more evident, more necessary and quite unavoidable than in the domain of politics and political campaign, with its characteristic gerrymandering, grandstanding, horse-trading, ideologizing, and the inherent need to win support from voters and potential opponents. He further argues that:

Proverbs have the capacity to provide a politician with what is dearly needed in any political talk, adding power, authority, clarity, and expressiveness to political discourse. This capacity arises from two factors. First, the ability of proverbs to crystallize

complicated and long messages into short sentences, consisting of only a few words, thereby is precluding the need for circumlocution which could easily distort the original message. Second, due to the fact, especially in African societies, that proverbs are communally owned as repositories of communal wisdom and knowledge arising from community's age old experiences, and are continually transmitted from one generation to another.

Politics and politicians discourse require of the speaker to have extraordinary abilities to convince the interlocutors by expressing themselves clearly, coherently and with little effort, ambiguities or tautology. Especially in campaign meetings, the politician needs not only be an effective salesman of his party's ideologies and viewpoints, but also to discredit and belittle opposing ideologies and ideas. Proverbs become a campaign tool in this regard.

Academically, the current study is going to be an eye opener to people who are not aware of the changes that exist in Sesotho proverbs. Research of this nature is very important as it is aimed at updating knowledge and intimating one with new developments in the field of Basotho oral literature. In addition, this study is going to act as a proof that this genre existed yesterday, it exists today and it shall exist even tomorrow. According to Kudadjie (2009:5) proverbs can be used for scholarly purposes. They can be used for the linguistic analysis of a particular language or dialect. He notices that historical information as well as the thought, customs, beliefs and values of a society can be obtained through their proverbs. Besides, African proverbs are a literary device used to embellish speech.

On the other hand, counsellors and judges use proverbs to comment obliquely on the conduct of those involved, often with implied advice or rebuke. People are rebuked for their wrong behaviour in court and reminded allusively that what they are doing falls into some general category they too disapprove of. In court and elsewhere there are also frequent occasions for using a proverb to smooth over a disagreement or bring a dispute to a close. It is therefore, necessary to show the continuity of this genre. In some cultures, proverbs are a rich part of everyday life, while in others they are considered as old fashioned.

People may unconsciously use them, with no awareness that they are employing proverbs in their speech. Ahmed (2005:15) avows that:

Some of her/his British informants considered them as old fashioned and as evidence of primitive thinking and uncivilized attitude. Some university students said that uncreative people rely on proverbs as they are ready-made expressions and those who do not want to update themselves with modern civilization use them.

This study shall sensitize such people who do not consider their wisdom important but as old fashioned as it will show that proverbs continue to live and function in modern communication. Taylor as quoted by Mieder (2009:238) notes that:

In spite of all the collecting from written and printed material, there still remain proverbs in everyday use that are not brought to book.[...] the collecting of this body of material would be a service both to our own time and to posterity. Especially significant would such a collection be if it were made as complete as humanly possible, showing not only proverbs and variations of old ones that are still current, but also new ones that have come into use, thus giving a complete cross-section of the proverbs of our time(1975: 45-46).

He continues to say:

The temptation to reprint older sources [that is, copying proverbs from older collections] without real effort to enlarge them or to verify them by reference to oral traditions, a temptation which besets all collectors, makes even the best modern collections unreliable guides to the stock of current proverbs.

Economically, proverbs are used by business people to advertise their products so that they are known by the people. Nhlekisana (2010:96) maintains that advertising is a form of communication intended to persuade people to purchase or take some action upon products, ideas and services. She therefore considers them as an important source of information for the public. Nhlekisana (2010:97) observes that “there are commercial and non-commercial adverts. Commercial

advertises often seek to generate increased consumption of their products or services whereas non-commercial adverts advertise items other than a consumer product or service such as interest groups". This is also the case among Basotho. There are proverbs that are used to advertise traditional medicines such as;

a) Text-*Ha thipa di thikgithela*

Literal meaning-When knives do not cut

Figurative meaning-When there is no erection in men

b) T-*Ha kepi di hana ho kena mobung*

Lit-When a small crowbar refuses to get in the sand

Fig-When there is no erection in men

The above proverbs are used to advertise medicines that help men to have erection. These proverbs make it easy for men to buy these medicines without being embarrassed.

Proverbs therefore, become important in the world of economy because of their terseness, clarity and to be straight to the point.

### 1.5 Scope of study

Since the key question concerning contemporary proverbs is the question of their popularity and future, that is, whether they will stay in the language and become respectable proverbs, or whether they will disappear, the scope of this study evolves around contemporary Sesotho proverbs in order to find their function in the society. Proverbs that are discussed are those that are proved to be proverbs by Possa (2010) that they are real proverbs. This research was conducted in the ten districts of Lesotho namely Maseru, Mafeteng, Mohale's hoek, Quthing, Qacha's nek, Thaba-tseka, Mokhotlong, Butha-Buthe, Leribe and Berea. It also extended to Free State in LadyBrand and Ficksburg where there are Sesotho speakers.

## **1.6 Conclusion**

This chapter is the introduction to the study. Hence, it explicates the background to the research and covers what triggered the research. It also presents the complexities, misunderstandings that surround aspects related to oral literature and proverbs in particular. This section therefore was a blanket explication of oral literature in broad and general. The chapter has also presented the statement of the problem highlighting current observation with regard to oral literature and proverbs and presents the way forward after acknowledging the existence of new proverbs and related questions of whether those new proverbs will have a place in future and remain a day to day activity like in the past. The chapter also presented the aim of the research and the concomitant research questions of whether new proverbs will stay for long and whether they have a role to play in the 21st century. The chapter further presents the significance of the study as outlined under justification. As indicated, the study looks at whether new proverbs are accepted by the society and whether there is a need for further research and to document contemporary proverbs. Finally, this chapter presented the ten districts of Lesotho where the research was conducted, namely, Maseru, Mafeteng, Mohale's hoek, Quthing, Qacha's nek, Thaba-tseka, Mokhotlong, Butha-buthe, Leribe and Berea. It was also extended to Free State in LadyBrand and Ficksburg where there are Sotho speakers.

## **1.7 Thesis lay out**

The research is divided into six chapters.

### **Chapter 1 Introduction**

Chapter one is the introduction to research. It comprises the following: statement of the problem, aims of the research, objectives, research questions, justification, and scope of the study.



## **Chapter 2 Literature review**

Chapter two is the literature review and it discusses earlier on oral literature in general and proverbs in particular in order to establish gaps to be filled.

## **Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework**

This chapter focuses on the theoretical framework which becomes the base for the study.

## **Chapter 4 Research Methods**

How data is going to be obtained and analyzed is indicated in this chapter.

## **Chapter 5 Data Presentation and analysis**

This chapter presents the findings of the research.

## **Chapter 6 Discussions**

This chapter deals with discussion of data.

## **Chapter 7 Conclusions and Recommendations**

This is the final chapter that presents the conclusion and recommendations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

Different scholars have undertaken studies on proverbs. The researcher read a variety of documents that include journals, theses and books that have dealt with proverbs. However, these documents still leave a gap for further research as they do not analyse contemporary Sesotho proverbs. In conducting a review of the literature that will be consulted for this study, the materials cover six broad topics, popular acceptance of proverbs, functions of proverbs, dynamism of proverbs, form of proverbs, adaptability of proverbs and Sesotho proverbs.

#### 2.1 Popular acceptance of proverbs

Taylor (1994) observes that:

A proverb is wise; it belongs to many people; it is ingenious in form and idea; and it is invented by an individual who uses ideas, words, and ways of speaking that are generally familiar. Because as he does so, his sayings win acceptance and circulate in tradition.

He affirms that proverbs in the form of general observations are not easily recognized as proverbial unless we have heard them applied to particular situations. Hence, by nature proverbs have to be heard being used by the society as a day to day activity. This triggered the researcher's interest in this study in order to detect whether contemporary Sesotho proverbs are being used daily, in other words, are a day to day activity. Taylor's study is therefore going to inform this research that deals with contemporary Sesotho proverbs.

Finnegan (1994) emphasizes that a proverb is a saying in more or less fixed form marked by "shortness, sense, and salt" and it is distinguished by the popular acceptance

of the truth tersely expressed in it. Finnegan argues that the question of popular acceptance is, however a more difficult one in that, if one of the marks of a proverb is its general acceptance as the popular expression of some truth, we are seldom given the data to decide how far this is indeed a characteristic of the sayings included in collections of "proverbs". Her observation is that in many cases presumably the sayings included are proverbs in this full sense yet there is no way of telling whether some of the "proverbs" included are not just the sententious utterance of a single individual on a single occasion which happened to appeal to the investigator.

Finnegan continues to indicate that:

The sort of terminology involved can sometimes provide a clue to the local attitude to "proverbs". As we have seen, there is sometimes a specialized term, sometimes not. This is not always made clear by collectors. Even more serious is the frequent failure to consider when, how, and by or among whom common proverbs are used. Even where something about the general context is given, we are practically never told in detail how a given single proverb was actually used. Yet, as will emerge, this may in fact determine its significance, the way in which it is appreciated locally, even its meaning. This aspect is often crucial, if whether or not some attractive saying is really a "proverb" depends on the local evaluation of it.

Even though Finnegan declares that it is not easy to know when a saying qualifies to be a proverb, one of the proverbs' characteristics is its popular acceptance, meaning their acceptance will be known by their frequent usage among the people. However, her study is very important as it will help the researcher to find out whether contemporary Sesotho proverbs are not out-of-date.

Dalfovo (1997) analyses Lugbara proverbs and indicates that the experiential origin of proverbs, as far as Lugbara culture is concerned, is extensively shown by their topics, ranging over the entire life of the people, dealing with their home and family, their work and social relations, their values and problems. Hence proverbs are rooted in the same reality that prompts human beings to forge their culture. Dalfovo further notes that the experience at the origin of a proverb and the observation that goes with it, though initially that of a person, need to be subsequently adopted by the social group to which the individual belongs in order to become a proverb. Furthermore, he avers that

proverbs are by their nature popular, namely, they are known and used by the entire population. They are communal or social asserts just like culture.

They truly echo a culture and not just the inventiveness of a single person who first launched the proverb. Dalfovo focuses on Lugbara proverbs, however, his study is going to help the researcher to differentiate between those proverbs that are passé and those are there to stay.

Mokitimi (1997) discusses Sesotho proverbs as a literature of the illiterate. She compares written literature with oral literature. In her study, Mokitimi focuses on the origin, function and use, stylistic nature and intertextuality of Sesotho proverb. She observes that before a proverb can be accepted as the lore of the people, it goes through several stages. She avows that in the first place, there has to be a situation in which a reaction can trigger the formation of a proverb. Once the words which have been spoken by the person who formulated the reaction are accepted by the society, they become the people's lore. They stop being an individual creation and become the possession of the society.

Mokitimi further argues that proverb formulation is therefore a creative process and an event in its own right, although the acceptance of a proverb may take several generations, so that their origin and their authors are seldom individually known. The observation made by Mokitimi is very crucial to this study because it is going to help the researcher to find out whether these contemporary proverbs are accepted by the society. However, the difference is that Mokitimi focuses on traditional proverbs while the current study concentrates on newly coined proverbs.

Madumulla (2001) observes that there comes a moment when a society undergoes social transformation where the social structure and its relations cannot be guided by *universal truth* anymore, because of the expanded ability of the human being to control nature.... Man does not even need togetherness because it has been overtaken by technology. Madumulla observes that a man with a machine does the work of many people, thus symbolically defeating the collective concept of the proverb. However, he

notes that the proverb, like the Latin language, never really dies but it may manifest itself in a different form.

Madumulla acknowledges that:

In its present form, it shall exist in the society and with the society, for a long time to come, because one of its constitutive elements, *social acceptance*, is a long-lasting imprint. The truth of a proverb, its simplicity notwithstanding, is what accords it its acceptance even among the so-called developed societies today. Since proverbs still enjoy ownership and activeness in some of the societies, it will be only logical to say that, whether proverbs are a pack of lies or not, the right decision should be sought for from the societies among whom the proverb genre is still alive and kicking.

Since Madumulla emphasizes on the social acceptance of the proverb, his study becomes relevant to the present study as it intends to prove that newly coined Sesotho proverbs are real proverbs.

Malmgren (2007) analyses proverbs with the purpose of illuminating the relationship between proverbs, human cognition and culture. In studying the construction and representation of identity in the proverbs, Malmgren intends to discuss for example the different roles for women and men that could be found in the proverbs, how these roles are represented? And whether there exists structural differences in the construction of them? He also discusses how the social surroundings, especially the power relations, are manifested in the proverbs. This information, he believes will shed light on the proverb itself, and the functions it fulfils in a cultural environment. In this study, Malmgren argues that proverbs illustrate cultural practices in a normative way, that is, they tell one how to act in a certain contexts, and in doing so, they could be viewed both as results of and the cause of such cultural practices: results, since the pre-linguistic cultural motivate the proverbs, which in turn entrench cognitive differences that are induced by such cultural practices, and the cause of, since proverbs are used to transfer cultural practices from generation to generation and to uphold a culturally acceptable behavior.

Furthermore, he maintains that cultural-cognitive schemas could be said to determine which proverbs are possible and which are not in a given culture, since proverbs must

match these schemas in order to be accepted as units of traditional wisdom. Further still Malmgren observes that since cultural practices change over time, the possible proverbs also change... a proverb will not be used in a culture that lacks the cultural-cognitive schemas that the proverb presupposes, whether it concerns practical or moral matters. There must be a match between cultural schemas and the proverb before the proverb could be used as an effective means of communication. This study is going to enlighten the present research.

Mieder (2009) argues that proverbs are still invented by individuals, and if a particular statement still exhibits at least one of the proverb markers (structure, shortness, metaphor, alliteration, rhyme, parallelism, ellipsis, hyperbole and paradox) it might just catch-on, it might gain currency in a family setting, a village, a city, a state, the entire nation, and eventually the world. He further states that in the technological world connected globally by computer networks and the ever present mass media of newspaper, radio, and television, short and witty utterances can become almost instantaneous quotations known throughout the land. Furthermore he mentions that the speed in which new and possible proverbial wisdom can be disseminated today is truly mind-boggling.

Mieder observes that while it might have taken decades in earlier times for a precise statement and its variants to become proverbial, this currency might now be accomplished in a few days... The test of time still needs to be applied to such proverbial neologisms; the elements of traditionality and general currency must come into play in order for such pithy statement to be considered as a bona fide proverb. Mieder's study stresses on the importance for popular acceptance of proverbs and this makes his study similar to the current study. However, the present study analyses contemporary Sesotho proverbs with the purpose of finding out whether they have a place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **2.2 Functions of a proverb**

Some scholars have analysed proverbs focusing on their roles or functions they play in the society. Their studies shall be discussed under this section.

Mkuchu (1997) discusses how proverbs in the context of Kaguru society are used as pillars in the enculturation of its social structure. Mkuchu indicates that proverbs in Kaguru society, as in other societies, have the broader goal of cultivating in the members of the community the ability to appreciate and conform to the social values, norms and beliefs of that community. Mkuchu avers that:

Proverbs are thus used to enable members to perform their roles responsibly in conformity with societal values and norms, to transmit cultural values. Proverbs can be used in formal and informal settings. Informal settings may be ordinary day-to-day conversations to advise, rebuke and instruct. Proverbs can also be used in formal gatherings or special occasions. Such gatherings can be a ceremony to mark the end of the period of mourning, a meeting called to smooth over a disagreement/conflict, or the payment of dowry and initiation rites.

She concludes by affirming that proverbs have been and still is, useful in transmitting Kaguru culture in different settings. She further concludes that proverbs used in day-to-day encounter and proverbs used in initiation rites all aim at enculturating people in such situations as relationship building with other people, the importance of work, resolving conflicts, proper childrearing, responsible parenthood, the importance of married life, and cooperation. All in all, Mkuchu affirms that proverbs have a role to play in every society. Mkuchu's study therefore is going to be insightful to the present study as it also discusses the role of contemporary Sesotho proverbs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Chindongo (1997) analyses proverbs with an attempt to reflect on the development facilitators in World Vision Malawi and how they have integrated or not integrated local traditional wisdom as they facilitate the development process. In this study, traditional local wisdom refers specifically to proverbs which are part of the means by which the people in Malawi, especially rural people, like to communicate. Chindongo indicates that proverbs constitute an attempt by the people to understand themselves and explain the world around them. He further observes that all communities in Malawi, especially rural communities, do not communicate in a linear manner as westerners do. The proverbs they use, which are part and parcel of their lives, are never straightforward. He therefore concludes that as we approach the twenty-first century, it will be very important for development practitioners to look more and more at culture-based grassroots development models. He further maintains that Malawi, like many

other countries, has many rich proverbs, most of which have neither been analysed nor documented. Furthermore, he concludes that development facilitators need to be consciously aware of, listen to and integrate these proverbs as they work with the people for any meaningful development to take place. This study is relevant to the present study in that it deals with newly coined proverbs.

Valdaeva (2003) deals with English anti-proverbs by looking at their use and stylistic analysis. He claims that proverbs combine literal meaning, which is the form for another, transferred, meaning that contains the idea. He detects that they are easily recalled and recognized because of different stylistic devices, such as alliteration, rhyme, paronomasia, metaphor and many others and, thus, have more advantageous form than other set of expressions and are very effective for carrying different ideas to the society in a very compact form. Valdaeva's findings prove that anti-proverbs have the same function in every day speech as traditional proverbs, namely they are an effective means for bringing a deep meaning in a short phrase. They carry new, up-to-date political, religious and other ideas to the people. Besides, these new ideas are more acceptable in our modern life than the old ones expressed in the traditional proverbs. Anti-proverbs, as well as traditional proverbs, are built with the help of many stylistic devices and that also brings them closer to the original proverbs. This study is going to inform the present study to prove the validity and sustainability of newly coined proverbs.

Malunga and Banda (2004) discuss how the traditional wisdom contained in African proverbs can be applied to understanding organizations and improving their effectiveness. They indicate that the use of African proverbs presents a new and creative way of communicating organizational principles to transcend the common communication barriers. They further observe that interest in collecting African proverbs and using them to enrich modern life is growing, based on a conviction that modern life and institutions would be greatly enhanced if they gave a home to the timeless wisdom these proverbs hold. By associating proverbs with organizational issues, the book shows how proverbs can enhance understanding of sustainability issues and consequently how to address them. More specifically, the book addresses two main themes. Effectively communicating financial and organizational sustainability improvement efforts in a language that organizational change leaders immediately and



easily understand and in a way that touches their hearts and motivates them to personal and organizational transformation Africa's contribution to organizational theory and practice in a world quickly becoming one global village, where financial and organizational sustainability are key for organizational integrity and impact.

Malunga and Banda further avow that proverbs are an integral part of African culture. Simple statements with deep meaning, they are guidelines for individual, family, and village behavior, built upon repeated real life experiences and observations over time. They see proverbs as mirrors through which people look at themselves—a stage for expressing themselves to others. The way people think and look at the world, their culture, values, behaviors, aspirations, and preoccupations can immediately be understood by looking at their proverbs. While Africa has many languages, proverbs offer them common ground. The same proverbs recur in similar forms in almost all African languages and societies. Some state facts from people's history, customs, and practices; others express philosophical thoughts, beliefs, and values. Yet proverbs make communication instantly possible, irrespective of differences in geographic origin and cultural backgrounds. Proverbs are the common property of Africans because they are ascribed to the wisdom of all the ancestors. The two scholars prove beyond any doubt that proverbs still have a role to play. This makes their study useful to the current one.

Kehinde (2004) discusses proverbs as thematic vehicles in recent African short fiction. This paper is aimed at investigating the place of proverbs in recent African short fiction as a step towards a purposeful appreciation of the repertoire of proverbs in this sub-genre of African prose fiction. Kehinde avers that some African scholars have rightly observed that folktales, proverbs, myths and legends, which are part of the rich African folklore, are very much alive and are influencing modern African literature with motifs, themes, characters and techniques. He observes that in African short fiction, the proverb is not merely an adornment or advice to elicit humor for a good laugh, but it constitutes the art of the stories. He concludes by asserting that African proverbs should continue to be of interest not only for literary artists, critics and cultural researchers, but also for sociologists, anthropologists and all those with an interest in the African past and present. Even though Kehinde deals with proverb in African short fiction, his study is going to be used to develop the current one.

Mieder (2005) presents and interprets eighty examples of English proverbs in the mass media, with an emphasis on American proverbs of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He indicates that there have been and there continue to be those voices that cling to the claim that proverbs have little significance in modern technological society.

He asserts that some scholars argue that this traditional folk wisdom is in fact so much on the decline that the death of proverbs is imminent both oral and written communication. However, Mieder concurs with that claim by maintaining that such prophecies of gloom are definitely unfounded, as has been shown in numerous publications around the world. He further observes that proverbs do indeed continue to play an incredible important role in human communication of all sorts, be it verbally in normal conversation, more deliberate socio-political rhetoric or in the written words of letters, diaries, reports, essays, and books of all types. Furthermore, he indicates that proverbs contain the wisdom and insights that humankind has gained through observation and experience, and as so-called “monumenta humana” they are the everyday and common-sense philosophy of all people.

Mieder declares that the frequent appearance of traditional and new proverbs, both in their standard form as well as in innovative variations, is especially noticeable in the mass media. Magazines and newspapers employ proverbs as headlines of articles or as slogans of advertisements, and they also appear quite often as captions or blurbs of cartoons and comic strips. Since the core of this research is to find out whether contemporary Sesotho proverbs have a role to play in society, Mieder’s study is going to be helpful in the development of this research.

Odebunmi (2008) examines the pragmatic functions that crisis-motivated proverbs play in Ola Rotimi’s *The Gods are not to Blame*. The study picks its inspiration from the little attention hitherto paid, in the linguistic literature, to both the specific proverbs that are spurred by crisis in the play and the pragmatic roles of such proverbs. The study reveals that crisis-motivated proverbs in *The Gods are not to Blame*, which are of two types: social and political, are characterized by parts such as those of counseling, cautioning, challenging, veiling, persuading, prioritizing, encouraging, threatening and admitting. These are psychological acts which exploit contextual features such as reference, metaphor, inference, shared situation knowledge, shared cultural knowledge

and relevance. Odebunmi observes that studying literary proverbs used in crisis situations, from a pragmatic perspective, both throws additional insights into the paremiological pool and promises to provide a veritably helpful tool for language teaching.

Odebunmi indicates that in terms of function, proverbs in Africa have been observed to "occur on all occasions when language is used for communication either as art or as tool [...]". This study is going to be constructive to the present study when examining the role of the proverbs in the society.

Kudadjie (2006) analyses Ga and Dangme proverbs in an attempt to uncover the attitudes of these two societies towards change and modernization as far as can be seen from their proverbs. It also intends to show what resources proverbs provide as repositories of the collective wisdom of the people, for forming attitudes towards change and modernization. In this paper, Kudadjie notes that proverbs function somewhat like moral codes, conventional wisdom and explicit rules of conduct. He further avows that they describe and prescribe and they state the experiences, moral institutions and guidelines for living that people generally have found to be noteworthy and helpful. Kudadjie's study is similar to the present study in that, the two studies look at the changes that are brought by modernization in proverbs. However, the difference is that, the present study analyses contemporary Sesotho proverbs with an attempt to test their durability and validity.

Adesoji (2006) analyses Yoruba proverbs. The aim is to examine their relevance as a source of or as a tool for the understanding of oral traditions by dwelling on those texts that contain historical information or have historical basis. The intent is also to establish the fact that, beyond the general usage of these proverbs in the modern times, either to warn, correct or commend, some of them came about as a result of certain historical developments, which eventually became reference points. Adesoji detects that in addition to learning some lessons from the usage of those proverbs in modern times, they also serve as reminders of certain developments that happened in the past. He indicates that given that one important lesson of history is to learn from the past with a view to avoiding or overcoming the problems or pitfall of the past in the present, a discussion of historically related proverbs becomes important. He further notices that in

addition to the general lessons that could be learnt, would serve to remind and teach of the past, with a view to living better in the present. He further affirms that despite the advance in modernization and the seemingly unending technological breakthroughs, the knowledge of the past is still very relevant. Adesoji analyses traditional proverbs which is not what the present study does, however, his study is going to inform the present research.

Gomez (2007) examines a particular subset of linguistic perspective; this specific work explicitly integrates creative uses of proverb and proverb-like statements in bilingual, Spanish-English conversation. In this essay, Gomez endeavors to merge general proverb scholarship, code-switching and Spanish language proverb research to specifically address the role of proverb use within ever growing, and constantly changing bilingual, Mexican-descent communities in the United States. She argues that for one to say that proverbs function primarily to ornament conversation is an oversimplification of their poetic function. She emphasizes that this is especially true when proverbs are utilized by bilingual speakers. Gomez further asserts that the most noticeable distinctions surface when speakers interpose proverbs into particular cultural and linguistic contexts and it is at this point that these proverbs potentially serve a unique dualistic purpose. They function as markers of a dialogic negotiation between linguistic and cultural identities. These functions are discerned by examining changes in the textural elements of conversation while paying close attention to the multiple, coexisting levels of micro and macro social settings. Gomez deals with proverbs from a linguistic perspective while the current study tests the availability and durability of Sesotho proverbs.

Lauhakangas (2007:78) looks at the functions of proverbs in social interaction. He defines proverbs as multifunctional and flexible instruments of everyday reasoning. He asserts that proverbs serve as tools to cover individual opinions in public interactive situations. According to Lauhakangas, proverbs cannot be analysed outside their context. He maintains that using proverbs of your own language or dialect has a central function to be a kind of speech that strengthens the identity of the community. He further indicates that this is also true when we consider the ways how a subculture or minority uses of proverbs. Lauhakangas claims that:

The speech using proverbs enables interactivity to bring different people closer to each other and it fades away cultural boundaries. Already the observation that different people can have the same kind of practice to use proverbs in their social interaction will help to decrease the experience of strangeness. The general impression of understanding constructs internationality, even if it would be considered impossible for “outsiders” to understand any single proverb of your own nation or subculture. By using proverbs one can emphasize (even quite loudly) feelings of togetherness, but at the same time they may serve as tools of segregation. With a common language people can exclude those who do not belong to the community or those who are not able or willing to share the consensus. In other words, proverbs can strengthen the unity or even narrowness of interpretation. But a proverb can also be a tool for giving a more exact analysis of situations than traditionally expected. They may serve as a way to avoid conventional interpretations of situations. In that case it is not inevitable to conform to the uniform viewpoint of one’s community. With proverbs one can express difference of opinions within the community. They can be used as aphorisms to think differently. As a part of literal culture there are no limits set in advance for their interpretation.

Lauhakangas (2007b) also discusses proverbs in social interaction: questions aroused by the multi-functionality of proverbial speech. In this study, he indicates that use of proverb is not neutral phenomenon in social interaction. When a single proverb user is concerned, a need to use a proverb is always a sign of some kind of emotional loading. He avers that using a proverb represents speech of “a third party”. By this kind of indirect speech it is possible to avoid pleading one’s own authority. The two studies confirm that proverbs do have a role to play in the society; they are therefore going to be useful to the present study.

Orwenjo (2009) discusses how different Kenyan politicians and political parties used proverbs to strengthen and further their respective political positions. These proverbs are collected from their context. According to Orwenjo, proverbs in isolation have no concrete and tangible meaning; as their semantic load is derived directly from the context and circumstances of use. He observes that people use proverbs in Africa and elsewhere to increase the clarity as well as the semantic effect of what they intend to say. It is possible to state, by the use of proverbs, what would otherwise be difficult to communicate in ordinary language. Even though Orwenjo focuses on Kenyan political proverbs, his study is similar to the present one in that the present study also analyses

contemporary Sesotho proverbs with an attempt to find their place in the modern world.

Nhleakisana (2010) discusses the use of proverbs in advertising in Botswana. In her paper, she indicates that proverbs serve many social functions and they have always had a role to play in the society. Nhleakisana asserts that “proverbs are an integral part of African society. They can be used to impart advice, comment on human experiences, deliver, inform and advertise new and existing products”. She concludes by indicating that proverbs play an important role in contemporary Botswana. Nhleakisana has looked at the use of proverbs in advertising in Botswana and has not said anything about new ones that are being coined so this makes her study different but insightful to this study.

Jamal (2010) argues that the usage of a proverb can bear manifold communicative-pragmatic, social and also other functions, which is true for interactional situations as well as different genres of written and oral texts. Moreover, Jamal insists that it seems important to underline that proverbs not only serve as a disseminator of traditional wisdom, knowledge and apparent truths handed down from generation to generation, but, apart from aspects already mentioned, bear to some extent a rather serious dimension, too. He emphasizes that this is particularly true when they are deliberately misused in order to express or propagate certain views and beliefs. He therefore claims that it is equally vital to note that proverbs do not exist in a cultural vacuum, but, depending on the language of its usage, can be highly culture-bound and contain components which may be restricted to a specific culture or region. As such, the study is attempted towards depicting significant functions and usages of proverbs in the modern age without taking its culture-bound aspects and suchlike into account. This study is similar to the present one in that, they both look at the significant function and usage of proverbs in modern age. However, the difference is on the language under discussion.

Lebeloane and Madise (2011) profess that many Africans have a rich and generous heritage which takes the form of proverbs. These proverbs are based on the natural and non-natural environment. They maintain that Africans use these proverbs to transmit and preserve some of their highest achievements such as knowledge, skills and attitudes. They also use them to facilitate the understanding of environmental education.

Lebeloane and Madise discuss the use of some identified proverbs to facilitate the understanding of environmental education in literature.

The two scholars assert that proverbs are used in various ways such as to constitute the titles of books and as part of the content to drive a point or alert or even warn the reader about errors members of society commit in life. They indicate that:

Proverbs are not used in the same way. Some are used in full and others are used partially. Because literature is often developed on a plot in a particular context, proverbs are used contextually in the environment. Readers are, thus, educated through the use of proverbs in the environment and about the environment. Some focus on proverbs and their meaning in the context of the plot in the reading material. That makes it important to decode proverbs further in literature and show an understanding of environmental education as well.

Lebeloane and Madise do not discuss Contemporary Sesotho proverbs so this is the gap the current research intends to fill.

Quan-Baffour (2011) discusses some selected Akan proverbs and their educational value for today. This paper sets out to demonstrate the importance of proverbs as part of popular culture and means of educating people through wise sayings and metaphors. The paper analyses few important Akan proverbs pointing out their respective educational value for modern people, especially the youth of today. Even though some scholars have claimed that the proverb has lost value in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Quan-Baffour strongly maintains that in Ghana, the proverb as an aspect of folklore has remained an important part of the Akan culture, heritage and identity despite the colonial encroachment or incursion on African culture. He acknowledges that the proverbs and wise sayings portray Akan beliefs and stories about every aspect of life, such as birth, childhood, adulthood, death, the origins of humans, the earth, the universe or *Onyame* (God), the Supreme Being and His relationship with people. Further, he asserts that as indigenous people who are traditionally a non-literate group, the Akan have preserved and transmitted their culture through orality and works of art for centuries. Furthermore, he notes that as Africa renews itself in this [21st] century it is prudent for its peoples to look at their cultural and indigenous practices to enable the continent to develop, protect and project its heritage and identity to the outside world. Since the purpose of the

present study is to discuss the role of proverbs in the global era, this study is going to be useful.

Mhlambi (2011) intends demonstrating the deployment of folklore material, proverbs in particular, in commenting on contemporary society by arguing that proverbs' migratory properties - their fluidity and flexibility - allow for the absolute authority embodied in them to shape perceptions on how contemporary challenges, informed by change and modernity, should be comprehended. This is achieved through didactically laced maxims contingent on life experiences. Equally, it will be observed that in instances where the proverbs' authority is short of its universal truth, it is then extended to incorporate the newness and the unpredictability of modern life experiences. A reading of Radebe's *Aphelile Agambaqa* and Buthelezi's *Impi YaboMdabo Isethunjini* is made to demonstrate how proverbs, as performance texts and discursive practices, underpin African value systems.

Mhlambi maintains that the study of proverbs has led to significant advances in understanding their nature and their function as localised in discourses of orature, literature, and every day speech acts. He claims that not only the thoughts of the society are presented through proverbs but also the philosophical views of the society are reflected and passed down from one generation to the next. He further observes that in some African societies, the uses of proverbs in daily conversations is the most valued verbal experience because their application brings about the ingenuity that could be viewed as the preparatory linguistic field for the performance of lengthy verbal art forms like folk stories or *izibongo* (praises). The fact that Mhlambi shows that proverbs have a place in the modern age, makes his study significant to the present day and study.

Zhou (2010) argues that proverbs have been collectively created by folk people of the human society since ancient times. They are spread widely from mouth to mouth. As concisely and comparatively stereotyped artist statements, they have summed up the rich wisdom and universal experience of the masses, becoming the important carrier of the history of social attitudes. Family instructions are specially written for ancient Chinese families or the clan old people to educate the children. As documents written for a certain purpose, family instructions belong to the education within families.



Therefore, it can be defined that proverbs are, since the ancient times, the artistic set of words or sentences created collectively in the folk world of the human beings, which are simple and concise in meaning and spread widely with strong style of popularization. What they have reflected involves every aspects of the social life.

Simple and easy words are always adopted to reflect profound meaning, which is closely related with the daily life of the ordinary people, to vividly express the rich life experience of the people in the society. They are conclusions drawn from the rich wisdom and universal laws of the masses and the important carrier of the history of outlooks on society. If proverbs can be used properly, text will become lively and vivid and more expressive. Family instruction is the document written by the ancient Chinese families or the elder people of a clan to educate the offspring. It belongs to the education within a family or a family clan and has a distinctive feature in the Chinese ideological and culture treasure. Zhou's study is going to inform the current study.

Vidjennagni (undated) analyses the role that art oral forms, namely, proverbs and tales, can play in the making of a people-centred ideology, and how such a consciousness can advance or hinder development. He examines these genres of oral material for what they have to say about, and the extent to which they are informed by or are a product of ethical, educational and developmental issues. The questions which he explores are:

- i) What political role did proverbs and tales play in Africa and how was this role fulfilled?
- ii) What potential do they still have to play a political role in modern African society?
- iii) How can oral genres in the diversity of their form and that of their functions be used to promote human rights, transparency in management of state's affairs and the African countries' development?
- iv) What can be the contribution of oral genres to the institution of political consciousness and political morality within communities who deliberately chose not to trust the African leaders?
- v) To what extent can aesthetics and ethics of oral traditions, mainly those of proverbs and tales, help in the "reinstallation of Africa's people within the culture of the world [...] within

what may reasonably be called the equality of world consciousness?" (Davidson 1994:4).

- vi) What can clearly be the role of proverbs and tales in the implementation of the African Renaissance?

Vidjennagni further asserts that whatever their weaknesses are, it appears that oral traditions, nonetheless, shape and promote moral order and ethical values, provide human understanding, facilitate elimination of anti-social behavior and help in the construction of social identity.

These roles are crucial when one takes into account the failure of some modern patterns and strategies of development to integrate these values and to build out of them an appropriate development strategy suitable to the cultural environment(s) prevailing in Africa. Even though Vidjennagni deals with proverbs and tales, his research questions and findings are going to tip off the current study on the role of proverbs in the modern world.

### **2.3 Proverb Dynamism**

Many scholars have dedicated their work to the study of proverbs. This section reviews different works of scholars who have dealt with proverb dynamism.

Ntshinga (1997) and (1999) analyses the dynamics of the African proverb with special reference to the Xhosa proverb. In her study, she discusses the multimedia dimension and structural dynamics of the proverb to demonstrate that the proverb as a genre of oral literature is fluid and flexible. Ntshinga (1997) indicates that the ability of proverb users to create the proverb during performance has received very little attention from scholars, hence she conducted her study. She indicates that the proverb in Africa is both conservative and dynamic. Ntshinga (2010) avers that:

It manifests itself in various contexts, traditional and modern, and it is transmitted through a large variety of media. Proverbs use language changes in response to social, political, economic and religious challenges. Proverb users exhibit skills in proverb re-creation. They delete, elaborate, and transpose elements in the

proverb. They are aware that proverbs have to be meaningful and relevant to contemporary experience.

Ntshinga (2010) further concludes that the proverbial wisdom is not dead or dying, but continues to function in an innovative way, so as to fit the demands of modern times. . Ntshinga's studies are very insightful to the current study as it is going to analyse new proverbs that are newly coined in order to suit modernity. However, Ntshinga focuses on the dynamics of Xhosa proverbs without testing their existence and durability which is what this study intends to do with contemporary Sesotho proverbs.

Mutasa (1999) analyses Shona proverbs in an attempt to see, from a sociolinguistic point of view, the extent to which proverbs have been transformed. He presupposes that the experiences or changes the language has had over the ages have transformed the shape and role of proverbs. Mutasa (1999) indicates that proverbs, like language, are dynamic. He observes that they are an aspect of language that continues to respond to challenges of modern life as seen in their prevalence as titles of novels, drama on TV and music. He further indicates that they carry the dynamism of language reflecting contemporary situations. Furthermore, he maintains that proverbs continue to operate in the new commerce and industry. The current study differs from Mutasa's in that it analyses contemporary Sesotho proverbs in order to see whether they are accepted by Basotho society and whether they play a significant role in the same society.

Raji-Oyelade (1999) analyses Yoruba proverbs in an attempt to record the development of a normative rupture in the production of this traditional verbal genre. Her study also establishes the presence of new proverbs with new forms, new meanings and new values. The analytic focus of Raji-Oyelade's study is on the nature of transformation, the shift in construction that has visited upon the conventional formulaic pattern of the typical Yoruba proverb among a younger generation of its users. The present study is similar to Raji-Oyelade's study in that they both focus on the emergence of new proverbs, especially on new forms and new meanings. However, in her study, Raji-Oyelade focuses on new Yoruba proverbs, while this study analyses contemporary Sesotho proverbs.

Reznikov (2009) discusses modern Russian Anti-Proverbs. In his study, he focuses on the form of anti-proverbs, their meaning, their new wisdom, their relationship with the

traditional proverbs and, last but not least, their chances for survival in the Russian language and culture. Reznikov adopted the term anti-proverb from Mieder. He asserts that Mieder defines anti-proverbs as deliberate proverb innovations (alterations, parodies, transformations, variations, wisecracks, fractured proverbs). However, the definition of an anti-proverb is the same definition of the proverb. The approach of this investigation is primarily linguistical as much attention is paid to phonetics, morphology, lexical, syntactic and stylistic characteristics of the anti-proverbs. The analysis shows that many anti-proverbs confirm old truths and express old wisdom in a new way or by new means.

They show that proverbs are not something complete and never changing, but in fact are as changeable a part of the language as anything else. Other anti-proverbs use familiar patterns to express new truths, thus reflecting not only new events or aspects of the modern society and people but also new mores. In terms of their survival Reznikov avows that those of them that follow the best traditions of Russian proverbs have all the chances of staying in the language. He observes that as traditional proverbs show, even when the realities that produced them disappear, the proverbs survive due to their figurative meaning and their expressing folk wisdom that has diachronic character. At the same time, many modern anti-proverbs are just language jokes or wordplays created for fun, and will hardly survive, especially if their form is awkward. Although Reznikov's study seem to have a lot in common with the present study, his focus is on Russian anti-proverbs while this study deals with contemporary Sesotho proverbs.

Litovkina and Mieder (1999) have collected new proverbs which they refer to as anti-proverbs. They collected new proverbs with a hope that their work might generate additional interest in the fascinating world of anti-proverbs from other languages and cultures. They observe that just as traditional proverbs are true *monumenta humana* (1999:6) (authors' emphasis) these innovative texts represent the thoughts, values, concerns, hopes, joy and humour of modern age. They further indicate that, what all serious proverb alterations show is that modern people are very much aware of traditional proverbs, so much that they enjoy such intentional changes to create innovative communicative devices. These scholars do not analyse contemporary Sesotho proverbs which is what the current study does.

Ssetuba (2002) analyses Ganda proverbs. His analysis has given an overview of Ganda proverbs on gender relations. He indicates that the proverb is highly regarded as a noble genre of African oral tradition that enjoys the prestige of a custodian of a people's wisdom and philosophy of life. He further observes that:

- a) As a literary genre and aspect of living language, the proverb is, stable, concise and fairly fixed and can therefore be transmitted to future generation with minimum alteration.
- b) Linguistically, a proverb is stable and versatile and thus easily absorbed in everyday speech and into other oral genres like riddles, short stories and songs, all often used for instructional purposes.
- c) Philosophically, in a traditional African setting, the proverbial messages are the gist of one's way of life representing treasures of wisdom inherited from forefathers. The proverb is then granted authority and prestige in shaping social perception and behavior.
- d) And patriarchy, deeply embedded therein, had to live on and hold firm. It has been noted by certain scholars that since the proverb falls under the category of the 'fixed form' genres, any significant textual modification would tantamount to 'deformation of tradition', thus compromising the 'functions of proverbs in archaic societies'. The proverb is durable and resilient and can stand as shaper of mentalities over several generations.
- e) Originally and basically, the proverb is an oral genre and adaptation and constructive change are no strangers to it. But one wonders where to fix the limits of change, with compilation of oral forms weighing heavy on their true nature while ensuring their preservation besides users' wisdom being far from authentic and original setting. Nevertheless, a wise saying transcends space and time to become universal human heritage. In case of wisdom gone sour, a rereading or retouch could save gems of the noble oral genre.

Ssetuba has clearly stated the functions of the proverbs and by so doing, his study is going to inform the current study.

Possa and Makgopa (2010) analyse contemporary Sesotho proverbs. They argue that as society develops, changes in culture are inevitable. They indicate that being an aspect of culture that has existed from time immemorial, proverbs are affected by these changes too and it is because of this dynamism that some Sesotho proverbs have variants with shifted meanings. Their study aims to examine contemporary Sesotho proverbs. The analysis includes coinages of new proverbs with new meanings, new proverbs that have meanings similar to traditional ones and old proverbs which have acquired new meanings to suit modern age.

They adopted Text-Context theory as its theoretical base. This theory has been developed by Yankah. Yankah asserts that the proverb is performed in the matrix of discourse interaction since it is in discourse that the dynamics of the proverb, as well as the speaker's efficiency in proverb usage, can be determined. Their analysis discloses that Basotho culture is dynamic as it changes with time and space. An investigation reveals that there is a shift in Basotho culture as is shown in the study of proverbs. Possa and Makgopa also find out that:

The main purpose of traditional proverbs, which encouraged good morality and values, has changed because of modernity. Proverbs have gone through a transformation. It is through this change that contrary to promoting good moral values, recent proverbs appear to have been designed or created to protect and promote practices and behaviours that undermine traditional moral values and acceptable social norms. The majority of recent proverbs are found among the youth and some men who use them to justify their unwanted behaviour. On the other hand, recent proverbs promote individualism and self-assertiveness, which is contrary to what Basotho believed in, which is cooperation. Contemporary proverbs demonstrate growth; they boost Basotho's new developments or acquisitions. Overall, adages freeze wisdom for the benefit of future generations.

The two scholars have not said anything about the continuity and survival of the new proverbs. Nevertheless, their study is going to inform the present study because it is going to analyse new proverbs in order to prove their sustainability and popularity.

## 2.4 Form of Proverbs

Ezejideaku and Okeke (2008) analyses Igbo proverbs. They affirm that Igbo proverbs are never phrases, rather, they are usually sentences with the same grammatical structure as the typical sentences, yet they maintain a distinct pattern that marks them out as poetic expressions. In this paper, the two scholars attempt a morpho-syntactic classification of Igbo proverbs. They identify four types: the simple-structured, the bi-componential, the tri-componential and quadric-componential proverbs. Their view is that the morpho-syntactic structure of each proverb plays a role in its semantic interpretation. Their findings prove that each structural type of Igbo proverbs has its own unique characteristics, which relate to the imageries created and play significant roles in the interpretation of the proverbs.

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Fayemi (2009) examines the idea of proverbs with reference to the African experience. The paper explores the African conceptual definitive meaning of proverb as well as the features of proverbs in the universal sense. It explores conceptually the idea of 'conceptual deconstruction' in contrast with 'conceptual decolonization' with a view to providing an authentic heuristic understanding of proverbs in Yoruba-African cultural understanding. Fayemi observes that proverbs have been reformulated by the younger generations to suit their purpose by changing the content and structure of the traditional formulation in order to give proverb some new meaning(s).

Fayemi further avows that a proverb needs not necessarily be a traditional saying; it could also be *posterior* and contemporary reaction to conventional wisdom, natural intelligence and traditional sayings.... A proverb is distinguished from all these linguistic features by their construction, which condenses a thought or a metaphor; where one thing is said and another is to be applied, which often produces wit. In other words, the truths provided by proverbs could be universal as well as relative, depending on the cultural and historical experiences that generated such proverbs. Indeed, the meaning of proverbs, as well as their functions in a particular literary tradition can only be known through a heuristic study in particular human languages and literatures. That notwithstanding, we can still meaningfully speak of some common features of proverbs. Proverbs are metaphors, and "metaphors characterize rhetoric, not scientific discourse. It can be argued further that some proverbs are unreasonable by virtue of their pre-

justice and irrelevance to modern day realities. In other words, they are old-fashioned. Nevertheless, we see proverb as a rich constituent of Yoruba African oral tradition, which is important in a whole range of ways.

Yuka and Ugwu (2010:339) analyses Lamnso proverbs. Their paper sets out to identify the structural uniqueness of Lamnso proverbs. It investigates the lexical sequences employed for proverb computation in the language and seeks to determine the application of the descriptive adequacy of Lamnso grammar for Lamnso proverbs. The paper claims that the ability to employ and understand Lamnso proverbs is a step removed from basic requirements for competence and performance in Lamnso grammar which an average speaker requires to function minimally within any Nso speech community. From this structural analysis the two scholars identifies two features that can be said to be responsible for the complexity of proverbs:

- a) Economy of derivation: the attempt to condense moral and philosophical expositions into a mnemonic form which can be committed to memory and repeated appropriate contexts has pushed proverb derivation beyond the basic requirements of sentences formation in Lamnso Proverb formation does not respect basic lexical insertion rules and constituents whose semantic value can be implicitly decoded are deleted.
- b) Proverbs present abstract meanings. Their metaphoric characteristic removes them from the class of basic sentences. This feature requires that their interpretation is beyond the meaning of the words in use. In addition, the study indicates that a proverb does not have a static interpretation but are multi-layered and rely heavily on the context of situation for their immediate meaning. Apart from being a reflection of the world view of the native speakers, proverb derivation must respect the socio-cultural restrictions.

Form is one of the major characteristic of a proverb. The proverb is known by its unique structure which is what Yuka and Ugwu are discussing so this makes their study relevant to the present study.



## 2.5 Adaptability of Proverbs

There are those traditional proverbs that are altered, shifted and modified to suit the modern age. This category shall discuss such proverbs.

Agbaje (2006) examines the effects of western civilization on the Yorúba proverbs. Agbaje indicates that before the westernization of Yorúba culture, the people naturally used proverbs in daily conversation. These proverbs were clearly understood between the speaker and audience because of the cultural affinity in the society. Further, Agbaje notes that these proverbs are modernized and harmonized along with the changing of culture to suit the prevailing socio-cultural situations in the society. According to Agbaje, apart from the cases of some proverbs which have a semantic extension, there are some proverbs that have emanated from the experiences gathered as a result of the westernization of Yorúba culture.

Furthermore, he observes that the new orientation gives the people adequate opportunity to create new proverbs in line with the prevailing changing culture. Further still, he concludes by indicating that the changes in proverbs seem to be appropriate socially, culturally and politically. This also shows how creative, current and sensible people are in their thoughts. Agbaje is also aware of the changes in proverbs that are modernized and harmonized along with the changing of culture to suit the prevailing socio-cultural situations in the society. That being the case, Agbaje's enables the current researcher to distinguish between traditional proverbs and new proverbs because of the changes that have occurred. However, Agbaje's study is different from the present study in that it focuses on Yoruba proverbs whilst this one focuses on contemporary Sesotho proverbs.

Jegede (2008) analyses proverbs and postproverbials in selected Nigerian literary works. Jegede indicates that proverbs are evocations of cultural displacement, which in modern times, have been reconstructed in diverse ways. Jegede has also observed that in some cases, old proverbs have been altered, imposed and supplanted so that they become variations and transformation of traditional sayings. However, the two studies are different in that Jegede's study focuses on adaptability of Nigerian proverbs, while the current study focuses on contemporary Sesotho proverbs. Jegede's study is going to

be insightful to the present study in that it is going to help the researcher to analyse since she has observed that contemporary proverbs have been creatively adapted to local and global changes.

Ahmed (2005) examines the meaning, use and purpose of Sudanese Arabic proverbs in their natural context and compares them with English proverbs as a means of expressing cultural and social values. In his study Ahmed examines major issues in people's daily lives as revealed in proverbs, including educational principles, God and religious life, family relationships, marriage and women, experience and wisdom, contentment and patience, silence and speech, solidarity, poverty and wealth, casteism, class polarization and social injustice. Since the current study analyses the role of contemporary proverbs, Ahmed's study becomes informative to it.

Possa (2011) analyses the adaptability of Sesotho proverbs. This paper discusses old proverbs that are given new meanings, old proverbs that are altered by inserting new wording, and new proverbs that have adapted old meanings. The findings show that there are proverbs that are adapted by giving new meanings to old proverbs. These proverbs are still in their old form and the literal meaning is still the same, what has changed is the figurative meaning. It has also been observed that there are old proverbs that are altered by inserting new words. This insertion of new words has been as a result of some words that are archaic. The findings also prove that there are old proverbs that are extended by adding some new words that add something to the meaning of a proverb. In fact, there is variation that has occurred in these proverbs. These variations seem to have occurred as a result of different social factors such as age, sex, educational background and occupation.

## **2.6 Sesotho proverbs**

This section shall review works of scholars who have undertaken studies on Sesotho proverbs, so as to avoid repetition or duplication.

Mokitimi (1991) analyses Sesotho proverbs from a text-context approach. In her study, she looks at the origin of proverbs. Mokitimi (1991:18) indicates that there has been a situation which triggered the formation of a proverb. She also looks at the contextual

usage of proverbs where she asserts that the meaning of the proverb is best revealed by actual usage in social situations. She maintains that the proverb can express more than one meaning which may seem to be contradictory if it is not discussed in its contextual usage. Even though Mokitimi analyses Sesotho proverbs, her study differs from the present study in that, she focuses on old Sesotho proverbs, whilst the present study focuses on recent Sesotho ones. However, hers is going to inform the present study.

Rapeane (2003) analyses Sesotho proverbs based on gender. She looks at how proverbs are used among the Basotho society with regard to women and men. Unlike the present study, Rapeane focuses on old or traditional proverbs while this one deals with newly coined proverbs.

Possa (2010b) analyses recent Sesotho proverbs with an attempt to find out whether they indeed qualify as acceptable and meaningful proverbs. In her study, she discusses the origin of recent proverbs. This discussion is done by comparing and contrasting the origin of the old proverbs with the origin of the recent proverbs. The purpose of this comparison is to find out whether recent proverbs still retain the origin of the old ones. Second, her study discusses the form of recent proverbs through comparison of the form of old proverbs. The reason being to find out whether recent proverbs still retain the form of old proverbs. Third, Possa discusses old proverbs that are adapted or given new meanings to suit new situations from a sociolinguistic point of view. The discussion includes the following sub- topics:

- (i) old proverbs that are given new meanings;
- (ii) old proverbs that are altered by inserting new wording;
- (iii) old proverbs that have been extended;
- (iv) recent proverbs that have adapted old meanings; and finally,
- (v) recent proverbs borrowed from other languages.

In this study, Possa does not authenticate the duration or validity of the contemporary proverbs, meaning she does not say whether they will survive or be accepted by the

society. Therefore, the present study is a response to and continuation of the spadework done by Possa (2010b).

Khotso and Mashige (2011) analyse male-oriented Sesotho proverbs. They assert that while some scholars who study male-oriented Sesotho proverbs indicate that these proverbs show an elevating and positive social attitude towards men, the observation is that Basotho men are disadvantaged due to the use of these male-oriented proverbs. They observe that much as these proverbs are said to promote strength, endurance, bravery and wisdom; negative implications that can be deduced from the interpretation of these proverbs exist as well. This paper seeks to study how male-oriented proverbs disadvantage Basotho males. The paper will also observe the consequences resulting from the use of male-oriented proverbs among the Basotho.

Khotso and Mashige avow that the analysis of the male-oriented Sesotho proverbs reveals that there are both positive and negative meanings that can be attached to interpretations of these proverbs. On a positive note, these proverbs encourage strength, endurance, bravery, super-ordinary, secretiveness and wisdom. However, as it was indicated a negative side exists as well. On this note, male-oriented Sesotho proverbs are used to pamper male negative behaviour. Some men engage in negative behaviour due to the use of these proverbs and as such, reflect negative attributes of masculinity such as violence, profligacy, crime and irresponsibility. Even though the two scholars analyse Sesotho proverbs, their focus is different from the current study.

Seema (2012) examines Basotho indigenous knowledge systems particularly in the way that they are embedded in proverbs, as containing a philosophy of their development. His paper seeks to analyse the pre-colonial Basotho's perspective with regard to the question of development as expressed in their arts and beliefs. He argues that there has always been an artistic relationship between Basotho art and their life and his article is mainly based on the assumption that Basotho oral art is used to formulate models of their development. Particular references are given to the socio-economic aspects of Basotho development and how this is outlined in their proverbs. His paper also argues that the philosophy of Botho/Ubuntu and Basotho communalism that is outlined in their proverbs contributed very much to their development. Further, he argues that there is much to draw on from Basotho proverbs that can be used to solve the Basotho's

numerous problems, especially the socio-economic problems. Seema's paper is going to help this study in as far as proverbs are concerned.

From the literature given above, it should be noted that none of the foregoing scholars have attempted to collect and proof the role of Sesotho proverbs and whether they will survive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Therefore, this thesis sets out to fill the academic gap left by the previous scholars. However, their works on the proverbs are going to be employed to develop this study.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has shown what other scholars have written about proverbs in general. The discussion of earlier literature was approached from the perspective of different themes related to proverbs. It was established that there are scholars who have expounded on the theme of acceptance of proverbs. They have indicated that proverbs belong to the people and, therefore, they should be accepted before they are considered as national lore of that particular society. Some scholars focused on the functions or role of proverbs in society. They point out that proverbs have a certain function that they serve in society. These are scholars of diverse background who have examined the function of proverbs in different societies. Other scholars paid attention to the dynamism of proverbs. Scholars have argued that proverbs change as a way of responding to social, political, economical and religious challenges. In this regard, there are new proverbs that are being coined on a day to day basis in order to respond to challenges and experiences. Literature on the form of the proverb was also reviewed. It indicates that proverbs have a certain form to which they have to adhere to. The literature reviewed has also shown that some proverbs have been altered, shifted and modified to suit modernity. Finally, this research was carried out in order to inform the current study. The next chapter presents the theoretical framework upon which this research is grounded.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with literature to this study. This chapter then provides a theoretical framework upon which the research is grounded. For this study the researcher employed Functionalism as the theoretical framework. Functionalism is the oldest and dominant conceptual perspective in society. Functionalism addresses the society as a whole in terms of function of its constituent elements such as norms, customs, traditions, institutions etcetera (Subedi: undated: 1).

This theory is identified with sociologists and social anthropologists like Emile Durkheim in the 1890s; Malinowski, 1920s-1950s; Radcliff-Brown, 1950s and Parsons 1950s. According to functionalism, sociologists can explain social structures and social behavior in terms of the components of a society and their functions. Auguste Comte helped develop functionalism in the 19th century, and functionalist Emile Durkheim later compared society to human body. Just as the body consists of different, interrelated organs that enable it to survive, society consists of different components that enable it to survive and which depend on each other (<http://www.cramster.com/definitions/functionism/854#>).

Smith (1973:2) finds Functionalism as the heir of a long tradition of perspective on social change. He indicates that as the approach of functionalists has broadened and developed, it has revealed with growing clarity its real intent: to provide a unified theory of change and order, which will encompass in one framework the varied and changing structures of history.

A thorough-going functionalist, such as Talcott Parsons, the best-known American sociologist of the 1950s and 60s, conceptualizes society as a collection of systems within systems: the personality system within the small-group system within the

community system within society (<http://web.grinnell.edu/courses/soc/s00/soc111-01/introTheories/Functionalism.html>).

For Parsons, the key to societal survival was the shared norms and values held by its individual members. According to him, deviation from those norms leads to disorganization, which threatens the survival of the system (<http://roxbury.net/images/pdfs.eftchap1.pdf>).

Functionalism is also said to be a structural theory that society shapes the individual through the social institutions. They believe this is a beneficial process as these social institutions provide functions for the individual and society as a whole. It can be argued that Functionalism is a very positive theory that if something exists or occurs, it must serve some form of purpose to society. They very rarely discuss negative aspects of society within their studies and usually tend to ignore them which leaves them open to heavy criticism. Functionalism is also a very conservative (traditional) theory that does not embrace social change.

<http://wyke.ac.uk/uploads/wssummer2012/sociology/functionalism-studyguide.pdf>

Functionalists believe that society is far more important than the individual and its interests should be put forward before the needs of the individual. Each individual performs a certain role that benefits society and when they die, someone else is trained to replace them. In this instance, Functionalists see society as a continual conveyor belt in which the individual is moulded into a useful product; it then performs its function until it becomes useless. Once the individual loses its functionality it is discarded and replaced by another new product to fulfill the role in a more effective way. <http://wyke.ac.uk/uploads/ws-summer2012/sociology/functionalism-studyguide.pdf>

### **Social order**

A quick way of learning the key principals of Functionalism can be conducted by remembering the following formula:

Value consensus

+

Specialized division of labour

=

## Social order

The ultimate goal for Functionalists is to ensure that social order is maintained under any circumstances.

Social order is the idea that society is very predictable, everyone plays their role and that things do not change significantly as this causes confusion. To maintain social order, society needs to make sure it is built upon a value consensus and operates an effective specialized division of labour. <http://wyke.ac.uk/uploads/ws-summer2012/sociology/functionalism-studyguide.pdf>.

## Value consensus

The value consensus refers to the idea that everyone has the same norms and values within a society. One of the main functions of all the social institutions is to socialize the population with the values of the society. They do this consistently and tenaciously so that they are 'internalized' by each individual and therefore never questioned.

The concept of consensus (agreement) flows through the theory of Functionalism in that not only do all the individuals have to work together but so do all of the social institutions. Functionalists suggest that the social institutions are all dependant on each other. If all of them are working well together then society can function properly however if one institution starts to break down for whatever reason, the whole system shuts down. This process is often referred to as the 'Human body analogy' as each institution represents a major organ, if you were to suffer from major heart failure your body would stop working just like society would do if the economy completely shuts down.

Talcott Parsons (1951) suggests that social institutions have 3 functions in society. They are;

1. To socialize individuals from an early age to adopt the key values of society
2. To provide us with moral codes that become sacred and therefore should never be broken
3. To encourage a sense of group solidarity so that we feel like we belong to and feel proud of the society we live in.



### **3.1 Proponents of functionalism**

As one of the proponents of this theory, Durkheim, Malinowski, Brown, Parsons and Merton have their own views regarding the society as indicated below:

#### **Societal Functionalism of Emile Durkheim**

Durkheim's basic assumptions:

1. Society is to be viewed as an entity in itself that could be distinguished from and was not reducible to its constituent parts.
- 2) System parts fulfill the basic functions, needs or requisites of the whole.
- 3) Social systems have needs that must be fulfilled - if abnormal states are to be avoided. (two states: normal and pathological)
- 4) Systems have equilibrium points around which normal functioning occur (Subedi: Undated:8).

#### **Malinowski's Individualistic functionalism**

Durkheim's functionalism analyzed system parts in terms of how they meet the system/societal needs of integration.

Malinowski's functionalism removed these restrictions and re-introduced two important ideas from Spencer:

- a) Notion of systems levels (hierarchy)
  - i) Biological (health)
  - ii) Socio-structural (integrity)
  - iii) Symbolic (cultural unity)
  
- b) concept of multiple system needs at each level
  - i) needs at cultural level/symbolic
    - 1) information to adjust to the environment
    - 2) a sense of control over people's destiny

3) a sense of communal rhythm in their daily activities

ii) Needs at structural level

- 1) Production and distribution of consumer goods.
- 2) Social control of behaviour and its regulation
- 3) Education of people
- 4) Organization and execution of authority relation

Universal elements of all institution

- a) personnel
- b) charter (goals)
- c) norms
- d) material apparatus
- e) activity
- f) function

### **Radcliffe Brown's Structural Functionalism**

Durkheim's proposition that parts fulfill system needs had teleological implication. So, in order to avoid it, Radcliffe Brown emphasized to substitute for the term 'needs' - the term 'necessary condition of existence'.

Radcliffe's assumption for structural analysis:

- i) one necessary condition for survival society is minimal integration of its parts
- ii) the term function refers to those processes that maintain this necessary integration or solidarity
- iii) in each society structural features can be shown to contribute to the maintenance of necessary solidarity

"Functional unity (integration) of a social system is, of course, hypothesis. So, in order to analyze a system, first assume minimal degree of solidarity in the system. Then parts of the systems would be assessed in terms of their consequences for maintaining the solidarity.

### **Parsons' view of functionalism**

Parsons indicates that in order to change a society, some great force must impact the system or it will remain unchanged. This is because societies naturally will find a balance. Thus change is unlikely and often disruptive. Spencer viewed society as a biological organism, and as such, it can evolve, thrive, or die. For him, some societies are "more fit" than others because they adapt better to changes in the environment.

### **Merton's view of Functionalism**

One of Merton's greatest theoretical contributions to functionalism was his understanding that social realities have both intended and unintended functions and social factors that affect people in a society. Merton identified two types: manifest functions, or factors that lead to an expected consequence or outcome, and latent functions, or factors that lead to an unforeseen or unexpected consequence. Merton suggested that when looking at any social event, sociologists should ask the question, "For whom is this functional?" By doing this, we'll do a complete analysis because we'll consider both manifest and latent functions. For example, one could argue that the manifest function of outsourcing jobs is to improve a company's profits while providing cheaper goods to consumers. However, the latent function of such a system creates tension for families whose jobs are lost, and who then might lose their homes. For Merton, one cannot complete a functional analysis without considering both manifest and latent functions (Strasser 1977:22).

### **3.2 Functional Prerequisites/Imperatives**

According to Holmwood (1996:1), functionalists argue that society should be understood as a system of interdependent parts. They believe that there are specific requirements-functional prerequisites- that must be met in all social systems and that these can provide the basis for the comparative analysis of social institutions.

Analysis of the things (functions) that a social system needs in order to survive:

1) What needs to be avoided?

These factors threaten the existence of society, so, need to be avoided.

i) Extinction or dispersion of population

- ii) Highly apathetic population
- iii) War of "all against all"
- 2) What needs to be adapted?
  - a) Society should adapt the following characteristics:
  - b) Society must have adequate methods of dealing with environment (ecology social system)
  - c) Society must have adequate method for sexual recruitment (couple must product something above 2 children)
  - d) Must have sufficient number of people with diverse interest and skills
  - e) Must have sufficient differential roles and assignment of people to those role (social stratification)
  - f) Adequate communication system
  - g) Common/shared value pattern (at individual and group level)
  - h) Share articulated set of goals
  - i) Requires some method of regulating the means to achieve these goals (normative regulation of goals)
  - j) Society must regulate affective expressions (unnecessary emotions) - but some are quite necessary, e.g. love, family loyalty)
  - k) Socialization of new member
  - l) Effective control over disruptive forms of behaviour (Subedi: undated:3).

### **3.3 Elements of functionalism**

#### **3.3.1 Function**

Radcliffe-Brown (1952:178-181), in an attempt to provide a better understanding of functionalism, defines the word function in the context of sociology. His view is that, the function of a social institution is the correspondence between it and the needs of the social organism. His observation is that, the function of any recurrent activity is the part it plays in the social life as a whole and, therefore, the contribution it makes to the maintenance of the structural continuity. Radcliffe-Brown further points out that, function relates to the contribution which a partial activity makes to the total activity of which it is a part and that the function of a particular social usage is the contribution it makes to the social life as the functioning of the total social system. He understands

that, the function of a social activity is to be found by examining its effects upon the individuals.

### **3.3.2 Social system**

Ritzer (1992:247) defines social system as the cultural system of patterned and ordered symbols, and that since it is created by humans it is the social stock of knowledge, symbols and ideas. It also covers language and other forms of communication, systems of morality and all the shared knowledge of people.

On the other hand, Parsons (1951:5-6) describes social system as a system that consists in a plurality of individual actors interacting with each other in a situation that has an environmental aspect, actors who are motivated in terms of a tendency to the 'optimization of gratification' and whose relation to their situations, including each other, is defined and mediated in terms of a system of culturally structured and shared symbols.

Radcliffe-Brown's (1952:5-6) interpretation of social system is based on the theory of Montesquieu, who says that, it is a system to which all the features of social life are united. According to this theory, the laws of a society are connected with the political constitution, the economic life, the religion, and the climate, the size of the population, the manners and customs.

### **3.3.3 Social structure**

Radcliffe-Brown (1952:9-11) refers to social structure as some sort of ordered arrangement of parts or components. He goes on to say that continuity, in forms of social life, depends on structural continuity, that is, some sort of continuity in the arrangements of persons in relation to one another.

The three concepts defined above play a very important role in the study. They are going to help the researcher to conduct and dig deep the study of contemporary proverbs, to examine their role in the society and their reception by the same society.

Their survival will also be determined through the use of this theory as their function in society will determine their existence, survival and durability.

### **3.3.4 Overview**

A consensus view of functionalism for Parsons (1999:1-3) and others is that it puts emphasis on function, interdependence, consensus, equilibrium and evolutionary change within a social system. They view the society as a social system that consists of different institutions where each has a role to play for the benefit of the entire society. These institutions are the social structures which serve the needs of the nation and bring stability in its social life (<http://uregina.ca/~gingrich/n2f99.htm>). The study contends that, the five aspects of functionalism as espoused by Parsons and others are also applicable in Basotho contemporary proverbs. A brief overview of their applicability follows.

#### **3.3.4.1 Function**

The concept function entails that, different groups within the society contribute to the operation or functioning of the system as a whole. This is so because each society has certain needs in that there are a number of activities that must be carried out for social life to survive and develop. If the needs are being met, it is the social structures that meet them. For instance, goods and services must be produced and distributed in order for people to survive. Furthermore, family structures must operate in order to provide means to reproduce the population and maintain social life on a daily basis. In this process, individuals carry out tasks and roles in various institutions that are consistent with the structures and norms of the society. The social structures become functional in that they help the society to operate. In this case, proverbs also play a role in that they are used for moral purposes so that there is peace and stability within a society.

Parsons (1999:3) and others again view the idea of function as a way of talking about consequences of any given pattern or patterns of social interaction for the stability and ongoingness of systems of interaction. The shared values and norms and the generally agreed upon means for accomplishing ends are seen as patterns contributing to the smooth functioning of society.

### **3.3.4.2 Interdependence**

Interdependence is a process where different parts of the whole (society) work properly for the smooth operation of the society. A society is said to be composed of basic units. These units constitute the social structures and perform certain functions within a social system in order to promote maintenance of the society as a whole. Each individual is born within a set of norms and values of a society, and in the process of socialisation the individual internalises them in order to be an acceptable member of the society. His behaviour and actions are regulated by the value system within which he operates. No individual is exempted from the social expectations even on the basis of his/her social standing. As people pursue their different interests in their lives, they do so on the basis of the long standing tradition of their norms and values. Furthermore, for any social structures to function and operate properly and smoothly within the society as a whole, such structure needs both input from and acknowledgement by the relevant society.

In order for contemporary proverbs to have a place in a society, they should be acknowledged by the relevant society. This will be seen by their regular usage by the same society. Radcliffe-Brown (1952:10) opines as follows: “continuity in forms of social life depends on structural continuity, that is, some sort of continuity in the arrangements of persons in relation to one another...”

### **3.3.4.3 Consensus**

Consensus refers to the social norms and rules that have been generally agreed upon within a social system. The lives of individuals within any given society are governed by social values and cultural traditions which are transmitted from generation to generation. These norms and values are learnt through socialization. The way individuals interact and behave in their social life operates within the context of the social system of which one is a member. Radcliffe-Brown (1952:52) observes:

The social relationships of which the continuing network constitute social structure, are not haphazard conjunctions of individuals, but are determined by the social process, and any relationship is one in which the conduct of persons in their interactions with each other is controlled by norms, rules or patterns.

In short, social norms and values are basic rules to which members of the society generally subscribe. Thus they constitute the unwritten rules and laws governing interpersonal relations. Proverbs therefore play a major role because they are used on day to day basis. They are also one of the cultural traditions that are transmitted from generation to generation.

#### **3.3.4.4 Equilibrium**

This is a situation where the state of affairs is normal, there is peace and stability. Having agreed on certain basic issues, members of the society return to normality. Sometimes, it does happen that the society experiences disturbances emanating either internally or externally thus it becomes necessary for disequilibrium; after which the society readjusts itself to such an extent that it regains normality and reclaims equilibrium. Thus, individuals are expected to adhere and abide by the norms and values that are acceptable, and are made to return to them in times of disturbance. This is done in the form of punishments, social disapproval or sanctions. This leads to stability which is a state of equilibrium.

#### **3.3.4.5 Evolutionary change**

Evolutionary change is a change which occurs within any system for as long as the system exists. Evolutionary changes are usually gradual and reflect a response to changing times as individuals try to adapt to the ever changing environment. As the environment constantly changes, the norms and values of the society might lag behind, resulting in a state of disequilibrium. Therefore, adjustment, whether through external or internal influence, is often necessary to move towards a new equilibrium. The adjustment takes place through evolutionary change. Such change, as a process, takes into account various components of the societies which become differentiated and adapt to new needs and problems. In this process, societies become more complex, and new institutions and subsystems develop to perform new functions required for the smooth operation of the society under the changing times. Evolutionary change is a necessary societal instinct for survival (Radcliffe-Brown 1952:7-9). Evolutionary change is usually triggered by a wide range of phenomena such as attitudes, instruments and



performance. As a national lore, proverbs are also affected by change. Mieder observes that:

Proverbs are flexible and adaptable to ever new contexts and interpretations because their metaphorical language is not limited to specific context. Changing times require forms of expression that the traditional proverbs can no longer supply. However, it often suffices to adopt and antique proverbs to the modern context (1993:xi).

No society is static as it needs to develop hence evolutionary change is very important to every society.

### **3.5 The attack on functionalism**

Even though Functionalism was believed to shape up a society, it was criticized for being incomplete or bias. Functionalism theory is said to have been dominant in the United States of America during the 1930's although in the 1960s it was criticized for failing to relate to some basic social concerns. That is, it was unable to explain a number of features of American society, such as poverty, social change, dissent and the continuing influence and political and economic power of the wealthy (<http://urengina-ca/~gingrich/nzfpq.html>).

This theory was viewed as consensus theory as it did not address the issue of conflict in society: instead it projected an ideal picture of harmonious relationships.

That is, functionalism was unable to account for social change or structuralist contradictions and conflicts

(<http://www.hewett.norfolk.sck.uk/curric/soc/T&M/func.htm>). These criticisms shall be discussed in depth below.

#### **3.5.1 Static and dynamics**

According to Smith (1973:2), to argue that functionalism is fundamentally a theory of change, is to challenge a very common opinion among sociologists: namely, that functionalism is a perspective on society which is unable to cope with social change. He observes that in certain quarters, indeed, this view is simply doctrinal; but they find it repeated even by writers who are in sympathy with the functionalist approach. He

further maintains that perhaps this opinion is less common among the non-committed and the sympathizers today, but throughout the 1940s and 1950s, the idea that functionalism was a theory of social stability and not change, was accepted by the majority of sociologists.

Roughly, their argument ran as follows:

Functionalism cannot come to grips with 'the problem of social change', because it is a doctrine of normative consensus. But normative consensus is a state of affairs which rarely obtains in the world of concrete, historical phenomena; hence as a model of society, it is singularly inapposite for illuminating empirical processes of change. Furthermore, the history and inner structure of functionalism preclude it from any concern with, or utility for, the construction of a theory of change (Smith 1973:2).

#### **3.5.1.1 Static bias**

First it was claimed that functionalism was necessarily static. Its origin and development precluded it from offering a 'dynamic analysis'. Because of its original polemic against the classical evolutionists, functionalism had to emphasize integration and stability. After all, the early functionalism of the anthropologists like Malinowski and Radcliffe- Brown had been developed because of opposition to the sweeping claims of the nineteenth-century evolutionists, with their laws of the various stages of civilization through which, it was thought, every society must pass.

There was also a second functionalist polemic against the rival diffusionists, who sought to explain the various similarities in the cultural make-up of primitive societies as a product of cultural borrowings from neighbouring societies.

Both polemics turned the analysis of the functionalist inward, to the institutional workings and relations of single societies-especially primitive ones (Smith 1973:2).

Against the evolutionists, the functionalists held that we must first discover the network of relations which sustain the institutions of a given social system, before we can be in a position to ascertain the laws by which one state of the social system succeeds another. In addition, we need to know much more about the institutional functioning of single cultures than the evolutionists allow; and this knowledge will prevent us from abusing

the comparative method, through disregard of the cultural context of a given trait. Similarly, as against the diffusionists, Malinowski and his followers rejected their explanation of the coexistence of similar cultural elements in different primitive societies, and stressed instead the contribution or function performed by each item for the maintenance of the cultural ensemble. The upshot of both polemics therefore, was to undermine the equal interdependence and mutual reinforcement of all the parts, however curious at first sight, of a system (Smith 1973:2).

What really interested functionalists was how societies survive and cohere in the face of external pressure and internal strain, not how they change. The 'historical' argument, in other words, claimed that functionalism by its origins and development was condemned to neglect change and confine itself to the explanation of stability (Smith 1973:4).

### **3.5.2 System and conflict**

#### **3.5.2.1 Interdependence**

A second group of criticisms emanated from those who were not completely unsympathetic to the functionalist cause. These attacks concentrated on such central functionalist assumptions as the normative integration of the system and the interdependence of parts. Smith (1973:8) asserts that Gouldner attacked the validity and utility of the idea of an equal interdependence of parts, developing further Merton's notion of the dysfunction of certain items or institutions for a given system.

Most functionalists, therefore, found it necessary to build up from their basic assumptions a new set of principles which would encompass the phenomenon of social change. This meant a gradual return to elements within functionalism which its polemical origins and subsequent development had largely obscured.

Yet it was only by elaborating these categories out of the fundamental assumptions behind the functionalist framework that the expansionists could achieve their end. With the aid of these categories, it was possible to overcome the sharp distinction between static and dynamics, structure and change.

Smith (1973:11) further maintains that Functionalism, after all, had arisen out of method; that of analysing the objective consequences of given cultural items, and their role in a total set of such items. In other words, functionalism had begun simply as functional analysis. But with its later refinement into a functionalist theory had come the temptation to apply it to contexts which the original functional analysis had avoided. In the succeeding stage, functionalism was united with other theoretical elements to produce a synthetic account of all human action. It followed that new, higher-level propositions about human behaviour had to be evolved, and now theorists had now provided a serviceable armoury for future use by those aiming at a more propositional sociology. So at every step in its development, functionalism became more general in its aims and categories.

Van den Berghe (1963:694) rejects criticisms based on beating the dead horse of extreme Malinowskian functionalism. Such criticisms as that societies are never perfectly integrated, that not every element of a social system is functional or essential, and that functionalism cannot account for change, have been satisfactorily answered and shown to be untrue or irrelevant by leading exponents of the "school", notably by Merton when he asserts that their concern, then, is with the more recent brand of functionalism in its most sophisticated and cautious form, and as represented by Parsons, Merton and Davis. Reduced to its common denominator, the functionalist or "structure-function" approach seems to involve the following postulates or elements:

- 1). Societies must be looked at holistically as systems of interrelated parts.
- 2). Hence, causation is multiple and reciprocal.
- 3). Although integration is never perfect, social systems are fundamentally in a state of dynamic equilibrium, that is, adjective responses to outside changes tend to minimize the final amount of change within the system. The dominant tendency is thus towards stability and inertia, as maintained through built-in mechanisms of adjustment and social control.
- 4). As a corollary of 3), dysfunctions, tensions and "deviance" do exist and can persist for a long time, but they tend to resolve themselves or to be "institutionalized" in the long run. In other words, while perfect equilibrium or integration is never reached, it is the limit towards which social systems tend.
- 5). Change generally occurs in a gradual adjustive fashion, and not in a sudden, revolutionary way. Changes which appear to be drastic, in fact affect mostly the social

superstructure while leaving the core elements of the social and cultural structures largely unchanged.

6). Change comes from basically three sources: adjustment of the system to exogenous (or extra-systemic) change: growth through structural and functional differentiation: and inventions or innovations by members or groups within society.

7). The most important and basic factor making for social integration is values consensus, that is, underlying the whole social and cultural structure, there are broad aims or principles which most members of a given social system consider desirable and agree on. Not only is the value system (or ethos) the deepest and most important source of integration, but it is also stablest element of socio-cultural systems.

Finally, According to Colomy (1986:1) Functionalism is not dead. To the contrary, there are signs that the functionalist tradition is being revitalized, a development producing the predictable, contradictory reactions in the discipline. This revival is most clearly apparent in Germany where several outstanding theorists, including Niklas Luhmann (1979, 1982) and Richard Munch (1981, 1982, 1986), are re-casting the Parson legacy in various ways.

Functionalism becomes relevant in this study as proverbs play a major role in maintaining peace and stability in a society. In addition, Functionslism was found to be appropriate for this study because proverbs have a significant role that they play in the society. These roles help the society to grow, as they shape the behaviour of individuals. Tadi (2010: 301) indicates that the proverb emanates from specific social experiences and consequently reflects the social, political and economic world of which it is part. For this reason, it means indeed proverbs play an important part in order for a society to survive. Barajas (2010:9) asserts that the social function of proverbs is the promotion of group solidarity by virtue of identifying shared referents in everyday interaction.

On the other hand, Lauhakangas (2007:80) maintains that a proverb can be considered as a piece of advice concerning a recommended direction of action. They play a reflective role, meaning that they give an insightful sense of probabilities. They act as mirrors through which we glance at the society, its attitudes and thought processes (Miruka: 1994:78). There is no doubt therefore, that this theory is going to provide a constructive basis for this study

### 3.6 Conclusion

This chapter dealt with the theoretical framework to the study. This study adopted Functionalism theory as its theoretical base. It has shown the proponents of this theoretical framework namely Durkheim, Malinowski, Brown, Parsons and Merton. Elements of Functionalism which are function, social system, social structure, consensus, equilibrium, evolutionary change were discussed in this chapter. This chapter indicated that Functionalism was criticized for being incomplete or bias. It was criticized for failing to relate to some basic social concerns. That is, it was unable to explain a number of features of American society, such as poverty, social change, dissent and the continuing influence and political and economic power of the wealthy. However, some scholars argued that Functionalism is not dead. To the contrary, there are signs that the functionalist tradition is being revitalized, a development producing the predictable, contradictory reactions in the discipline. They rejected criticisms that not every element of a social system is functional or essential, and that functionalism cannot account for change, have been satisfactorily answered and shown to be untrue or irrelevant by leading exponents of the "school", notably by Merton when he asserts that their concern, then, is with the more recent brand of functionalism in its most sophisticated and cautious form, and as represented by Parsons, Merton and Davis. Functionalism was therefore found to be relevant to this research as proverbs play a major role in maintaining peace and stability in a society. The next chapter presents how this study was conducted.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH METHODS

#### 4.0 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the theoretical framework that will guide this study. This chapter offers a more in-depth discussion of research design and methodology. Methodology is sometimes presented as a form of recipe by which to guide a research project (Daly, 2003:192). Research methodology refers to the research process and to the steps that are followed to complete the research process (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:75 and Mouton, 2008:56). Similarly Payne and Payne (2004:149) indicate that a research method is a procedure, practice or set of techniques that are used to identify and explore research questions and a means by which to collect and analyse data, and present findings.

The research is carried out by using the qualitative approach. Doerr (2004:12)'s perception of qualitative research has been adopted in this study. According to her:

Qualitative research could be defined as a craft, with the researcher as a master craftsman. Such a craftsman approaches a setting and a people much like a sculptor views a piece of granite. It is said that a sculptor does not see a rough, irregular piece of rock, but rather sees the details of a work of art. The task of the sculptors is to carve away the parts of the rock which do not belong to the finished product, and to skillfully expose an object worthy of consideration. A researcher/craftsman also views a chosen situation with a mind full of the possibilities of discovery. Anticipating the emergence of new understanding, the researcher carefully observes and participates in the lives of the people in the setting.

Many scholars have dedicated themselves into defining qualitative approach. To mention few, Leedy and Ormrod (2005:142) explain qualitative approach as “a detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of material for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes or biases”. It is a naturalistic method, a study

whereby the researcher focuses on a complex phenomenon within a specific context (Borg et al 1993:198). Denzin and Lincoln (2003) aver that qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter; it attempts to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bringing to them. On the other hand, Domegan and Fleming (2007:24) add that qualitative research aims to explore and to discover issues about the problem on hand, because very little is known about the problem.

There is usually uncertainty about dimensions and characteristics of problem. It uses 'soft' data and gets 'rich' data. Alternatively, Fossey, Harvey, McDermott and Davidson (2002:717) maintain that qualitative research "aims to address questions concerned with developing an understanding of the meaning and experience dimensions of humans' lives and social worlds".

When further assessing qualitative approach, Spinhall, et al (1991:102) argue that qualitative research is holistic and humanistic in its approach. It is holistic in that descriptions of behavior encompass the context. The humanistic side of qualitative research refers to the motivating purpose, which is to gain understanding of a specific issue through the perspective of other people. According to Borg et al (1993:194) the purpose of the qualitative methodology is to describe a given set of phenomena through certain interventions. It is important that the researcher minimizes personal opinions and biases, and remain as objective as possible.

There are certain characteristics of qualitative research as identified by Creswell (2003:181-183) and Merriam and Associates (2002:4-6) mentioned below:

- 1) Qualitative researchers strive to understand the meaning people have constructed about their social worlds and their experiences.
- 2) Qualitative research uses the researcher as the key instrument for data collection and data analysis. In order to understand the participants' experiential worlds through verbal and non-verbal communication, the researcher conducted face-to-face semi-structured interviews herself to collect data from the participants, using open-ended questions. The researcher used interviewing skills to explore accurate and relevant information to answer the research questions posed for the study.



3) Qualitative research is explorative by nature; the researcher explored the phenomenon under investigation. Qualitative research is descriptive in that the researcher is interested in process, meaning and understanding gained through words and pictures. The words and pictures, instead of numbers, are used to convey what was learnt about the phenomenon. The researcher collected data from participants as words. These were recorded and transcribed verbatim to be used as quotations and story lines to support the findings of the study.

These characteristics prompted the researcher to follow the qualitative approach because proverbs are involved in people's day to day life.

Another motivation for utilising the qualitative research approach was prompted by Ritchie and Lewis (2005:32) who highlights the following as reason for opting for a qualitative research approach: Where the purpose of a research project is to:

- a) explore and describe an experience, a context, a process, or perspectives;
- b) discover or learn more about a phenomenon;
- c) develop an understanding of an experience or context, and report on an experience, context or process.

From the above mentioned information, the researcher found it appropriate to use Qualitative approach for this study as it will make data collection and analysis possible.

#### **4.1 Historical foundation**

Qualitative research became particularly associated with anthropology due to the fieldwork done by Boas (1911) and Malinowski (1932). Because of the nature of work in other cultures, qualitative research has been effectively used by anthropologists. Lingenfelter (1996:35) affirms that "if you are to understand the people, the society and the culture in which you are working, it is essential that you engage in a program of systematic observation and research". Qualitative research methods or phenomenological studies were developed in such disciplines as anthropology, sociology, history, psychology, linguistics and sociology. This phenomenologist gathers descriptive data and seeks to discover how individuals experience and interpret their worlds.

## **4.2 Researcher's role**

The researcher is the instrument for data collection in qualitative methodology. Shurink (1998b:260) lists four master roles from which a qualitative researcher can choose.

These roles are:

- i) Full observer
- ii) Observer-as-participant
- iii) Participant-as-observer and
- iv) Full participant.

These roles denote the level of participation of the researcher, from being totally separated and acting as a spectator to being totally immersed and belonging to the group as a full participant. In the middle of the continuum, the observer-as-participant role is one in which the researcher interacts with participants in a friendly, casual manner; however, the researcher does not become significantly involved in all the activities of the setting. As a participant-as-observer, the researcher strives to establish meaningful relationships with participants, with the purpose of gaining an insider perspective.

The participant-as-observer still does not fully belong to the group (Patton 1990:206). When dealing with the study of proverbs the researcher chose full participant. The reason being, the researcher is a member of the community which the study was being conducted from. Borg, et al (1993:196) encourage this by indicating that the researcher must choose the role which will be most effective in the study at hand. They insist that this requires researchers to find an appropriate level of involvement during research. The researcher's role requires flexibility and ability to modify procedures during the process. Being a member of the community made the research easier and effective.

## **4.3 Research design**

Research design has been defined by Mouton (2008:55-57) as the overall planning of how to conduct research. He also mentions that the research design will address different kinds of questions, while it emphasises the end product, using the logic of research. Babbie and Mouton (2002:72), maintain that the research design facilitates the planning enquiry and it highlights the strategic plan to find out something. The activity

of designing the study relates to the third step of the qualitative research process according to the framework of Neuman (2006:15). The phrase designing the study implies the concept of research design. Denzin and Lincoln (2005:25) explain that the concept “research design” refers to “a flexible set of guidelines that depicts how the study will be conducted.

It seeks to connect theoretical paradigms first to strategies of inquiry and second to methods for collecting empirical materials”. In other words, research design guides researchers on how they should go about, throughout the research process, obtaining appropriate information to achieve the purpose of the study. This entails making decisions about the type of sample to choose as well as the research techniques to employ to collect, analyse and verify the data (Neuman, 2006:14).

#### **4.3.1 Design of the study**

In this study, the researcher employed an explorative, descriptive and contextual research design.

##### **4.3.1.1 Exploratory research design**

According to Neuman (2006:33-34), the primary purpose of using an exploratory design is when researchers seek to examine a new topic or phenomenon where little is known in order to generate more precise research questions for future research. Exploratory research aims at investigating the full nature of phenomenon, the manner of existence, other related factors and the characteristics of the subject thereof, in order to gain additional information on the situation or practice. Exploratory research is done to increase the researchers’ knowledge on the field of study and provides valuable base line information for further investigation. The methods use interviews and observational methods to collect data (Polit and Beck 2004:21).

##### **4.3.1.2 Descriptive design**

The descriptive design was also used to achieve the purpose of this study. Neuman (2006:33) highlights the possibility that the exploratory design could be used as a first

step in a sequence of inquiries. Researchers may employ an exploratory study in order to know enough to execute a second design which is more systematic and extensive. Neuman (2006:34-35) further states that a descriptive design paints a picture of specific details of a situation, social setting, or relationship. While the exploratory design focuses on answering the “what” question, the descriptive design focuses on answering questions such as “who”, “when”, “where” and “how” (Neuman 2006:35). A descriptive study observes and describes the presence, frequency or absence of characteristics of a phenomenon as it naturally occurs, in order to gain additional information.

The primary purpose of a descriptive study is to describe the situation, preferences, practices, opinions, concerns or interests of the phenomenon of interest (Burns and Grove 2001:248 Polit and Beck (2004:189). It is for this reason that the researcher decided to employ a second more extensive research design in order to describe the aspects that were identified as a result of the exploration that was carried out.

#### **4.3.1.3 Contextual design**

A contextual research design was also employed for this research. Context refers to the immediate and extended settings in which a phenomenon occurs. The settings include the physical or socio-cultural context such as practices, language, ethnicity or other aspects of personal and group identity shared by the individuals concerned (Craig and Baucum 2002:6). According to Neuman (2006:158) contextual research design is used in a qualitative research study to understand the social meaning and significance of an event or social action from the social context in which it appears. Evidence about a person’s social world cannot be isolated from the context in which it occurs or the meanings assigned to it by the person involved.

Qualitative researchers can assign appropriate meaning to an act or statement only if they take into account the social context within which the act or statement occurs because the same event or action can have different meanings in different contexts (Neuman, 2006:92). Context becomes major in the study of the proverbs because without context they lose their meaning. Finnegan (1970:425), Mieder (1993: xi) Bradbury (2002:261), among other scholars who have studied proverbs in context,

maintain that proverbs only make sense in a given situation or context. They assert that proverb use arises from a context of 'cultural specifics' from which it cannot be 'abstracted' without serious distortion.

#### **4.4 Research setting**

The research setting is the environment in which the research study takes place and can be natural or controlled environment. Natural settings are real-life study environments without any changes made for the purpose of the study (Burns and Grove 2001:40). This research was conducted in the ten district of Lesotho namely Maseru, Mafeteng, Mohale's hoek, Quthing, Qacha's nek, Thaba-Tseka, Mokhotlong, Butha-Buthe, Leribe and Berea. It was also extended to Free State in LadyBrand and Ficksburg where there are Sotho speakers. Since Lesotho is a very small country, gathering data from all the districts was easy.

#### **4.5 Data collection**

Data collection is a systematic process in which the researcher collects relevant information to achieve the research purpose and objectives. The instrument used to collect the data depends on the research design (Burns and Grove 2001:460).

##### **4.5.1 The research population, sampling and sampling technique**

In this section, the population from which a sample will be drawn for inclusion in the study as well as the sampling techniques that will be used to realize the former will be presented.

###### **4.5.1.1 Population from which the samples were drawn**

Silverman (2005:129) explains that population is a term that sets parameters on the study units from which a sample is chosen. In other words, a population outlines specific and realistic characteristics that the researcher is interested in studying in order to answer research questions posed at the outset of the study (Yegidis & Weinbach, 2002:180). On the other hand, Jegede (1999:114) refers to population as that universe

to which the investigator wishes to make generalisation. He points out that it is the totality of all the observations an investigator is concerned with. In this study, population refers to the contemporary proverbs, songs, artists, media, street vendors and the audience. Polit and Beck (2004:258) says a population is the total number of people or elements that fit the specific set specifications of the study. This is also known as the target population. The criteria for inclusion or exclusion should be clearly stated. The population of this study is based on Basotho contemporary proverbs.

Creswell (2003:126) asserts that one general guideline of qualitative studies is to elucidate a specific issue which is of interest to the researcher, rather than generalizing information to the population (as in quantitative studies), because qualitative studies place more emphasis on collecting extensive information about a particular phenomenon. This is affirmed by Brymanas cited in Silverman (2005:130) who postulates that in qualitative studies, information should be generalized to theoretical propositions rather than to populations or universes.

#### **4.5.1.2 Sampling and sampling technique**

Gay (1996:213) maintains that for qualitative research, the sample includes people and the environment. A researcher must locate people who meet certain criteria and who are willing to participate in a research project. From a large group, a researcher selects the sample which yields desired information (Gay 1996:213).

After selecting the target population, the size of the sample must be determined. There are no rules for choosing the size of a sample in a qualitative study (Patton 1990:184). The size of the sample is connected to the purpose of the research and the ability of the researcher to get information-rich data. Van Wyk (1996:15) addresses this issue succinctly “the sample size is dynamic and ad hoc, and depends on the availability of the participants and saturation of the data, rather than aiming at representativeness to generalize to how well they fulfill the purpose of the research”.

Sampling is a process of selecting subjects who are representative of the population being studied (Burns & Grove, 2007:29). Sampling is a process of selecting a portion of the population to represent the total population and the findings from the sample

represent the rest of the group. (Burns and Grove 2001:365: Polit and Beck 2004:259) A sample, according to Jegede (1999:116) is a subset of population. That is, a small unit of large group which is of interest to the research worker. The advantage of selecting a sample is that it is less costly and time saving than collecting information from a large group of respondents. The selected sample should therefore, have similar characteristics to the population under study to allow generalizability of the results to represent the population.

Silverman (2005:130) states that sampling in qualitative research is theoretically grounded, rather than statistical. In other words, groups or settings are selected to be studied on the basis of their relevance to the study in order to gather relevant information from which conclusions can be drawn to develop or build theories. The purpose of sampling is described by Becker (in Silverman, 2005:136), who asserts that it is not feasible for researchers to study every case which is of interest to the researcher owing to time constraints and shortage of resources.

Creswell (2003:128) assumes that researchers can use criterion sampling to select or choose participants that can represent people who have experienced the phenomenon being studied.

With reference to selecting a sample for qualitative study, Merriam and Associates (2002:12) explain that random sampling is not of relevance as it is not interested in knowing 'how much' or 'how often'. In view of the fact that qualitative research seeks to understand the meaning of a phenomenon from the participants 'point of view, qualitative researchers use non probability sampling in exploratory research (Alston & Bowles, 2003:87).

#### **4.5.1.3 Sample**

Sample is a manageable unit which one can easily work on without difficulty. In this case, it refers to the number of proverbs the researcher will analyse and the number of people who will be interviewed. The total number of proverbs that the researcher analysed is sixty nine while that of interviewees was eight hundred and eighty. There were eighty respondents from each district. The respondents were categorized according

to their age. The first group was from age ten to nineteen, the second, twenty to thirty five and the last from fifty six upwards. The reason for this category was to have a clear picture as to which group knows and uses the contemporary proverbs. It would also help the researcher to make an informed decision about popularity of these proverbs. In Ladybrand and Ficksburg only forty respondents per town were interviewed using the same procedure. Getting eight hundred respondents was not difficult as most of the visits were done during political gatherings. The researcher would find villagers of different ages and gender as it is also important. Church gatherings were also used to find many respondents. Schools played a major role as most of respondents from age ten to twenty were found. These categories will be seen under data presentation and analysis. Polit and Beck (2004:267-268) aver that qualitative research designs require large samples to increase representativeness and reduce sampling error.

#### **4.5.1.3.1 Purposive sampling**

Purposive sampling is recommended for qualitative research (Shurink 1998b:253). Neuman (2006:222) defines purposive sampling as a “non-random sampling method in which the researcher uses a wide range of methods to locate all possible cases of a highly specific and difficult-to-reach population”. Purposive sampling implies the deliberate choice of participants (Whittaker, 2002:259), that is participants who are information rich who have firsthand knowledge and experience of the phenomenon under investigation and who can best inform the study by comprehensively answering the research question (Fossey et al., 2002:726). Merriam and Associates (2002:12) state that to begin with the process of selecting a sample purposively, the researcher should first decide upon the site to be studied. The site should be an area in which most could be learnt about the phenomenon under investigation. This is confirmed by Denzin and Lincoln (2005:378) who suggests that qualitative researchers employ purposive sampling as it seeks individuals or settings where the processes being studied are more likely to happen.

For this study the researcher chooses the purposive sampling technique because she finds it important and efficient to find participants who will be easily reached and willing to participate.



The participants will vary in terms of age, gender, marital status, education and the place where they live. This variety will bring multiple perspectives to the interview process. Collection of data will also be based on personal interviews and participant observations as indicated below.

#### **4.5.1.4 Personal interview**

According to Doerr (2004:33) in qualitative research, interviews are the most common method of data collection. The face-to-face encounters with people create opportunities for an in-depth, understanding of a situation and context. Tuckman (1999:237) claims that qualitative interviews are meant to be flexible and dynamic, and are described to as non-directive, unstructured, no standardized and open ended. Jegede (1999:133) defines personal interview as the situation where the inquirer is physically present to interrogate the respondent, meaning that both the interviewer and the interviewee are involved.

Carey (2009:111) notes that interviews, usually with a small number of participants on a one to one basis, provided one of the most reliable means by which to build upon a literature review and explore the key themes and objectives of a research question. This is due to many factors, including a realization that through language people can often best articulate and explain their thoughts, opinions, emotions and experiences. Further, Carey asserts that interviews are also one of the most popular means of data collection, principally because they provide a convenient, cheap, often uncomplicated and highly effective means by which to collect an extensive amount of data in a relative brief period of time.

There is significant variation in interview style within the context of qualitative research. Best and Kahn (1993:199) indicate that interviews vary on a continuum from very informal to very formal. In a very formal interview, the researcher asks open-ended questions and maintains an open receptivity to the response. On the other end of the continuum, a very formal interview may be comprised of a set of prearranged questions, which are asked in a standardized manner. Similarly, Patton (1990:288-289) lists four types of interviews:

- i) Informal conversational interviews: the researcher does not choose questions or topics. This style allows maximum flexibility in studying a phenomenon; however, it makes data analysis difficult.
- ii) Interview guide approach: although the researcher works out an outline of topics before the interview, he is flexible with the sequence of topic discussion. This approach continues to be conversational and can be adjusted to a situation. The approach may make it harder to compare and categorize the data.
- iii) Standardized open-ended interviews: prior to the interview, the researcher lists questions. During the interview, the researcher asks the questions in a predetermined sequence. This is true for each participant. Although all questions must be open-ended, this method of interview reduces the 'naturalness' of the questions. This style is helpful when organizing and analyzing data.
- iv) Closed, fixed response interview: in this approach, questions are predetermined and responses are fixed. The participant is further limited to researcher's predetermined responses. This mechanical approach makes data analysis easier, but answers by participants may not reflect the true experiences and feelings of the participant.

However, Tuckman (1999:401-2) also suggests four steps of interview process derived from ethno science:

- a) Description: the interview is used to gather a descriptive narrative. Often used at the beginning of an interview, descriptive questions encourage people to tell about their lives.
- b) Discovery: in this step, interview questions move toward seeking the perspective of the participant. This begins to give the researcher a picture of the mental map, which the participant uses to categorize people.
- c) Classification. To seek further understanding, the researcher uses questions which define the boundaries used when classifying people.
- d) Comparison. The researcher compares the classification and attempts to find links. Questions of comparison lend insight into the thought patterns of the participants. As themes develop, the researcher can pursue more probing questions.

Genise (2002), Shneiderman and Plaisant (2005), uphold that the main advantages of interview method of data collection are;

- a) Direct contact with the users often leads to specific, constructive suggestions.
- b) They are good at obtaining detailed information
- c) Few participants are needed to gather rich and detailed data.

They further declare that depending on the need and design, interviews can be unstructured, structured, and semi-structured with individuals, or may be focus -group interviews as elaborated below.

#### **4.5.1.4.1 Unstructured and semi-structured**

Carey (2009:113) states that in qualitative research two key formats of interview remain: unstructured and semi-structured. Both approaches take place with one person at a time, as interviews with groups of people tend to be difficult to organize and manage. With unstructured interviews there are some general pre-planned ideas or prompts regarding what may be discussed: however, considerable flexibility and discretion is allowed regarding what can be discussed. This freedom can be ideal in interviews where the emphasis is very much upon the participant guiding the conversation, while offering a detailed and open exploration of personal themes. For example, this approach is prevalent in narrative or life history research in which person may talk at great length and reflect upon prior life experiences. It is also the preferred method for undertaking forms of research influenced by interpretivist or postmodern theory, in which narrative or discourse analysis becomes the priority. However, notable drawbacks of unstructured interviews include that they can take considerable time to complete, and will tend to collect large amounts of data.

Semi-structured interviews contain a combination of both pre-planned and unplanned questions, with the latter allowing the interviewer some discretion to create new questions in response to participant's answers. The use of questions that were not originally planned may help the interviewer probe a theme that the participant has unexpectedly raised, or alternatively allow the researcher to unpack and expand upon answers that were perhaps a little unclear. Semi-structured interviews can proceed with questions asked in any order depending upon circumstance-on again this allows more

discretion. Semi-structured interviews are preferred by the researcher as it allows some flexibility in the data collection as compared to structured interviews. Therefore this study used semi-structured interviews when collecting data.

#### **4.5.1.5 Interview questions**

Carey (2009:114) maintains that qualitative interviews are regularly dominated by open-ended questions, whereby interviewees are offered discretion regarding how to respond, and are also able to answer and explore any queries in their own words and style. He further declares that all interview questions should be clearly focused and link to any research question and related aims and objectives. In sum of what he suggests, it is usually a priority to be clear, brief, unambiguous and avoid over complicated or abstract words as part of any questions asked.

All interviews were conducted in Sesotho, which is the first language of the participants. Feldman et al. (2003:54) affirm that conducting interviews in the language that is understood by the interviewee's increases sharing of information because it makes interviewees feel comfortable. This enabled participants in this study to express themselves freely verbally. Interviews were conducted in settings where participants felt comfortable and relaxed. Holstein and Gubrium (in Silverman, 2004:141) highlight that interviews that are conducted in propitious settings encourage individuals to convey the desired information.

De Vos and Van Zyl (1998:268) point out that the initial research question to participants must be focused on the central purpose of the study, but open and broad enough to allow for discovery. As the interview progresses, the topic of the study may be revised, according to the information gained in the interview. The researcher must be careful to remain open to new and unpredictable directions during the data collection process.

Data will be obtained through the use of tape recorder and cell phone recorder. The data are more accurate and completed with a recorder, and the tapes may be replayed by the researcher (Gay 1996:218). The researcher must, however request the permission of the participant to record an interview (Tuckman 1999:414).After recording data, some of

the respondents asked the researcher to replay and they were very excited and added more information where they felt like they omitted some important information.

#### **4.5.1.6 Participant observation**

Savenye and Robinson (2004:1051) define participant observation as a qualitative method frequently used in social science research. They observe that;

participant observation is based on a long tradition of ethnographic study in anthropology. In participant observation, the observer becomes “part” of the environment, or the cultural context. The method usually involves the researcher’s spending considerable time “in the field,” as anthropologists do. Anthropologists typically spend a year or more in a cultural setting in order really to understand the culture in depth, even when they begin the study with a broad overall research question. The hallmark of participant observation is interaction among the researcher and the participants. The main subjects take part in the study to varying degrees, but the researcher interacts with them continually. For instance, the study may involve periodic interviews interspersed with observations so that the researcher can question the subjects and verify perceptions and patterns.

Borg and Gall (1979) discuss the types of questions one might address using participant observation techniques. These include such questions as who the participants are; their typical and atypical patterns of behavior; and where, when, how, and why the phenomena occur. In short, participant observation is often successfully used to describe what is happening in a context and why it happens. These are questions that cannot be answered in the standard experiment. Similarly, Jegede (1999:133) defines participant observation as the form of observation that requires the observer to be actively involved in the events or activities involving the person to be observed. In an interview, an interviewer concentrated or asked questions based on contemporary proverbs that are commonly used. This was very important because some proverbs were known in certain districts and not in others. Similarly, some of these proverbs were still known among the adults with their original meanings. They were not aware on the semantic shift that occurs to such proverbs.

#### **4.5.1.7 Collection of newspapers**

The researcher listened to different radio stations in order to find out whether contemporary Sesotho proverbs are being used by presenters and callers. These stations were those inside and outside Lesotho specifically Joy FM, Radio Lesotho, Lesedi FM, Moafrika FM, Harvest FM, People's choice FM, Thakhube FM, LEC Radio, CR FM and Motswedding FM. Newspapers from 1999 to date will also be read with the same purpose of finding the use of contemporary proverbs. Such newspapers included Public Eye, Sunday Times, Sunday Express, Moeletsi oa Basotho, Moafrika, Leseli ka sepolesa, Lentsoe la Basotho and Informative. Newspapers such as these ones were read so as to discover the use of contemporary proverbs on articles and advertisements.

#### **4.5.1.8 Collection of cassettes**

The researcher also collected CDs of Basotho accordion music in order to find the use of proverbs that are used by artists in their songs.

### **4.6 The determination of the sample size through the principle of data saturation**

Since this study is qualitative in nature, the sample size was determined at the outset of the study, but the principle of "data saturation" was applied to determine the sample size in the end.

In relation to the principle of data saturation informing the eventual sample size, Fossey et al. (2002:726) write: "...sampling in qualitative research continues until themes emerging from the research are fully developed, in the sense that diverse instances have been explored, and further sampling is redundant. In other words, patterns are recurring or no new information emerges". Once the former become apparent, the data are then said to have achieved "saturation", meaning the researcher senses that a full understanding has been reached (Donalek & Soldwisch, 2004:356). On the other hand, Patton (1990:214) postulates that the researcher should continue until the research questions are answered and the purpose of the study is completed. In this research, the researcher stopped when the research questions were fully answered and the purpose of the research completed.

Glaser and Strauss (in Seale, 2004:229) concur with the above and state that the criterion for judging when to stop collecting data on the categories is when a particular category becomes theoretically saturated. They elaborate by explaining that “data saturation” means that no additional data are being found as the researcher finds similar instances over and over again. Once the information begins to repeat itself, the researcher can be empirically confident that a category or a theme is saturated. The researcher therefore adapted Glaser and Strauss’s criteria.

#### **4.7 Analyse and interpret data**

The analysis of data or findings is fundamental to all forms of qualitative research. This process typically begins during the literature review and continues through to the end of the research. According to Schurink (1998:300), in qualitative inquiry, data analysis begins during the interview as new avenues of research begin to emerge. The researcher records insights and interpretations besides the actual narrative data. In the data analysis of qualitative research, broad themes and patterns are looked for (Borg et al 1993:199). Payne and Payne (2004:214-215) aver that analysis attempts to critically investigate and unearth meaning and understanding by rigorously exploring themes, perspectives, trends, issues or outcomes that relate to a research question and subsequent aims and objectives.

Three examples of data analysis include:

- i) Thematic analysis. This approach attempts to look for specific identified themes within data and other findings, which can include social trends, patterns or outcomes that can be used to generate debate and draw conclusions from.
- ii) Comparative analysis. This approach is sometimes used alongside thematic analysis. It identifies contrasting research themes, homes in on them and then compares and assesses any relates data or findings. Typically two themes or cases are compared and contrasted within one single topic or project. Sometimes comparative analysis can become a dissertation in itself, such as when two countries are compared regarding their aspects of their social policy or legislation.

- iii) Critical analysis. This approach draws from a variety of influential theoretical sources including feminism, Marxism and interpretivism. The emphasis is very much upon discussing and explaining forms of social disadvantage , discrimination and forms of inequality or justice, such as those linked to gender, 'race', disability or class. Critical analysis also tends to explore wider themes and link the 'micro' experiences of individuals with wider 'macro' forces such as those linked to language, culture, institutional practices and government policies (Payne and Payne, 2004: 214-215).

The researcher used thematic and critical analysis approach in this study.

According to the framework of Neuman (2006:15) the activities of analysing and interpreting data relate to the fifth and sixth steps of the qualitative research process. He asserts that in qualitative research, the steps of data analysis and data interpretation can take place simultaneously because the researcher tends to build new theory and draw on existing theory during these steps. This is confirmed by Creswell (2003:150) who sees the process of data collection, data analysis and interpreting, and report writing as a spiral (that is the steps are interrelated and often occur simultaneously rather than in a strictly linear way). While analysing data, qualitative researchers engage in interpreting data to make sense of the data through forming larger meanings of what is going on in the situations or sites (Creswell, 2003:154). In view of this, the researcher analysed and interpreted the data simultaneously.

Qualitative research requires that data analysis become an ongoing process, meaning that the researcher makes thoughtful, informed decisions throughout the data collection procedures (Gay, 1996:219). The thread of analysis is woven through the interview phase, where the researcher records personal comments besides the narrative data. The thread winds through a coding process, which is a way to sort a large quantity of descriptive data. Then the thread completes its journey as the data are interpreted and new findings are declared. Thus the researcher seeks to define themes, which will lend a coherent synthesis of the data (Gay, 1996:227).

In analyzing results of qualitative study, the researcher is expected to add his own impressions and feelings to the data, then to interpret the data through reflection and introspection (Patton, 1990:205) this step is dependent on the researcher's background,



skills and knowledge (Best and Kahn, 1993:204). Being the member of the same community under study, it was simple for the researcher to reflect and introspect in order to come up with fair results of the study. Data was classified into the following themes, contemporary proverbs that encourage individualism, those that promote divorce, child-abuse, those that encourage promiscuity, relationships with sugar daddies and mummies, women who court men and other proverbs that are unclassified.

#### **4.8 Coding process**

De Vos and Van Zyl (1998:271) aver that at the conclusion of fieldwork, the researcher must find a way to study and analyse large quantity of data. This systematic way of developing the interpretations of the data is referred to as coding. The process of data analysis commences with researcher reading and rereading the data with the purpose of developing an intimate familiarity with the data. Therefore, the following steps are taken (Best and Kahn, 1993:203, De Vos, 1998:48).

- a) Develop a set of content categories, according to the dominant themes and patterns found in the data.
- b) Develop a one word code for each category
- c) Mark the text with the code word

Next the researcher must cut the data apart, placing the coded themes in separate files. The researcher should be cognizant of the fact that the study will not use all data collected. This process stated above was to be adapted in this research. Proverbs were given different codes in order to easily group them according to their themes.

The conclusions in qualitative study are the insights the researcher believes she or he has gleaned as the result of a lengthy, intensive effort (Gay, 1996:229).

#### **4.9 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the research methods through which the study was conducted. Qualitative approach was adopted in this study and it was discussed in general as a precursor to methods used. As alluded to earlier in this chapter, qualitative approach is adopted because it allows the researcher to explore and describe an experience, a

context, a process, or perspectives, to discover or learn more about a phenomenon, to develop an understanding of an experience or context, and report on an experience, context or process. The researcher's role in the research has been highlighted as a full participant because of being a member of the same community. Geographical areas where the research was done were presented. Needless to say, this chapter has indicated in depth how data was collected. The population under research was also deliberated on. As presented in the chapter, data was collected through interviews and participant observation. The next chapter presents data and the analysis of the data.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

*While it is perfectly appropriate for paremiologists to look backwards for the use of proverbs, they must not forget to investigate their traditional and innovative use in modern times, with the growing interest in popular culture, mass media, and cultural literacy, paremiologists ought to look at which traditional proverbs survive today and which have actually been coined in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (Mieder 2004:151).*

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses data. It comprises five categories of contemporary Sesotho proverbs namely, those that encourage individualism, that promote divorce, child-abuse, that encourage promiscuity, relationships with sugar daddies and mummies, women who court men and other proverbs that are unclassified. In this chapter the terms contemporary proverb and expressions will be used interchangeably as indeed some are expressions that may not be considered as proverbs because of their nature, function and other features that distinguish proverbs from other genres. First, contemporary proverbs will be presented under each section. Second, the number of contemporary proverbs found from respondents per regions will also be presented, and third, their popularity in each region and the age groups will be presented and analysed too.

Below, contemporary proverbs from different categories alluded earlier to earlier are presented and analysed.

#### 5.1 Proverbs that encourage individualism

In individualist cultures, people are autonomous and independent from their in-groups; they give priority to their personal goals over the goals of their in groups. They behave primarily on the basis of their attitudes rather than the norms of their in-groups, and exchange theory adequately predicts their social behavior (Hofstede 2001: 909). According to Gleason (2003:34) individualism is fostered in children in the West

through the early stressing of self-reliance and separation. Infants sleep in separate rooms from their parents and are put on feeding schedules. Toddlers are taught to take care of themselves and their things. This is also the case in Lesotho. People now have big houses fenced with bricks so that each one is in his/her own house and does not see or know how or what his/her neighbour is doing. Children also sleep in separate rooms and are not permitted to play with others as it used to happen in the past. However, this new lifestyle is popular in the urban areas. It is this new lifestyle that encourages individualism and so people coined proverbs listed below to highlight this new way of life.

**Below is the list of proverbs that show individualism**

<p><b>1. Text-Qaqana se seng le se seng sea iqhomela</b>          Literal meaning-[Every frog jumps for itself].          Figurative meaning-Every person must be independent</p>
<p><b>2. T-Mokgodutswane o mong le o mong o ikorela letsatsi</b>          Lit-[Every lizard basks in the sun for itself]          Fig-Every person must manage his/her own life.</p>
<p><b>3. T-Sole le leng le le leng le ipulela bifi ya lona</b>          Lit-[Every soldier opens his/her own tin of beef].          Fig-Every person works for himself/herself.</p>
<p><b>4. T-Kamele e nngwe le e nngwe e itjarela lota sa yona</b>          Lit-[Every camel carries its own hump].          Fig- A person has to work hard in order to uplift oneself.</p>
<p><b>5. T-Ntja e nngwe le e nngwe e iphahamisetša mohatla wa yona</b>          Lit-[Every dog lifts its own tail]          Fig-Every man must work hard in order to survive</p>
<p><b>6. T-Kgolwabolokwe e nngwe le e nngwe e ithetela polokwe yona</b>          Lit-[Every beetle rolls down its own ball].          Fig-Everybody must be independent</p>

<p><b>7. T- Ntja e nngwe le e nngwe e ya ipatlela</b>          Lit-[Every dog hunts for itself]          Fig-Every person must work hard in order to survive</p>
<p><b>8. T- Fofane se seng le se seng se lenta ka mabidi a sona</b>          Lit-[Every flight lands with its own wheels]          Fig-Every man must be independent.</p>
<p><b>9. T- Motho e mong le e mong o ngwaya kgopho la hae</b>          Lit-[Every person scratches his/her own pimples].          Fig-Every person manages his/her own affairs.</p>

### 5.1.1 Number of contemporary proverbs that encourage individualism in different regions

Below is the number of proverbs that encourage individualism elicited from different respondents. As indicated earlier there were eighty respondents per region. Each respondent was asked whether he/she knows the nine proverbs. This means that if respondents knew all the proverbs, the total number would be seven hundred and twenty ( $80 \times 9 = 720$ ). In Ladybrand and Ficksburg would be four hundred ( $40 \times 9 = 360$ ). This would mean that these proverbs are known by every Mosotho. However, the total of proverbs known has been shown which will determine the popularity of these proverbs.

#### Maseru

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
INDIVIDUALISM	73	110	85	19	258/720

#### Mafeteng

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
INDIVIDUALISM	28	80	60	28	168/720

Mohale's hoek

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
INDIVIDUALISM	28	76	55	30	189/720

Quthing

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
INDIVIDUALISM	108	131	88	14	341/720

Qacha's nek

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
INDIVIDUALISM	70	99	42	14	225/720

Thaba-Tseka

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
INDIVIDUALISM	59	60	53	40	212/720

Mokhotlong

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
INDIVIDUALISM	51	58	50	24	183/720

Butha-Buthe

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
INDIVIDUALISM	43	83	63	42	231/720

Leribe

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
INDIVIDUALISM	45	86	58	40	229/720

Berea

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
INDIVIDUALISM	50	94	71	58	273/720

### Ladybrand

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
INDIVIDUALISM	0	18	13	3	34/360

### Ficksburg

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
INDIVIDUALISM	0	10	19	23	52/360

Quthing accounts for many respondents who know these contemporary proverbs. This raised the researcher's interest as this is one district where one would expect Basotho living there to be deeply rooted in culture. However, some respondents claimed that they learnt these proverbs from some students in one of the tertiary institutions called Leloaleng in Quthing. This institution has many different students from different parts of Lesotho and South Africa so they have different cultures that lead them into being individualistic. Others indicated that because this is the only district that has two languages, Sesotho and Thembu, people really have to fend for themselves in this district.

Maseru commands the biggest number of respondents after Quthing. Maseru being the capital city of Lesotho one would expect to see a big number of respondents who know these proverbs because it is metropolitan or centre of attraction.

#### 5.1.2 Their meaning

The above mentioned proverbs which obviously are different in wording have the same meaning. They encourage people to be independent and work hard in order to survive in this world.

#### 5.1.3 Their form

These proverbs have a different form from the traditional structure which shows they are new.

### 5.1.4 Their function

These contemporary proverbs have a particular function that they perform. Although it is not easy to others but it encourages people to work hard and know that there is no one who will put the bread on their tables unless they stand up and work. These proverbs also encourage people to be independent. According to Gleason (2003:35) children also copy from their elders and are aware that in order to survive one has to work hard. This means this practice will be handed down from one generation to another.

### 5.2 Proverbs that encourage promiscuity

There are newly coined and adapted proverbs that support the unacceptable behaviour or promiscuity among the Basotho. These proverbs are mostly used by those who are not trustworthy to their partners. Most of them speak favourably about men.

**Below is the list of proverbs that encourage promiscuity**

<p><b>1. T-Tsela tsa kgale ha di na ditsotsi</b> Lit-[Old paths do not have robbers]. Fig-Old lovers are not troublesome.</p>
<p><b>2. T-Tsela tsa kgale ha di na dinokwane</b> Lit-[Old paths do not have robbers]. Fig-Old lovers are not troublesome.</p>
<p><b>3. T-Terata e ema ka palo tse pedi</b> Lit-[A washing line stands with two poles]. Fig-One should have more than one sexual partner.</p>
<p><b>4. T-Kerebae ha e eme ka bidi le le leng</b> Lit-[A wheelbarrow does not stand on one wheel]. Fig-It is good for a person to have more than one partner.</p>
<p><b>5. T-Eta sa kgale ha se lahlwe</b> Lit-[An old shoe is not to be thrown away]. Fig-An old lover is kept.</p>



<p><b>6. T-Fielo la kgale le fiela hantle ho feta le letjha</b>  Lit-[The old broom sweeps better than the new one].  Fig- An older lover is more reliable than the younger one.</p>
<p><b>7. T-Monna ke mokopu o wa nama, mosadi ke khabetjhe o wa ipopa</b>  Lit-[A man is a pumpkin he spreads himself, a woman is a cabbage she coils herself].  Fig-A man can flirt as he wishes but a woman cannot.</p>
<p><b>8. T-Hoja lebese ha se ho rua kgomo</b>  Lit- [To consume milk does not mean to rear a cow].  Fig- It does not mean that one should have a husband or a wife in order to have sex.</p>
<p><b>9. T-Nku ha e tswa terateng e siya boya</b>  Lit-[When a sheep goes through a fence it leaves some wool].  Fig-One has to pay something good after one has been given something or something done to one.</p>
<p><b>10. T-Monna ke apole o a lomisanwa</b>  Lit- [A man is an apple, he is shared].  Fig- A man should have multiple partners.</p>

### 5.2.1 Number of proverbs that encourage promiscuity in different regions.

Under this category is the number of proverbs that encourage promiscuity found in different respondents. Each respondent was asked whether he/she knows the ten proverbs. Meaning if the respondents knew all the proverbs, the total number would be eight hundred ( $80 \times 10 = 800$ ). In Ladybrand and Ficksburg would be four hundred ( $40 \times 10 = 400$ ). This would mean that these proverbs are known by every Mosotho. However, the total of proverbs known has been shown which will determine the popularity of these proverbs.

Maseru

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
PROMISCUITY	62	161	153	83	459/800

Mafeteng

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
PROMISCUITY	14	80	82	80	256/800

Mohale's hoek

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
PROMISCUITY	22	115	105	93	335/800

Quthing

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
PROMISCUITY	83	138	133	90	444/800

Qacha's nek

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
PROMISCUITY	20	117	105	80	335/800

Thaba-Tseka

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
PROMISCUITY	22	92	84	80	278/800

Mokhotlong

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
PROMISCUITY	47	106	99	88	340/800

Butha-Buthe

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
PROMISCUITY	65	123	101	83	372/800

## Leribe

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
PROMISCUITY	42	135	114	86	377/800

## Berea

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
PROMISCUITY	15	147	104	88	354/800

## Ladybrand

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
PROMISCUITY	0	29	30	9	68/400

## Ficksburg

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
PROMISCUITY	0	14	49	45	108/400

Proverbs that promote promiscuity are popular in Maseru. This is a district that has many people from different cultural background as there are many foreigners living there. It is followed by Quthing.

### 5.2.2 Their meaning

The above contemporary proverbs mean that people can jump from one relationship to another or even to run two affairs concurrently. They do not encourage trustworthiness. They encourage infidelity which results in people being infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

### 5.2.3 Their form

These contemporary proverbs have the same form with traditional proverbs. There is nothing new about their form.

#### 5.2.4 Their function

Kudadjie (2006:1) notes that proverbs function somewhat like moral codes, conventional wisdom and explicit rules of conduct. He further avows that they describe and prescribe and they state the experiences, moral institutions and guidelines for living that people generally have found to be noteworthy and helpful. Contrary to what Kudadjie observes about proverbs, these contemporary Sesotho proverbs promote immorality.

#### 5.3 Proverbs that highlight child abuse

According to Seema (2012:129), in the old days in the village, an act of improper behaviour would be made known and denounced in ways that made it easy to identify and correct the wrongs. Orphans were drawn into society and absorbed by other families. The proverb: *Leihlo la kgutsana ke lebone* (an orphan notes in detail what others do), means that everyone in the village became the mother, father, sister or brother of such orphans. In that way they were cared for, loved, nurtured and developed as members of Basotho society. Therefore the Basotho did not have street kids, ragamuffins and hobos. There is a new habit, taking root in Lesotho, where fathers abuse their daughters, and male teachers abuse their students (Possa and Makgopa, 2010:8).

Jamal (Undated:2) insists that it seems important to underline that proverbs not only serve as a disseminator of traditional wisdom, knowledge and apparent truths handed down from generation to generation, but, apart from aspects already mentioned, bear to some extent a rather serious dimension, too. He emphasizes that this is particularly true when they are deliberately misused in order to express or propagate certain views and beliefs. He therefore claims that it is equally vital to note that proverbs do not exist in a cultural vacuum, but, depending on the language of its usage, can be highly culture-bound and contain components which may be restricted to a specific culture or region. Some people, especially men misuse proverbs in order to express or propagate certain views and beliefs. Such proverbs are stated below.

## Proverbs that highlight child abuse

<p><b>1. T-Motshosi o ja matshohlo</b> Lit-[A shepherd eats from the flock]. Old -Fig-One benefits from where one is working. New -Fig - One can have sexual intercourse with one's student or daughter/son.</p>
<p><b>2. T-Modisa o ja mohlapeng</b> Lit-[One who drives birds away from the lands eats young wheat]. Old-Fig -One benefits from where one is working. New-Fig-One can have sexual intercourse with his/her student or daughter.</p>
<p><b>3. T-Mokoko o itswalla sethole</b> Lit-[A cock bears its own hen/hens]. Fig-It is not wrong for a man to have sexual intercourse with his daughter.</p>
<p><b>4. T-Ntja e ja mahlatsa a yona</b> Lit-[Every dog eats its own waste] Fig-It is not wrong for a man to have sexual intercourse with his daughter.</p>
<p><b>5. T-Ha poho tse pedi di lwana ho senyeha jwang</b> Lit-[When the two bulls are fighting grass gets destroyed] Fig-When parents are fighting children get affected.</p>

### 5.3.1 Number of proverbs that highlight child abuse in different regions

Below is the number of proverbs that encourage child abuse found in different respondents? Each respondent was asked whether he/she knows the five proverbs. Meaning if the respondents knew all the proverbs, the total number would be four hundred ( $80 \times 5 = 400$ ). In Ladybrand and Ficksburg would be two hundred ( $40 \times 5 = 200$ ). This would mean that these proverbs are known by every Mosotho.

However, the total of proverbs known has been shown which will determine the popularity of these proverbs.

Maseru

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
CHILD ABUSE	47	92	83	65	287/400

Mafeteng

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
CHILD ABUSE	4	60	60	60	184/400

Mohale's hoek

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
CHILD ABUSE	3	57	60	60	180/400

Quthing

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
CHILD ABUSE	42	81	73	62	258/400

Qacha's nek

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
CHILD ABUSE	42	73	64	60	239/400

Thaba-tseka

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
CHILD ABUSE	38	60	60	60	278/400

Mokhotlong

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
CHILD ABUSE	45	60	60	60	225/400

### Butha-Buthe

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
CHILD ABUSE	52	66	62	60	240/400

### Leribe

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
CHILD ABUSE	13	66	61	60	200/400

### Berea

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
CHILD ABUSE	5	78	68	62	213/400

### Ladybrand

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
CHILD ABUSE	0	0	20	14	34/200

### Ficksburg

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
CHILD ABUSE	0	7	34	20	61/200

Maseru has a large number of contemporary proverbs that show child abuse. However, these proverbs are known in many regions which really show that nowadays children are being abused and proverbs are used to support this behaviour.

#### 5.3.2 Their meaning

All these proverbs mean that it is not wrong for a man to have sexual intercourse with his daughter. The first three proverbs are traditional proverbs but their meanings have shifted to suit people's demands or interests. Ntshinga (2010) avers that Proverbs use

language changes in response to social, political, economic and religious challenges. Proverb users exhibit skills in proverb re-creation. They delete, elaborate, and transpose elements in the proverb. They are aware that proverbs have to be meaningful and relevant to contemporary experience. An example is illustrated by proverbs below.

a) T-*Motshosi o ja matshohlo*

Lit- [One who drives birds away from the lands eats young wheat].

New-Fig-One can have sexual intercourse with his/her student or daughter.

b) T- *Modisa o ja mohlapeng*

Lit-[A shepherd eats from the flock].

New -Fig - One can have sexual intercourse with one's student or daughter/son.

The above mentioned proverbs are old proverbs that meant something different from what they mean now. The meaning has shifted to suit an unacceptable behaviour of men.

### 5.3.3 Their form

These proverbs do have the same features as the traditional proverbs as some are old proverbs with shifted meanings.

### 5.3.4 Their function

These kinds of proverbs promote unwanted behaviour. They cause immorality and instability in the society. Functionalists assert that there is equilibrium which is a situation where the state of affairs is normal, there is peace and stability. Having agreed on certain basic issues, members of the society return to normality. Sometimes, it does happen that the society experiences disturbances emanating either internally or externally thus it becomes necessary for disequilibrium; after which the society readjusts itself to such an extent that it regains normality and reclaims equilibrium. Thus, individuals are expected to adhere and abide by the norms and values that are acceptable and, are made to return to them in times of disturbance. This is done in the form of punishments, social disapproval or sanctions. This leads to stability which is a



state of equilibrium. Some people get punished by their unwanted behaviour others defend themselves using these proverbs.

#### 5.4 Proverbs that encourage intimate relationships with old men and women (sugar daddies and mummies)

In Lesotho girls engage in sexual relationships with old people because they are lured into intimate relationship by presents and money from them. In order to justify this behaviour there are newly coined proverbs and those that are adapted to suit the situation as shown below.

##### Proverbs that show new types of relationships

<p><b>1. T-Dijo di tswa mobung</b>          Lit-[Food comes from the soil].          Fig-Old lovers are more important than young ones.</p>
<p><b>2. T-Mobu ke letlolo</b>          Lit-[Sand is treasure]          Fig-There is more benefit from older lovers.</p>
<p><b>3. T-Manamane a diswa ke bontate</b>          Lit-[Claves are taken care by men]          Fig-Girls are taken good care of by older men</p>
<p><b>4. T-Dikgomo di diswa ke bashanyana</b>          Lit-[Cows are shepherded by boys]          Fig-Older women are taken good care of by boys.</p>
<p><b>5. T-Kgampoto e pheha konyana</b>          Lit-[A big pot cooks a calf]          Fig- An older lover takes care of the younger lover</p>
<p><b>6. T-Lemao le qhwaela kobo</b>          Lit-[A safety pin ties a blanket].          Fig-A young person can have sexual relations with an older person.</p>
<p><b>7. T-Tadi e qeta lofo</b>          Lit-[A rat finishes a loaf of bread].</p>

Fig-A young lover can manage an old lover.
<b>8. T-Koloi ya kgale e lokiswa ka tshepe tse ntjha</b> Lit-[An old vehicle is repaired with new parts]. Fig-An old lover needs a young lover.
<b>9. T-Monwang o bolaya flou</b> Lit-[Mosquito kills an elephant] Fig-A younger lover can manage the older lover.
<b>10. T-Lengangajane ha le na diboko</b> Lit-[Dried fruit does not have worms]. Fig-An old lover is reliable.
<b>11. T-Mmadikotwana o pheha kgomo</b> Lit-[A small pot cooks a cow]. Fig- A younger lover can manage the older lover.
<b>12. T-Podi e tsofetseng e ja jwang bo botala</b> Lit-[An old goat eats green grass]. Fig-An older lover needs a young lover.

#### 5.4.1 Number of proverbs that promote intimate relationships with sugar daddies and mummies in different regions

Below is the number of proverbs that encourage intimate relationships with sugar daddies and mummies elicited from respondents. Each respondent was asked whether he/she knows the twelve proverbs. Meaning if the respondents knew all the proverbs, the total number would be nine hundred and sixty ( $80 \times 12 = 960$ ). In Ladybrand and Ficksburg would be four hundred and eighty ( $40 \times 12 = 480$ ). This would mean that these proverbs are known by every Mosotho. However, the total of proverbs known has been shown which will determine the popularity of these proverbs.

Maseru

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
NEW TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS	191	216	187	89	602/960

Mafeteng

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
NEW TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS	7	98	81	46	232/960

Mohale's hoek

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
NEW TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS	5	80	72	43	200/960

Quthing

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
NEW TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS	99	151	173	63	486/960

Qacha's nek

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
NEW TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS	46	148	100	55	349/960

Thaba-tseka

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
NEW TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS	37	124	97	65	323/960

Mokhotlong

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
NEW TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS	62	122	89	77	350/960

### Butha-Buthe

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
NEW TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS	63	121	88	75	347/960

### Leribe

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
NEW TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS	10	110	85	54	259/960

### Berea

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
NEW TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS	17	176	107	88	388/960

### Ladybrand

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
NEW TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS	0	12	43	18	73/480

### Ficksburg

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
NEW TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS	0	11	24	28	63/480

Maseru has the largest number of people who know these proverbs. Nevertheless, they seem to be known in all the regions.

#### 5.4.2 Their meaning

All these proverbs encourage those affairs in which age difference is huge. However, the following proverbs are traditional proverbs but their meanings have been shifted

what Reznikov (2009:131) calls “new wine in old bottles” since they express new wisdom using traditional forms.

a) T-*Dijo di tswa mobung*

Lit-[Food comes from the soil

**Old-Fig**-One must plough in order to eat.

**New-Fig** -Old lovers are more important than ones.

b) T-*Mobu ke letlotlo*

Lit-[Soil is treasure]

**Old-Fig**-soil is very important

**New-Fig**- There is more benefit from the older lovers

Originally these proverbs figuratively indicated that in order for people to live and eat, they must plough or work in the fields. However, the meaning of these proverbs has now being changed to refer to older lovers. Mokitimi maintains that the proverb can express more than one meaning which may seem to be contradictory if it is not discussed in its contextual usage. She asserts that the meaning of the proverb is best revealed by actual usage in social situations (Mokitimi 1991:18).

### **5.4.3 Their form**

The form of these proverbs is the same with the form of traditional proverbs.

### **5.4.4 Their function**

These proverbs are giving young boys and girls the power and encouragement to engage in these kinds of affairs. Elders who also engage in these relationships use them to justify their behaviour like a person who quotes the Bible to justify evil behaviour.

### **5.5 Proverbs that promote divorce**

Basotho valued marriage so much that they had proverbs that supported this institution such as;

a) *T-Mosadi o ngalla motsheo.*

Lit- [A woman sulks towards the innermost part of a house].

Fig- A woman is not expected to abandon her home no matter how tough it is; if she has problems she has to solve them (Mokititmi 1997:18). However divorce is now popular among the Basotho and proverbs are coined to maintain this behaviour.

**Below is the list of newly coined proverbs that encourage divorce**

<b>DIVORCE</b>
<p><b>1. T-Ntja ha e shwele matsetse a ya e baleha</b> Lit-[When a dog is dead fleas run away from it]. Fig-When one's wealth is gone or finished, he or she is divorced</p>
<p><b>2. T-Tjhepisi ha e fela tswekere e ya lahlwa</b> Lit-[When a chewing gum loses its sweetness, it is thrown away]. Fig-When one is less valuable, one is divorced.</p>
<p><b>3. T-Mokopu ha o bodile o a lahlwa le dithotse</b> Lit- [A rotten pumpkin is thrown away with its seeds]. Fig-When a woman is divorced she is sent away with her children.</p>
<p><b>4. T-Thole se fuwama mahe a haufi le sona</b> Lit-[Every hen broods eggs that are near it]. Fig-A man works for a woman who is near him.</p>
<p><b>5. T-Mokoko o mong le o mong o fatela thole se haufi</b> Lit-[Every cock digs for a hen that is near it]. Fig-A man works for a woman who is near him.</p>
<p><b>6. T-Ntja e nka lesapo molomong wa e nngwe haholo ha e sa e tshabe.</b> Lit-[A dog takes a bone from another, especially when it does not fear it]. Fig-A man can engage in sexual relationship with one's wife or girlfriend.</p>

### 5.5.1 Number of proverbs that promote divorce in different regions

Below is the number of proverbs that promote divorce that were elicited from different respondents. Each respondent was asked whether he/she knows the six proverbs. Meaning if the respondents knew all the proverbs, the total number would be four hundred and eighty ( $80 \times 6 = 480$ ). In Ladybrand and Ficksburg would be two hundred and forty ( $40 \times 6 = 240$ ). This would mean that these proverbs are known by every Mosotho. However, the total number of proverbs known has been shown which will determine the popularity of these proverbs.

#### Maseru

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
DIVORCE	68	120	96	9	293/480

#### Mafeteng

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
DIVORCE	2	33	31	26	92/480

#### Mohale's hoek

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
DIVORCE	13	44	27	0	84/480

#### Quthing

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
DIVORCE	55	87	37	40	219/480

#### Qacha's nek

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
DIVORCE	19	74	95	23	211/480

#### Thaba- tseka

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
DIVORCE	9	78	75	51	213/480

#### Mokhotlong

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
DIVORCE	6	59	48	3	116/480

#### Butha-Buthe

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
DIVORCE	29	68	42	16	155/480

#### Leribe

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
DIVORCE	7	91	54	13	165/480

#### Berea

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
DIVORCE	12	98	53	30	193/480

#### Ladybrand

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
DIVORCE	0	0	9	2	11/240

#### Ficksburg

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
DIVORCE	0	0	0	0	0/240

Maseru is still leading in terms of the number of new proverbs that are known. Needless to say, these proverbs are widely known except in Ficksburg.

### 5.5.2 Their meaning

The above proverbs mean infidelity is not condoned and should be chastised.

### 5.5.3 Their form

Just like traditional proverbs these contemporary proverbs also have a fixed form and are metaphoric.

### 5.5.4 Their function

These proverbs highlight infidelity and have a problem of promoting divorce, meaning that they also cause instability in the society.



## 5.6 Proverbs that highlight women who court men

According to Basotho it gives pleasure and pride for a girl or woman to be valued by men. A woman or girls is expected to behave well especially towards men so that she can attract a good husband. However, things are changing with modernity. Some Basotho girls are resorting to approaching men or make advances to men as shown in proverbs below:

### Proverbs that highlight women who court men

<p><b>1. T-Nonyana e sa itshelleng e bola kila</b>          Lit-[The gizzard of a bird which does not look for food, rots].          Old- Fig-One must fend for oneself if one is to survive.          New-Fig- A woman must court a man that she likes.</p>
<p><b>2. T-Thole se seng le se seng se itsokela tonono sa sona pela mokoko oo se oratang</b>          Lit-[Every hen shakes its tail near the cock that it likes].          Fig-A woman has to court a man that she loves.</p>

### 5.6.1 Number of proverbs that highlight women who court men in different regions

Below is the number of proverbs that highlight women who court men found in different respondents. Each respondent was asked whether he/she knows the two proverbs. Meaning if the respondents knew all the proverbs, the total number would be one hundred and sixty ( $80 \times 2 = 160$ ). In Ladybrand and Ficksburg would be eighty ( $40 \times 2 = 80$ ). This would mean that these proverbs are known by every Mosotho. However, the total of proverbs known has been shown which will determine the popularity of these proverbs.

Maseru		10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
WOMEN	WHO					
COURT	MEN	3	16	24	0	433/160

Mafeteng		10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
AGES						
WOMEN	WHO					
COURT	MEN	0	0	0	0	0/160

Mohale's hoek		10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
AGES						
WOMEN	WHO					
COURT	MEN	0	3	0	0	0/160

Quthing		10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
AGES						
WOMEN	WHO					
COURT	MEN	3	9	7	4	23/160

Qacha' s nek		10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
AGES						
WOMEN	WHO					
COURT	MEN	0	7	3	0	10/160

Thaba-tseka		10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
AGES						
WOMEN	WHO					
COURT	MEN	0	0	0	0	0/160

Mokhotlong		10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
AGES						
WOMEN	WHO					
COURT	MEN	0	0	0	0	0/160

Butha-Buthe		10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
AGES						
WOMEN	WHO					
COURT MEN		0	2	0	0	2/160

Leribe		10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
AGES						
WOMEN	WHO					
COURT MEN		0	4	1	0	5/160

Berea		10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
AGES						
WOMEN	WHO					
COURT MEN		0	9	1	0	10/160

Ladybrand		10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
AGES						
WOMEN	WHO					
COURT MEN		0	0	0	0	0/80

Ficksburg		10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
AGES						
WOMEN	WHO					
COURT MEN		0	0	0	0	0/80

These proverbs are known in few regions and the number is very small. Maseru commands more respondents than in other regions. From this number one surmises that this kind of behaviour is not popular.

### 5.6.2 Their meaning

According to these proverbs, it is not wrong for a woman or a girl to propose love to man that she loves.

### 5.6.3 Their form

The first proverb has the same form as traditional proverb because it is a traditional proverb in which its meaning has been shifted as shown below:

a) T-*Nonyana e sa itshelleng e bola kila*

Lit- [The gizzard of a bird which does not look for food, rots].

Old-Fig-A person that does not work hard will starve.

New-Fig-A woman must court a man that she likes.

The second proverb has the longest structure. However, there are some features that it possesses of the traditional proverbs although has introduced a new structure which did not exist before.

There is both elision of noun class prefix and internal elision in this proverb.

T-(Se)*Thole se seng le se seng se itsokela (se)tono sa sona pela mokoko oo se o ratang.*

Lit-[Every hen shakes its tail near the cock that it likes].

Fig- A Woman courts a man that she loves.

### 5.6.4 Their function

These proverbs are used by women/girls who are said to be promiscuous to lure or entice man as the act of proposing is done by men. They encourage the loose life of women and girls.

### 5.7 Unclassified contemporary proverbs

This category consists of other newly coined proverbs whose theme is not classified; among them are old ones that shifted meaning and those with alterations and dealing with different spheres of life. These are as Malinowski (1961:42) puts it, cultural aspects such as social groups, human ideas, beliefs and customs that put a man in a position to cope with the concrete, specific problems that face him in his adaptation to his environment. The following proverbs are from the various spheres of life that affect the Basotho positively and negatively

## Unclassified contemporary proverbs

<p><b>1. T-Kgomo ke banka ya Mosotho</b> Lit-[A cow is a bank of a Mosotho]. Fig-One who has cattle has fewer problems.</p>
<p><b>2. T-Biri e nowa moreneng</b> Lit-[Beer is expected to be drunk at the great place]. Fig- Heroes are expected to be at the rich people's places.</p>
<p><b>3. T-Mokgatjhane ho ima ya ratang</b> Lit-[One becomes pregnant out of one's free will]. Fig-People are free to do what they want to do.</p>
<p><b>4. T-Qhekwana ho tsofala le ratang</b> Lit-[Only old people who wish to be old become old]. Fig- Age is not very important.</p>
<p><b>5. T-Thuto boholo e ya hlalefisa</b> Lit-[Old age education makes one intelligent]. Fig- One learns better when old.</p>
<p><b>6. T-O sebetse sa ho pepa tlou ka fatuku</b> Lit-[(A person) is so brave that he/she can put an elephant on her back using a dish towel]. Fig- One takes unnecessary risks.</p>
<p><b>7. T-O tla e supa dinomoro</b> Lit-[(A car) you will point out its plate numbers]. Fig-One will lose something precious, due to delay.</p>
<p><b>8. T-O opile kamele selota</b> Lit- [He/she has clapped a camel's hump]. Fig- He/she has said the right thing at the right time.</p>
<p><b>9. T-Kotlolo se setle ha se jele</b> Lit-[A small beautiful bowl cannot be used]. Fig- A most cherished thing is short-lived.</p>
<p><b>10. T-Bophelo ke lebidi la koloi</b> Lit-[life is a wheel]. Fig- Life is full of changes.</p>

<p><b>11. T-O tla holela mobung jwalo ka tapole</b></p> <p>Lit- [(A person) will grow inside the soil like a potato].</p> <p>Fig- One will die, while still young.</p>
<p><b>12. T-Ngwana salleng o shwela poremeng</b></p> <p>Lit-[A child that does not cry dies on the pram].</p> <p>Fig-One who does not show dissatisfaction cannot be attended to.</p>
<p><b>13. T-Motho ke kgoba la nthwa e ratang</b></p> <p>Lit- [A person is a slave of what he/she likes]</p> <p>Fig- A person would rather die than to let go of something he/she likes</p>
<p><b>14. T-Serurubele se shwela leboneng</b></p> <p>Lit-[A butterfly dies on a lamp].</p> <p>Fig-People are killed by things that they like.</p>
<p><b>15. T-Motho o ya ka lebaka mothong</b></p> <p>Lit-[A person goes to another for a reason].</p> <p>Fig-People engage in sexual relations with only those who have money.</p>
<p><b>16. T-Pokotho di masoba</b></p> <p>Lit-[Pockets are holes]</p> <p>Fig-He/she is broke</p>
<p><b>17. T-Batho ha balekane e se disheleng</b></p> <p>Lit-[People are not as similar as shillings].</p> <p>Fig- In a society people differ in ranks, status and stature.</p>
<p><b>18. T-Moqomo ha o tlale ho latela phako la mokwao</b></p> <p>Lit-[A rubbish bin does not fill up according to the wishes of a hobo].</p> <p>Fig-Things do not happen the way one may wish.</p>
<p><b>19. T-Busetsa molamu sefateng ka molao</b></p> <p>Lit- [Return the stick to the tree with the law]</p> <p>Fig- Revenge with the law</p>
<p><b>20. T-Ho tswa molomong wa pere</b></p> <p>Lit-[From the horse's mouth]</p>

Fig-From the owner
<p><b>21. T-Ho ipaballa ho molemo ho feta setlhare</b>  Lit-[Taking care of oneself is better than medicine]  Fig-It is better to take care of yourself than to use medicine.</p>
<p><b>22. T-Ho thola ho paka ho dumela</b>  Lit-[To be quiet shows to agree]  Fig-Silence means concerned</p>
<p><b>23. T-Nako ke tjhelete</b>  Lit-[Time is money].  Fig-One need not waste time in whatever one is doing.</p>
<p><b>24. T-Nako ke setlhare</b>  Lit-[Time is medicine].  Fig-One heals with time.</p>

### 5.7.1 Number of unclassified contemporary proverbs in different regions

Below is the number of unclassified proverbs elicited from different respondents. Each respondent was asked whether he/she knows the twenty-four proverbs. Meaning if the respondents knew all the proverbs, the total number would be one thousand and nine hundred and sixty ( $80 \times 24 = 1920$ ). In Ladybrand and Ficksburg would be nine hundred and sixty ( $40 \times 24 = 960$ ). This would mean that these proverbs are known by every Mosotho. However, the total of proverbs known has been shown which will determine the popularity of these proverbs.

#### Maseru

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
UNCLASSIFIED PROVERBS	181	384	330	184	1079/1920

#### Mafeteng

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
UNCLASSIFIED PROVERBS	63	211	189	129	592/1920

Mohales' hoek

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
UNCLASSIFIED PROVERBS	38	182	161	127	508/1920

Quthing

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
UNCLASSIFIED PROVERBS	392	338	258	194	1182/1920

Qacha's nek

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
UNCLASSIFIED PROVERBS	152	326	293	176	947/1920

Thaba-tseka

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
UNCLASSIFIED PROVERBS	171	235	232	165	806/1920

Mokhotlong

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
UNCLASSIFIED PROVERBS	159	268	244	171	842/1920

Butha-Buthe

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
UNCLASSIFIED PROVERBS	243	297	251	189	980/1920

Leribe

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
UNCLASSIFIED PROVERBS	114	302	244	166	826/1920

Berea

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
UNCLASSIFIED PROVERBS	118	327	249	177	971/1920



### Ladybrand

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
UNCLASSIFIED PROVERBS	23	71	163	93	350/960

### Ficksburg

AGES	10-19	20-35	36-55	56-UP	TOTAL
UNCLASSIFIED PROVERBS	69	114	189	116	488/960

Even though there are those regions with big numbers of these proverbs that are known, many of them seem to be known throughout all regions.

#### 5.7.2 Their meaning

Since these are miscellaneous proverbs with different meanings this section will not be easy to deal with. However, their literal and figurative meaning has been given.

#### 5.7.3 Their form

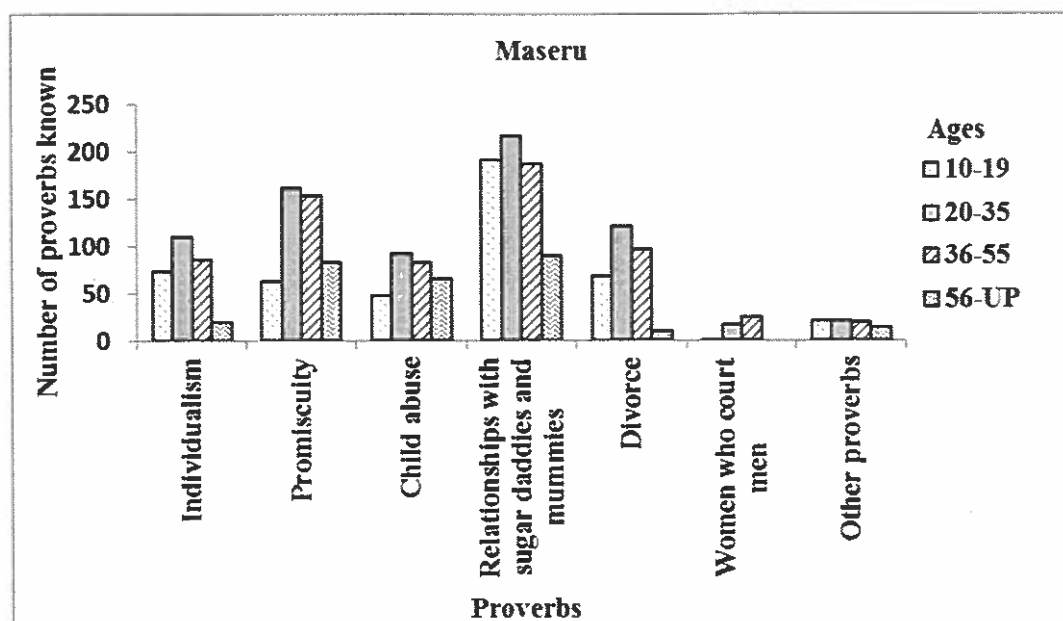
All of these proverbs have the same structure as traditional proverbs.

#### 5.7.4 Their function

These proverbs have different functions as they are different.

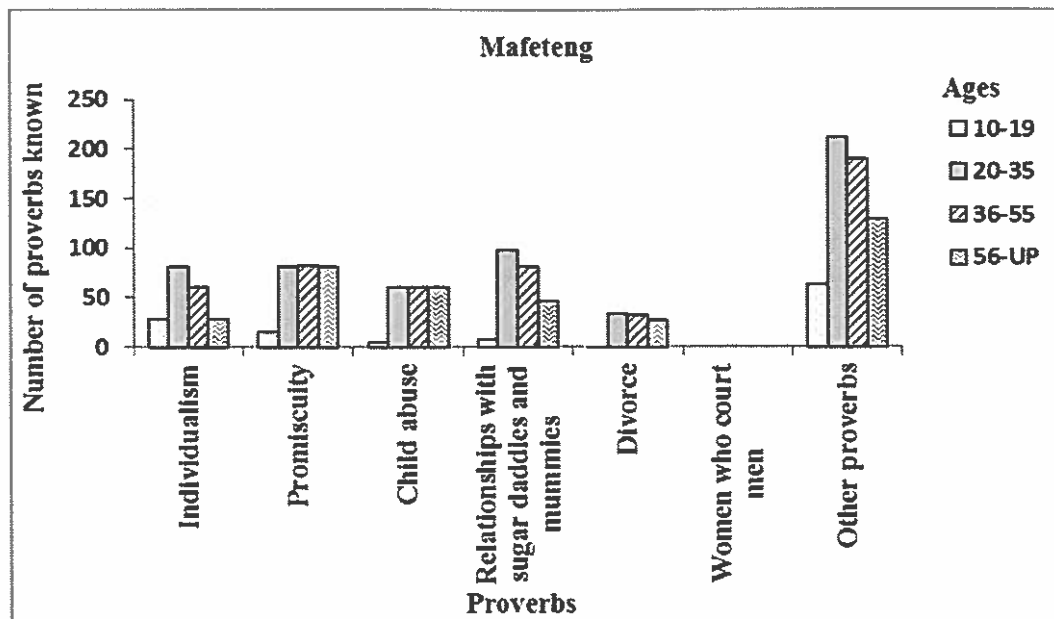
## 5.8 Age group and the concomitant number of new proverbs coined in different towns

Table 1: Age group and proverbs in Maseru



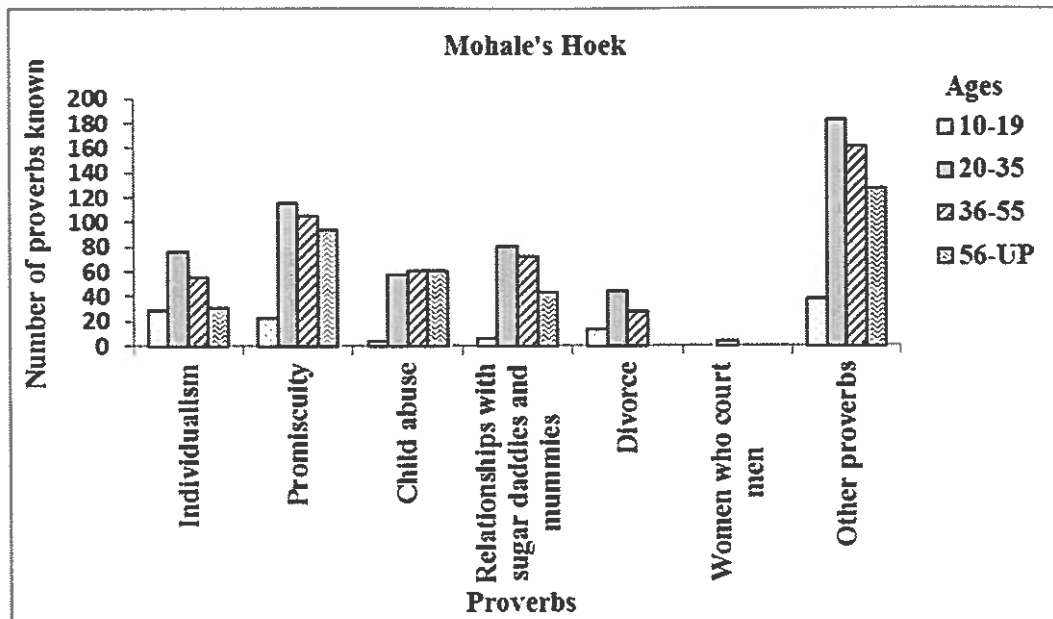
In Maseru proverbs about individualism are known among people aged 20-35, meaning that they are popular among the youth. Proverbs about intimate relationships are also popular among the youth. They have an interest in these proverbs because nowadays the youth are more into money than anything else. The main purpose of those affairs is therefore money or material related. Proverbs promoting promiscuity and highlighting child abuse are well known among adults not necessarily that they condone infidelity. Most abuses of children are carried out by their parents or teachers. What that means is that adults are the ones who use these proverbs when they justify their unwanted behaviour.

**Table 2: Age group and proverbs in Mafeteng**



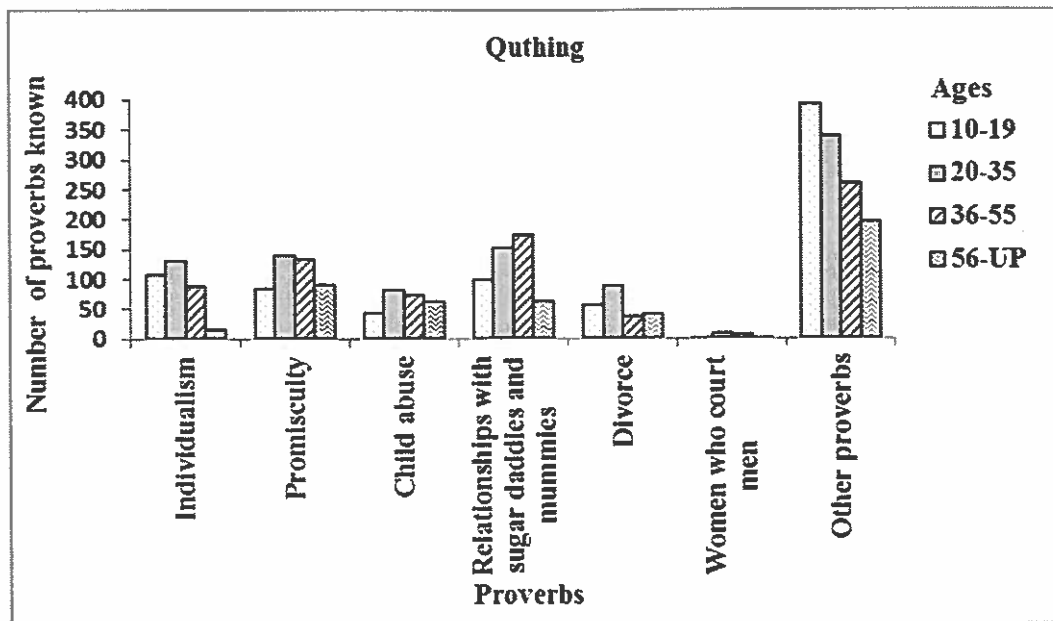
In Mafeteng also, proverbs that encourage individualism are popular among age 20-35. Proverbs that encourage relationships with sugar daddies and mummies are also popular in the age 20-35. These are the very same people who engage in this kind of affairs. Proverbs about divorce are also popular to the same age group. All in all this age group is dominant in as far as proverbs are concerned in Mafeteng.

**Table 3: Age group and proverbs in Mohale' Hoek**



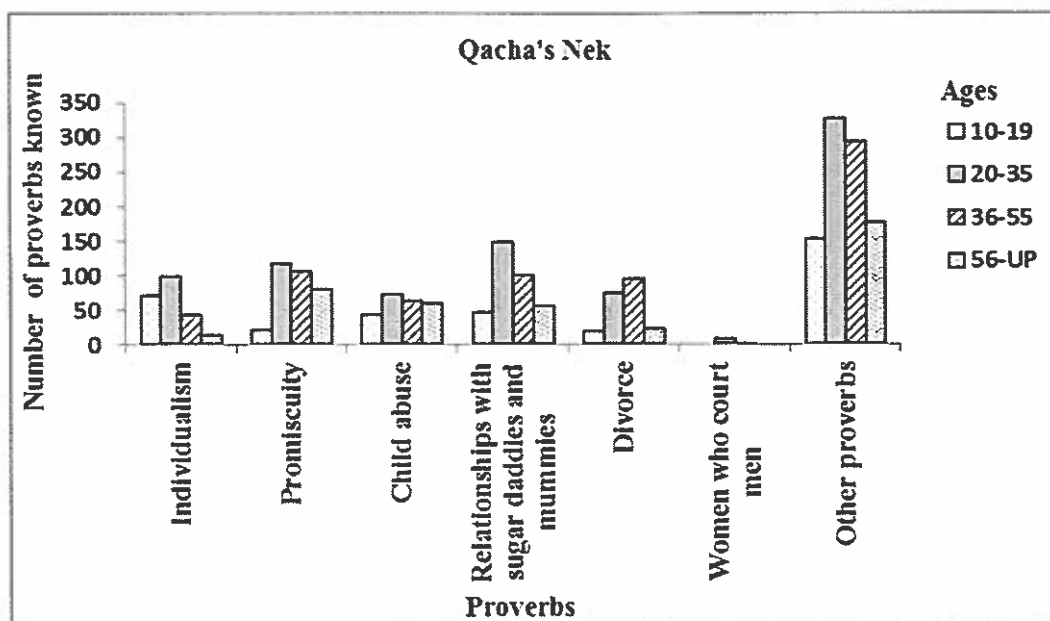
Proverbs that encourage individualism, promiscuity, relationships of sugar daddies and mummies, divorce and unclassified proverbs are also popular among the youth in Mohale'shoek. Only proverbs that encourage child abuse are known by the age groups of 36-55 and 56-upwards. Most of the reports of rape from the media show that most of the men who rape their daughters are between forty to fifty years.

**Table 4: Age group and proverbs in Quthing**



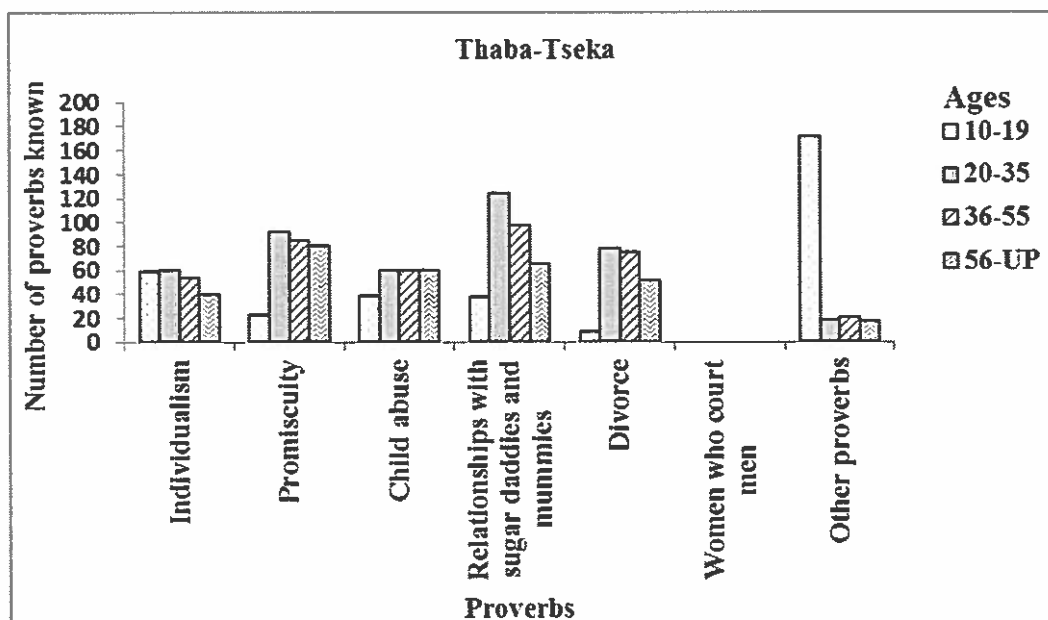
In Quthing proverbs that encourage individualism, promiscuity, child abuse, divorce, women who court men are popular in the age 20-35. Those that promote relationships with sugar daddies and mummies are popular in the ages 35-55. Unclassified proverbs are well known among those aged 10-19 as they learn some of these proverbs at schools.

**Table 5: Age group and proverbs in Qacha's Neck**



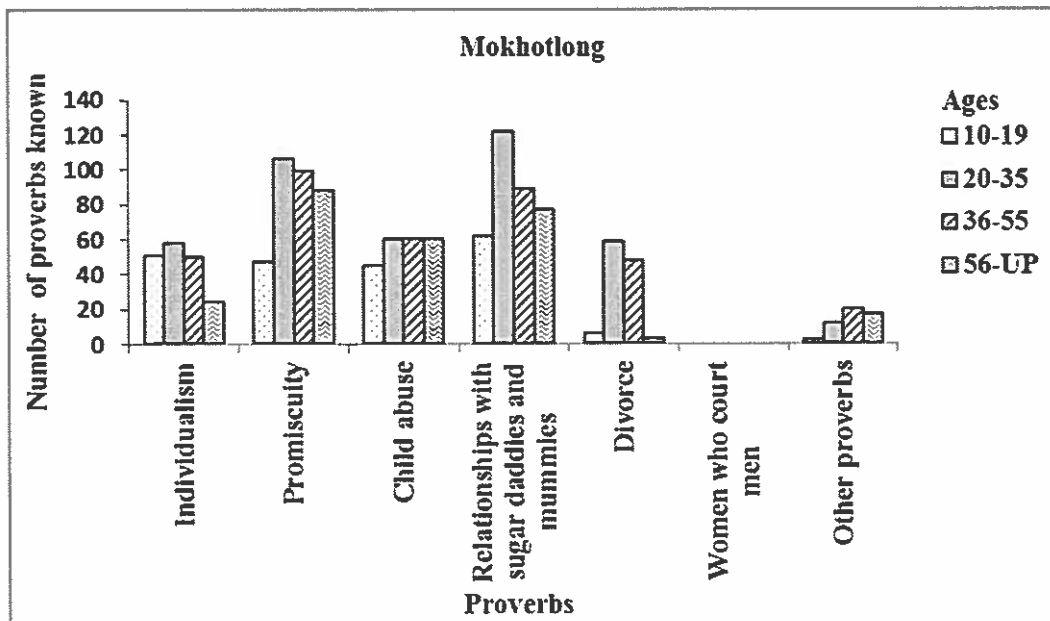
Proverbs that encourage individualism, promiscuity, child abuse, relationships with sugar daddies and mummies, women who court men and unclassified proverbs are popular in the age group 20-35. Only proverbs that encourage divorce are well known by the age group 36-55 in Qacha's nek.

**Table 6: Age group and proverbs in Thaba-Tseka**



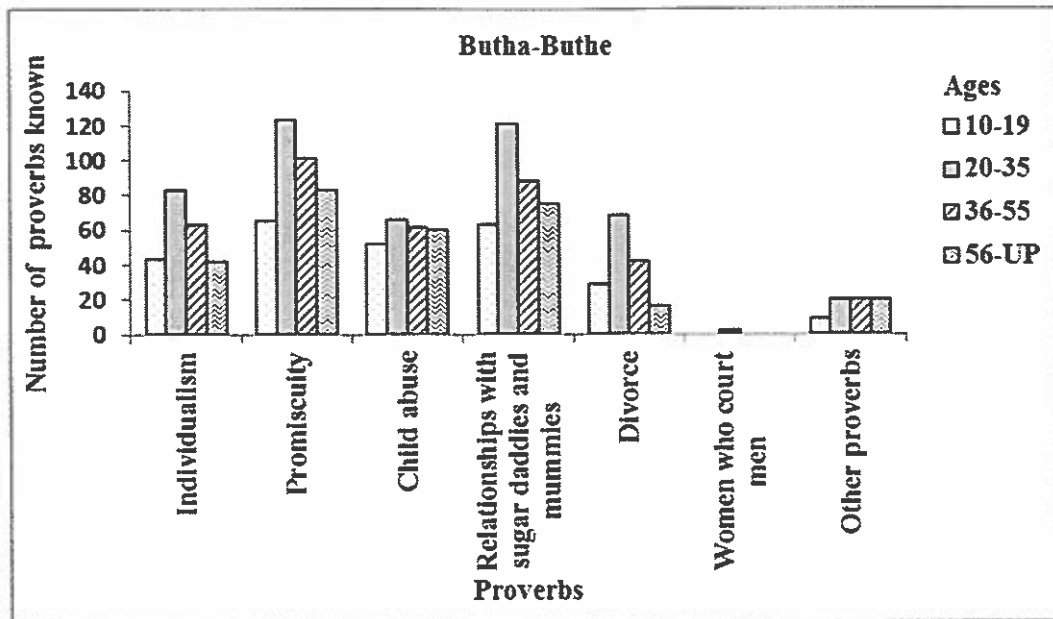
In Thaba-Tseka proverbs that encourage individualism, promiscuity, relationships with sugar daddies and mummies and divorce are popular among the age group 20-35. Proverbs that encourage child abuse are equally known by age groups 20-35, 36-55 and 56-upwards. Thaba-tseka has many people from different parts of Lesotho who are staying because of being public servants. Most of the proverbs are known by adults except those that encourage individualism.

**Table 7: Age group and proverbs in Mokhotlong**



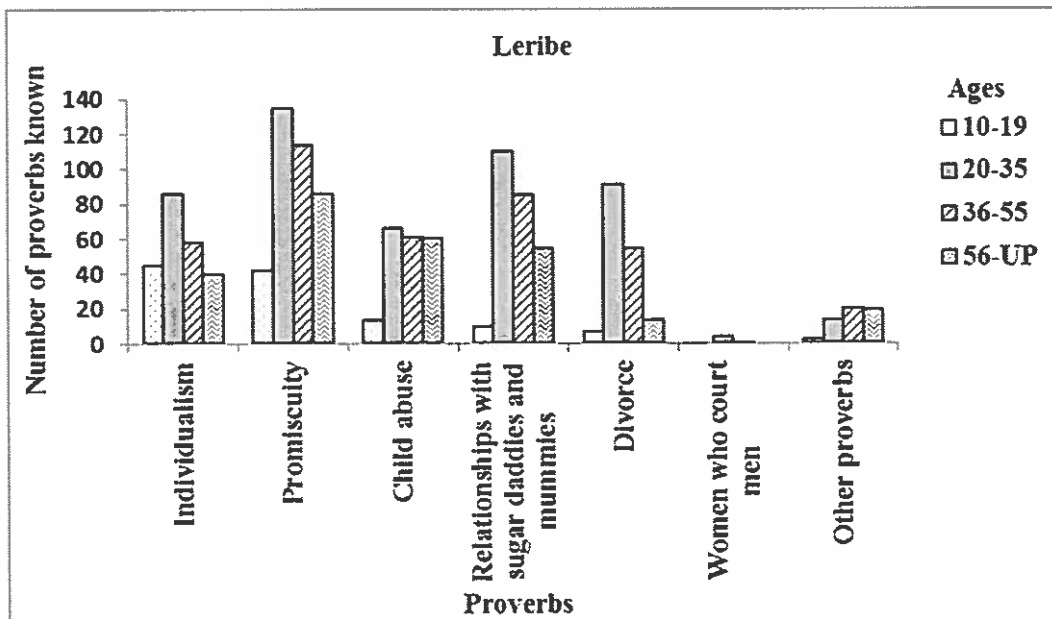
In Mokhotlong proverbs that encourage individualism, promiscuity, those that encourage relationships with sugar daddies and mummies and divorce are well known by the age group 20-35. Proverbs that encourage child abuse are known in the same way by three age groups, 20-35, 36-55 and 56-upwards. The reason for this similarity is because these proverbs are traditional proverbs with the shifted meanings. However, the researcher noted that the new meaning is only known by two age groups, 20-35 and 36-55.

**Table 8: Age group and proverbs in Butha-Buthe**



In Butha-Buthe, all categories of proverbs except unclassified proverbs are popular in the age group 20-35. However, many contemporary proverbs are known in this district.

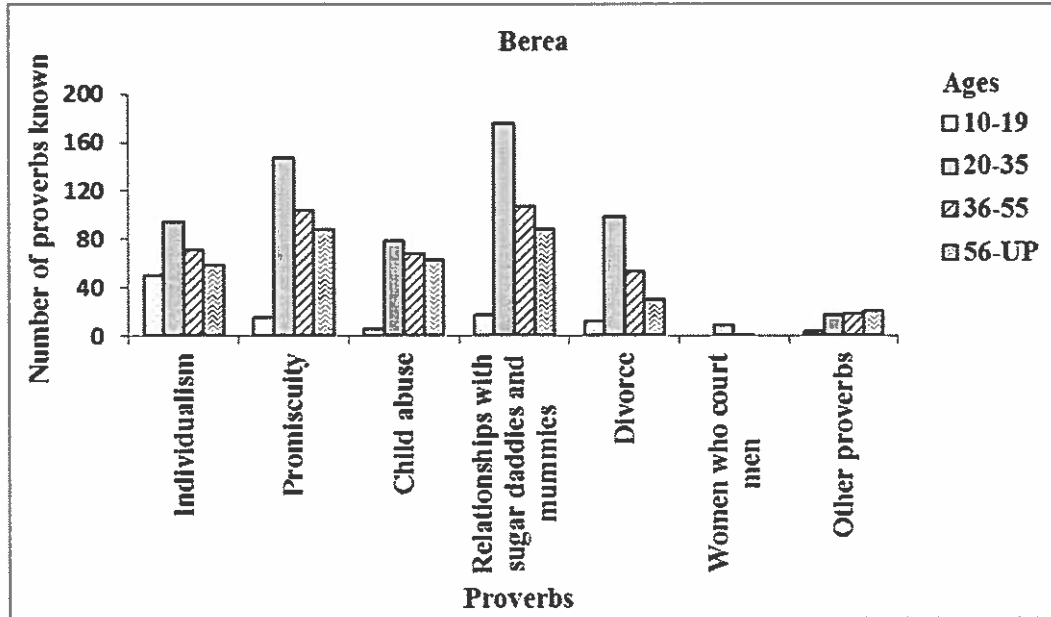
**Table 9: Age group and proverbs in Leribe**





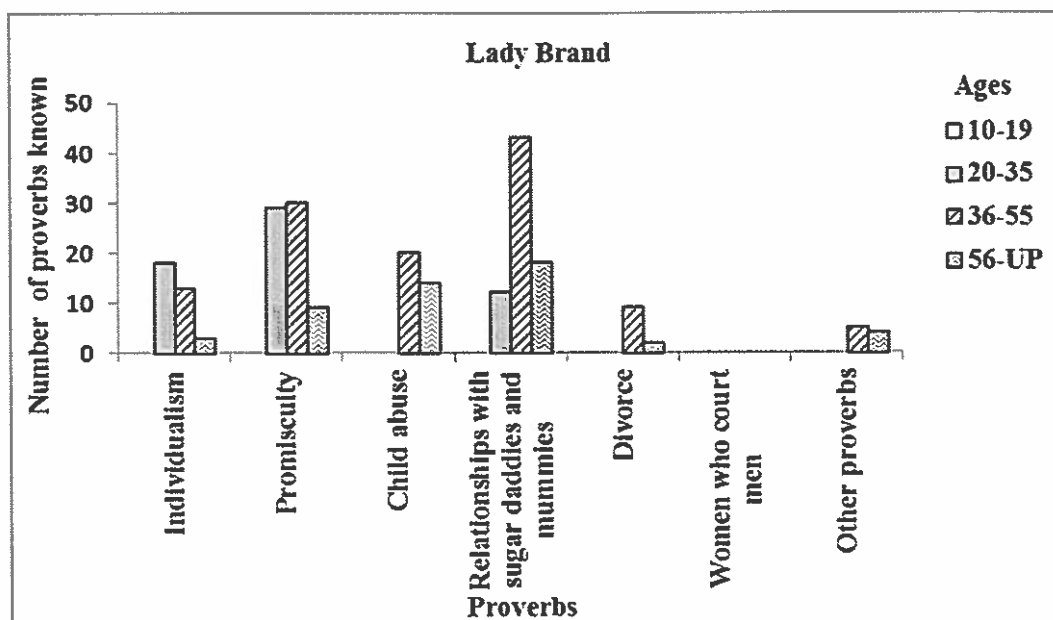
In Leribe, proverbs that encourage individualism, promiscuity, child abuse, relationships with sugar daddies and mummies, divorce and women who court men are popular in the age group 20-35.

**Table 10: Age group and proverbs in Berea**



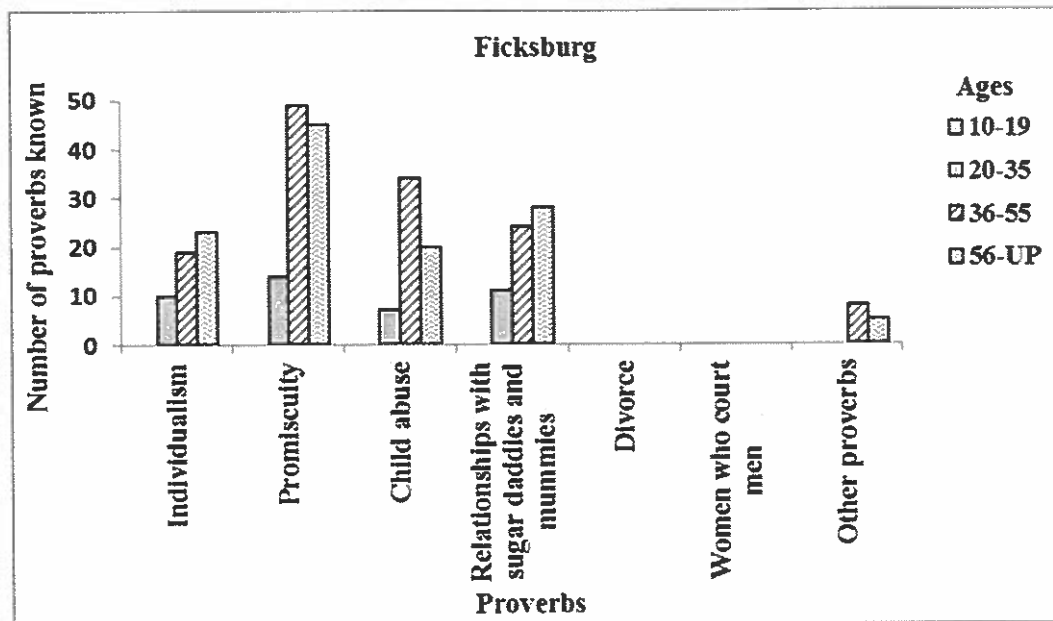
In Berea also, proverbs that encourage individualism, promiscuity, child abuse, relationships with sugar daddies and mummies, divorce and women who court men are popular in the age group 20-35.

**Table 11: Age group and proverbs in Lady Brand**



Ladybrand is in the Republic of South Africa near Maseru. Most of the Basotho do their shopping and other businesses in Lady Brand. There are many Sotho speaking people in this town hence the researcher chose this place to find the use of contemporary proverbs. In his town, proverbs that encourage promiscuity, child abuse, relationships with sugar daddies and mummies, proverbs that encourage divorce and unclassified proverbs are popular in the age group 36-55.

**Table 1 2: Age group and proverbs in Ficksburg**



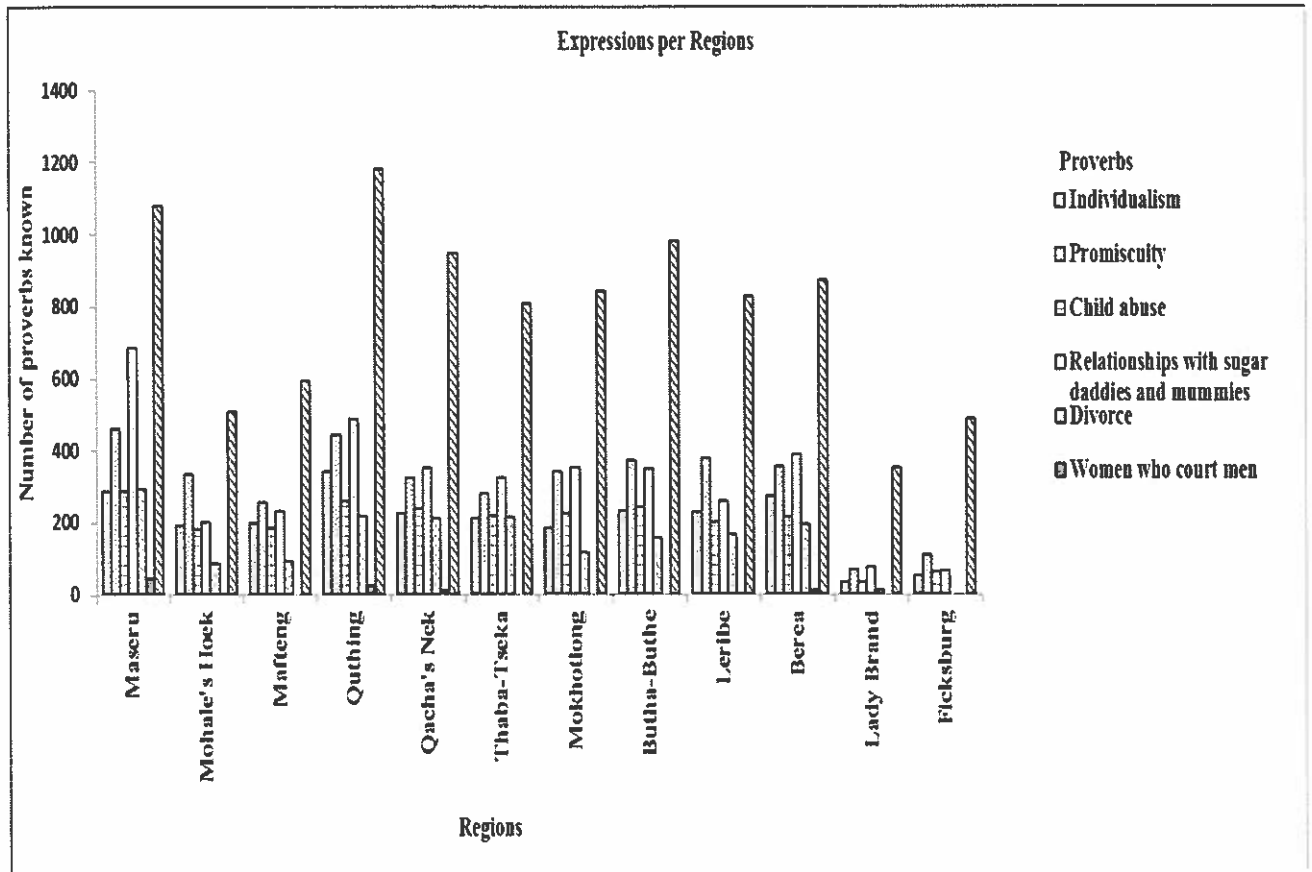
Ficksburg is a town near Maputsoe, a place in Leribe. This place is also populated by Basotho who also do their daily shopping and other businesses. Age group 36-55 has many proverbs well known by respondents than other age groups.

In summary of all the regions, contemporary proverbs are popular among the age group 20-35 which is a group of youth. However, these proverbs are known throughout the country. Even if some groups have small numbers but the fact that each district knows them is what is important for this research. It fulfils the purpose of the research.

### 5.9 Region dominating in contemporary proverbs

The table below illustrates the region that has dominated in coining and the use of contemporary proverbs.

**Table 13: Region dominating in contemporary proverbs**



Maseru has more contemporary proverbs than the other regions. There are those proverbs that were only known by respondents in Maseru. This means Maseru has many coined proverbs which have not spread to other regions.

The reason could be what prompted the coining of such proverbs was only prevalent in Maseru only. However, many of contemporary proverbs are known across the country.

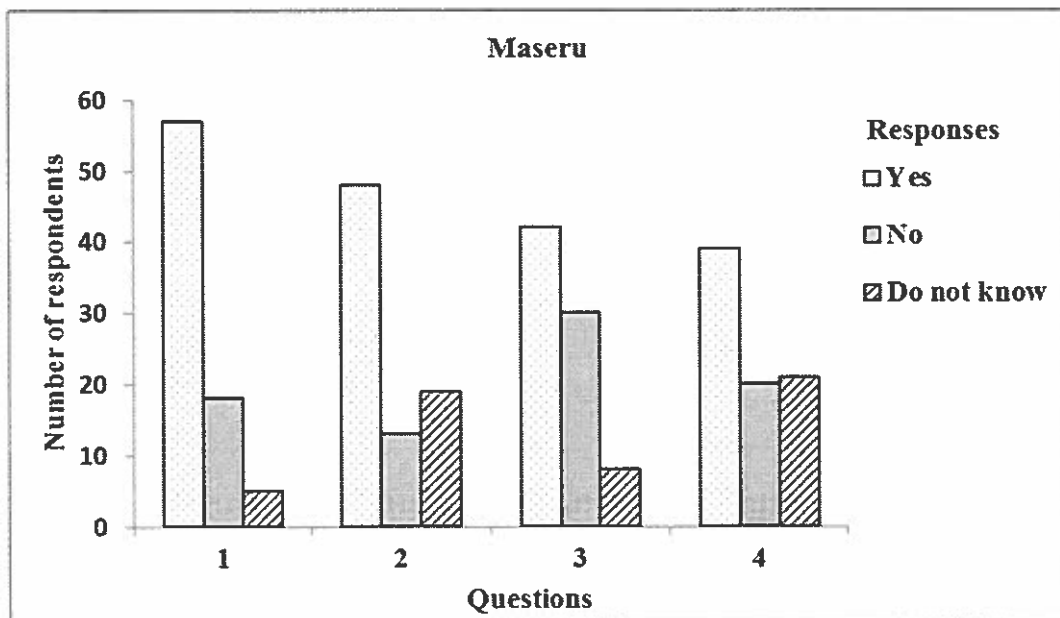
### 5.10 Questionnaire responses according to regions

The following questions were asked to elicit essential and pertinent information on contemporary proverbs in different regions:

1. Do contemporary proverbs serve the same function in the society like traditional proverbs?
2. Do they show the development of our language?
3. Will they get their place in Sesotho language?
4. Do we have to document them or do they destroy our language?

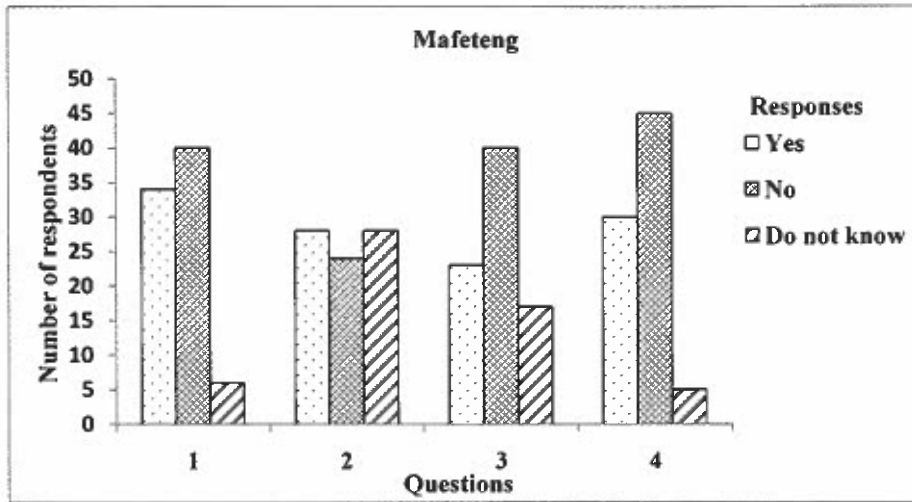
Responses of the questions above are illustrated in the graphs below. Number s 1-4 on the graphs represents the four questions above.

**Table 1: Responses from Maseru**



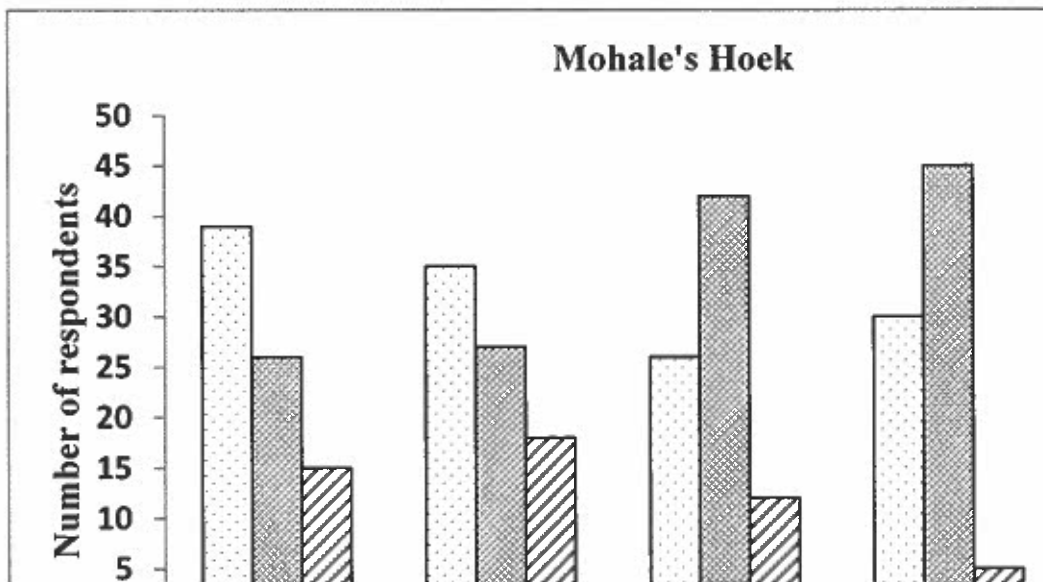
In Maseru most of the responses are positive. This means that respondents believe that contemporary proverbs perform the same function as traditional proverbs. Respondents further agree that these proverbs show the development of Sesotho language and they should be documented.

**Table 2: Responses from Mafeteng**



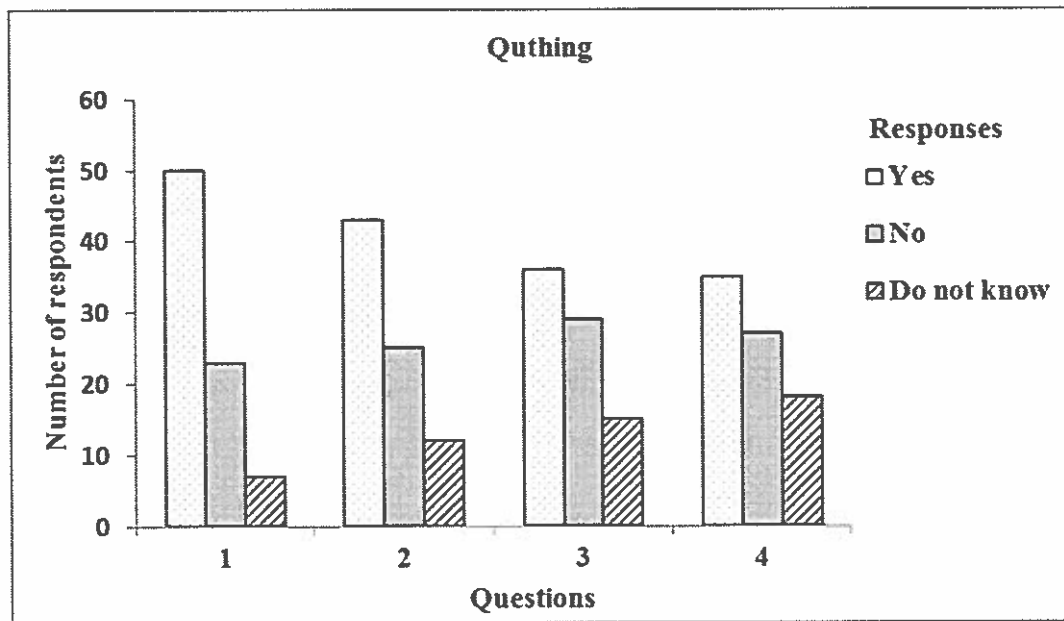
In Mafeteng most of responses are saying no to contemporary proverbs. Most of the respondents were not happy with the functions of these proverbs as they promoted promiscuity, child abuse and relationships with sugar daddies and mummies. Even though they indicated that these proverbs may show the development of the language, their themes are not acceptable.

**Table 3: Responses from Mohale's Hoek**



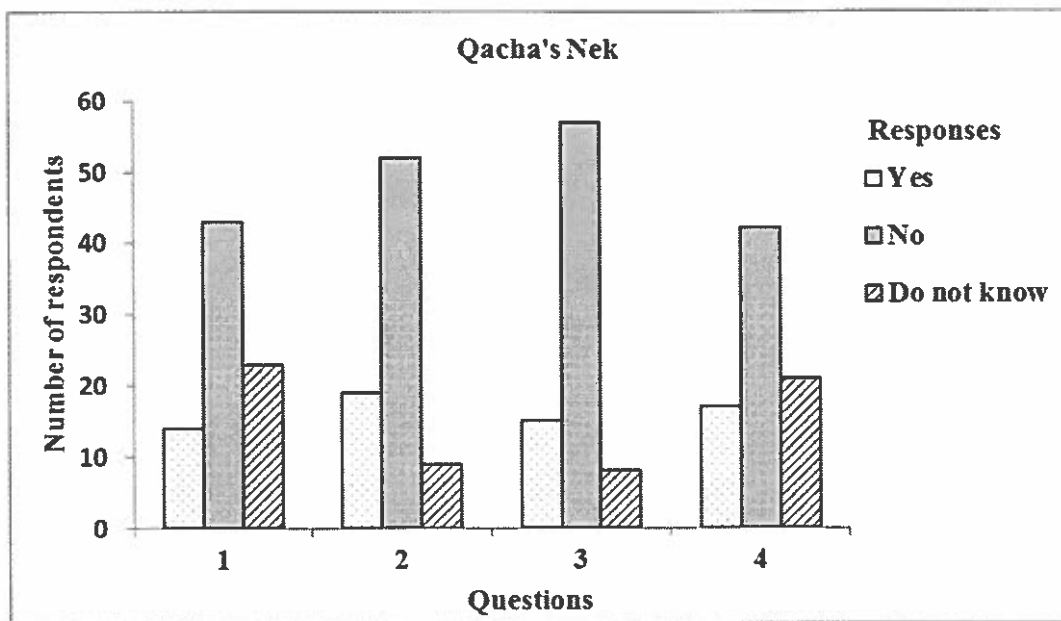
In Mhales'hoek, most of the respondents indicated that these proverbs function the same way as traditional proverbs and they show the development of the language. However, they do not want them to be part of Sesotho language and to be documented because of their functions. But few agreed that they should be documented and become part of Sesotho language.

**Table 4: Responses from Quthing**



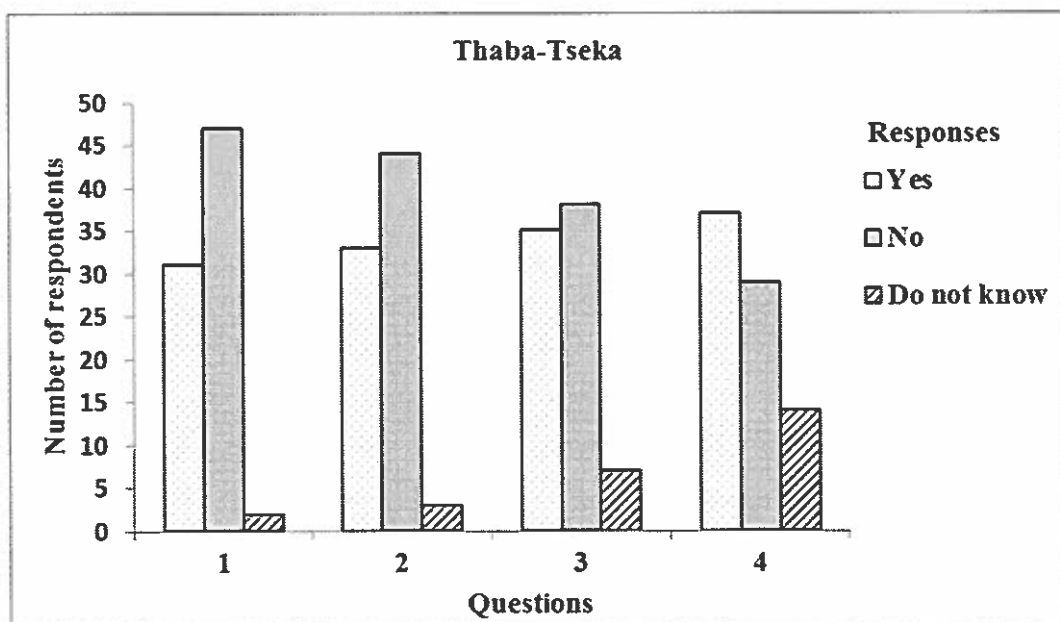
Out of eighty respondents, fifty maintained that contemporary proverbs function like traditional proverbs and they show that Sesotho language is growing. Most of them also assured that they will get their place in Sesotho language. That being the case, they should be documented.

**Table 5: Responses from Qacha's Nek**



Being in the rural areas where tradition is still being practices, respondents from Qacha's nek strongly argued that contemporary proverbs do not function like tradition proverbs. Their argument was based on the themes of contemporary proverbs especially those that encourage promiscuity, divorce and child abuse.

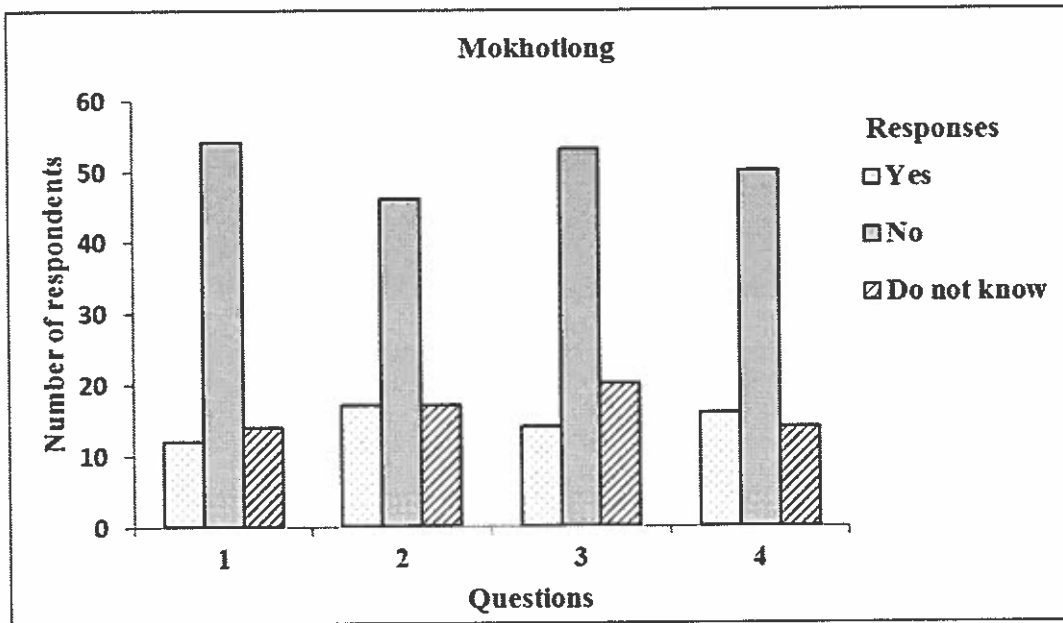
**Table 6: Responses from Thaba-Tseka**





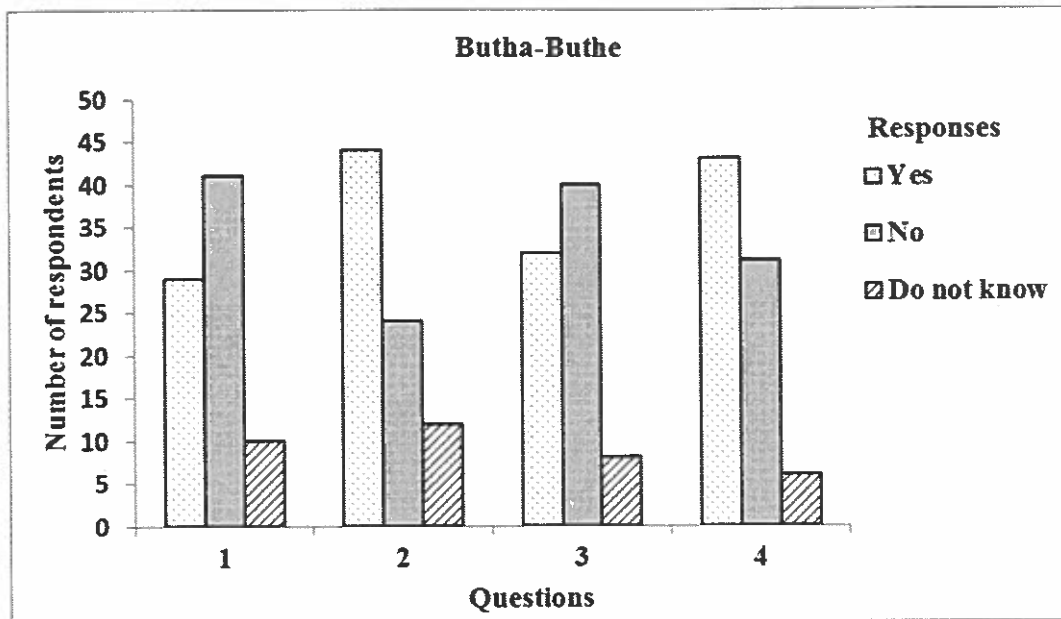
Most of the respondents in Thaba-tseka did not approve contemporary proverbs. They said that they do not function like traditional proverbs and there is no way they can be part of Sesotho language. However, they said they should be documented as a way of reference when disciplining people who are doing the same acts that these proverbs are encouraging.

**Table 7: Responses from Mokhotlong**



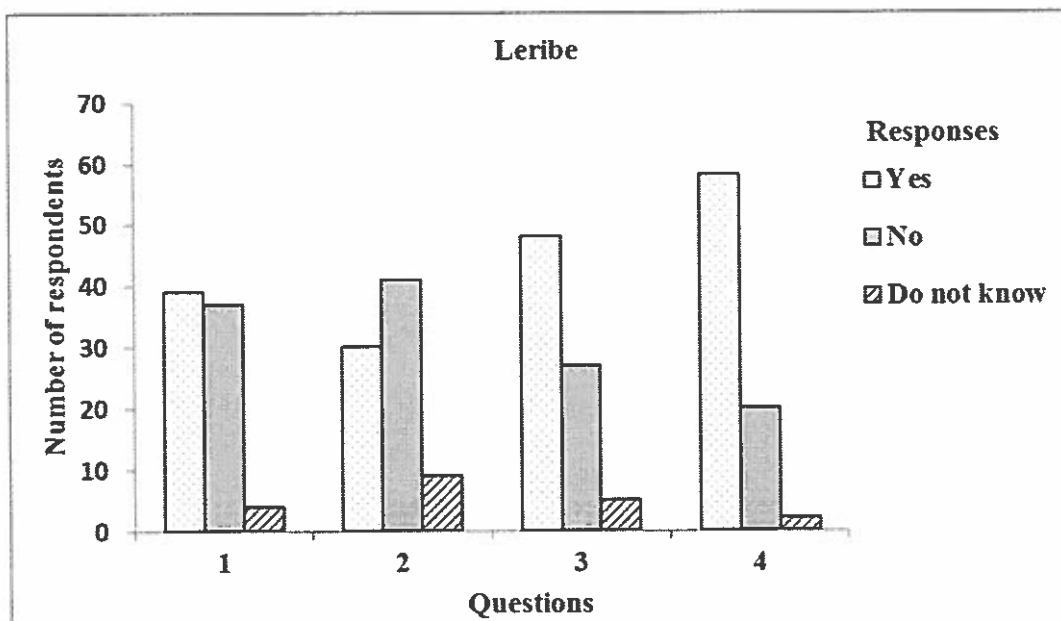
In Mokhotlong, out of eighty respondents, only few saw contemporary proverbs as new proverbs that are coined to bring in new ideas that Basotho do not have. They showed that they reveal the development of Sesotho language. Nevertheless, Majority of these respondents indicated that these proverbs are there to destroy their language and people from outside with think Basotho are immoral.

**Table 8: Responses from Butha-Buthe**



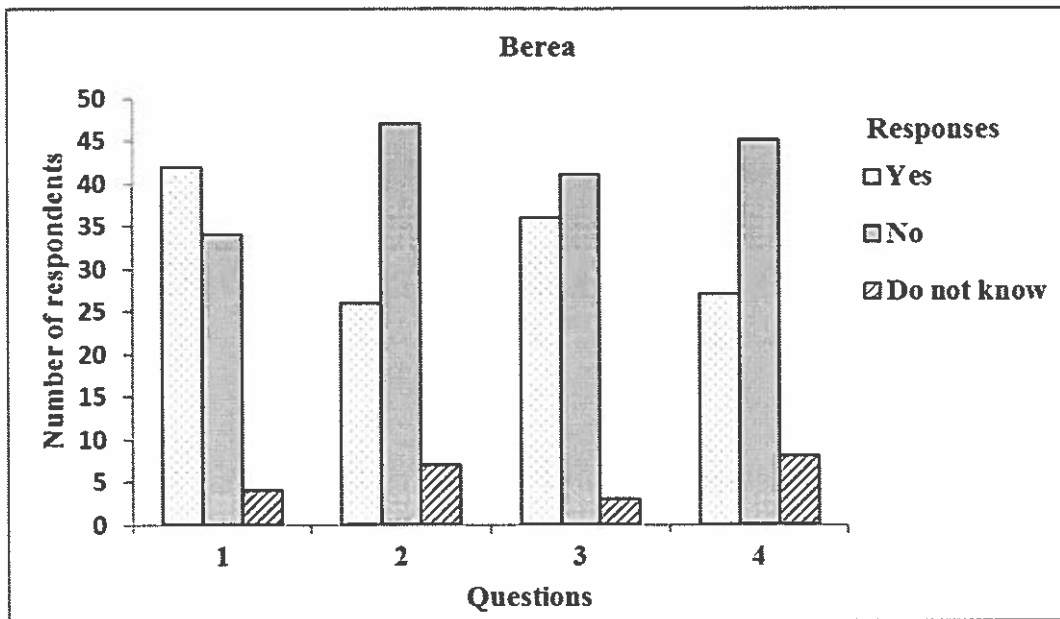
In Butha-Buthe, respondents stated that contemporary proverbs do not function like traditional proverbs that encouraged morality but they encourage men to rape their daughters and divorce. But they show the development of the language. They indicated that even though some of them may not be acceptable, others show that Sesotho language is growing. They therefore said they should be documented.

**Table 9: Responses from Leribe**



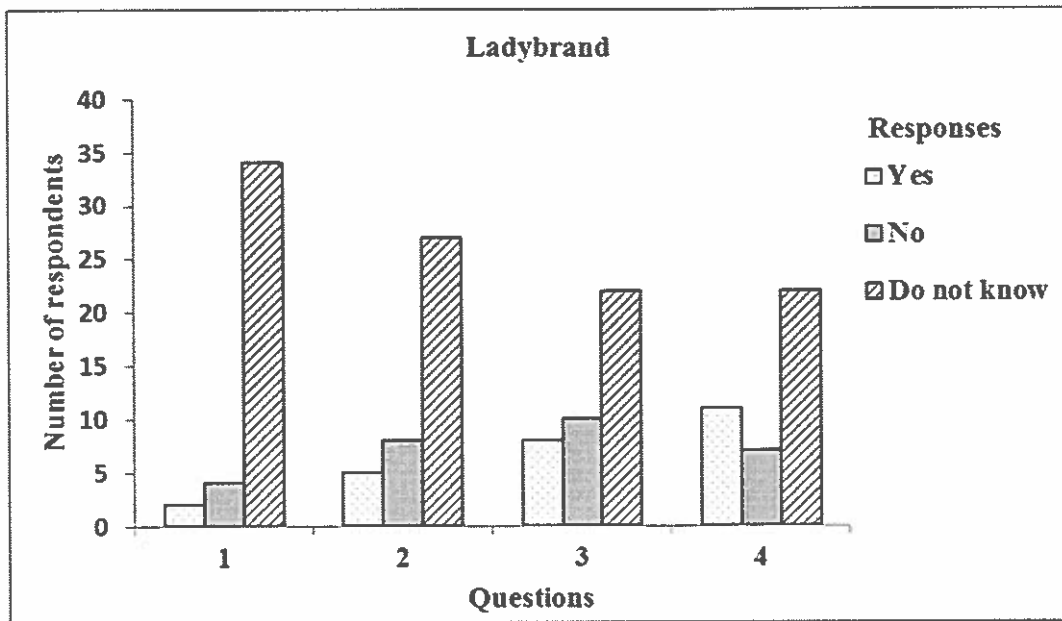
In Leribe thirty nine respondents noted that contemporary proverbs have the same function as traditional proverbs. Forty eight guaranteed that they will get their place in Sesotho language. Many of them said they must be documented.

**Table 10: Responses from Berea**



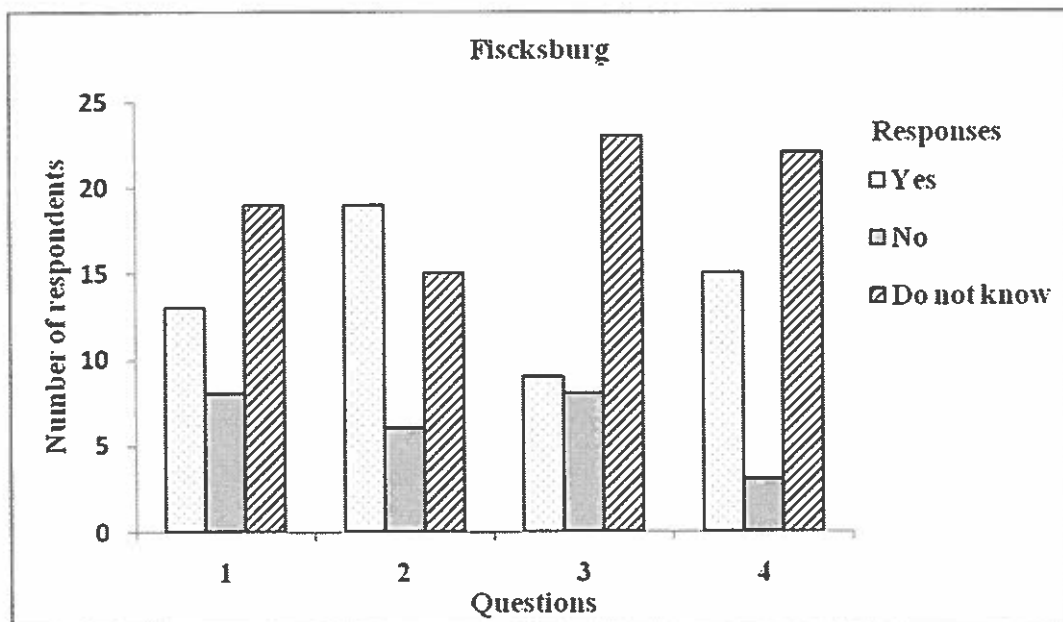
When asked whether contemporary proverbs function like contemporary proverbs, forty two out of eighty respondents said they do. But they argued that their themes are the ones that will make them not to be part of Sesotho language and they do not show the development of the language because they can never be considered as Basotho proverbs. They said they should not be documented. There are those respondents who had a feeling that these proverbs should be part of Basotho wisdom as seen in the table.

**Table 11: Responses from Ladybrand**



These questions were not really relevant in the neighbouring towns but because these two towns were part of data collection, the researcher asked the respondents the questions about the survival of contemporary proverbs. As it has been illustrated in the graph, very few could respond to the question.

**Table 12: Responses from Ficksburg**



The same thing happens here as it has been shown in table 12. The only difference is that some of the respondents could answer the questions and out of forty respondents, nineteen indicated that these proverbs show the development of Sesotho language.

### 5.11 Contemporary proverbs which are commonly used

Having seen that popular acceptance is the key for an expression to become a proverb, it should be noted that there are contemporary proverbs that are commonly used throughout the whole country. However, they feature commonly among the youth which depicts that the youth are the more creative section of society. The proverbs are listed below as per category.

#### 1) Proverbs that depict Individualism

a) T-*Sole le leng le le leng le ipulela bifi ya lona.*

Lit-[Every soldier opens his/her own tin of beef]

Fig-Every person works for himself/herself.

b) T-*Motho e mong le e mong o ngwaya kgopho la hae.*

Lit-[Every person scratches his/her own pimples].

Fig-Every person manages his/her own affairs.

c) T - *Kamele e nngwe le e nngwe e itjarela lota sa yona.*

Lit-[Every camel carries its own hump].

Fig- Every person has to work hard in order to survive.

d) T-*Ntja e nngwe le e nngwe e iphahamisetsa mohatla wa yona*

Lit-[Every dog lifts its own tail]

Fig-Every man must work hard in order to survive.

e) T-*Ntja e nngwe le e nngwe e ya ipatlela*

Lit-[Every dog searches for itself]

Fig- Every person must work hard in order to survive.

## 2) Proverbs that encourage promiscuity

a) T-*Terata e ema ka palo tse pedi* (Rapeane 2007:5).

Lit-[A washing line stands with two poles].

Fig-One should have more than one sexual partner.

b) T-*Kiribae ha e eme ka bidi le le leng*.

Lit-[A wheelbarrow does not stand on one wheel].

Fig-It is good for a person to have more than one partner.

c) T-*Ho ja lebese ha se ho ruwa kgomo*.

Lit- [To consume milk does not mean to rear a cow].

Fig- It does not mean that one should have a husband or a wife in order to have sex.

## 3) Poverbs that encourage divorce

a) T-*Mokopu ha o bodile o lahlwa le dithotse*.

Lit-[When a pumpkin is rotten it is thrown away with its seeds].

Fig- When a woman is divorced; she is send away with her children.

b) *Ntja ha e shwele matsetse a ya e baleha*.

Lit-[When a dog is dead, fleas run away from it].

Fig-When one's wealth is gone or finished, he or she is divorced.

c) T-*Tjhepisi ha e fela tswekere e a lahlwa*.

Lit-[When a chewing gum loses its sweetness, it is thrown away].

Fig-When one is less valuable, one is divorced.

## 4) Women who court men

a) T-*Thole se seng le se seng se itsokela tono sa sona pela mokoko oo se o ratang*.

Lit-[Every hen shakes its tail near the cock that it likes].

Fig-A woman has to court a man that she loves.

## 5) Child abuse

a) T-*Ha poho tse pedi di lwana ho senyeha jwang*

Lit- [When two bulls are fighting, grass is affected]

Fig- When parents are fighting, children are affected

**6) Intimate relationships with sugar daddies and mummies**

a) T-*Lemao le qhwaela kobo.*

Lit-[A safety pin ties a blanket].

Fig-A young person can have sexual relations with an older person.

b) T-*Tadi e qeta lofo* (Rapeane 2007:4).

Lit-[A rat finishes a loaf of bread]

Fig-A young lover can manage an old lover.

b) T-*Koloi ya kgale e lokiswa ka tshepe tse ntjha* (Rapeane2007:5).

Lit-[An old vehicle is repaired with new parts].

Fig-An old lover needs a young lover.

d) T- *Podi e tsofetseng e ja jwang bo botala.*

Lit-[An old goat eats green grass].

Fig-An older lover needs a young lover.

e)T-*Lengangajane ha le na diboko.*

Lit-[Dried fruit does not have worms].

Fig-An old lover is reliable.

**6) Unclassified proverbs**

a) T- *Biri e nowa moreneng.*

Lit-[Beer is expected to be drunk at the great place].

Fig- Heroes are expected to be at the rich people's places.

b) T-*O sebetse sa ho pepa tlou ka fatuku.*

Lit-[He/she is so brave that she can put an elephant on her back using a dish towel].

Fig- One takes unnecessary risks .

c) T- *O opile kamele selota.*

Lit- [He/she has clapped a camel's hump].

Fig- He/she has said the right thing at the right time.

d) T- *Ngwana ya sa lleng o shwela poremeng.*

Lit-[A child that does not cry dies on the pram].

Fig-One who does not show dissatisfaction cannot be attended to.

e) T- *Moqomo ha o tlale ho latela phako la mokwao.*

Lit-[A rubbish bin does not fill up according to the wishes of a hobo].

Fig-Things do not happen the way one may wish.

## 5.12 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to present and analyse data of Sesotho contemporary proverbs. These contemporary proverbs were divided according to different categories namely, proverbs that encourage individualism, those that promote promiscuity, child abuse, relationships with sugar daddies and mummies, women who court men and other proverbs. Data was classified in four different age groups, namely, 10-19, 20-35, 36-55 and 56-upwards. The meaning of the proverbs was presented. Their form and function was also discussed in this chapter. It was detected that the form of these proverbs is the same as that of the traditional proverbs. Their meaning is also derived from the context. Contemporary proverbs also have a certain function that they perform in a society.

Analysis of data showed that proverbs were popular among the age group 20-35 which is a group of youth. Like traditional proverbs, these proverbs were found to be known by Basotho in all the 10 districts of Lesotho and two neighbouring towns in South Africa. However, there are few proverbs that are shown in this chapter that were only known in two districts and known by very few people in other districts. The following chapter shall be the discussion.



## CHAPTER SIX

### DISCUSSION

#### 6.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses data that has been presented and analysed in chapter four.

Taylor (1994) observes that: “a proverb is wise; it belongs to many people; it is ingenious in form and idea; and it is invented by an individual who uses ideas, words, and ways of speaking that are generally familiar. Because as he does so, his sayings win acceptance and circulate in tradition”. He affirms that proverbs in the form of general observations are not easily recognized as proverbial unless we have heard them applied to particular situations. It is through this affirmation that the researcher had to find out whether these contemporary proverbs are known and used in different regions of Lesotho and the neighbouring regions in South Africa. These proverbs were also observed to be used by artists in their songs, newspapers and in different Radio stations in and out of Lesotho.

#### 6.1 Dynamism of proverbs

Every language must expand and allow change in order for it to survive. Proverbs as part of language are not an exception. Mutasa (1999:30) indicates that proverbs, like language, are dynamic. They are still an aspect of language that continues to respond to challenges of modern life. Similarly, Agbaje (2006:18) observes that the new orientation gives the people adequate opportunity to create new proverbs in line with the prevailing changing culture. In the like manner, Sesotho proverbs are also affected by change. This transformation has been indicated by Mokitimi (1991:111) when she notes that, as society develops, proverbs are affected by change; and it is this change that some Sesotho proverbs have variants with shifted meanings.

Clearly, she is aware that proverbs are not static and are liable to change. Further, Mokitimi (2004:375) maintains that Basotho’s use of proverbs continues, with new ones being created to express and come to terms with contemporary issues and new technology. However, she argues that old proverbs are still employed today, even though some of them may be regarded as archaic, with no place in modernity.

In order to make valid conclusions about the future and survival of the contemporary proverbs, it is important to look at their origin, context and popular acceptance.

## **6.2 Origin**

Ahmed (2005:25) asserts that:

Traditional proverbs have stemmed from various sources; often connected with individuals' experiences, observations, or general facts from different surroundings. People then refer to them on similar occasions and transmit them from generation to generation until they become part of their heritage. This is to say, a proverb is first uttered by an individual and in the time it becomes part of the traditions. People epitomize their way of thinking, their ideas through proverbs.

With regard to Sesotho proverbs, Mokitimi in (Peek and Yankah 2004:375) indicates that Sesotho proverbs originate from observations of the community's daily activities. Proverbs deal with the spectrum of the people's experiences with the physical environment, including animals and values, feelings and emotions. The expectation with contemporary Sesotho proverbs is that they should also originate from observation of the community and also deal with the spectrum of the people's experiences with physical environment, including animals and values, feelings and emotions as it is expected with a proverb. Data that has been presented and analysed shows that contemporary proverbs also originate from people's daily observations. They originate from natural phenomena, flora, insects, reptiles, frogs and lizards, rats/mice, birds and fowls, animals, humans and household goods. Meaning they also deal with the spectrum of the people's experiences with the physical world, including animals and values, feelings and emotions like traditional proverbs.

## **6.3 Context**

The context is also vital in as far as the meaning of a proverb is concerned. According to Mathumba (1988:108) "a proverb lends itself to being used in a variety of situations, sometimes with different connotations in different situations". According to Lauhakangas (2007:78), proverbs cannot be analysed outside their context. Orwenjo (2009:125) also maintains that proverbs in isolation have no concrete and tangible

meaning; as their semantic load is derived directly from the context and circumstances of use. The use of proverbs or proverb-like sayings seemed as expected to be connected to certain interactive situations or to a person's inner speech in certain situations. Proverbs were brought forth as social strategy when emotional or cognitive tension had for some reason increased or was expected to increase in social interaction. The research project of proverbs in their social contexts proved that no proverb could be fixed as a special sign for any situation or emotion. The explanation of their "meaning" as such was always dependent on the ways people use them (Lauhakangas, 2007:210).

Similarly, Mieder (2004:162) avers that all contextualised proverbs are solid proof that by no means out-of-date. He indicates that if traditional texts do not seem to fit a particular context, they can always be twisted into shape by changing a word or two. And, to be sure, modern people from poets to slogan writers are perfectly capable of creating statements based on proverbial structures that over time might well become the new proverbs of modernity.

Lamidi (2008:66) is of the same view when he affirms that the proverb recurs with almost the same structure and sense or meaning in different situations where it is used. If this is correct, we may then refer to a proverb text as a phraseme; that is, a unit that is coherent and cohesive, able to stand independently and be meaningful without recourse to another text. Since the proverb is based on the wisdom, culture, experiences, history, etcetera, of its society, it is easily interpretable within the society. The proverb is also used in interpersonal discourse by both the young and the old in appropriate contexts. As a text, it is passed down orally but with dialectal variations in some instances. It is used to sum up ideas in a speech event or draw analogies between events/personalities described in proverbs and events. Hence it is a record of past events which are relevant to the contemporary world. Thus we can say that proverbs are texts. If this is correct, then they are said as part of a person's speech in a particular context.

Lamiti (2008:66) further argues that this context can be defined as the situation or event that provoked the invocation of a proverb. A proverb must conform to the society's norms of interpretation and interaction. This in essence means that it must be interpretable within the context in which it occurs. It does not matter what the event is, a speaker can say a proverb that is relevant to that event; and a listener should be able to

interpret it within the social event in which it is used. This context must include topic, participants, setting and subject matter (cf., Hymes, 1962). Following the discussions above, it is axiomatic that the proverbs must be related to a current event. Of course, it can draw relevance from past events; the proverb is relevant to an ongoing speech. Otherwise, it would not be necessary to invoke it for current speech. For current event, it states or summarizes in a nutshell an idea that would have been expressed in several words. These contemporary proverbs are also given their meanings based on context, which is why old ones have new meanings because the context in which they are used now is different from that of old.

Having seen that contemporary proverbs stem from people's daily experiences like traditional proverbs and are used in context, it is also vital to look at how change has affected proverbs or what could be the possible reasons for coining of new, adapting or shifting the meaning of traditional proverbs.

#### **6.4 The form of contemporary proverbs**

Scholars such as Guma (1967), Mokitimi (1991), Finnegan (1994), Valdaeva (2003) and Reznikov (2009) have worked on the form of proverbs. Finnegan (1994:14) rightly points out that:

The form of proverbs is picked out first and most obviously as being short, and secondly, by the fact that even where the wording itself is not absolutely fixed, at least the main structural pattern is accepted in the society concerned as an appropriate one for this purpose.

Finnegan further indicates that "in addition to terseness and relative fixity, most sayings classed as proverbs are also marked by some kind of poetic quality in style or sense, and are in this way set apart in form from more straightforward maxims". On the other hand, Valdaeva (2003:379) notes that "proverbs combine literal meaning, which is the form for another, transferred, meaning that contains the idea". He further points out that:

Proverbs are easily recalled and recognized because of different stylistic devices such as alliteration, rhyme, paronomasia, metaphor and many others and, thus, have a more advantageous form than other set expressions, and are very effective for carrying different ideas to the society in a very compact form.

With regard to traditional Sesotho proverbs, Guma (1967:65) asserts that “proverbs have certain basic characteristics which they adhere to”. According to him, it is only if proverbs have the characteristics listed below that they can be called proverbs:

- a) They all have a fixed and rigid form which they adhere to at all times and which is not changeable.
- b) They are figurative; employ various structural forms such as contrast and parallelism, rhythm and alliteration as well as balance.
- c) For them to be firmly established in any language, they must have general acceptance by the community whose collective wit and wisdom they represent.

Correspondingly, Mokitimi (1991:126) indicates that “proverbs have a fixed or closed structure and are often didactic in nature. This implies that a proverb almost always appears in the same form (although some variations do occur)”. On the other hand, Mokitimi in Peek and Yankah (2004:375) observes that Sesotho proverbs are brief, terse, reflective statements that are both simple and complex, and that follow certain poetic patterns. She further notes that they are composed in poetic language, which makes them memorable to their users. Furthermore, she asserts that this poetic language is governed by metaphor, repetition, direct or indirect parallelism, elision, and omissions. Finally, she maintains that the proverb foregrounds itself through its structure and its connotative significance, and is governed by its syntactic patterns and linguistic modifications coupled with tone and rhythm. Contrary to what Guma and Mokitimi have indicated, Yankah (1989:28) holds a different view when he indicates that the form and meaning of a proverb is not fixed; it moves with usage.

Equally important, Mieder (1993:8) concurs with this idea by indicating that there are other 'markers' that enable people to characterize proverb texts. He notices that it is usually accepted that proverbs are relatively short and pithy. But he clarifies his point by making people aware that there are also proverbs that are considerably longer. However, the emphasis is that a proverb ought to be a relatively short and complete sentence. Mieder indicates that "to maintain a maximum level of recognizability and memorability, the proverb is usually stated in a fixed form that is not changed. Though, newer research is showing more and more that proverbs are being changed for various reasons quite often, the key thing is that the fixed form of proverbs does not appear to be as sacrosanct anymore presently as it might have once been" (1993:8).

Mokitimi (1991:127) asserts that "poetry tends to be self-reflective, both structurally and semantically". She notes that this applies to the proverb as well as its closed syntactic organization, its sound pattern, both segmental and suprasegmental, as well as its semantic significance (or theme), make it different from ordinary prose. Within its own boundaries and in addition to its sound pattern this contributes to a salient rhythm, which, as we view it, is derived from demonstrable tonal, and two other suprasegmental features, viz. length and pauses. Together all these points endow the proverb with the qualities normally associated with poetry. Due to its fixed form, these properties remain intact in discourse, no matter its kind. Although slight variation in form is possible, and despite the variation which could occur through the poetic license of the literary poet, the proverb text continues to display its poetic appeal and charm (Mokitimi, 1991:127).

Contemporary proverbs adhere to the above mentioned features of traditional, though there are some exceptions that will be discussed under this section.

#### **6.4.1 Old proverbs inserted new wording**

The observation made from contemporary proverbs is that some of them are traditional proverbs in which a new word is inserted and yet the meaning is still the same. For example;

Old proverb

a) T-*Monna ke qaati o a lomisanwa*

Lit-[A man is **the second stomach of a ruminant animal** he is shared]

Fig-A man should have multiple partners.

Contemporary proverb

b) T-*Monna ke apole o a lomisanwa.*

Lit-[A man is an apple he is shared]

Fig-A man should have multiple partners

The word *qaati* (the second stomach of a ruminant animal) has been substituted by the word *apole* (apple). An assumption is that nowadays many Basotho do not rear animals, as earlier Basotho used to do. The reason for substitution may therefore be the fact that the practice of slaughtering domestic animals together has vanished, especially in urban areas of Lesotho. Nowadays people hire specialists who do the whole job of slaughtering and skinning domestic animals. The word *apole* is so common in Lesotho that everybody including children know what it is, so instead of talking about *qaati*, which may not be known to children, an apple becomes clear to everyone. However, in both proverbs the figurative meaning is still retained.

#### 6.4.2 Direct parallelism

There is direct parallelism in contemporary proverbs as indicated below. According to Mokitimi (1991:136) there are two types of parallelisms namely direct parallelism and indirect parallelism. She avers that “direct parallelism is found where two similar or contrastive statements are parallel, that is, the constituents of one construction corresponds syntactically to those of the other, irrespective of whether they are similar or not”.

c) T- *Monna ke mokopu o a nama, mosadi ke khabetjhe o a ipopa.*

Lit-[A man is a pumpkin he spreads himself, a woman is a cabbage she wraps herself].

Fig-A man is allowed to move freely while a woman is not.

In this contemporary proverb above, the two topics and their comments are contrasting. There is a pause between the two propositions *Monna ke mokopu o a nama* and *mosadi ke khabetjhe o a ipopa* and both convey complete ideas in themselves. They correspond syntactically.

### 6.4.3 Indirect parallelism

Mokitimi (1991:136) indicates that “indirect parallelism occurs where there is a word change in the structure of the second proposition. Sometimes, a word which was non-existent in the first proposition is inversed, thereby changing the position of the words”.

d) T-*Ho ja lebese ha se ho rua kgomo.*

Lit- [To consume milk does not mean to rear a cow].

Fig- It does not mean that one should have a husband or a wife in order to have sex.

In this proverb there is half pause between the two propositions *Ho ja lebese* (to consume milk) and *ho rua kgomo* (to rear a cow) and this makes them dependent on one another. Mokitimi (1991:138) notes that the propositions are contrastive and it is brought about by the negative copulative element *ha se* (it is not).

Some of contemporary proverbs are exactly the same as traditional proverbs except semantic shift to suit modernity. Some of them have been extended to add more to their meaning. There are old Sesotho proverbs that are altered by inserting new words. This insertion of new words has been as a result of some words that are archaic. There are also old proverbs that are extended by adding some new words that add something to the meaning of a proverb. In fact, there is also variation that has occurred in these proverbs. These variations seem to have occurred as a result of different social factors such as age, sex, educational background and occupation.

Such proverbs include;

Old proverb

a) T-*Busetsa molamu sefateng*

Lit-[Return the stick to the tree]

Fig-To revenge



Contemporary proverb

*T-Busetsa molamu sefateng ka molao*

Lit-[Return the stick to the tree with law]

Fig-Revenge with law

In this proverb, *ka molao* (with law) has been added to the original proverb to extend its meaning.

Old proverb:

b) *T-Phiri e jewa moreneng*

Lit-[Hyna is eaten at the chief's place]

Fig-Heroes are expected to be at the rich people's places

Contemporary proverb:

*T-Biri e nowa moreneng*

Lit-[Beer is expected to be drunk at the great places]

Fig-Heroes are expected to be at the rich people's places

In these proverbs the figurative meaning is the same and the locative *moreneng* is still retained in both proverbs.

Old proverb:

c) *T- O sebeta sa ho beha tau setswetse*

Lit-[(A person) is so brave that she helps a breastfeeding lion]

Fig-One takes unnecessary risks

Contemporary proverb:

*T- O sebeta sa ho pepa tlou ka fatuku*

Lit-[(A person) is so brave that she can put an elephant on her back using a dish cloth]

Fig-One takes unnecessary risks

The two proverbs have the same figurative meaning. The first part of the traditional proverb is also retained.

d) Old proverb;

T-*O opile kgomo lenaka*

Lit-[He/she has clapped a horn of a cow]

Fig-He/she has said the right thing at the right time

Contemporary proverb:

T-*O opile kamele selota*

Lit-[He/she has clapped a camel's hump]

Fig-He/she has said the right thing at the right time

The two proverbs also have the same figurative meaning. The first part of the traditional proverb is also preserved.

The changes in these proverbs is not as a result of archaic words as the substituted words are still used or even substituted names of the animals are still there.

However, in the proverbs below, changes may be as a result of archaic words.

Old proverb:

e) T-*Fiswana le letle ha le jele*

Lit- [A small clay pot is not used]

Fig- A small cherished thing is short-lived

Contemporary proverb:

T-*Kotlolo se setle ha se jele*

Lit-[A small beautiful bowl is not used]

Fig-A small cherished thing is short-lived

According to Mokitimi (1991:56) "before the introduction of different dishes that are used today, food used to be dished into small clay pots". It is through this observation that this proverb was coined. Since nowadays clay pots are no longer used they have been substituted by glass and enamel dishes.

Green (1997:666) upholds that the applicability and adaptability of proverbs seem to be without limit. He maintains that the moment that a traditional proverb does not appear

to be appropriate; its wording is consciously changed, though the underlying proverbial structure is maintained. This therefore suggests that the word *(le)fiswana* 'small clay pot' has been replaced by *(se)kotlolo* 'dish' due to the fact that there are no longer clay pots as people these days buy dishes from retailers. Clay pots demanded a lot of time to be made. The figurative meaning is still retained.

Old proverb:

f) T-*Ngwan'a sa lleng o shwela tharing* (Sekese 1975:57).

Lit- [A child that does not cry dies in a **leather carrier**].

Fig-One who does not show dissatisfaction cannot be attended to.

Contemporary proverb:

T-*Ngwana ya sa lleng o shwela poremeng*

Lit-[ A child that does not cry dies on the pram]

Fig-One that does not show dissatisfaction cannot be attended to

The original proverb was coined out of an observation that Basotho women used to carry their babies on their backs using *thari* (cradle). What differs in these two proverbs is the final word, *tharing* (a skin in which to carry a child on one's back). It has been substituted by the word *poremeng* (pram; a small car used to carry babies). This may be due to the fact that *thari* is no longer used to carry babies, instead, women now use blankets or prams to carry their babies. However, *thari* and *poreme* still perform the same function of carrying a baby; the difference is that people prefer to use prams these days rather than to carry babies on their backs, as most of these proverbs are used in towns where there are pavements where it is easy to drive a pram. Jegede (2008) has also observed that in some cases, old proverbs have been altered, imposed and supplanted so that they become variations and transformation of traditional sayings.

#### 6.4.4 Newly coined proverbs with the old meaning

Old proverb

g) T-*Moqomo ha o tlale ho latela phako la mokwao*.

L-[A rubbish bin does not fill up according to the wishes of a hobo].

F-Things do not happen the way one may wish.

### Contemporary proverb

T-*Monokotshwai ha o butse ho latela takatso tsa tshwene.*

L-[A berry never ripens in terms of the wishes of a monkey].

F-Things do not happen the way one may wish.

The fact that monkeys are no longer there in Lesotho, the idea of berries and the monkeys vanishes as time went by, hence, the coining of the new proverb. In the new proverb above, *moqomo* (rubbish bin), and *mokwao* (hobo) are new images. People use bins to empty their dirt unlike in the past when each Mosotho had his or her own *thotobolo* (dumping place). Moreover, there were no street people. Everybody had a place in which to stay. If a person did not know his or her own abode, he or she would rather live at the chief's place. Nevertheless, things have changed now. People are seen in streets roaming about. *Mokwao* (hobo) is a noun derived from a verb *kwaholla* (open). They open street bins in order to find what they can eat. They feed themselves from the bins. In these two proverbs, the literal meaning is different but the figurative meaning is the same.

#### 6.4.5 Subject elision

Another feature is subject elision. The subject noun can be omitted where the concord makes clear that it represents the omitted subject (Finnegan, 1994:20).

h) T- (*Motho*) *O opile kamele selota.*

Lit- [He/she has clapped a camel's hump].

Fig- He/she has said the right thing at the right time.

i) T- (*Motho*) *O sebetse sa ho pepa tlou ka fatuku.*

Lit- [(A person) is so brave that she can put an elephant on her back using a dish towel].

Fig- One takes unnecessary risks.

j) T- (*Motho*) *O tla holela mobung jwaloka tapole.*

Lit- [(A person) will grow inside the soil like a potato].

Fig- One will die, while still young.

- k) T-(*Motho*) *O tla e supa dinomoro.*  
 Lit-[(A car) you will point out its plate numbers].  
 Fig-One will lose something precious, due to delay.

In examples (l)-(o) above, the function of the subject has been taken over by the subject concords *o-* 'he/she' that appears in all these proverbs.

#### 6.4.6 Truncation

They also have truncation. Mokitimi (1991:141) define truncation as “the deletion of one part of a proverb and the use of the remainder”. Mokitimi further asserts that in Sesotho, truncation occurs mostly when the original proverb consists of two co-ordinate sentences, in which case only one part is quoted during some discourse. Furthermore she declares that in such a situation, the listeners mentally complete the proverb with the remaining part.

- l) T- *Ntja e nka lesapo molomong wa e nngwe, haholo ha e sa e tshabe.*

Lit-[A dog takes a bone from another, especially when it does not fear it].

Fig- A man can engage in sexual relationship with one's wife.

In this proverb, *ntja e nka lesapo molomong wa e nngwe* (a dog takes a bone from another) is normally quoted. *Haholo ha e sa e tshabe* (especially if it does not fear it) is normally quoted by the listener.

In another example;

- m) T- *Monna ke mokopu o a nama, mosadi ke khabetjhe o a ipopa.*

Lit-[A man is a pumpkin he spreads himself, a woman is a cabbage she wraps herself].

Fig-A man is allowed to move freely while a woman is not.

In this example above, only the first half is normally quoted, which is *monna ke mokopu o a nama* (a man is a pumpkin he spreads himself). The second part, which is *mosadi ke khabetjhe o a ipopa* (a woman is a cabbage she wraps herself) is normally left to be quoted by the listener.

Mokitimi (1991:142) maintains that truncation in proverbs helps to shorten what would otherwise be a long proverb, thus making it more poetic. Mathumba (1988:18) observes that “African proverbs are not always spoken out in full on all occasions, but may often be alluded to by quoting only part of the proverb. In such instances the listener is deemed capable of supplying the rest of the proverb”. Similarly, among the Tsonga people of Mozambique it is very common to use only part of a proverb (or just a reference) which is then completed by the interlocutors or audience. This is one creative way to use proverbs. Mentioning only a part of a proverb, the performer involves the audience, who participates, sharing and assuming at same time responsibility for that performance that may include opportunity and voice, underlining an agreement on the meaning to be brought out in that particular occasion. (Manjate undated:11).

#### 6.4.7 Structural Dynamics

Some of the data that was presented and analysed in the previous chapter exhibits a new structure of proverbs which does not appear under the structures provided by Guma (1967) and Mokitimi (1991). In these new proverbs, *e nngwe le e nngwe* (each and everyone), *le leng le le leng* (all others) and *se seng le se seng* (all others) are quantifiers. Lesia (1998:37) maintains that the quantifier *e nngwe le e nngwe* (each and every one) expresses the meaning of all. She indicates that there is a very slight difference between ‘the whole of’ and ‘all of’ the involved entities. According to her, these two quantifiers imply totality. She adds that the former refers to the whole of the singular entity referred to, and the latter refers to all of the plural entities. This is the new structure that does not appear on traditional proverbs. Perhaps one would assume that the reason for this reduplication in these proverbs is a result of new lifestyle that Basotho have adopted.

According to Possa (2010:83), this new structure shows dynamism. However, she avers that even though new proverbs have a different structure from traditional proverbs, there are some features of traditional proverbs that these contemporary proverbs have maintained, such as the following:

- 1) They have both literal and figurative meaning as illustrated below:

a) T-*Mokgodutswane o mong le o mong o ikorela letsatsi*

**Literal meaning** – [Every frog basks in the sun for its own benefit].

**Figurative meaning**-Every person must manage his/her problems

2) There is elision of noun class prefixes as indicated below:

b) T-*(Se)Qaqana se seng le se seng se a iqhomela.*

Lit- [Every frog jumps for itself].

Fig- Every person must work hard in order to survive.

3) There is an internal elision as shown below:

c) T - *Kamele e nngwe le e nngwe e itjarela (se)lota sa yona.*

Lit-[Every camel carries its own hump].

Fig- A person has to work hard in order to survive.

d) T-*Mokoko o mong le o mong o fatela (se)thole se haufi.*

Lit-[Every cock digs for a hen that is near it].

Fig- A man works for a woman who is near him.

4) There are both elisions of noun class prefix and internal elision shown below:

e) T-*(se)Thole se seng le se seng se itsokela (se)tono sa sona pela mokoko oo se o ratang.*

Lit-[Every hen shakes its tail near the cock that it likes].

Fig- A Woman courts a man that she loves.

#### 6.4.8 Metaphorical significance

Foster (1968:43) rightly points out that “the proverb functions on the basis of the metaphor applied to situation”. On the other hand, Sunkuli and Miruka (1990:54) define metaphor as “an image in which association of one thing with another is made as

if the two were actually the same". According to Mieder (1993:8) metaphors constitute an important marker for many proverbs, and it is exactly this vivid imagery of most proverbs that makes them so appealing to people. Valdaeva (2003:388) points out that metaphor is the stylistic device based on the principle of identification of two objects, the transference of meaning from one word to another when the objects have some similar characteristics. But those similarities are not real but arise out of the associations from our experience (Valdaeva 2003:388).

Many scholars observe that many proverbial sayings make significant use of metaphor, not simply to enhance their rhetorical appeal but to convey essential meaning. With regard to Sesotho proverbs, Mokitimi (1991:175) illustrates that there are limited numbers of proverbs of which both the 'tenor' and the 'vehicle' are not metaphorical, and which are understandable in terms of their denotative meaning as such.

One then notices that there are these kinds of contemporary proverbs where both the 'tenor' and 'vehicle' are not metaphorical, as shown below:

Contemporary proverbs:

- a) T- *Mokgatjhane ho ima ya ratang.*  
Lit-[One becomes pregnant out of one's free will].  
Fig-People are free to do what they want to do.
  
- b) T- *Qhekwana ho tsofala le ratang.*  
Lit-[Only old people who wish to be old become old].  
Fig- Age is not very important.
  
- c) T- *Thuto-boholo ya hlalefisa.*  
Lit-[Old age education makes one wise].  
Fig- One learns better when old.

In the three proverbs above, *mokgatjhane*, (pregnant woman) *qhekwana* (old person) and *thuto-boholo* (old age education) are tenors; while *ho ima ya ratang*, (only she that like gets pregnant) *ho tsofala le ratang* (only he/she that like, age), and *ya hlalefisa*



(makes one wise) are vehicles or focal expressions which brighten up their tenors. However, both the tenor and the vehicle operate on the same level, so that no clear metaphor has been employed.

Even though there are limited proverbs that do not show a clear metaphor, Mokitimi (1991:175) asserts that the large majority of proverbs function metaphorically, since they strike a connection between concepts which can only be understood through the mode of connection. This has been illustrated in the proverbs below:

#### Contemporary proverbs

- a) T- *Koloi ya kgale e lokiswa ka tshope tse ntjha,*  
Lit- [A new car is repaired with new parts]  
Fig- An old lover needs a young lover.

In the proverb above, a connection is made between an old car that is repaired with new parts, and older people who engage in sexual relationships with young people.

- b) T- *Mokoko o itswalla sethole*  
Lit- [A cock bears its own chickens]  
Fig- A man works for a woman who is near him

A connection is also made in the above proverb of a cock that would copulate with a hen, which would then lay eggs and, after brooding would have chicks produced. Similarly, a man would have sexual intercourse with his wife and then the wife becomes pregnant and gives birth to a child. If it is a daughter then the man has found somebody whom he will have sexual intercourse with.

On the other hand, Mokitimi (1991:174) further notes that in the proverbial metaphor, however, both the 'tenor' and the 'vehicle' refer to persons, circumstances or objects outside the proverb itself, and should therefore, be understood or interpreted likewise. This is seen in the proverbs discussed below:

a) T- *Lemao le qhwaela kobo.*

Lit- [A safety pin ties a blanket].

Fig-A young person can have sexual relations with an older person.

The tenor *lemao* (safety pin) refers to a human being, especially the young one, while the focal expression *le qhwaela kobo* (ties a blanket) shows the huge difference between the two people who engage in love affair.

b) T- *Ntja ha e shwele matsetse a ya e baleha.*

Lit- [When a dog is dead, fleas run away from it].

Fig- When one's wealth is gone or finished, they are divorced.

The tenor *ntja* (dog) refers to the human being, and the focal expression *ha e shwele matsetse a ya e baleha* (when it is dead fleas run away from it) indicates how suddenly people can change when they discover that one is no longer valuable to them.

c) T- *Podi e tsofetseng e ja jwang bo botala.*

Lit-[An old goat eats green grass].

Fig-An older lover needs a young lover.

The tenor *podu e tsofetseng* (an old goat) also refers to the human being, especially an old one. The focal expression *e ja jwang bo botala* (eats green grass) justifies unacceptable behaviour of old people who engage in sexual activities with younger people.

d) T- *Nku ha e tswa terateng e siya boya.*

Lit-[When a sheep goes through a barbed wire, it leaves some wool]

Fig- One has to pay something after one has been given something

The tenor *nku* (a sheep) refers to the human being, while the focal expression *ha e tswa terateng e siya boya* (when it goes through a barbed wire) display a new culture that has been adapted, of not helping people, instead expecting a form of payment after every favour that has been done.

d) T-*Mokopu ha o bodile o lahlwa le dithotse.*

Lit-[When a pumpkin is rotten it is thrown away with its seeds].

Fig- When a woman is divorced, she is sent away with her children.

*Mokopu* (pumpkin) is the tenor while *ha o bodile o lahlwa le dithotse* (when it is rotten) is the vehicle or focal expression which denotes that when a woman is divorced; her children are also abandoned by their father.

## 6.5 Changes observed in themes

Change is not something that can be ignored so it is good that there are newly coined Sesotho proverbs which we believe are coined due to change which functionalism refers to as social change. From the functionalist court comes a positive and negative point of view. Both points of view see modern technology and social change as intertwined and integrated process. According to this theory the incidence of social change is normal function of the society. If there is no change in the society then society will lose its importance. The very basic function of the society is to meet the needs of modern technological advances for the betterment of its members. As a result, social changes are basic functions of the society. All the social institutions including family, therefore, need to be changed as per rate and speed of social changes. Otherwise, they will cease automatically to perform their regular functions.

According to Parsons, one of the proponents of functionalism, social change has a direct impact on the basic structure and functions of the social institutions. Technology is considered as a powerful tool of social change. It has drastically changed the way of life. It has also institutionalized the functioning of the social institutions. The institutions of family, religion, morality, marriage, state, property have been altered. Modern technology has also shifted the industry from the household goods. As a result, some radical changes have been witnessed in the family organization. It is from this theoretical background that we see this kind of change into Basotho society through the use of proverbs.

Keakepoto (Undated: 2) notes that social change can be defined as alterations that occur in the social structure and social relationship. Alterations may occur in norms, values,

cultural products and symbols in a society. Institutions, patterns of interaction, work, leisure activities, roles, norms and other aspects of society can be altered overtime as a result of the process of social change. Contemporary proverbs indicate social change as indicated below. Contemporary proverbs show a change in morality, marriage and property as seen in the discussion indicated in different categories below.

### 6.5.1 Individualism

Contemporary proverbs bring in a new theme that has never existed among the Basotho or in their traditional proverbs which is individualism. This is new to Basotho. Proverbs that encourage this new lifestyle are known and used by many Basotho. As it has been indicated in chapter four, Out of 80 respondents interviewed per region, Maseru has 258, Mafeteng 168, Mohale'shoek 189, Quthing 341, Qacha's nek 225, Thaba-Tseka 212, Mokhotlong 183, Butha-Buthe 231, Leribe 229, Berea 273 out of the total of 720 while Ladybrand 34 and Ficksburg 52 out of the total of 360. These numbers show that these proverbs are rampant.

Seema (2012:129-130) argues that one has seldom heard a Mosotho saying: "this is my cow", "this is my land", because they emphasized the duties towards the community not to an individual. He asserts that:

Virtues of sharing as well as compassion were regarded as very important in Basotho life. The proverb: *Bana ba motho ba kgaolelana hlooho ya tsie* (children of the same family share the head of a locust), emphasized the fact that an individual had a social commitment to share what he had with others. Even though one had little food, one had to share with those who had none, and stinginess or meanness was discouraged.

Similarly, in his speeches when addressing the nation, the former Prime Minister Lesotho, Pakalitha Mosisili would identify several core social values that are "part and foundation of the nation's vision into the next twenty years."

The former prime minister would encourage the Basotho to revive the values associated with expressions such as *kgotso* (peace), *kopano ke matla* (unity), *u ka nketsang ha e ahe motse* (tolerance), *boithompho le tlhomphano* (self-respect and respect of others),

*bana ba monna ba arolelana hlowana ya tsie* (children of the same family share the head of a locust) (sharing), and *ntlo ya motho e mong ha e na boroko* (self-reliance) (Mosisili 2006, p.1). He also emphasized on cooperation in the political arena. Mosisili observed this new lifestyle and used the opportunity to attract people by talking about unity. He knew that many Basotho are still yearning for their past life so by advising Basotho to go back to their traditional life would win him many votes. Mieder (2008:320) maintains that traditional proverbs are indeed a living part of all political discourse. They play a significant role in their speeches and writings of major politicians, who employ them both positively and negatively to reach their political goal. Mosisili was aware that Basotho no longer have that spirit that traditional Basotho had of cooperation.

Traditionally, Basotho encouraged cooperation. Their social life was based on unity. Segoete (2002:5) observes that Basotho did everything together. They helped each other without expecting any payment in return. Hence, they had proverbs such as *Kopano ke matla*, (unity is power), *Bana ba monna ba ntša sebata lefikeng*, (A man's sons succeed to bring out the fierce animal from the rock: unity is strength) and many more, meaning that if there is a heavy duty to be carried out, it can seem less demanding if it is done by a group.

In addition, Matli (2005:25) observes that in Thaba-Tseka, in the rural areas of Lesotho, traditional lifestyle is still steadfast even though western influence is apparent. People follow their traditional practices such as circumcision, witchcraft, venerating the dead ancestors, *letsema* (working together in labour intensive activity). Majority of households have residential sites and own one to two pieces of land as crop fields, fewer own three or more. People lead simple rural life and are largely unemployed with no regular cash income.

However, he indicates that after some of these people were moved from this place as it was used to build a dam, their life began to change. He avers;

But after resettlement, for such help one had to employ someone else and then paying was a problem because they themselves were unemployed and poor. In their real homes where they had been

forced to leave, their work philosophy was *letšoele le beta poho* (unity is strength); the poor benefited too. Things had changed to individualism and money; that oneness which was shared by the community as a whole was no more. The poor bore it alone – they felt the real pinch of not having anything in life (2005:98)

Matli observes that moving people from their place due to construction of a dam in Katse also contributed to this individualism which seems to be practiced in Lesotho (2005:25). This even shows how real individualism that is shown by contemporary proverbs is. Some chose this kind of life while others were forced in to it and proverbs such as these are used to support this new life style.

a) T-*Qaqana se seng le se seng se a iqhomela*

Lit-[Every frog jumps for itself].

Fig-Every person must be independent

b) T-*Mokgodutswane o mong le o mong o ikorela letsatsi*

Lit-[Every lizard basks in the sun for itself]

Fig-Every person must manage his/her own life.

c) T-*Sole le leng le le leng le ipulela bifi ya lona*

Lit-[Every soldier opens his/her own tin of beef].

Fig-Every person works for himself/herself.

Money is involved now and those who do not have it are in hot soup. Meaning it is the survival of the fittest.

Some Basotho blame this new way of living or individualism on politics. Wilson and Mapetla (2008:80) observe that the political division and lack of unity has brought about a tendency to not listen to ideas and to destroy all efforts of persons who are from a particular [political] party, even though these ideas may be wise and thoughtful. The hope is that leadership would embody a vision of the common good that unifies minds and hearts, bringing strength and integrity to the country as a whole. They identify two sources of tension in Lesotho today that challenge unity.

- a) Historically, chiefs have been entrusted with maintenance of law and order, preservation of the environment, and protection of the people. The present day challenge stems from the transfer of some chiefly functions to the politically elected local authorities. This change has left chiefs and the Basotho people unclear as to who is responsible for what. There is some conflict between these leadership institutions that have a stake in providing development, control of natural resources, and social welfare issues.
  
- b) The “middle” segment of society not being involved in decision making process. The middle segment includes a highly educated, professionally working group; these people are considered to be the pillars and drivers of the economy and are responsible for delivery on improved livelihoods for the Basotho people.

Their exclusion defies the principles of sustainable democracy which among others emphasize providing opportunity for all and ruling for and by the people, and the traditional Moshoeshoe I core leadership values of consultative democratic decision making (2008:80).

According to these two scholars politics have totally changed Basotho’s life style into a new behaviour of individualism.

Functionalism sees this new life style as evolutionary change which is a change which occurs within any system for as long as the system exists. Evolutionary changes are usually gradual and reflect a response to changing times as individuals try to adapt to the ever changing environment. As the environment constantly changes, the norms and values of the society might lag behind, resulting in a state of equilibrium. Therefore, adjustment, whether through external or internal influence, is often necessary to move towards a new equilibrium. The adjustment takes place through evolutionary change. Such change, as a process, takes into account various components of the societies which become differentiated and adapt to new needs and problems. In this process, societies become more complex, and new institutions and subsystems develop to perform new functions required for the smooth operation of the society under the changing times.

Evolutionary change is a necessary societal instinct for survival (Radcliffe-Brown 1952:7-9). This means the idea of individualism might not be bad but it is how life is today among the current Basotho as it might be a way to survive. Basotho no longer depend on livestock or ploughing, only the few in the rural areas have animals and they still plough their own land but the majority is poor. The whole life depends on money now so the only option is for one to fend for himself/herself in order to survive.

Similarly, Madumulla (2001:273) observes that there comes a moment when a society undergoes social transformation where the social structure and its relations cannot be guided by *universal truth* anymore, because of the expanded ability of the human being to control nature.... Man does not even need togetherness because it has been overtaken by technology. Madumulla observes that a man with a machine does the work of many people, thus symbolically defeating the collective concept of the proverb.

In its present form, it shall exist in the society and with the society, for a long time to come, because one of its constitutive elements, *social acceptance*, is a long-lasting imprint. The truth of a proverb, its simplicity notwithstanding, is what accords it its acceptance even among the so-called developed societies today.

Typically, all things 'communal' or 'collectivistic' or 'interdependent' are considered 'traditional' or 'old-fashioned' and thus need to be 'modernized' and 'developed.' It is as if the people to be 'developed' are somehow their own worst obstacles to this development, while at the same time they also are considered to be the solution to their own problems (Gleason 2003:51).

From the information above, the new theme of individualism may not be a bad idea but indicates changes that affect the Basotho society. Even though this new life style is painful to some people but it could also show continuity of the society and its adaptation to modernity. Basotho society like any other has been affected by changes which are reflected in these contemporary proverbs. Some of the examples presented in chapter four are;



- a) *T-Kgolwabolokwe e nngwe le e nngwe e ithetela polokwe yona*  
 Lit-[Every beetle rolls down its own ball].  
 Fig-Everybody must be independent
- b) *T-Kamele e nngwe le e nngwe e itjarela lota sa yona*  
 Lit-[Every camel carries its own hump].  
 Fig- A person has to work hard in order to uplift oneself.
- c) *T-Ntja e nngwe le e nngwe e iphahamisetsa mohatla wa yona*  
 Lit-[Every dog lifts its own tail]  
 Fig-Every man must work hard in order to survive

These examples demonstrate the change that has affected the Basotho.

These proverbs therefore might find their place in traditional Sesotho proverbs. The analysis has also shown that even though they have a different structure from traditional proverbs, they still have some proverb markers. Mieder (2009) argues that;

proverbs are still invented by individuals, and if a particular statement still exhibits at least one of the proverb markers (structure, shortness, metaphor, alliteration, rhyme, parallelism, ellipsis, hyperbole, paradox, Etcetera .) it might just catch-on, it might gain currency in a family setting, a village, a city, a state, the entire nation, and eventually the world.

This therefore means that these contemporary proverbs can still be considered as proverbs because they still retain some form that traditional proverbs have. These proverbs also have the same functions as traditional proverbs that encourage people to work hard as shown in the song below;

Nevertheless, there are still traditional proverbs that encouraged Basotho to work hard in order to survive as indicted in this song below;

Mahosana a ka Phamong (2001)

*Ha ho na tsuonyana phatela 'ngoe,*

*Ha ho na khomo sebeletsa pere,*

*Motho o phela ka mofufutso oa phatla ea hae.*

(There is no chicken that digs for another,  
There is no cow that works for the horse,  
Every person has to sweat in order to survive).

The first two lines of this song are idiomatic expressions while the last one is a proverb. This song indicates that in life, everybody has to work hard to make a living, and nobody should turn out to be an idler who expects to be spoon-fed. He informs us that, for one to survive, one has to struggle and fend for one's family (Phafoli 2009:213).

### **6.5.2 Promiscuity**

Proverbs that encourage promiscuity promote unaccepted behaviour. From another perspective they serve to highlight the level of immorality that has gripped Basotho people. They demonstrate the rampant infidelity that has hit the community. This is also illustrated by the fact that the proverbs are used by all ages and that they are prevalent in the urban areas, the centres of prostitution. Basotho have their own values and morals that govern their society. Functionalism states that the lives of individuals within any given society are governed by social values and cultural traditions which are transmitted from generation to generation. These norms and values are learnt through socialization. The way individuals interact and behave in their social life operates within the context of the social system of which one is a member (Radcliffe-Brown 1952:52). This theory suggests that whatever behaviour from the people shall be the approved one by the society. In short, social norms and values are basic rules to which members of the society generally subscribe to. Thus they constitute the unwritten rules and laws governing interpersonal relations. Proverbs therefore play a major role because they are used on day to day basis. They are also one of the cultural traditions that are transmitted from generation to generation.

However, Basotho traditions may be blamed for this kind of behaviour or coining of contemporary proverbs. According to Gill (1993:57) there is a Basotho tradition that a nursing mother should be spared from sex for at least two years, to give her time to breastfeed and wean the baby. Her husband is allowed to have sex during this period with a special chosen person, usually the wife of a very close relative, the younger sister of the wife or the wife of an age-maid from the initiation lodge. Gill further indicates that some Basotho men and women still behave firmly in this tradition, while modern

morally sound and Christian-minded ones see it as adultery. Some mineworkers are said to engage in this tradition as a part time.

From Gill's information, one would wonder whether Basotho tradition did not contribute into promiscuity. Giving a man permission to sleep around and keeping a woman for full two years without having sexual intercourse with her husband could result in promiscuity or breaking down of marriages. One surmises that it is because of this behaviour that men felt like it is their right to sleep around and this behaviour has been handed down from one generation to another. The only difference is the rate at which is done now or the motive.

These proverbs are popular among men as they claim to have a right to sleep around. According to Phafoli (2009:186) among Basotho, there seem to have been some signs of promiscuity in olden days, although it was not legalised. We are informed that, when the husband had gone away and returned late in the evening, he would, as he approached his compound, blow a whistle or start by reciting praises loudly. This exercise was meant to warn any man relaxing in his house to quit as the owner was around. If indeed a man was present he would leave the house silently unlike nowadays when most husbands are anxious to catch their wives red handed with their lovers (2009:186). What Phafoli observes is that Basotho were promiscuous even though it could not be legalised.

To support this further, there is traditional proverb such as those listed below that encourages this behaviour.

*T-Monna ke qaati o a lomisanwa.*

Lit-[A man is the second stomach of a ruminant animal he is shared].

Fig- A man should have multiple partners.

This is a traditional proverb that is used and accepted by Basotho. It encourages men to sleep. According to traditional Basotho there was nothing wrong with this kind of behaviour so this could be the reason for coining of other similar proverbs shown below with the same function.

Nowadays proverbs that encourage promiscuity are rampant among the Basotho. As it has been indicated in chapter four, Out of 80 respondents interviewed per region, Maseru has 459, Mafeteng 256, Mohale'shoek 335, Quthing 444, Qacha'snek 322, Thaba-Tseka 278, Mokhotlong 340, Butha-Buthe 372, Leribe 377, Berea 354 out of the total of 800 while Ladybrand 68 and Ficksburg 108 out of the total of 400. These numbers shows how popular these proverbs are in Lesotho. They are being used o day to day basis.

Examples of such proverbs are:

a) *T-Monna ke a apole o a lomisanwa.*

Lit-[A man is an apple we share]

Fig-A man should have multiple partners

c) *Kerebae ha e eme ka bidi le le leng*

Lit-[A wheelbarrow does not stand on one wheel].

Fig-It is good for a person to have more than one partner.

c) *T-Monna ke mokopu o a nama, mosadi ke khabetjhe o a ipopa*

Lit-[A man is a pumpkin he spreads, a woman is a cabbage she coils herself]

Fig-A man can flirt as he likes but a woman cannot.

According to Khotso (2010:72) metaphorically in Sesotho culture, *mokopu* is used to refer to male behaviour. On the other hand, Rapeane (2003:175) states that this proverb is more often heard to reinforce male promiscuity. She asserts that this proverb is more often heard from males who use it to justify their profligacy. She further observes that males together with females who support this status quo on gender issues normally interpret these proverbs to mean that men are incapable of changing their promiscuity, as it is natural characteristic of theirs (2003:175). Miti (2008:74) also observes that proverbs directed at men "justify their behaviour and authorizes them to behave as they wish".

Khotso and Mashige (2011:110) indicate that this proverb means that it is natural and socially acceptable when a man has multiple sexual partners: a womanizer. Kabaji (2009:27) asserts that a man with a child out of wedlock is at best praised as a bull that

started early. Khotso and Mashige (2011:110) maintain that this attitude is predominant in Sesotho culture where man who has children outside his family is considered a real man. This attitude is best expressed in male-oriented proverbs. This challenges the function of truth and morality which is one of the features of Basotho proverbs. The very same observation may be the reason why these kinds of proverbs may be accepted and stand the test of time, especially among men as they give them the right to sleep around. Since they do not sleep alone, women also have no other option but to accept them as well. This is what is observed in the following proverbs which according to chapter four are prevalent in all the regions.

a) *T-Terata e ema ka palo tse pedi*

Lit-[A washing line stands with two poles].

Fig-One should have more than one sexual partner

b) *T-Eta sa kgale ha se lahlwe*

Lit-[An old shoe is not to be thrown away].

Fig-An old lover is kept.

c) *T-Hoja lebese ha se ho rua kgomo*

Lit- [To consume milk does not mean to rear a cow].

Fig- It does not mean that one should have a husband or a wife in order to have sex.

Artists also promote this behaviour in their songs. The way these songs are liked by both young men and women shows that this behaviour will not stop anytime soon but will end up being part of the Basotho culture.

Tlou Makhola (1996), in their song *Ha ke ya nka mosadi* (I have not taken a wife.) point out that he has not taken a woman but has taken love and that people should sympathize with him. He even states categorically, may be to the husband, which the wife belongs to him as a husband, while the wife's love belongs to him as a paramour. In his own words he says: "*Ha ke ya nka mosadi, ke nkile lerato, mosadi ke oa hau, lerato ke la ka,*" (I have not taken a wife, I took love, the wife is yours, and love is mine) (Phafoli, 2009:188).

Similarly, according to Rapeane (2011:81) mistresses use songs to address their lovers' wives as the following example indicates.

*U tla di ala*

*U tla di ala, u di ale, u di alole*

(You will stretch out the blankets, and stretch them out, and then fold them)

According to Rapeane the message that the mistress is giving to her lover's wife is that she should forget about enjoying sex with her husband, hence she says the wife will prepare her bed and herself to enjoy sex with her husband, but unfortunately for the wife, her husband will be sleeping with the mistress. The irresponsibility that is proved by the man who now spends his nights with the mistress results in mistress's arrogance. Other mistresses boast to the wives because of the comfort they enjoy, while the children and wife suffer as illustrated below:

*Monga monna* (Bo- mme ba ha Ramarou)

*monga monna,*

*ha a lwana*

*a nke tjhefo*

*a ipolae*

(The owner of the man,  
when she fights,  
should take poison,  
and commit suicide)

*Nna ke kene-kene,*

*ka mahetla,*

*ke ja mafura,*

*ha ke kgathale*

(I am comfortable  
with everything  
I eat fatty ones  
I don't care)

Rapeane (2011:82) indicates that these songs sung by mistresses are defiant of Sesotho culture which prescribes that married people should refrain from extra marital affairs. She avows that mistresses can brag about their illicit relationships because such relationships are now common. One would therefore argue that contemporary proverbs have not brought anything new from what traditional Basotho did. What has just happened is coining of newer proverbs but with the same meaning “old wine in new bottles” (Reznikov 2009:131).

### 6.5.3 Intimate relationships with sugar daddies and mummies

There are newly coined Sesotho proverbs that also show a shift in Basotho culture where young girls engage in sexual affairs with men twice their age and boys with women twice their age. Such proverbs are know in all the regions as indicated below Maseru has 602, Mafeteng 232, Mohale'shoek 200, Quthing 486, Qacha's nek 349, Thaba-Tseka 323, Mokhotlong 350, Butha-Buthe 347, Leribe 259, Berea 388 out of the total of 960 while Ladybrand 73 and Ficksburg 63 out of the total of 480. These numbers also show that these proverbs are widespread. Some of these proverbs are:

a) *T-Dikgomo di diswa ke bashanyana*

Lit-[Cows are shepherded by boys]

Fig-Older women are taken good care of by boys.

b) *T-Lemao le qhwaela kobo*

Lit-[A safety pin ties a blanket].

Fig-A young person can have sexual relations with an older person.

c) *T-Tadi e qeta lofo*

Lit-[A rat finishes a loaf of bread].

Fig-A young lover can manage an old lover.

d) *T-Koloi ya kgale e lokiswa ka tshepe tse ntjha*

Lit-[An old vehicle is repaired with new parts].

Fig-An old lover needs a young lover.

These proverbs are found in all age groups particularly among men, women and young girls. Some of these men and women are married. Thobejane and Thabede (2010:57) refer to these types of relationships as inter-generational relationships as there are no common grounds between the teenager and the sugar daddy because of the age difference. They indicate that both would not want to be identified to be having this relationship because the sugar daddy would not want to jeopardize his marriage, while the teenage girl would not like to be exposed. They maintain that many girls are subsumed into a world that is controlled by powerful men who lure them into unwanted or unethical choices and behaviors. Similarly, Gilligan (1998:23) argues that as girls become the carriers of unvoiced desires and unrealized possibilities, they are inevitably placed at considerable risk and even in danger.

Thobejane and Thabede (2010:58) further aver that the new political elites are bringing forth a culture of materialism where one's success is measured by how many cars one owns, and the fleshy clothes one wears. There is a rush by those girls who come from working class families, to accumulate material possessions by all means necessary, so that they can be seen to be "fitting in". Some of them are forced into child labour or as sex workers in order to accumulate as much wealth as possible. They observe that this behaviour is not only unique to South Africa. In Sri Lanka, it has been established that sex work is rampant especially by teenage girls. These scholars observe that:

Research has shown that many teenage girls readily avail themselves sexually to older men in order to escape from the vice grip of poverty. Most of these teenagers engage in voluntary "sex labour because of lack of self-esteem and psychological problems arising from patriarchy where their role is only seen in terms of providing comfort for men. However, most of them talk about the embarrassment of having sex with older men in the privacy of their homes, but cannot express these sentiments openly for fear that they are rejected by the society.

Thobejane and Thabede (2010:58) further observe that peer pressure and the need to belong have actually contributed to these girls dating older men. These unholy relationships usually end up in teenage pregnancies that we witness today. To show that this is a popular behaviour, they quote City Press newspaper that wrote an article entitled "bitter truth of sugar daddy relationships" (City Press 21/03/2009) in which it is stated that the teen years can be frustrating, and that peer pressure can encourage a



susceptible teenager to enter a secret relationship based on a mere crush or on the vulnerable teenagers who have entered their adolescent years. These are the years that are filled with self-discovery, curiosity and insecurities. Unfortunately the “sugar daddies” prey on these insecurities by way of promising them good clothes and a good lifestyle. Since most of these relationships boil to transactional sex (meaning that money is involved in this relationship), they are very close to prostitution (City Press 21/03/09).

Teenagers, in most cases, would like to have cell phones, a good spending life style, and to break out of the vicious cycle of poverty. Others indulge in sex with the sugar daddies because they want to feed their families, pay school fees and buy uniforms (City Press, 21/03/2009). Even these two scholars talk about girls in South Africa; Lesotho is also faced with the same practice. This does not involve girls only even boys are also victims. They become the victims of older women who have money. In the case of boys one would find that a woman is a friend of a mother and every time she visits the mother she is looking at the young boy to an extent that she will come when the mother is not there to trick the boy into having this relationship with. In other cases female teachers do it to their students. They usually ask boys to go to their places where they would seduce them. This is very common in the High Schools and there are those female teachers who have been suspended because of this behaviour. These newly coined proverbs are used by both youth and adults as it involves both parties.

These proverbs are very popular as it has been shown in the data. The reason could be that Sesotho artists also promote them by applying them in their songs. This is what makes them more popular and those who engage in this kind of affairs sing them with gladness. They feel that they are doing a good thing which should not be hidden. Phafoli (2009:99) notices that as part of the language, proverbs are used even in songs in order to add more flavour to the music. One may have the feeling that since Basotho love proverbs, the artists have taken advantage of that to have proverbs as titles of their songs to attract potential buyers. That is, we could as well say that, even though most artists are not well-read, they have the basic understanding of running their business, thus, making their products marketable.

Example is taken from accordion music in a song is sung by Sefako sa Menoaneng

***Kgomo tse kgolo***

***dikgomo di diswa ke bashanyana,***

***dikgomo,***

***tsa manamana,***

***dikgomo di diswa ke bontate***

(big cattle

big cattle are herd by boys

cattle

Calves

are herd by men)

In this song there are two proverbs even though they are not clearly stated. Phafoli (2009:99) maintains that one finds that proverbs used as titles are, sometimes, not in their complete form but only words bearing the basic meaning of the proverbs. Thus, one learns that the artists are also aware of the economical use of words. The complete proverbs are;

a) T-*Dikgomo di diswa ke bashanyana*

Lit-[Cows are shepherded by boys]

Fig-Older women are taken good care by boys

b) T-*Manamane a diswa ke bontate*

Lit-[Claves are taken care by men]

Fig-Girls are taken good care of by older men

In order to show that this practice of adults engaging in sexual affairs with young children is common, below is another song taken from 'M'e oa Maphutseng Two (2005) in her song

*U n'u robetse kae? (Where did you sleep?) :*

*U n'u robetse kae ntat'a bana?*

*U n'u robetse kae ka lijo tsa ka?*

***Utloa bashanyana ha ba e ja khomo bosiu bohle!***

***Ba e qeta hle!***

***Utloa bashanyana ha ba e ja khomo bosiu bohle!***

***Ba e qeta hle!***

(Where did you sleep the father of my children?  
Where did you sleep with my food?  
Listen therefore when boys eat the cow the whole night!  
They finish it!  
Listen therefore when boys eat the cow the whole night!  
They finish it!)

When analyzing this song Phafoli asserts that 'Marapelang employs sexual euphemism in the above song that cuts across all ages. The husband seems to have slept out in one of his concubines' places and did not return in time, and to express her anger, the wife is asking him where he had slept. It looks like the wife knew where he had gone, and in retaliation, the wife opened the door for the boys to do what the husband ought to have done that night in his house. The wife is accusing the husband that he slept out to give sexual satisfaction to the concubine while she remained starving. The wife finds herself with no option but to snatch the boys to calm her sexual appetite (2009:111).

Phafoli (2009:113) avers that the use of euphemism makes their music socially acceptable as it addresses sensitive issues like extra-marital affairs in a more polite manner and hence, their performance is open to the public domain.

Men also complain about this behaviour as shown this the song below.

Maema (1986), from his song, *Moratua* (My lover), lodges a complaint against his wife's infidelity.

*A k'u bone moratua, a k'u bone,*

*Re loanela masaoana,*

***O ratana le bashanyana,***

*A k'u bone, a k'u bone hle,*

*A k'u bone ntate ngoetsi ea hao,*

***E ratana le bashanyana...***

Just see my lover, just see,  
We are fighting over petty things,  
You are in love with boys,  
Just see, please just see,

Just see my father, your daughter-in-law,  
She is in love with boys.

Phafoli (2009:179) indicates that it is common for each sex to complain of the other in marriage life. Maema has a grudge against his wife, and accuses her of extra-marital affairs. His main worry is that his wife does not go out with grown up men but boys.

One assumes that looking at the present life style, artists, because they want their music to be loved and be popular among the Basotho, they also embark of changes that are seen among the people. Being aware of the newly coined proverbs they also use them to promote their songs. This is also observed by Phafoli when he says:

It could also be said that the artists are tapping into the sentimental and cultural values of the Basotho and thereby make their product belong to Basotho, and make the Basotho feel that the songs belong to them. Employment of proverbs in accordion music does not only enrich it with linguistic expressions but enables it to be accepted as Sesotho traditional music which the Basotho can identify as their music. Language is said to be the conveyor of cultural aspects of any society, accordion music is no exception as it carries along cultural aspects of the Basotho making it the Sesotho traditional music.

These songs promote intimate relationships with sugar daddies and mummies.

Radcliffe-Brown (1952:178-181) observe that, the function of any recurrent activity is the part it plays in the social life as a whole and, therefore, the contribution it makes to the maintenance of the structural continuity. Radcliffe-Brown further points out that, function relates to the contribution which a partial activity makes to the total activity of which it is a part and that the function of a particular social usage is the contribution it makes to the social life as the functioning of the total social system. He understands that, the function of a social activity is to be found by examining its effects upon the individuals. It is therefore good to examine these kinds of proverbs as they promote unwanted behaviour. These proverbs do not contribute to structural continuity as the cause instability in the society. Families break, girls leave schools and run after older men because of these kinds of proverbs encourage. However, these proverbs are popular in both adults and youth and this makes their chances of survival high.

#### 6.5.4 Divorce

As it has been indicated in the data, there are newly coined proverbs that promote divorce such as the following:

n) *T-Ntja ha e shwele matsetse a ya e baleha*

Lit-[When a dog is dead fleas run away from it].

Fig-When one's wealth is gone or finished, he or she is divorced

o) *T-Tjhepsi ha e fela tswekere e ya lahlwa*

Lit-[When a chewing gum loses its sweetness, it is throw away].

Fig-When one is less valuable, one is divorced.

p) *T-Mokopu ha o bodile o a lahlwa le dithotse*

Lit- [A rotten pumpkin is thrown away with its seeds].

Fig-When a woman is divorced she is sent away with her children.

q) *T-Thole se fuwama mahe a haufi le sona*

Lit-[Every hen broods eggs that are near it].

Fig-A man works for a woman who is near him.

These proverbs are known by many people. Maseru has 293, Mafeteng 92, Mohale's hoek 84, Quthing 219, Qacha's nek 211, Thaba-Tseka 213, Mokhotlong 116, Butha-Buthe 155, Leribe 165, Berea 193 out of the total of 480 while Ladybrand 11 and Ficksburg 0 out of the total of 240. These proverbs are not only known but are used as well.

These proverbs highlight and demonstrate that divorce is rampant. Divorce has never been a common practice among traditional Basotho. Phafoli observes that marriage, among the Basotho, is one of the most important customs as it unites families, leading to an extended type of family. There are many steps that are followed before two are crowned as husband and wife in a normal marriage process. Among others, the two families have to meet and agree on *bohadi* (bride-price), *ho hlabisa bohadi* (killing an ox for concluding the marriage arrangements), *ditlhobohano* (two families' gathering where the newly-weds are guided on peaceful married life) and *ho isa morwetsana*

*bohadi* (to accompany a bride to her husband's home). These steps are still followed even today, although the couple sometimes goes to church but customary practices are still adhered to. In the final step, before a bride goes to her husband's home, the two are briefly cautioned by their family members on how to live together as a happy family. But, regardless of such attempts, problems still arise in marriages (2009:177). But in the past, once one was married, the marriage would stay solid regardless of the problems that would be encountered. Even if a woman would have a child out of the wedlock, that child would be accepted in the family and the following proverb was used;

a) T- *Ngwana ke wa dikgomo*

Lit- [A child is for the cattle].

Fig- A child belongs to the paternal side because a woman is married.

Again the family on the side of a woman when cautioning their daughter, they would use the proverbs such as;

b) T- *Mosadi o ngalla motsheo*,

Lit-[A woman sulks towards the innermost part of a house].

Fig- Woman is not expected to abandon her home no matter how tough it is; if she has problems, she has to solve them

According to Manyawu (2012:18), this proverb develops the discourse of womanhood by adding to it traces of the discourse of decorum: decency, self-control and dignity in distressing situations. It thus focuses primarily on expected conduct. However, he seems to critique this proverb by maintaining that:

This proverb incorporates traces of the discourse of discipline focusing on the containment of negative emotions. It also comprises echoes of the disciplining discourse of the rebuke – women are reminded of expected decorum. The collocation of the terms *mosadi* and *motsheo* highlights the symbiotic link between womanhood and the home in Sotho traditional worldview. The explanation text regards discourses of conflict – threat to abandon one's home, self-abnegation and abuse – as the constitutive elements of the proverb's discourse of womanhood. This resonates with contemporary discourses of the abuse and disempowerment of married women. Married women are therefore viewed as virtual captives of their husbands caught in the cruel trap of marriage.

This means that even though Basotho used this proverb to keep marriages solid, Manyawu consider its explanation as abuse to women.

Basotho believed that women are the ones that can keep pillars of marriage standing. If they are strong enough to stand all the pains, then marriage would survive. However, due to modernity, this proverb does not seem to function anymore in the society. Marriages break all the time due to promiscuity, abuse, lack of patience and poverty. Only few people from the rural areas still believe in this proverb.

Modo blames this practice of divorce on the mines. He asserts that it is obvious that the mine culture in South Africa has a major effect on the majority of Basotho men eligible for marriage (2001:73).

In his study, Modo indicates that 77% of the Roma valley respondents said that the influence of migration has been bad on marriage institution: it has ruined many marriages, separated friends and led hundreds of illegitimate children. He maintains that the impact has been apparent in practices such as abandonment, *nyatsi* (concubine), cohabitation and increasing number of street children. Respondents claimed to know someone who has abandoned his wife in Lesotho and has taken a new wife in South Africa (2001:73). It is through this observation that proverbs below were coined:

a) T-*Mokoko o mong le o mong o fatela thole se haufi*

Lit-[Every cock digs for a hen that is near it].

Fig- A man works for a woman who is near him.

b) T-*Thole se fuwama mahe a haufi le sona*

Lit-[It broods eggs that are near it]

Fig- A man works for a woman who is near him

c) T-*Ntja e nka lesapo molomong o a e nngwe haholo ha e sa e tshabe*

Lit-[A dog takes a bone from another, especially when it does not fear it].

Fig-A man can engage in sexual relationships with one's wife or girlfriend.

These proverbs are mostly used by women who have taken other women's husbands. One will find that most of these women are also from Lesotho. They follow these men when they go to the mines. Some of them even know their wives but they do not care. These acts lead to divorce.

According Sutton, Cebulla and Middleton (2003:28) for many in today's generation, marriage had obtained lesser status than for those married in the 1960s or 1970s. Marriage in the 21<sup>st</sup> century was perceived to be changing mainly due to increased opportunities and expectations. The rigid norms that structured society 30-40 years ago and constrained choice and opportunity, in particular for women, had broken down. This has resulted in more fluid roles for both men and women within the home and has brought about new forms of conflict, requiring patience, tolerance and negotiation, if marriages are to survive.

Lesotho is no exception in this regard. Nowadays marriage is based on money and material things. People marry because they will gain something from the one getting married to and immediately when that person loses his/her job or money or businesses, marriage breaks. There is no patience, tolerance even time for negotiations. These proverbs below were coined because of this new life style.

a) *T-Ntja ha e shwele matsetse a ya e baleha*

Lit-[When a dog is dead fleas run away from it].

Fig-When one's wealth is gone or finished, he or she is divorced.

b) *T-Tjhepisi ha e fela tswekere e ya lahlwa*

Lit-[When a chewing gum loses its sweetness, it is thrown away].

Fig-When one is less valuable, one is divorced

c) *T-Mokopu ha o bodile o lahlwa le dithotse*

Lit-[When a pumpkin is rotten it is thrown away with its seeds].

Fig- When a woman is divorced, she is sent away with her children.

Although traditional Basotho despised divorce so much, it seems to be working well in the current nation as men kill their wives, wives kill their husbands. This happens when



a man has mistress and chases the wife away. Most of the time, if a woman would not leave, the husband would start assaulting her. Again nowadays families no longer intervene when there are conflicts between married people. This intervention of family members used to help the two parties to reconcile. It is also through this observation that these proverbs may find their place in the changing culture of Basotho.

### 6.5.5 Unclassified contemporary proverbs

As alluded to contemporary proverbs are coined out of people's daily experiences and observation. These proverbs are coined to respond to the current situations. Agbaje (2006:18) avers that the new orientation gives the people adequate opportunity to create new proverbs in line with the prevailing changing culture. Further, he concludes by indicating that the changes in proverbs seem to be appropriate socially, culturally and politically. This also shows how creative, current and sensible people are in their thoughts. Agbaje is also aware of the changes in proverbs that are modernized and harmonized along with the changing of culture to suit the prevailing socio-cultural situations in the society. Proverb below indicates that cattle are very important in the lives of Basotho. Cattle have been there in the past but this proverb is newly coined to show their importance even in the modern time.

a)T-*Kgomo ke banka ya Mosotho*

Lit-[A cow is the bank of Mosotho].

Fig-One who has cattle has fewer problems

Stoddard (2009:1) asserts that:

Basotho have a very special relationship with animals, especially with cattle. Cattle play a prominent role in the culture of Basotho. In ceremonies like the passage to manhood and womanhood, in marriages and weddings, in funerals and in the appeasement of the departed (the ancestor), cattle play a very significant role.

Seema (2012:128-137) also insists that the rearing of cattle was one of the most important items in tribal economy. The 'owner' in every kraal was the head, who led and performed certain rituals in religious ceremonies when a cow was slaughtered. Cattle were so important that they featured right through the lives of individuals and

when a death occurred, when a marriage took place, a cow was slaughtered by the kraal head on behalf of all members of the kraal. Basotho created proverbs such as: *Kgomo ke modimo o nko e metsi* (a cow is a god with a wet nose). The cattle were such a valuable social commodity that Basotho had various names to denote various characteristics of cattle. This proverb therefore is “old wine in new bottles” (Reznikov 2009:131) because it is using old wisdom using new forms.

Possa (2010:49) detects that when one is sick, a cow is sold and one is taken to a doctor. Children’s fees are also paid after selling a cow. This is the reason why they refer to it as a bank where there is always money kept in order to make life easy. A bank is foreign to Basotho as it came with modernity but, they observed how it operates and saw that there is always some money in the bank just like there are always cows in their villages. It is through this observation that this proverb was coined. This proverb shows the development of Sesotho language as it introduces *banka* which is a new concept.

Some of these proverbs have introduced new words that were not part of Sesotho vocabulary such as *poreme* (pram) and *mokwao* (hobo).

Again due to the current life style whereby in order to settle the disputes, people have to use lawyers, the meaning of one traditional proverb has been extended to suit the prevailing situation as shown below;

*T-Busetsa molamu sefateng ka molao*

Lit- [Return the stick to the tree with the law].

Fig- Revenge with law

The original proverb does not have *ka molao* (with law) but this proverb has an extended meaning because of the way things are done nowadays. When there was a dispute between people among the Basotho, it was normal for one to revenge with a fight. But things have changed now the law is used to resolve such matters. This proverb therefore encourages people to put law on their sides in order to solve their differences. Scorpion legal aid in South Africa uses this contemporary proverb to advertise its services. This shows the change in Basotho culture. Instead of people fighting one another and even killing each other, they are advised to do things the better

way. Falola (2003:51) affirms that in the discourse on development, culture cannot be ignored. He argues that culture shapes people's perception of themselves and their environments; their values, norms and their general way of behaviour. He explains that the past is still relevant even in the twenty first century. Falola (2003:62) advocates for a creative adaptation of other cultures and civilizations. He observes that there is need to keep expanding knowledge through interaction with other cultures. However, he explains that:

Development modes whether based on local or imported ideas must respect people, appreciate their histories and values, strengthen human rights and capacity building and invest cultures with power to be creative and functional [...] culture, ideology and interrogation of the past history are the essential ingredients in the package(s) of solution for the African crisis of development (2003:67).

Even though Falola encourages adaptation of other cultures and civilisation, he maintains that people of that culture must be respected and appreciated. Meaning it is not everything that can be adapted into the culture.

### **6.6 Unpopular proverbs**

It should be noted that there are those proverbs as indicated under data analysis that are only popular in Maseru and Quthing only. Maseru and Quthing are two regions that coined more proverbs than other regions hence they have proverbs know to them only. It is not easy to say whether these proverbs will spread and be known to other parts of Lesotho or they are just passé. As it has been pointed out, a proverb has to be heard being used on regular basis. Again it has to be known by majority of people. However, even though these proverbs are known by few people, some of them have been used for some time now such as:

a) *T-Koloi ya kgale e lokiswa ka tshepe tse ntjha* (Rapeane, 2007:5).

Lit-[An old vehicle is repaired with new parts].

Fig-An old lover needs a young lover.

b) T-*Tadi e qeta lofo* (Rapeane, 2007:4).

Lit-[A rat finishes a loaf of bread]

Fig-A young lover can manage an old lover.

c) T-*Terata e ema ka palo tse pedi* (Rapeane, 2007:5).

Lit-[A washing line stands with two poles].

Fig-One should have more than one sexual partner.

Reznikov (2009:131) calls the above proverbs “new wine in new bottles” as they express new wisdom or reflect new realities using new forms. For the fact that these proverbs are known in few regions, we cannot guarantee their popular acceptance or their survival. However, some of them have been used for almost five years now. Meaning they might stand the test of time. Such proverbs were taken from Rapeane (2007:4-5) even though they are not so popular. These proverbs have also introduced new words that were not part of original Sesotho language such as *koloi*, *lofo* and *terata* (car, loaf of bread and wire). These are borrowed words. Some of them were coined because at that time something was happening in the country which might not be the case now. For example, when the former minister was given camels by the government of Lybia, some people from opposition parties made fun of those camels and so the proverb below was coined.

T- *O opile kamele selota.*

Lit- [He/she has clapped a camel’s hump].

Fig- He/she has said the right thing at the right time.

This proverb has been found to be popular in Maseru, the capital city of Lesotho. It is mostly known by the youth which makes it possible that it has been coined by them. It was not the proverb only that was coined about these camels but everything including government buses that were bought during the reign of Mr Mosisili was named a camel. Now that Mr Mosisili is no longer the prime minister, nobody has an interest of those camels. Meaning even this proverb that was coined then might be out of usage now.

On the other hand, there are those which are traditional proverbs and yet they are given new meanings, so majority of respondents especially adults knew them but with an old

meaning in other words this is semantic shift. It is also important to note that these proverbs with new meanings are not popularly known for the new meaning. These proverbs are also listed below.

a) T- *Modisa o ja mohlapeng.*

Lit-[A shepherd eats from the flock].

**Old -Fig-One** benefits from where one is working.

**New -Fig -** One can have sexual intercourse with one's student or daughter/son.

b) T-*Motshosi o ja matshohlo.*

Lit-[One who drives birds away from the lands eats young wheat]

**Old-Fig -One** benefits from where one is working.

**New-Fig-One** can have sexual intercourse with his/her student or daughter.

c) T- *Nonyana e sa itshelleng e bola kila* (Matšela and Moletsane, 1999:9).

Lit-[The gizzard of a bird which does not look for food rots]

**Old- Fig-One** must fend for oneself if one is to survive.

**New-Fig-** A woman must court a man that she likes.

Some people in the rural areas are still using these proverbs with old meanings and are not aware of the new meanings. From the above information it is not every contemporary proverb that will be accepted and become part of Sesotho proverbs as they were meant for a temporary event.

## **6.7 Popularity of the proverbs**

First of all, even before considering whether these proverbs are accepted by the society, Finnegan (1994:14) utters that the question of popular acceptance is, however a more difficult one in that, if one of the marks of a proverb is its general acceptance as the popular expression of some truth, we are seldom given the data to decide how far this is indeed a characteristic of the sayings included in collections of "proverbs". Finnegan further observes that in many cases presumably the sayings included are proverbs in this full sense. Yet there is no way of telling whether some of the "proverbs" included are

not just the sententious utterance of a single individual on a single occasion which happened to appeal to the investigator.

Mokitimi (1997:18) observes that before a proverb can be accepted as the lore of the people, it goes through several stages. She avows that in the first place, there has to be a situation in which a reaction can trigger the formation of a proverb. Once the words which have been spoken by the person who formulated the reaction are accepted by the society, they become the people's lore. They stop being an individual creation and become the possession of the society.

Malmgren (2007:232) also observes that proverbs illustrate cultural practices in a normative way, that is, they tell you how to act in certain contexts, and in doing so they could be viewed both as results of and the cause of such cultural practices results, since the pre-linguistic cultural practices motivate the proverbs, which in turn entrench cognitive differences that are induced by such cultural practices, and the cause of, since proverbs are used to transfer cultural practices from generation to generation and to uphold a culturally accepted behaviour. Further, Malmgren asserts that culture-cognitive schemas could be said to determine which proverbs are possible and which ones are not in a given culture, since proverbs must match these schemas in order to be acceptable as units of traditional wisdom.

Furthermore, he notes that a proverb will not be used in a culture that lacks the cultural-cognitive schemas that the proverb presupposes, whether it concerns practical or moral matters. He emphasizes that there must be a match between cultural schemas and the proverb before the proverb could be used as an effective means of communication.

In order to make an informed decision about the popular acceptance of these contemporary proverbs, the age group in which these proverbs are popular is very important. Finnegan (2004:18) observes that a mistake of this is often made. She argues;

The sort of terminology involved can sometimes provide a clue to the local attitude to "proverbs". As we have seen, there is sometimes a specialized term, sometimes not. This is not always made clear by collectors. Even more serious is the frequent failure to consider when, how, and by or

among whom common proverbs are used. Even where something about the general context is given, we are practically never told in detail how a given single proverb was actually used. Yet, as will emerge, this may in fact determine its significance, the way in which it is appreciated locally, even its meaning. This aspect is often crucial, if whether or not some attractive saying is really a “proverb” depends on the local evaluation of it.

On the other hand, Healey (Undated:2) asks these questions; are African proverbs a relic of the past? Are they merely quaint expressions that will gradually die out with new generations of people? Do African youth, especially in the cities, ignore proverbs? Some people maintain that African proverbs will have a lasting influence. He further avers that others say that they are old-fashioned and will slowly pass out of use. It has been a particular challenge not just to identify popular sayings and proverbs in general, but those used in particular by young people. African urban youth’s popular sayings, especially their street language, can change from month to month and even from one section of the city to the next. He reports that their research in East Africa shows clearly that traditional African proverbs are not so popular with young people, especially not in urban situations. The research also indicates that many traditional African proverbs will gradually fall out of use and be forgotten. But other proverbs and sayings will find new meaning and new life in contemporary contexts in Africa itself and worldwide. Significantly, African urban youth use certain of the traditional African proverbs and sayings in different contexts and with different meanings than adults. At the same time, new African proverbs, sayings, maxims, slogans, and idioms are being created to fit contemporary situations Healey (Undated:2).

Healey (Undated:3) further observes that young people coin new proverbs and sayings (or use old proverbs and sayings in a new way) in writing popular songs, plays and novels. This is the same thing even in Lesotho.

From data collected and analysed there are those proverbs that are popular among the youth only. The possibility is that they coined such proverbs. This could be a good sign that proverbs are here to stay because if youth use them they may stand the test of time.

Fayemi (2009:4) strongly argues that it is incorrect to see proverb purely and wholly as a relic of tradition. The reason for this is obvious. Proverbs have been reformulated by

the younger generations to suit their purpose by changing the content and structure of the traditional formulation in order to give proverb some new meaning(s). Raji-Oyelade calls his attempt to replace traditional proverbs on the microscope of the new age, new experience and modernity as 'post-proverbials' (Raji-Oyelade 1999:36). In other words, a proverb needs not necessarily be a traditional saying; it could also be *posterior* and contemporary reaction to conventional wisdom, natural intelligence and traditional sayings.

Beyond his position that proverbs convey precise moral lessons, warnings, advice and truth, Balogun (2006:86) argues that truth, which proverbs express, are not necessarily limited to moral truth. Rather, such truth extends to epistemological, metaphysical, aesthetical, legal, scientific and anthropological facts. Fayemi (2009:15) asserts that it can be argued further that some proverbs are unreasonable by virtue of their pre-justice and irrelevance to modern day realities. In other words, they are old-fashioned.

Collecting data from youth also was the best thing ever according to above scholars. They are aware that youth coin proverbs that respond to their needs or that suit modernity. Basotho youth have also coined proverbs to suit their demand and modernity. The theme of morality seem not to matter that much as it would be a problem as to whether the proverb that promote promiscuity or divorce should be accepted as part of Sesotho language or not.

On the other hand, we may not rely on youth for popularity of proverbs because they are easily influenced by many factors and fashion which come and go. But we know that if a proverb is known by an adult is for real and the chances of staying in the language are high. In his study of anti-proverbs, Reznikov (2009:131) states that anti-proverbs use familiar patterns to express new truths, thus reflecting not only new events or aspects of the modern society and people but also new mores.

In terms of their survival, Reznikov avows that those of them that follow the best traditions of Russian proverbs have all the chances of staying in the language. He observes that as traditional proverbs show, even when the realities that produced them disappear, the proverbs survive due to their figurative meaning and their expressing folk wisdom that has diachronic character. At the same time, many modern anti-proverbs are



just language jokes or wordplays created for fun, and will hardly survive, especially if their form is awkward. This could also be possible with contemporary Sesotho proverbs. Contemporary proverbs were found in Maseru, Mafeteng, Mocha's hoek, Quthing, Qacha's nek, Thaba-tseka, Mokhotlong, Butha-Buthe, Leribe, Berea, Ladybrand and Ficksburg. These proverbs were popular among youth as indicated below:

Maseru 20-35

Mafeteng 20-35

Mocha's hoek 20-35

Quthing 20-35

Qacha's nek 20-35

Thaba-Tseka 20-35

Mokhotlong 20-35

Butha-Buthe 20-35

Leribe 20-35

Berea 20-35

Ladybrand 36-55

and Ficksburg 36-55

Only Ladybrand and Ficksburg have proverbs popular among adults. This is not the case in Lesotho. The fact that these proverbs are known in all the ten districts of Lesotho and in two neighbouring towns and are known by youth and adults shows that they have been accepted. However, not all of them will be able to stand the test of time.

### **6.8 Functions of contemporary proverbs**

As it has been shown by various scholars, some of which are quoted in this study, proverbs have function to perform in a society. To note few, Mkuchu (1997), Valdaeva (2003), Kudadjie (2006) and Adesoji (2006) observe that:

- 1) Proverbs are used to enable members to perform their roles responsibly in conformity with societal values and norms, to transmit cultural values.

- 2) New proverbs have the same function in every day speech as traditional proverbs, namely they are an effective means for bringing a deep meaning in a short phrase. They carry new, up-to-date, political, religious and other ideas to the people. Besides, these new ideas are more acceptable in our modern life than the old ones expressed in the traditional proverbs.
- 3) Proverbs function somewhat like moral codes, conventional wisdom and explicit rules of conduct. They describe and prescribe and they state the experiences, moral institutions and guidelines for living that people generally have found to be noteworthy and helpful.
- 4) Some of new proverbs came about as a result of certain historical developments, which eventually became reference points.
- 5) New proverbs are built with the help of many stylistic devices and that also brings them closer to the original proverbs.

Some of the respondents also observed that some of Sesotho contemporary proverbs function like traditional proverbs as shown below.

Maseru 57

Mohae's hoek 39

Quthing 50

Leribe 39

Berea 42

However they observed that other than encouraging good morality, some proverbs appear to have been designed or created to protect and promote practices and behaviours that undermine transitional moral values and acceptable social norms.

### **6.9 The place of contemporary proverbs in the Sesotho language**

When collecting data, respondents were asked whether cotemporary proverbs will get their place in Sesotho language. They provided many answers. Some said yes, others

said no while few said they do not know. Those who did not know are those in the age group 10-19. That being the case, it was not a problem because they do not have any interest whether the language dies or grows. However, out of eighty respondents that were interviewed per region, there are three districts where many respondents agreed that these proverbs will get their place in Sesotho language as indicated below:

Maseru 42

Quthing 36

Leribe 48

Many respondents from other districts complained about the new themes that contemporary proverbs are promoting. According to them, these proverbs are destroying their language and encourage people to live an immoral life.

Nevertheless, Islam (1985:30-31) insists that folklore belongs to the society as an important part of its culture. When we accept social change and change in culture, we cannot remain blind to the changing pattern inherent in folklore as a component of society...folklore is dynamic in the sense that with the social and cultural change, as an important part of culture, it also accepts some changes to suit the new situation. Any material of folklore may originate even today, but would be regarded as folklore if it survives the test of time and is accepted by the folk, composed of a family of minimum two persons, a village community, a tribe of nation, who may be non-literate or literate, no matter where they live, in a village, a town or modern city.

Manjate (Undated:12) maintains that in oral cultures it is quite difficult to think of a text as a fixed form, without any change happening throughout the centuries because the changes that occur in the situations; they must fit into new realities. A dynamic point of view, which accepts changes – transformations on old texts and creation of new ones, seems to be more real and natural. This reflection about proverbs brings up also reflections about mentalities, that is, the values and the Cosmo vision of the community. Any speaker with cultural and linguistic competence can create a valid and acceptable proverb or at least a structured text according to the cultural framework and this can easily be included in the corpus.

What one has observed is that some of these contemporary proverbs are the same as traditional proverbs in many aspects; their origin. Just like traditional proverbs, they also originate from people's daily situations.

They are related to the traditional proverbs in terms of their usage, their language and their chances of survival and staying in the language. Some of these proverbs confirm old truths and express old wisdom in a new way or by new means. They show that proverbs are not something complete and never changing, but in fact are as changeable a part of the language as anything else (Reznikov, 2009:132).

Parsons continues to assert that Social systems also undergo changes from within due to cultural innovations within the system, contact with other cultures and diffusion of new values and styles of living. According to him, social change occurs through role differentiation, socialization and institutionalization processes. From Parson's statement there may not be many options but to accept some these proverbs as new values and style of living. And for this reason too, Sesotho proverbs will have a place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Other proverbs use familiar patterns to express new truths, thus reflecting on new events or aspects of the modern society. Those of them that follow the best tradition of Sesotho traditional proverbs, have all the chance of staying in the language. As traditional proverbs show, even when the realities that produced them disappear, the proverb survive due to their figurative meaning and their expressing folk wisdom that has diachronic character. At the same time, some of these new proverbs are just jokes created for fun by youth and are not known by adults. Their chance of survival is limited, meaning they may not survive (Reznikov, 2009:132).

There are other proverbs such as those that encourage child abuse, promiscuity, relationships in which age difference are big and divorce which promote unwanted behaviour in a society. This behaviour is not acceptable as the purpose of proverbs as indicated by Mokitimi (1991:114) is to advise, give some warning, encouragement, comment, teach, disapproval, make people conform to accepted patterns of behaviour.

Similarly, Possa and Makgopa (2010:11) argue that the main purpose of traditional proverbs, which encouraged good morality and values, has changed because of modernity. Proverbs have gone through a transformation. It is through this change that contrary to promoting good moral values, recent proverbs appear to have been designed or created to protect and promote practices and behaviours that undermine traditional moral values and acceptable social norms. The majority of recent proverbs are found among the youth and some men who use them to justify their unwanted behaviour. Whether they become part of Basotho lore is still a question at hand. However, Parsons says, change is never just alteration of pattern but alteration by the overcoming of resistance. By overcoming of resistance, Parsons means the resolution of strain or conflict in the social system. The new proverbs also highlight or draw the society's attention to immoral behavior and warn and advise. They are there to caution the community.

Lastly, most of these proverbs have introduced new terminology that was not part of Sesotho language. This terminology shows the development of this language because these new terms are new things that are brought by modernity and they exist among the Basotho. Since proverbs are coined out of people's daily observations, they observe these new things in action then coin proverbs out of their observation. Mieder (2009:43) therefore argues that proverbs are still invented by individuals, and if a particular statement still exhibits at least one of the proverb markers (structure, shortness, metaphor, alliteration, rhyme, parallelism, ellipsis, hyperbole, paradox, and truncation) it might just catch-on, it might gain currency in a family setting, a village, a city, a state, the entire nation, and eventually the world. He further states that in the technological world connected globally by computer networks and the ever present mass media of newspaper, radio, and television, short and witty utterances can become almost instantaneous quotations known throughout the land.

Furthermore, Mieder (2009:43) mentions that the speed in which new and possible proverbial wisdom can be disseminated today is truly mind-boggling. Mieder observes that while it might have taken decades in earlier times for a precise statement and its variants to become proverbial, this currency might now be accomplished in a few days... The test of time still needs to be applied to such proverbial neologisms; the

elements of traditionality and general currency must come into play in order for such pithy statement to be considered as a bona fide proverb.

#### **6.10 Documenting new proverbs as part of Basotho lore**

When asked the question about whether contemporary proverbs should be documented as part of Basotho lore, many respondents indicated that these proverbs should be documented. Out of eighty respondents per region, the following numbers indicate that these proverbs should be documented.

Maseru 39

Quthing 35

Thaba-tseka 37

Butha-Buthe 43

Leribe 58

The reasons that were given for documenting these proverbs were for educational purposes. Some said if these proverbs are documented it will be easy to refer to them when teaching young children about behaviour and morality. They will be taught not to follow such proverbs. Others indicated that these proverbs show the development of Sesotho language and creativity of Basotho, so they should be documented. There are those who still insisted that they do not want to be associated with these proverbs so the idea of documenting them should be abolished.

Even so, these proverbs should be documented. Unseth (2008:399) supports this idea by indicating that collecting proverbs from languages where they have not been documented is valuable for a variety of people: proverb scholars, anthropologists of several disciplines, ethnologists, linguists, folklorists, missionaries, and also the people of the language community.

Mieder (2009:43) notes that above all, the future looks good for proverbs. He indicates that proverbs are never out of season and will assuredly remain so, since people will always be in need of expressing their old and new wisdom in easily remembered formulaic structures, employing them strategically as logically as ready-made and usually metaphorical signs in various contexts. Finally, the findings have shown that

some of these proverbs have found space in Sesotho language because they are used by artists and even journalists.

Malunga and Banda (2004:1-2) indicate that the use of African proverbs presents a new and creative way of communicating organizational principles to transcend the common communication barriers. They further observe that interest in collecting African proverbs and using them to enrich modern life is growing, based on a conviction that modern life and institutions would be greatly enhanced if they gave a home to the timeless wisdom these proverbs hold.

### **6.11 How lack of a language policy impacts on new proverbs and development of Sesotho language**

Sesotho language has not been developed for use in major domains, that is, administration and education. This owes to the fact that Lesotho does not have a language policy that promotes the development of Sesotho language. There are many terms that are created as a result of technological advancement. This creation of new terminology that has been instigated by modernity is void because the new terminology has not been accepted as part of Sesotho language. New proverbs as part of language are no exception. As it has been shown in data collection and analysis, there are many proverbs that are newly coined and being used by Basotho yet they are not considered part of Sesotho proverbs.

The consoling fact is the Basotho scholars who are aware that Sesotho needs to be developed in tandem with technological advancement and the demands of globalization. As evidence in April 2013, the Sesotho academy held a press conference to discuss the enactment of a language policy (Informative, Monday, 29, April 2013).

Needless to say, other Basotho like teachers are aware the position of Sesotho in terms of development, that is, it is not accommodating new coinages which leaves many Basotho to question accommodation of new terminology, proverbs and other aspects of language in broad and general. When asked whether contemporary proverbs show the development of Sesotho language many respondents indicated that they do. Out of eighty respondents in all the regions, those who said contemporary proverbs show

development of the language were more than those who said no or the do not know in the regions listed below:

Maseru 48

Mafeteng 28

Mohae's hoek 35

Quthing 43

Butha-Buthe 44

Ficksburg 19

These respondents argued that the coinage of proverbs shows how Basotho like their language and they are creative. They indicated that that for this reason Sesotho language will not die but continue. Nevertheless, they avow that the themes of these new proverbs should be used with the purpose of teaching the young ones not to practice the new behaviour observed in these proverbs.

#### **6.12 The future of new proverbs in Sesotho language**

Having collected contemporary Sesotho proverbs, analysed and discussed them in this research one would say that their future in to Sesotho language is bright. According to some respondents, some of these proverbs are here to stay. Other hand, their form which is the same as traditional proverbs qualifies them to be accepted as proverbs. They are not passé like those that were coined because something was happening in the society. According to Adeoti (2005:2) a proverb is “enduring, yet dynamic enough to withstand the pressure of existence in the universe, then, now and later”.

#### **6.13 Conclusion**

This chapter constitutes a discussion of data that was presented and analysed in chapter four. The discussion has shown that some of contemporary proverbs behave the same way as traditional proverbs in terms of structure and function. One may therefore conclude that even though some of the proverbs discussed in this chapter have introduced a new structure which did not exist before, they still retain other features of original proverbs as discussed. Their new structure proves that they are typically new. These proverbs are accepted because they have been collected from different people in



different places in and outside the country. Some were often heard over the radio and this shows acceptability.

Some of the proverbs that promote immorality get their instigation from traditional proverbs as they have the same theme but only stated in different wording. Again, these contemporary proverbs are coined out of people's daily experiences. The behaviour or new life style that is reflected in these proverbs is also popularized by artists as well in order to promote their songs.

Some contemporary proverbs may not stand the test of time as it has been observed that they were just coined for a particular reason that was passing so they are passé. Others will be accepted into Sesotho language as they show the development of the language by introducing a new vocabulary. Documenting this genre has also been discussed as important as it will benefit different categories of people but more importantly it will keep Sesotho language moving with modernity. It is therefore important to document this new genre.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCLUSION

#### 7.0 Introduction

This chapter is the conclusion to what has been presented and discussed in the previous chapters. It shows how the researcher conducted this research, the framework and methods that were applied and the reasons for their application. This chapter is arranged in such a way that the first part is the summary of each chapter, second is research findings and the last part is recommendations.

#### 7.1 Summary

This study intended to examine oral literature, contemporary Sesotho proverbs in particular with an attempt to find out whether they perform a significant role in the society. It also aimed at finding out whether they have a place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The study further targeted at finding out whether these proverbs are being used on day to day language. Their survival in this modern world was of great importance in this research.

This research responded to the following questions:

- 1) What is the nature of contemporary proverbs?
- 2) Are these contemporary proverbs accepted by the society?
- 3) Do they serve the same function in the society like traditional proverbs?
- 4) Do they show the development of our language?
- 5) Are they proverbs that will get their own place in the Sesotho language?
- 6) What is their future in this world of modernization?
- 7) Do we have to document them or do they destroy our language?

There were six chapters in this research.

Chapter one was an introductory part to the study. It comprised of the background information to the study. It presented the statement of the problem that indicted that oral literature may seem to be in extinct or declining in the modern world as it has been indicated by some scholars. However, this does not seem to be true as there are

cotemporary proverbs that are being coined from day to day in many different cultures. Nevertheless, the key question concerning these contemporary proverbs is the question of their future, that is, whether they will stay in the language and become respectable proverbs or whether they will disappear. This chapter also presented the purpose of the study which has been shown above. Chapter layout was also provided in this chapter.

Chapter two presented a literature review that informed this research. Since many different scholars have undertaken studies on proverbs, the researcher read a variety of documents that includes journals, articles, theses and books that have dealt with proverbs. However, these documents still left a gap for further research as they did not analyse contemporary Sesotho proverbs. In conducting a review of the literature that was consulted for this study, the materials covered six broad topics, popular acceptance of proverbs, functions of proverbs, dynamism of proverbs, form of proverbs, adaptability of proverbs and Sesotho proverbs.

The third chapter provided a theoretical framework. The researcher employed Functionalism as the theoretical framework for the analysis of contemporary Sesotho proverbs. The reason for adapting this theoretical framework was because it observes that a society is composed of basic units. These units constitute the social structures and perform certain functions within a social system in order to promote maintenance of the society as a whole. Each individual is born within a set of norms and values of a society, and in the process of socialisation the individual internalises them in order to be an acceptable member of the society. His/her behaviour and actions are regulated by the value system within which he operates. No individual is exempted from the social expectations even on the basis of his/her social standing. As people pursue their different interests in their lives, they do so, on the basis of the long standing tradition of their norms and values. Furthermore, for any social structures to function and operate properly and smoothly within the society as a whole, such structure needs both input from an acknowledgement by the relevant society.

It is through this background that the researcher chose this theory because in order for contemporary proverbs to have a place in a society, they should be acknowledged by the relevant society. This will be seen by their regular usage by the same society.

Functionalism was also therefore found to be relevant in this study as proverbs also play a major role in maintaining peace and stability in a society.

In addition, Functionalism was established to be appropriate for this study because proverbs have a significant role that they play in the society. These roles help the society to grow, as they shape the behaviour of individuals.

Chapter four discussed research methods. In this chapter how data was collected, number of respondents, how the same data was going to be analysed was given. The research was carried out by using the qualitative approach. Motivation for utilising the qualitative research approach was because it allowed me to:

- a) explore and describe an experience, a context, a process, or perspectives;
- b) discover or learn more about a phenomenon;
- c) develop an understanding of an experience or context, and report on an experience, context or process.

For collection of data the researcher collected CDs in order to find contemporary proverbs that are used by artists in their songs. Another way was to listen to radio programmes on *Mmino wa Sesotho/Mmino wa diparola thota/Mmino wa koriana/Re ya kubasela*. This is one programme which is given different names by different radio stations. For instance, these programmes are aired on Radio Lesotho, Radio MoAfrika, and Catholic Radio in Lesotho and Radio Lesedi in the Republic of South Africa. The researcher also listened to different radio stations in order to find out whether contemporary Sesotho proverbs are being used by presenters and callers. These stations were those inside and outside Lesotho. Newspapers from 1999 to date were also read with the same purpose of finding the use of contemporary proverbs. Such newspapers included *Public Eye*, *Sunday Times*, *Sunday Express*, *Moeletsi oa Basotho*, *Moafrika*, *Leseli ka sepolesa* and *Informative*. Newspapers such as these ones provided information on the use of contemporary proverbs on articles and advertisements.

The reason for collecting data in the media is because it promotes proverbs as many people who listens to such stations or reads such papers gets to know these contemporary proverbs. However, the main method of data collection was in participant observation where the observer becomes part of the environment, or the cultural

context. The method usually involves the researcher's spending considerable time in the field.

This method allowed the researcher to ask questions such as who the participants are; their typical and atypical patterns of behavior; and where, when, how, and why the phenomena occur. The reason for asking participants who they are and where they were from help the researcher to know where mostly these proverbs were known and how they are being transferred from district to district.

It was from the above mentioned information, that the researcher found it appropriate to use qualitative approach for this study as it was going to make data collection and analysis possible.

Chapter five both presented and analysed data. It comprised of five categories of contemporary Sesotho proverbs namely, those that encourage individualism, those that promote divorce, child-abuse related proverb, those that encourage promiscuity, proverbs that shows new types of relationships in which age difference is big, women who court men and other proverbs that are not classified under certain titles. This chapter was dealt with in such a way that first, contemporary proverbs were presented under each section. Second, the numbers of contemporary proverbs found form respondents per regions were also given, and third, their popularity from each region and the age groups were presented. All categories were analysed by looking at the meaning, form and function of each category. Finally, the responses of the following questions were also given.

- a) Do they serve the same function in the society like traditional proverbs?
- b) Do they show the development of our language?
- c) Will they get their place in Sesotho language?
- d) Do we have to document them or do they destroy our language?

Chapter six discussed data that was presented in chapter five. This chapter addressed research questions that were indicated in chapter one of this research.

## 7.2 Outcome of the research

It was also found out that some of the proverbs were only found in few places, namely, Maseru and Quthing which is in the far North of Lesotho. It has also been revealed that there are those proverbs that seem to be known in Maseru only. Some of these proverbs were found to be known by youth only. It is not easy to say whether these proverbs will spread and be known to other parts of Lesotho or they are just passé. On the other hand, there are those which are traditional proverbs and yet they are given new meanings, so the majority of respondents especially adults knew them but with an old meaning. The investigation showed that some people in the rural areas are still using these proverbs with old meanings and are not aware of the new meanings.

This research also demonstrated that contemporary proverbs also originate from people's daily observations. They initiate from natural phenomena, flora, insects, reptiles, frogs and lizards, rats/mice, birds and fowls, animals, humans and household goods. Meaning they also deal with the spectrum of the people's experiences with the physical world, including animals and values, feelings and emotions like traditional proverbs. It has been observed that some of these contemporary proverbs are the same as traditional proverbs in many aspects. They are related to the traditional proverbs in terms of their usage, their language and their chances of survival and staying in the language. Some of these proverbs confirm old truths and express old wisdom in a new way or by new means.

An observation was made that these contemporary proverbs were also given their meanings based on context. These proverbs were collected from the context. How and when they are used was one of the questions that participants were asked which is why old ones have new meanings because the context in which they are used now is different from that of old. Even those that are on the newspapers were used contextually.

Discoveries show that contemporary proverbs indicate social change. They demonstrate a change in morality, marriage, lifestyle and property as it was shown under different categories.

An investigation showed that contemporary proverbs bring in a new theme that has never existed among the Basotho or in their traditional proverbs which is individualism. People now have big houses fenced with bricks so that each one is in his/her own house and does not see or know how or what his/her neighbour is doing. Children also sleep in separate rooms and are not permitted to play with others as it used to happen in the past. However, this new lifestyle is popular in the urban areas. It is this new lifestyle that encourages individualism and so people newly coined proverbs listed below to justify this new way of life. It has been discovered that some people are forced to live this kind of life by being removed from their original homes because of building a dam in Lesotho. However, discussion explained that this new theme of individualism may not be a bad idea but indicates changes that affect the Basotho society. Even though this new life style is painful to some people but it could also show continuity of the society and its adaptation to modernity.

People now know that they can only survive if they work hard and not expect to get from other people. These proverbs also have the same functions as traditional proverbs that encourage people to work hard.

Another discovery that was made is that there are contemporary proverbs that encourage promiscuity. However, it is detected that Basotho traditions may be blamed for this kind of behaviour or coining of these contemporary proverbs. There are some traditions that permitted men to sleep around when the wife was breastfeeding for two year in order to give a woman time to breastfeed and wean the baby. Again traditional proverbs encouraging men to sleep around were also discovered. The very same observation may be the reason why these kinds of proverbs were coined and may be accepted and stand the test of time, especially among men as they give them the right to sleep around. Since they do not sleep alone, women also have no other option but to accept them as well. It is observed that the very same proverbs are promoted by Basotho artists also. The way these songs are liked by both young men and women shows that this behaviour will not stop anytime soon but will end up being part of the Basotho culture. Male respondents were very excited when being asked about these contemporary proverbs. They felt like it is indeed their right to have multiple partners. Some indicated that women are many and they are few but every woman needs a man.

However, these proverbs will conscientize Basotho about the shift in behaviour so that they may find a way or reducing this behaviour.

Findings revealed that there are newly coined Sesotho proverbs that also show a shift in Basotho culture where young girls engage in sexual affairs with men twice their age and boys with women twice their age. It has been found out that these proverbs are found to be very popular as it has been shown in the data. The reason could be that Sesotho artists also promote them by applying them in their songs. Probably, this is what makes them more popular and those who engage in this kind of affairs sing them with gladness. They feel that they are doing a good thing which should not be hidden. However, it has been discovered that these proverbs do not contribute to structural continuity as they cause instability in the society which Functionalism condemns. Families break, girls leave schools and run after older men because of these kinds of proverbs. These proverbs were found to be popular among both adults and youth and this makes their chances of survival high.

An investigation exposed that there are newly coined proverbs that promote divorce. Some scholars blame this practice of divorce on the mines. They indicate that divorce happens because men have to leave their wives and children to work in the mines, so this lead to abandonment and divorce. It has been detected that these proverbs are mostly used by women who have taken other women's husbands. It is also found out that most of these women are also from Lesotho. They follow these men when they go to the mines. Some of them even know their wives but they do not care. Although traditional Basotho despised divorce so much, it seems to be working well in the current nation as men kill their wives, wives kill their husbands. This happens when a man has a mistress and chases the wife away. It has been observed that in most cases, if a woman would not leave, the husband would assault her. Detection is that nowadays families no longer intervene when there are conflicts between married people. This intervention of family members used to help the two parties to reconcile. It has been found out that it is through this observation that these proverbs may find their place in the changing culture of Basotho.

An investigation showed that collecting data from youth also was the best thing ever according to different scholars. They are aware that youth coin proverbs that respond to



their needs or that suit modernity. Findings show that Basotho youth have also coined proverbs to suit their demand and modernity.

In terms of structure, it was discovered that contemporary proverbs, whether newly coined, adapted ones, those that are inserted new words, borrowed ones have the same form with the traditional proverbs. Except for few most of which encourage individualism. They have a long structure which is different from a normal structure of traditional proverb. Nevertheless, they still have some proverb markers. Therefore, this means that these contemporary proverbs can still be considered as proverbs because they still retain some form that traditional proverbs have.

Lastly, most of these proverbs have introduced new terminology that was not part of Sesotho language. This terminology shows the development of this language because these new terms are new things that are brought by modernity and they exist among the Basotho. These proverbs are coined to respond to the current situations. Since proverbs are coined out of people's daily observations, they observe these new things in action then coin proverbs out of their observation. This therefore shows the development of Sesotho language.

All in all it was discovered that the fact that these contemporary proverbs are known by youth and adults, shows that they have been accepted by the society. What is left is for them to be legally accepted by Sesotho academy so that even students can use them in their essays. However, findings showed that not all of them will be able to stand the test of time. It was through the above information that the future of oral literature, particularly proverbs seems to be bright in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as they are being coined from day to day observations to suit modernity. Responses from the respondents about contemporary proverbs have also given a hope that some of these proverbs will survive and become part of Sesotho language. This research is also going to be very important to Sesotho academy as there will be proverbs ready to be considered as Basotho lore without the trouble of collecting and analyzing new proverbs.

### 7.3 Recommendations

- a) Having collected these contemporary proverbs in the ten districts of Lesotho and two neighbouring towns in South Africa and in media, having seen that majority of them are known, and having listened to respondents giving their different meanings, one recommends that some of these should be documented.
- b) Every language has to develop in order to avoid extinction so Sesotho language also has to accommodate this new genre so that it grows and continues to have this kind of wisdom.
- c) One feature of traditional proverbs which is how proverbs are coined or their origin allows for new coinage of proverbs. If proverbs originate from people's observation, then it means what traditional Basotho observed in the past is not what the modern Basotho observe today. Meaning it is valid that there are new themes in Sesotho proverbs because things have changed. Again if proverbs are used in context, then today's contexts are different from those of the past. It is through this observation that one advocates that these proverbs should be documented.
- d) Sesotho Academy which deals with the laws that govern Sesotho language is not functional now to allow or accepts these contemporary proverbs into Sesotho language and yet they are being used on day to day basis. However, in April 2013 Sesotho Academy held conference to discuss the implementation of the language policy that Lesotho does not have which is a breakthrough that Sesotho language will develop and have these new proverbs accepted as part of national lore.
- e) One recommends that these proverbs should be included in the syllabus so that students use them. There is a lot of new vocabulary in these proverbs that cannot be ignored. These proverbs show that Basotho love their oral

literature and they do not want it to die, hence they continue to coin contemporary proverbs.

- f) Scholars should work hand in hand to collect and document new proverbs for the purpose of retaining this wisdom in order for the coming generation to know their heritage and to show the continuity of this genre.
- g) Lastly one recommends that the Ministry of culture and Ministry of education accept these proverbs as part of our heritage; as we are living in the world of globalization.

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