

CONTEXT AS A DETERMINANT OF MEANING]
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NORTHERN SOTHO

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that CONTEXT AS A DETERMINANT OF MEANING WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NORTHERN SOTHO is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



F.C.M. Mokgokong

28th November 1975

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SUMMARYCHAPTER I : INTRODUCTION

The principal aim of this study is to establish the role played by context in determining meaning. In this chapter a brief critical comment is made on theories of meaning, viz. the imagist theory, the concept theory and the mechanist (behaviourist) theory. An observation is made that, although these theories show certain differences in approach, they are in fact complementary. In the same chapter the scope of the thesis and the method that is to be followed are outlined. Antal's theory of meaning, which rejects the existence of context, is closely examined. His claim that a word maintains the same meaning in each and every environment is shown to be false.

CHAPTER II : SIGNS, SYMBOLS AND MEANING

In chapter II the relation between sign and symbol to meaning is investigated in order to establish that language is a symbolic process. The terms denotation and connotation are discussed and it is realized that meaning is both objective and subjective. The various factors that influence meaning are scrutinized. These are emotive value, range of meaning, semantic shift, polysemy, homonymy, synonymy, antonymy and hyponymy. An observation is made that only context can pinpoint the meaning intended.

CHAPTER V : MEANING IN THE CONTEXT OF BORROWING AND DIALECTAL USAGE

This chapter is an examination of the semantic effect of culture contacts, i.e. the shifts of meaning that occur when one word or expression in one language is borrowed into another. It is observed that, although borrowing mostly carries over the meaning of the loan in the source language into Northern Sotho, there are instances where the meaning of the loan covers a semantic field wider than that of the lending language, and where the meaning is different from that of the loan in the source language. It is also argued that since no two words in any language ever refer to the same thing under all circumstances, lexical differences may be observed even among dialects of the Northern Sotho speaking area. Just as it is not sufficient to know the meaning of a word in the source language but to examine its use in the context of borrowing, it is of vital importance to know the use of a word in the dialectal context concerned.

CHAPTER VI : MEANING IN THE CONTEXT OF SYNTAX AND SEMOTAXIS

In this chapter various syntactic markers — word-order, intonation, punctuation etc. — are discussed in order to illustrate what nuances of meaning may be effected by their application. In addition the influence of other words on the specific meaning of a word in a sentence is stressed.

CHAPTER VII : INTERPRETATION

Here two passages of prose and two poems (one traditional and the other modern) are analysed in detail as an overall application of our standpoint, viz. that the various contexts discussed in the thesis play a very important role in the comprehension of the full meaning of a word.

CHAPTER VIII : GENERAL CONCLUSION

In the conclusion it is observed that while form may be the primary determinant of meaning, it is certainly not the dominant factor. Opinions of leading semanticists on the important role played by context in determining the full meaning of a word are cited. The chapter is brought to a close with a quotation of a definition of meaning by Robins (1971, 27), which embraces the context of situation.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

THEORIES OF MEANING

1.0.00 The study of meaning has occupied the minds of philosophers, psychologists, anthropologists and linguists since the appearance of Michel Bréal's article on the subject published in a classical journal in 1883, but to the present, "meaning" remains one of the most nebulous and most controversial terms in the theory of language. The failure on the part of semanticists to arrive at a uniform definition of meaning is partly understandable because the field of meaning, if not actually infinite, is certainly unlimited in range. In a recent article on Meaning and its change László Antal (1964, p. 20) confesses:

"What meaning is we do not know,
and it is in the nature of the thing that
we never shall know with absolute certainty"

1.0.01 According to the mentalistic approach meaning has been described in terms of mental images, a method whereby emphasis is laid upon a type of psychological "model" which corresponds to the symbol. In accordance with this theory, "prior to the utterance of a linguistic form there occurs within the speaker a non-physical process, a thought, concept, image, feeling, act of will, or the like, and that the hearer, likewise,

upon receiving the soundwaves, goes through an equivalent or correlated mental process" (Bloomfield, 1961, p. 142)

In other words, the speaker who utters the word apple has a mental image of 'apple', and this word evokes a similar image in the hearer's mind. The meaning of a word can, according to this view, be said to reside in the "mental thought" of that which it customarily is used to name.

1.0.02 The interpretation of meaning in terms of mental images or in terms of imageless mental thoughts presents many problems because while a man may readily have a mental picture of a particular friend, how is he supposed to have a "mental view" of an abstraction such as "beauty" or "truth" or "goodness"? Moreover, as "antimentalists" point out, everybody who maintains that meaning is image, necessarily arrives at the conclusion that meaning varies from subject to subject, so that a perfect understanding between members of the same speech community is impossible.

1.0.03 Related to the imagist theory is the theory whereby "meaning" is construed as a concept. Meaning is not a concept because there are other linguistic signs, like morphemes, which are not connected with any concept, but which, as we shall show in Chapter III, may have meaning. If meaning were identical with concept, then meaning would not be a part of language but of thinking, since the concept is a category of human thinking. Concepts are essentially idiosyncratic in the sense that

they reside in particular individuals with particular histories of experiences that lead them to classify those experiences in particular ways. One man's concept of "stone" may reflect his positive delight in collecting new varieties of minerals, whereas another man's concept may reflect the fact that he had unpleasant experiences with stones, having had them thrown at him in a riot. At the same time differences in intellectual and educational levels will account for differences in the sheer number of concepts attained by individuals within a given culture. Leon Coetsee (1972, p. 38), however, warns against total disregard of the concept theory. He says:

"Our conclusion must be that although the concept theory is either mentalistic or tautologous, and therefore cannot serve as a theory of meaning, it nevertheless does make an important subsidiary contribution. It emphasizes, quite rightly, that words work by common elements. To suggest that the concept theory is unsatisfactory is, therefore, not to suggest that the objects to which a term refers do not share common properties".

1.0.04 Another approach to the study of meaning is that followed by the behaviourists, popularly known as mechanistic. The work of Pavlov on conditioned reflexes is well known to need any detailed discussion. It tends to show that the way in which the brain reacts to a stimulus is automatically determined, and so that the way in which the brain reacts determines the way in which we "think". Thus our characters, our personalities, our motives, our conduct, indeed the whole tenor of our lives, may be explained in

terms of the conditioning of our responses. To the mechanist behaviour is response to stimuli, conditioned in a mechanical way by repetition. "Thinking" is such behaviour, to be known only in its external manifestations. Speech is but externalized "thinking", and a man may be said to know the meaning of a word like dog if the associatiative effects of the word, when he hears it, are such, by conditioning, that he responds to it as he would to the object for which it stands. The meaning of a word therefore can be defined simply in terms of the speaker's stimulus, namely the situation in which he utters the expression, and the response which it calls forth in the hearer.

1.0.05 In an attempt to explain why we sometimes use the same word for different situations, Bloomfield, an exponent of the mechanistic school, distinguishes between the "non-distinctive features of the situation, such as the size, shape, colour, and so on of any one particular apple, and the distinctive, or linguistic meaning (the semantic features) which are common to all the situations that call forth the utterance of the linguistic form, such as the features which are common to all the objects of which English-speaking people use the word apple" (Bloomfield, 1961, p. 141).

1.0.06 The chief weakness of Bloomfield's conception of meaning is that it virtually equates "meaning"

with the denoted object, the denotatum. It also does not take account of cases where the thing referred to is not present at the time of speaking. Many critics have reacted sharply to Bloomfield's view. Leon Coetzee's reaction is reflected in the following definition of "meaning" (1972, p. 62):

"...the meaning of an expression consists in the fact that it can be used by someone to refer correctly to any object of a particular kind. To say this is not to say that the meaning of the expression is the object to which the word is correctly used to refer; it is to say, rather, that its meaning lies in the referring use to which it may legitimately be put. To say that an expression has meaning is to say that it has become someone's slave, and to stipulate its meaning is to stipulate the sort of thing this person does or may use it to refer to. This is to say, not that the meaning of an expression is some or other kind of entity, but that it is rather the correct referring use that is made of that expression".

1.0.07 But let us sum up the general shortcomings of this theory in the words of Ullmann (1962, p. 59):

"An inevitable consequence of Bloomfield's conception of meaning is that the latter is relegated outside linguistics proper. Since meaning is a feature or event in the non-linguistic world, it is natural for Bloomfield to suggest that we should define it, wherever we can, in terms of some other science, saying, for example, that 'the ordinary meaning of the English word salt is "sodium chloride" (NaCl). But one may wonder whether this is really the meaning of the word for the average speaker who probably has no idea of the chemical composition of salt".

1.0.08 We conclude that these theoretical approaches to meaning tend to supplement each other, although

they use different techniques. Semanticists, however, often are interested more in the social dimension of communication than in the nature of psychological responses to language or the logical relations expressed in language. We should not lose sight of the fact that language not only symbolizes concepts but is used also for the promotion of purposes; that is to say, it has not only psychological but also cultural and behavioural functions.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

1.0.09 The purpose of this enquiry is to investigate and elucidate what we believe is a practical approach to meaning — the significant role played by context in language — transactions. We shall lay emphasis on the meaning of a word in a contextual situation. We shall be vitally concerned with how symbols are used in certain behavioural contexts; in other words, how symbols operate as elements in human communication.

1.1.00 Before we proceed with our analysis, we must briefly examine László Antal's view of meaning since it rejects the contextual theory. Antal (1963, pp. 51-52) states:

"We have often said that meaning is nothing more than the rule of the use of the sign which, in this case is the word. In our speech, the words do not follow each other accidentally but according to their meaning. From this it obviously follows that, if we use the words according to their meaning, then the meaning precedes the use of the word, just as the use

of a language presupposes knowledge of that language. And if the meaning precedes the use of the word, then the meaning is not determined by the context but according to the meaning we put the word in different contexts".

1.1.01 Antal continues:

"The meaning of a linguistic sign - of a word - is really something which is constant and identical in various contexts. What seems to belong to the meaning of a word in a specific context is not, in fact, a part of the meaning of the word but only of the context. It is, in fact, no more than our subjective thinking which reads it into the meaning of the word. We repeat that a word maintains exactly the same meaning in each and every environment, since, when it develops a different meaning, it ceases to be the same word".

1.1.02 According to the above quotations it is quite clear that Antal totally rejects the existence of figures of speech such as metaphor and other shifts of meaning summed up by the term polysemy. Perhaps this view may be applicable to the language(s) that Antal is concerned with, but certainly not to Northern Sotho and many other Bantu languages. In this study we shall argue that a word has a basic meaning but that various shifts can be derived therefrom, which can only be determined by context. In the sentence: monna ke tau ka gore o bolailê tau (the man is very brave because he has killed a lion), context helps us pinpoint the meaning of the second tau as an animal, which is the basic meaning of the word; while the first tau is used metaphorically, i.e. a transfer of the quality of bravery from the lion to the man. What is implied here

is that the man is as brave as a lion, which does not make tau in the first usage a new word. We must admit, however, that there is a shift in meaning, which refutes further Antal's concept "that a word maintains exactly the same meaning in each and every environment.

1.1.03 Throughout this enquiry we shall uphold the view that "meaning" is that part of our total reaction to the word which is the thought of what the word symbolizes. In other words, we shall maintain that "meaning" is both objective and subjective - the one is complementary to the other. This view is stressed by Langer (1971, p. 55) who regards meaning as "a function of a term". She compares the meaning of a word to a musical chord and says, "A function is a pattern viewed with reference to one specific term round which it centers; this pattern emerges when we look at the given term in its relation to the other terms about it".

1.1.04 Admittedly, meanings of words take shape in our thoughts and feelings in some form and to some degree, whether clear or nebulous, even before they arrive at the expression stage; but the act of expression gives further shape and direction to meanings. In fact, the phases of creating, expressing and communicating often take place so quickly that they seem to form one unified process. This point is borne out by Hayakawa (1971, p. 61) when he says:

"To insist dogmatically that we know what a word means in advance of its utterance is nonsense. All we can know in advance is approximately what it will mean. After the utterance, we interpret what has been said in the light of both verbal and physical contexts, and act according to our interpretation. An examination of the verbal context of an utterance, as well as the examination of the utterance itself, directs us to the intensional meanings; an examination of the physical context directs us to the extensional meanings. When John says to James, 'Bring me that book, will you?' James looks in the direction of John's pointed finger (physical context) and sees a desk with several books on it (physical context); he thinks back over their previous conversation (verbal context) and knows which of these books is being referred to".

1.1.05 In this analysis we shall accept a priori that we are dealing with communication in a natural language used by, and shared among, members of a speech community. We shall not lay undue emphasis on the formal aspects of language as such except to show the relationship between the structure of a word and its meaning. It is generally accepted that "there is usually in each word a hard core of meaning which is relatively stable and can only be modified by the context within certain limits". (Ullmann, 1962, p. 49).

1.1.06 In Northern Sotho the prefixal and suffixal morphemes play an important role in modifying the meanings of words. For instance, the causative suffixal morpheme -iša may add to the verb stem the implications of "cause to", "force to", "help to". It is context alone that will indicate which one is applicable in a specific utterance or sentence. Similarly, the

diminutive suffixal morpheme -ana (and its alternatives) may be used to refer to smallness, youth, admiration, contempt or comparison. To know which of these applies in a particular utterance or sentence, one has to turn to context. This has made it necessary for us to include in this study a brief survey of the relationship between structure and meaning (Chapter III). As we have decided to take the word as the core of the meaning, this inclusion helps to reinforce our springboard, i.e. the inclusion is a means to an end and not an end in itself.

1.1.07 Our main interest is a study of a contextual theory of meaning. By a contextual theory of meaning we understand that words vary in meaning according to the context in which they are used; in other words the context provides a clue as to the particular meaning with which a word is intended to be associated. We shall distinguish between the verbal (linguistic) context and the situational (extra-linguistic) context. As John Lyons (1971, p. 413) points out:

"The context of an utterance cannot simply be identified with the spatiotemporal situation in which it occurs: it must be held to include, not only the relevant objects and actions taking place at the time, but also the knowledge shared by the speaker and hearer of what has been said earlier, in so far as this is pertinent to the understanding of the utterance. It must also be taken to include the tacit acceptance by the speaker and hearer of all the relevant conventions, beliefs and presuppositions 'taken for granted' by the members of the speech community to which the speaker and hearer belong".

1.1.08 For the eminent anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski (1923, p. 306) this concept of context of situation assumes even broader dimensions embracing the entire cultural background against which an utterance is made. He says:

"The conception of context must burst the bonds of mere linguistics and be carried over into the analysis of the general conditions under which a language is spoken The study of any language, spoken by a people under conditions different from our own and possess a different culture, must be carried out in conjunction with the study of their culture and their environment".

1.1.09 In this study an attempt will be made to illustrate more precisely the impact of context upon word-meanings and in Chapter IV particularly we shall argue that the cultural context is even more relevant to a full understanding of an utterance, and shall analyse the allied phenomena of euphemism and linguistic taboo.

1.1.10 As our aim is to cover various aspects of context, we shall also attempt to sketch the dialectal and borrowing contexts (Chapter V), as well as the syntactic and the semotactic contexts (Chapter VI). In Chapter VII we shall give stylistic analyses of two prose passages and two poems (traditional and modern). These analyses will illustrate how the various contexts are brought to bear in the comprehension of prose passages and poems.

1.1.11 All examples in this work will be written in the standard practical orthography of Northern Sotho, except that the semi-close front and back vowels, as well as their raised counterparts, will be regularly written with a circumflex as follows:

rêma > rêmilê

bôna > bône

CHAPTER II

SIGNS, SYMBOLS AND MEANING

2.0.00 Every school of modern linguistics shows a large and justifiable measure of agreement in that language is symbolism. Charles Morris uses "signs" as a term to include both signs and symbols. Susanne K. Langer, Richards and Eugene A. Nida make a distinction between "signs" (what Morris calls "signals") and symbols. It is this distinction that we are going to follow in this study. Since this distinction is basic to our treatment, we shall give an explanation for the necessity to treat signs and symbols separately.

2.0.01 A sign may be said to indicate the existence of a particular thing, event or condition within a context. Wet streets are a sign that it has rained, smoke a sign of fire (Nida, 1960), and a scar a sign of past accident (Langer, 1971). In terms of Pedi culture, when an old woman strikes a man repeatedly with a stick, that man knows that his wife has borne him a son; a woman with a shaven head which has a fringe of approximately half an inch around the sides and back indicates that she is mourning her husband's death; a wooden dish turned upside down at the end of an initiation school signifies to the mother that her son passed away during initiation. Likewise the portents and omens of future events may be called signs;

for example, a shooting star is a sign of the death of a chief. In all these cases, a sign is an object or event that can be taken as an unintended clue to some condition with which the sign is supposedly connected.

2.0.02 A symbol on the other hand, can be used quite apart from its immediate context or stimuli. We may talk, for example, about rain without it raining, or lightning without it striking, either in the immediate past, present or future. Similarly we may use the symbol death without implying that it is a sign of some immediate event. It is only a label used to identify a concept. Symbols imply principally a token that may be used to stand for or refer to anything other than itself by bringing to mind the idea of that thing. They may also express and evoke feelings along with ideas. They are those intentional meaning vehicles that have a primary conceptual - referential function of calling to mind and referring to something. Langer (1971, p. 61) emphasizes the following points about symbols:

"Symbols are not proxy for their objects, but are vehicles for the conception of objects. To conceive a thing or a situation is not the same thing as to 'react toward it' overtly, or to be aware of its presence. In talking about things we have conceptions of them, not the things themselves; and it is the conceptions, not the things that symbols directly 'mean'. Behavior toward conceptions is what words normally evoke; this is the typical process of thinking".

2.0.03 Where words are used as symbols, as they are in the majority of language-transactions, we have four factors to take into account: the speaker; the hearer; the symbol; the referent (object, thing-meant, fact, quality of experiences, state of affairs, etc.). A necessary condition in any act of communication is agreement by both the speaker and the listener on the meanings of the symbols employed. The speaker and the hearer are not identical, and so the conception "calling forth" the use of the symbol by the speaker will not be the same (save approximately) as the conception aroused within the mind of the hearer by the use of the symbol. Within the mind of both the speaker and the hearer the conception will be of the nature of a psychological response, "thought", "idea" or "attitude". Now the relationship between words and referents (technically known as denotation) is indirect — it is an imputed relationship; whereas the relationship between words and their connotations is direct: for words do not represent things but correspond to thoughts. Words do not have a direct, one-to-one connection with things-out-there-in-the-world. "The connotation of a word" writes Langer (1971, p. 64), "is the conception it conveys. Because the connotation remains with the symbol when the object of its denotation is neither present nor looked for, we are able to think about the object without reacting overtly at all".

2.0.04 Denotation offers very few problems of interpretation since in this case we deal with words apart from the feelings they may excite. A point to remember is that the denotation of a word is the class of all possible things to which that word can refer, which means that sethōlwane (a familiar of a witch) and mmamokêbê (a mythological snake) have a denotation in Northern Sotho even though there are no such objects. In other words, we ascribe to these objects a fictional or mythical 'existence' when the language is used in discourse of this kind. Words do not refer all by themselves. It is the people who refer by means of words. John B. Carroll (1964, p. 186) defines a word as follows:

"As a physical symbol, a word is a cultural artifact that takes the same, or nearly the same, form throughout a speech community. It is a standardized product on which the speech community exercises a considerable degree of quality controlThe conditions under which the use of words is rewarded or not rewarded - either by successful or unsuccessful communication or by direct social approval or disapproval - can be looked upon as constituting the 'rules of usage' of a word, and these rules of usage define the denotative meaning of a term. Thus, there is a rule of usage such that the noun mother can be used only for a certain kind of kinship relation. One thinks of denotative meaning as something that is socially prescribed. Connotative meaning, however, banks heavily on those aspects of concepts that are widely shared yet non-criterial and perhaps affective (emotional) in content. "Mother" as a noun might evoke various emotional feelings depending upon one's experience with mothers".

2.0.05 Bertrand Russell, (1940, 212) gives the following three purposes of language:

(a) to indicate facts, (b) to express the state of the speaker, (c) to alter the state of the hearer. Words which are used chiefly under points (b) and (c) of the classification — for expressing the state of the speaker or affecting the state of the hearer — clearly emphasize the conception a great deal more than the referents. Conceptions are formed by and within unique nervous systems, in the boiling pot of varied experiences, memories, emotions, instincts, urges and intentions. It is this conception-function of symbols which is important since it principally affects our behaviour.

2.0.06 According to Richards (1945), linguistic communication is possible only because words are "signs" and frequently also "symbols". As such they can stimulate in us psychological reactions "determined by our past experience in similar situations and our present experience". These reactions include "emotions", "feelings" and "attitudes", but also "references" to "things" for which they stand. As a symbol, a word can by definition stand in the place of the "referent" or thing-meant, where one exists, by so stimulating our minds that part of our reaction to it will be a "reference" to our "thought of" the thing referred to. Thus the meaning of a word for Richards, "in the most important sense in which words have meaning", is that part of our total reaction to the word which is the "thought" of what the word

symbolizes. Now words are not ordinarily encountered in isolation, but as elements in a larger unit of discourse; so that our reaction to any given word in the larger unit is affected partly by our reactions to other words which precede and follow it. In any language-transaction, therefore, a word or words may (i) symbolize a "reference", i.e. cause a "thought" of something, (ii) express an attitude towards the listener or reader, (iii) move the hearer or reader to do something, (iv) express the speaker's attitude towards the "referent" or "thing" thought of, or (v) support the "reference", i.e. make it easier to think of the "referent". These are styled by Richards the five "functions" of speech-material. There are also two uses of language. The first of these is called "referential", "symbolic" or "scientific", and it is to communicate "thought" about "things". The other "use" is dubbed "emotive", and it is the use of language to express or excite "attitudes" or "emotions" or to act as the cause of action.

2.0.07 But communication in words can be never better than approximate. Out of his private world the speaker speaks through a screen made up of his memories and experiences; and it is impossible for any two persons ever to have learnt the same word or phrase in identical circumstances, apprehending the same term with exactly the same background. Therefore each will take it into his

consciousness ringed about with a special context of association differing from the associations of every other person hearing it. It is only because procedures do approximately repeat themselves that the approximation of understanding can occur. Accordingly, the meaning of a word for any person is dependent upon his experience (both practical and linguistic). TSHWANE is the Northern Sotho name for the city of Pretoria or the river that flows through it; but if a homeland youth, on first visiting Tshwane, is unduly harassed by the police, he will for a long time thereafter associate the city with his nasty experience.

2.0.08 Although Ullmann (1963, 64) is of the opinion that proper names are monosemantic, i.e. have clear-cut semantic boundaries and negligible potentialities, it may not be quite so because the very proper names may have affective connotations to different persons. Pretoria, for example, might be associated with the idea of the administrative Capital of the Republic of South Africa, or the idea of a metropolis, or a city with a very hot climate, or an historical aspect, e.g. the Great Trek, or the figure of Pretorius after whom it is named. The theory of "ideal words" which "can be used in isolation" laid down by Bertrand Russell (1940, pp. 25-) should be regarded with great caution. Instances of unique reference or denotation in communication are few and far between. Simeon

Potter (1960, p. 164) advises that proper names may be regarded as instances of unique reference or denotation though we must be careful to say "unique denotation in this particular context". Nida (1960, p. 77) makes this point abundantly clear when he says:

"A word in isolation (i.e. without a context) begins with a very wide area of meaning, for it may occur in many hundreds of situations and may be used for scores of objects; but by means of the practical and linguistic contexts in which it is used we can 'whittle it down' to precisely that sub-area of meaning which it must have in any specific utterance".

2.0.09 This point is further emphasized by A.B. Johnson (1968, p. 18) who states that "words are unmeaning sounds when they possess no ultimate signification that is unverbale". The object conventionally called "brick" has no meaning until it is put to use in the building trade or in a physical combat as an effective weapon of attack or defence. The same can be said of water. In a book on science, for example, the word water has a simple and defined meaning. In ordinary life the word water has many associations for us: it may bring to the mind the visual picture of the expanse of water in a dam, the sound of running water or the touch of water on the body.

2.0.10 Up to this point we have discovered the relative ambivalence of terms, i.e. their capacity to

have many different meanings. Words have characteristically more than one meaning, and there are often some common features of resemblance between certain of the meanings of a word, and different common features of resemblance between certain of the meanings of a word, and different common features between other meanings of the same word. It is this vagueness of meaning and its irregular outline that, above all else, make possible the changes in meaning. This vagueness has been ascribed, in the main, to the generic character of words because "words denote, not single items, but classes of things or events bound together by some common element". (Ullmann 1962, p. 118).

2.0.11 Not only are words used to refer to the characters or aspects of things and actions but they are also governed by the idiosyncracies of our individual personalities - differences in tone, speed and general voice quality. No two persons ever mean exactly the same by the same word. With regard to the ambivalent character of words, Ullmann (1963, p. 124) says:

"Our words are never completely homogeneous; even the simplest and the most monolithic have a number of different facets depending on the context and situation in which they are used, and also on the personality of the speaker using them".

2.0.12 Yet another source of vagueness in the words is the lack of clear-cut boundaries in the non-linguistic world. "The continuous gradation of colour"

writes Gleason (1961, p. 4), "which exists in nature is represented in language by a series of discrete categories. This is an instance of structuring of content. There is nothing inherent either in the spectrum or the human perception of it which would compel its division in this way". In other words, physically there are millions of colours but each language segments the colour continuum into a highly restricted number of discrete parts. For instance, Northern Sotho -sêbla means "grey" as well as "fawn", but "grey" may also be expressed by -pududu; -tala means both "green" and "blue"; -hubêdu means both "red" and "maroon". The above examples show some of the difficulties that some linguists encounter who attempt to give meaning a structure and to systematize these shifting relationships between words, ideas or things.

FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE THE MEANING OF WORDS

EMOTIVE VALUE

2.1.00 By emotive value of a word we refer to the aura of personal feelings it arouses. Since ideas are normally conveyed by words, any feeling engendered by an idea could then be indirectly the result of the word that gave rise to the idea. So these feelings readily come to form part of the larger meaning of the words themselves; and the words, therefore, may be said to acquire an emotive tinge. This is called the expressive-evocative

power or force of the word, in contrast to its strict conceptual-referential meaning. Ullmann (1963, p. 197) stresses the importance of both the cognitive and affective functions of language in the following words:

"The affective side of language is just as fundamental as its cognitive function. In theory, every utterance is both communicative and emotive; there is always something to be said, and a subjective interest in saying it".

2.1.01 Some words carry with them an emotive colouring of praise or reprobation as a close concomitant of their lexical meaning, if not an integral part of it. We angrily call people diota (idiots), dimuša (dogs, thieves), or lovingly call them moratiwa (beloved), mmadikgōmo (beloved wife, lit. mother of cattle), warra (my kinsman). And when we use the following words we are usually expressing our attitude towards the hearer:

- fafatla (speak in a delirium, speak nonsense)
- gaila (grind corn coarsely)
- šaētša (make a mistake, be out of tune, be careless, be negligent, do an injustice)
- kgakgaripa (till dry land, scrap surface)
- kgwalepa (plough in hard dry soil, do a job carelessly)
- tlaila (walk uncertainly, wander off the point, speak nonsense, blunder)
- sebōdu (an incorrigible sluggard)
- lefadi (a rogue)

2.1.02 There are also words whose main function is to express evaluation or emotive comment. Such are qualificatives. Here the emotive element is more than an overtone; it is an integral part of their central meaning. For example,

kgarebê e botse (a pretty girl)

monna yô bogale (a brave man)

lesogana la setswatswa (a neat young man)

kgôši ê botho (a kind-hearted chief)

mosadi wa segafa (a crazy woman)

2.1.03 Certain interjectives are linked up with emotional reactions. In the following sentences the context will bring out the full meaning:

(a) Surprise: Mafêfô! O reng o mpotša ditaba tša go tšhoša?

(By Jove! Why do you tell me shocking news?)

Mağalamapaka, re hlasêtšwe! (Indeed we have been attacked!)

(b) Joy: Aga! O šomilê senna (Indeed, you have done well!)

(c) Sorrow: Mmalô! re hwilê la pitšana (Alas, we have suffered a tragedy).

(d) Disappointment: Ôwê, a ka se tsoge a kgônnê (In truth, he will never succeed).

(e) Spite: Ihŭ, ke selô mang yêna (Damn him, who is he!)

2.1.04 Nick names, which usually describe undesirable or humorous characteristics of bearers, have also affective connotations, e.g.

<u>Mantsarana</u>	(one who is lean)
<u>Radimpê</u>	(a pot-belly)
<u>Madinkô</u>	(one who has a big nose)
<u>Makaïpea</u>	(a meddlesome person)
<u>Tsôgwane</u>	(one-armed person)
<u>Tlhôï</u>	(a cripple)

2.1.05 Finally, we must mention ideophones, which also express emotive content. Prof. Cole (1955, p. 370) defines ideophones as "vivid vocal images or representations of visual, auditory and other sensory or mental experiences. These highly descriptive expressions are usually impulsive and emotionally coloured, and are used most commonly in descriptive statements and narrative, thus providing greater emotional appeal to listeners". Indeed, one cannot express quiet better than by saying ba re tuu! because tuu! gives that feeling of quiet, which cannot be expressed by any other word. Similarly, no other word can express a sense of bad smell better than phuu! or fông! Here are a few more examples:

- (a) Legadima la re bêkê (Lightning flashed)
- (b) Pula e bê e re šwaa (Rain was coming down softly and lightly).
- (c) Mošemane a re palakata! (The boy suddenly appeared).

RANGE OF MEANING

2.1.06 By range or area of meaning of a word we refer to the totality of meaning it can express. In general, some words have a wider range to which their meanings may be applied than others. Motho (human being) has a wider area of meaning when opposed to Mosotho (black man) or Letebele (a Ndebele). An examination of the following phrases will clarify what we mean:

- (a) batho ba lefase (world)
lefase la gešo (country)
- (b) naga ya Bapêdi (Sekhukhuneland)
naga ya Afrika-Borwa (Republic of South Africa)
naga ya diphôôfôlô (area suitable for game/area that
abounds in game)
- (c) motse wa Kgalema (Kgalema's family)
motse wa gaKgalema (Kgalema's village)

SEMANTIC SHIFT

2.1.07 By semantic shift we refer to the phenomenon whereby a word has a basic or principal meaning but that meaning has now undergone some modification, although it is still related to the basic meaning. This change in meaning may be due, in the first place, to a shift in meaning over a period of time. For example, mokawahlana used to mean a

goat-skin jacket but today it means a lumber-jacket; ramphašane used to be a dried-skin cut into the size of a foot and fastened with strings but today it refers to any type of sandals. In both these examples there is a closer functional resemblance between the old and the modern object, but the shift in meaning has been unintentional. The change in meaning may also be due to context. In the following sentences

re bolêla Sepêdi (we talk Pedi)

ga go dirwe bjalô ka Sepêdi (it is not done
that way according to Pedi custom)

The first sentence clearly refers to "language" while the second refers to "custom".

2.1.08 Moderate shifts or shifts in application are slight shifts from the basic meaning, with an obvious connection between the variants in meanings. The following examples will illustrate what we mean:

(i) leleme: (tongue, language, telling lies)

ke itomilê leleme (I have bitten my tongue)

o kwišiša leleme lefe? (which language do you
understand?)

mosadi yô o na le leleme (lit. this woman has a
tongue, i.e. she is a liar).

In the first sentence leleme refers to an organ of

speech and in the second, to speech or language. A close connection between the basic and the secondary meanings is clearly discernible. The third sentence gives us an example of a transfer of meaning or a further degree of shift in application. leleme in this sentence draws attention to the undesirable function of the tongue, i.e. the wagging of the tongue. In fact the third sentence is an example of polysemy.

- (ii) lesome: (ten, ten shillings/one rand)
kgarebê e nyêtswe ka dikômo tšê lesome (the girl's
 lobola was ten head of cattle)
ke rêkilê bupi ka lesome (I bought mealie-meal worth
 one rand)

In both these sentences reference is made to the numeral ten although we should add that lesome in the second sentence is the contracted form of lesome la mašêlêné.

- (iii) sehlano: (five shillings/fifty cents, a palm of hand)
o mo filê sehlano gore a rêkê dipuku (he gave her
 fifty cents to buy books)
o mo ôtlilê ka sehlano, e sego ka molômo (he slapped
 her but did not thrash her)

sehlano provides an interesting example of the Sotho quinary system of enumeration. From the five fingers we have five shillings, as also the palm of the hand.

- (iv) mmopi: (someone who makes clay pots, the Christian God referred to as Creator)

pele dipitšša di ka dirišwa mmopi o swanêtšše go di fiša [before pots can be put to use the maker (moulder) must bake them].

Modimo ke mmopi wa legodimo le lefase (God is the Creator of heaven and earth).

In both sentences the idea of creating is emphasized although one is concrete and the other abstract.

- (v) fihla: (hide, withhold, e.g. information, bury)

o iphihlilê ka ngwakông (he has hidden himself in the house)

mmotšišê gapê, o fihlilê ditaba tšê dingwê (ask him again, he has withheld other information)

ka gê tatê a biditšwê, re tlô mo fihla ka moswane (as father has passed away, we will bury him tomorrow).

- (vi) bôna: (see, understand, realize)

ke bôna motho a tšwêlêla (I see a person appearing)

taba yê ke e bôna gabotse (I understand this matter)

ke a bôna gore o nyakô mpolaya (I realize that you intend to kill me)

- (vii) godišša: (cause to grow, promote, elevate, honour, respect)

ke godišša ngwana ka dijô (lit. I cause the child to grow by food, i.e. I feed the child so that he/she may grow)

morutišši ba mo godišitšê go ba mohlahlubi (the teacher is promoted to the post of inspector)

bana ba swanêtšê go godiša batswadi (children should honour their parents)

badumêdi ba godiša Modimo (Christians revere God)

In all these sentences action is directed from a lower to a higher position. In the first sentence it is the idea of growth; in the second, that of elevation, in the third, that of respect; and in the fourth, that of deep and religious respect.

(viii) tsebiša: (cause to know, give notice of, announce, introduce, inform)

ke le tsebiša lenyalô la morwakê (lit. I cause you to know the marriage of my son, i.e. I inform you of the marriage of my son)

tsebiša batho gore dijô di lokilê (announce to the people that the food is ready)

ba re tsebišitšê moêng (they introduced us to the visitor)

(ix) bina: (sing and dance, have as totem, venerate)

dikgarebê di a bina (the girls sing and dance)

ke bina tau (I have a lion as totem)

The relationship between -bina in the first sentence

and -bina in the second sentence derives from the fact that culturally when one has an animal as totem one expresses one's veneration by singing and dancing at special tribal ceremonies.

(x) swa: (burn, undergo ill-treatment)

nama e a swa (meat is burning)

bana ba lapa lê ba a swa ka gobane mmago bôna o sehlogo
(children in this family are being ill-treated because their mother is cruel)

2.2.09 By polysemy or multiple meaning we refer to a phenomenon whereby a given word has two or more shifts of meaning. Polysemes are different senses of one lexical item. Although the meanings may show considerable divergence from the basic meaning of the word, the variants are, nevertheless, related to a common origin.

2.2.10 The most important vehicle of polysemy is metaphor, which is based on the connection between the primary referent and the secondary (or tertiary) referent to which the word is applied. A metaphor is a transference of a particular notion into a new sphere where it will glow with a new radiance of meaning. This transfer on the part of the speaker, and the understanding on the part of the hearer, came about as a result of the resemblance between the new thing and the old, but the new

is a separate thing from the old. The resemblance must be apparent to the mind - that is to say, it must be affective and functional as well as objective.

2.2.11 The following examples will illustrate the incidence of polysemy:

- (i) swara: has the basic meaning of "get hold of" but related meanings of "treat", "recognize", "understand", e.g.

swara selêcê sêo (get hold of that axe)

mosadi yô o swara baêng gabotse (this lady is hospitable/treats visitors well)

monna yô o re o a ntseba fêla nna ga ke mo swarê
(this man says he knows me but I do not recognize him)

morwaka o swara dithutô gabotse (my son understands his lessons)

The shift from the basic meaning to the related meanings is purely metaphorical. The basic idea of -swara (get hold of) runs through the related meanings. Being hospitable to people suggests having control over them; and one who controls does so physically with his hands. Similarly the act of recognising or understanding or mastering something indicates mental control over that thing or object.

- (ii) bêrêka: has the basic meaning of "work for Whites"

but may also mean "thrash thoroughly" "undermine",
"be effective", e.g.

Matome o bërêka Gautêng (Matome works in Johannesburg)

o rilê go nthumula ka mmêrêka ka molamo (after he
had provoked me, I thrashed him thoroughly with a
stick)

sehlare sê sa mala se a bërêka (this purgative is
effective)

o bê a re o bohlale fêla ke mmêrêkilê (he thought he
was clever but I have outsmarted him)

The basic meaning of "work for Whites" implies a
specific job for a specific remuneration or advantage.
Thrashing someone thoroughly or undermining him
suggests gaining an advantage over him. Similarly
an effective purgative is to the user's advantage.

- (iii) loga: has the basic meaning of "weave" but may also
mean "devise a plan", e.g.

banna ba loga sešego (men weave a grain basket)

banna ba loga maanô a go bolaya tau (men devise a
plan of killing a lion)

Here again the shift is metaphorical. The con-
templation of intricate schemes in one's mind re-
sembles the weaving of a grain basket.

- (iv) ja: has the basic meaning of "eat" but may also mean

"be expensive", "have sexual relations", "be angry",
e.g.

ke ja nama ya kolobê (I eat pork)

lesogana lê le ja lešela (this young man dresses
expensively)

go thwe Katêdi o swêrwe a eja Modipadi (it is said
that Katedi was caught having sexual relations with
Modipadi)

The shift is metaphorical. Eating is an enjoyable
undertaking; hence go ja lešela (lit. eat the cloth)
signifies personal satisfaction in the wearer in
comparison with other people, just as, in the third
sentence, sexual intercourse is a satisfying act.
Compare also the Tswana: go ja monate (be happy)

- (v) tsoga: has the basic meaning of "rise" but may also
mean "bewitch", "be restored", "be cunning", e.g.

re tlo tsoga ka mahubê (we will rise at dawn)

ba ga Molapo ba išitšwê mošâtê ka gobane ba a tsoga
(the Molapo's have been reported to the chief because
they practise witchcraft)

ralebênkôlê o bê a welê eupša bjalô o tsogilê (the
shopkeeper used to be bankrupt but now he is
prosperous)

kgarebê ya sekgowêng e tsogilê borôkông (a town girl
is cunning)

The idea of rising from sleep implied in the basic meaning is reflected in the rest of the related meanings. Witches function when other people are asleep; the rise from bankruptcy to prosperity resembles an object that rises from a lowly position to one of significance; a cunning person is likened to one who is fully awake and vigilant.

- (vi) hlapa: has the basic meaning of "wash" but may also mean "menstruate", e.g.

šana ba hlapa mosegare le mantšiboa (children wash during the day and in the evening)

mosadi ge a imilê ga a hlape (a pregnant woman does not have her menses)

The relationship between -hlapa in the first sentence and -hlapa in the second sentence is that both actions denote a process of purification or cleansing. It is interesting to note that culturally no direct word or expression is used to refer to "having menses". The other alternatives go ipôna (lit. see oneself) and go bôna kgwêdi (lit. see the month) are also euphemistic.

- (vii) tšhêla: has the basic meaning of "pour into" but may also mean "teach well", "drink excessively", "build a honey-comb", e.g.

tšhêla mêêtse ka pitšêng (pour water into the pot)

morutiši yôla o a tšhêla (that teacher teaches well)

Tsakata ga a nwe, o a tšhêla (Tsakata drinks
excessively)

dinôse di tšhêla tšdi (the bees are building a
honey-comb)

The basic meaning of "pouring into" suggests a large quantity of liquid or grain, which is in keeping with teaching effectively or drinking excessively or building a honey-comb undertakings that exceed all expectations.

(viii) phêkola: has the basic meaning of "throw divining bones" but may also mean "examine medically", e.g.

reatseba yôla o tšilô phêkola molwêšši (that witch-doctor has come to determine the patient's illness by means of divining bones)

Ngaka Seloma o phêkotše molwêšši (Dr. Seloma has examined the patient)

Both the basic and the related meanings imply examination of an ailing person; first, in the traditional sense, and second, in the modern sense. Although the processes are different, the function is the same.

- (ix) kgatla: has the basic meaning of "stamp" but may also mean "brand", "castrate", "emasculate", e.g.

basetšana ba kगतla dikôkô (the girls crack open the marula nuts)

ke hwêditšê ba kगतla mangwalô pôsong (I found them stamping the letters at the post office)

re kगतla dikgomo tša rena gore di se timêlê (we brand our cattle against loss)

re kगतlêla phôokwana (we emasculate the he-goat)

The basic and the related meanings are linked by a similar force of action that is implied in all of them.

- (x) hlama: has the basic meaning of "put on a roof" but may also mean "compose", e.g.

lehono ba hlama ngwakô wa Rasebilu (today they are putting on the roof of Rasebilu's house)

Pôdu o hlamilê kôša e bose (Podu has composed a melodious song)

The basic meaning of "putting on a roof" implies completion of a house, whereas the derived meaning of "compose" in the sense of a poem or a song implies completion of a thought like putting on the roof of a house.

2.2.12 One of the most important shifts in polysemy is that of the auxiliary verb, which is the result of the shift of a basic meaning of an independent (original) verb from which the deficient verb derives. For example,

- (i) hlwa: has the basic meaning of "spend the day" e.g.
ke tlô hlwa gaê lehôno (I shall spend the day at home today)

But it has also auxiliary meanings of "spend doing" and "usually" as in the following sentences:

ke tlô hlwa ke ithuta go bala (I shall spend the day learning how to read)

ke hlwa ke ba bôna (I usually see them)

- (ii) dutše: has the basic meaning of "sit", e.g.

banna ba dutše moriting (the men are sitting under the shade)

But the auxiliary meaning of "have/has been", e.g.

bana ba dutše ba lla (the children have been crying)

- (iii) šetše: has the basic meaning of "remained", e.g.

bakgêkolo ba šetše gaê (the old ladies remained at home)

But the auxiliary meaning of "already", e.g.

moruti o šetše a tlilê (the pastor has already come)

(iv) nyaka: has the basic meaning of "want", "demand", e.g.

belaodi ba nyaka tšhélêtê (the administrators want money)

But the auxiliary meanings of "about", "nearly", e.g.

mêêtse a nyakô bela (water is about to boil)

ke rilê go babja ka nyakô hwa (I fell so ill that I nearly died)

(v) tšwa: has the basic meaning of "come out/from" e.g.

bana ba tšwa sekôlong (children come from school)

But the auxiliary meaning of "just", e.g.

ke sa tšô mmôna (I have just seen him)

2.2.13 In those instances where the deficient verb is followed by an infinitive, the shift is barely noticeable, e.g.

ke a êtšiša (I imitate)

but ke etšiša go opêla ga gagwê (I imitate his singing)

2.2.14 In other instances the deficient verb only is used and its basic form is no longer in evidence, e.g.

a napa a dula fase (he just sat down)

o diô nkwêla godimo (he just fell upon me)

wherein napa and diô no longer have the absolute or independent meaning.

HOMONYMY

2.2.15 Homonymy is a term used to describe pairs or groups of words with the same phonetic form but totally different meanings. Unlike polysemes, homonyms are distinct words unrelated to one another, and the similarity in form is purely coincidental. Because in Northern Sotho, as in the other Bantu languages, tone is semantic, we shall discuss homonyms under two headings, viz. homotonyms and heterotonyms.

2.2.16 Homotonyms are words with the same form (i.e. the same speech sounds and tonal pattern) but with different meanings. A necessary condition for homotonyms is that the words should belong to the same word-categories. Technically speaking, there may be pairs of words with the same form, one of which being either a noun and the other an adjective, e.g. hlábà (an illegitimate child) and -hlábà (fawn with brown on back and neck); or one of which being a noun and a verb, e.g.

tsébà (jealousy) and -tsébà (know).

These are not regarded as homotonyms.

2.2.17 In the following examples only the context gives a clue to the meaning of the word:

(a) mollô (fire); mollô (a cry)

re ôra mollô (we are sitting by the fireside)

mollô wa dinônyana o a kwala (the chirping of birds is audible)

(b) thulô (collision, repairing, butting)

thulô (iron smelting, forging)

thulô ya diêta ga e swane (the repairing of shoes is not the same)

go swanetše go ba le thulô ya ditshipi pele di ka dirišwa go bopa difatanaga (there must be iron-smelting before cars can be built)

(c) thôbô (breaking)

thôbô (massage, fomentation)

ke kwa thôbô ya dikgong ka sekgwêng (I hear the breaking of wood in the thicket)

dinthô di ka fodišwa ka thôbô (wounds can be cured by fomentation)

(d) pôtô (trust, faith)

pôtô (pot)

pôtô ya rena go Modimo e tiilê (our faith in God is strong)

mmê o rêkilê pôttô (mother has bought a pot)

(e) phôtlêlanô (shelling monkey-nuts or birdlime for one another)

phôtlêlanô (folding sleeves for one another)

phôtlêlanô ya ditlooc tša bôna ke seka sa leratô

(their shelling of monkey-nuts for each other is a sign of their love)

phôtlêlanô ya dihêmpê tša bôna e leštša nwa (their folding of their shirt-sleeves for each other signifies their intention to fight)

(f) phalô (scraping, scraping instrument)

phalô (surpassing)

phalô ya mokgopa e swanêšše go ba bogale (a skin-scraper should be sharp)

phalô ya gašwê ya bana ba bangwê ditlhahlobông e dirile gore a hwêšše pasari (his surpassing of other pupils in the examination enabled him to get a bursary)

(g) uta (hide)

uta (rot)

tatê o uta tšhêlêtê (father hides money)

ga re je nama ya go uta (we don't eat rotten meat)

(h) tima (extinguish)

tima (be stingy)

re tima mollô ge re yô rôbala (we extinguish the fire when we go to sleep)

re tima baêng dikuku (we don't serve visitors with cakes)

(i) kgama (throttle)

kgama (take a bite of, e.g. apple)

lehôdu le kgama monna gore le mo hulê (the thief
throttles a man in order to rob him)

kgama apole yê o tlê o kwê bose bja yôna (take a bite
of this apple in order to enjoy its taste)

In the above sentences, there is no difference in form and tone between each of the pairs of words, but the roots are apparently unrelated since there is no discernible relation in meaning.

2.2.18 Heterotonyms, on the other hand, are words which correspond segmentally (i.e. the same speech sounds without the tones) but differ in meaning and tonal pattern. In other words, they can be distinguished only in terms of a difference in tonal pattern, e.g.

môhlwà (grass)

môlâlâ (neck)

môhlwá (ants)

môlâlâ (plain)

môbú (soil)

îpà (belly)

môbù (wasp)

îpá (string, thong)

lèkgái (nit)

sègòlê (knot)

lèkgái (stick of initiate)

sègólê (cripple)

<u>pélà</u> (rock-rabbit)	<u>thápô</u> (rope)
<u>pèlà</u> (tooth of a Sotho xylophone)	<u>thápô</u> (pip)
<u>gò fihlâ</u> (arrive)	<u>gò kgônâ</u> (be able)
<u>gò fihlâ</u> (hide)	<u>gò kgônâ</u> (weave)
<u>gò sèkâ</u> (discuss a case)	<u>gò bôtâ</u> (trust in, have confidence in)
<u>gò sèkâ</u> (be clear, e.g. water)	<u>gò bôtâ</u> (plaster)
<u>gò ânêgâ</u> (relate, tell (a story) narrate)	
<u>gò ânêgâ</u> (hang out (to dry))	

SYNONYMY

2.2.17 Very few words in Northern Sotho may be regarded as true synonyms, i.e. as "identical and co-extensive in sense and usage with other words". Even as regards such seemingly identical synonyms as -tshwênnya and -tlaiša, one feels a sense of more organized and more objective ill-treatment in -tlaiša than in -tshwênnya; or setlaêla and seota, where seota emphasizes the degree of stupidity more than setlaêla. However, the few that might pass the test are:

<u>-raloka</u> (play)	<u>-thokga</u> (break, break off)
<u>-bapala</u>	<u>-rôba</u> (break to pieces)

-munamuna (grumble, murmur, grouse, complain)

-ngôngôrêga (be dissatisfied)

letsêka (detective)

lefôkisi

2.2.18 Words bear great and essential resemblances of meaning but at the same time have small, subordinate and partial differences - differences which they have acquired by usage, or such as they are capable of receiving at the hands of wise and discreet masters of the tongue. Synonyms are therefore words of similar significance in the main, but with a certain dissimilarity as well; with very much in common, but also with something private and particular, which they do not share with one another. They are not on the one hand words absolutely identical in meaning; but neither on the other hand only remotely related to one another.

2.2.19 Most semanticists are agreed that total synonymy does not exist. Ullmann (1963, pp. 108-109)

says:

"Two forces militate against complete synonymy: the vagueness of the sense, and emotive overtones. Only those words can be described as synonyms which can replace each other in any given context, without the slightest alteration either in cognitive or in emotive import".

2.2.20 The same opinion is expressed by John Lyons (1971, p. 448):

"The two conditions for total synonymy are therefore inter-changeability in all contexts, and identity in both cognitive and emotive import".

2.2.21 Nida (1969, p. 73) defines synonyms as "words which share several (but not all) essential components and thus can be used to substitute for one another in some (but not all) contexts without any appreciable difference of meaning in these contexts". According to this view we can have only partial synonymy since the presence of non-shared components prevents the words from being used interchangeably in all contexts. An analysis of the componential features of the following pairs of words yields the following results:

(a)	<u>-loša</u>	<u>-kgea</u>
	i. make love	make love
	ii. verbally or in written form or by exchange of gifts	by touch of breasts
	iii. young and old	uninitiate

lesogana le loša kgarebê gore le e nyalê (the young man makes love to the girl with a view to marrying her)

mašoboro a kgea mathumaša ka go a tsopola matswêlê
(boy-uninitiates make love to girl-uninitiates by touching their breasts)

(b)	<u>manga</u>	<u>menga</u>
	i. cracks	cracks
	ii. in foot	in soil

nqwana wa go se rwalê diêta marega o palêga manga dinaong (a child who does not wear shoes in winter develops cracks in the sin of his feet)

naga ya selôkô e palêga menga ka gôhlê se go na le kômêlêlô (a loamy soil land develops cracks all round during drought).

(c)	<u>dimphô</u>	<u>diputê</u>
	i. gifts, presents	gifts, presents
	ii. from anybody to anybody	from lover to loved one or fiancé to fiancée

go lehlôgônôlô baô ba fago bahlôki dimphô (blessed are those who offer gifts to the poor)

lesogana le nêa kgarebê diputê go lokišêtša lenyalô (the young man gives presents to his fiancé as a prelude to their marriage)

(d)	<u>mogašwa</u>	<u>lethêbô</u>
	i. blanket, kaross	blanket, kaross
	ii. made from ox-hide	made from skins of wild animals, (e.g. the tiger, the lion)
	iii. worn by anybody	worn by chiefs

kgôši e apara lethêbô la nkwe (the chief wears a tiger-skin kaross)

mokgalabjê o epara mogašwa malaông (the old man uses an ox-hide blanket in bed)

(e)	<u>seferô</u>	<u>seroba</u>
	i. entrance, gate	entrance
	ii. front	back
	iii. public	private

baông ba tsêne ka seferô (the visitors entered through the front gate)

go tsêna ka lapông la motho ka seroba ga go a dumêlêlwa (to enter someone's lapa through the back entrance is not allowed).

(f)	<u>tlôpô</u>	<u>leêtsê</u>
	i. tuft of hair	plaited hair
	ii. on Sotho women	on Sotho girls
	iii. crest, comb (bird)	-

basadi ba Bapêdi ba kgêra tlôpô (Pedi women are distinguished by tufts of hair on their heads)

basetsana ba Bapêdi ba kgêra leêtsê (Pedi girls are distinguished by their plaited hair)

(g)	<u>-nanampa</u>	<u>-nanankêla</u>
	i. walk slowly	walk slowly
	ii. tortoise	human being

khudu le gê e nanampa e fihla mô e yago (although the tortoise moves slowly it reaches its destination)

molwêšši o sepele ka go nansnkêla (the patient walks slowly)

(h)	<u>-menekana</u>	<u>-menagana</u>
i.	curl	curl
ii.	writhe	-
iii.	-	be entwined, be twisted
iv.	human being, snake	wire

o rilê go ušhatla nōga hlōgō ya menekana (after crushing the head of the snake, it writhed)

a re tatollêng motatō wō o menaganego (let us straighten this wire that is entwined)

(i)	<u>-khuma</u>	<u>-êbola</u>
i.	pull off fibre, peel off	peel off
ii.	from bark of tree	from sweet reed

monnamogolo o khuma dinti tša mohlare (the old man pulls the fibre off the bark of a tree)

ngwanênyena o êbola ntsho (the girl peels off the sweet reed)

(j)	<u>-gamola</u>	<u>-hlôtle</u>
	i. squeeze water	strain
	ii. from material	beer

mosadi o gamola hêmpê pele a e anêga (the woman
squeezes water from the shirt before she hangs it to dry.)

bjalwa bja go hlôtlewa masbane bo ka nwewa lehono (beer
that was strained yesterday may be drunk today)

ANTONYMY

2.2.22 Antonymy refers to oppositeness of meaning.

John Lyons distinguishes three types of

oppositeness of meaning: complementarity, antonymy and
converseness. Complementarity is a relation of opposite-
ness which holds between words which are also complementary
to each other. "It is characteristic of such lexical
items", he says,

"that the denial of the one implies the
assertion of the other and the assertion of
the one implies the denial of the other".
(Lyons, 1971, p. 461).

In their "normal" usage complementary terms are not
qualifiable or gradable. The following pairs of words
may be said to be complementary:

tona: tshadi (male: female)

lesogana: kgarebê (young man: girl)

<u>mogegare</u> :	<u>bošego</u>	(day: night)
<u>bohlabêla</u> :	<u>bošikêla</u>	(east: west)
<u>seêtšê</u> :	<u>leswiswi</u>	(light: darkness)

2.2.23 The characteristic of antonymy, which may be regarded as true oppositeness of meaning, includes lexical items that are gradable. Sentences containing antonyms are always implicitly, if not explicitly, comparative. The sentence ngwakô wa rena ke ô mogolo (our house is big) implies that ngwakô wa rena ga se ô monyênnyane (our house is not small). Ngwakô wa rena ke ô mogolwane go wa lena (our house is bigger than yours) explicitly compares two houses and tells us more of the one than of the other. In the light of the foregoing explanation, the following pairs of words may be regarded as antonyms:

<u>-golo</u>	:	<u>-nyane/-nyênnyane</u>	(big: small)
<u>-têlêlê</u>	:	<u>-kopana</u>	(long/tall: short)
<u>-botse</u>	:	<u>-be</u>	(good: bad)
<u>tlase</u>	:	<u>tlêtiolo</u> (<i>brontoe</i>)	(up: down)
<u>kgolê</u>	:	<u>kgauswi</u>	(far: near)
<u>-fisa</u>	:	<u>-tála</u>	(new: old)
<u>-so</u>	:	<u>-šwêu</u>	(black: white)

2.2.24 Converseness is a relation of oppositeness in which one word is the converse of the other, e.g.

<u>-rêka</u>	:	<u>-rêkiša</u>	(buy: sell)
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<u>-wa</u>	:	<u>-tsoga</u>	(fall: rise)
<u>-bula</u>	:	<u>-tswalêla</u>	(open: close)
<u>-fa</u>	:	<u>-amogêla</u>	(give: receive)
<u>-ruta</u>	:	<u>-rutolla</u>	(teach: unteach/reteach)
<u>-bôfa</u>	:	<u>-bôfolle</u>	(tie: untie)

HYPONIMY

2.2.25 By hyponymy is meant the grouping together of words which, though they do not have the same meaning, nevertheless refer to objects and actions of a similar kind. For example we may take a broad term such as pitša (clay pot), which includes all types of clay pots, each with its own name. The various kinds of pots are nkgô (big clay pot), moêta/motšêga (clay pot for storing water), lefišô (clay pot for preparation of beer), moruswi (clay pot for curdling milk), lesapêlô (clay washing basin). These words are "hyponyms" of pitša and "co-hyponyms" of one another. The general term, pitša, is called the "superordinate" or main hyponym.

2.2.26 The following are other examples of hyponymy:

- (a) superordinate: leeba (dove)
hyponyms: leebakoko (laughing dove)
leebamošu (red-eyed turtle dove)
leebakgwêthê/-kgôthô (green pigeon)
leebamphêpane (Rameron pigeon/rock pigeon)

- (b) superordinate: nôga (snake)
- hyponyms: mokôpa (mamba)
- hlware (python)
- marabe/letsolobolo (puff-adder)
- pêêtle (cobra)
- lejapela (species of poisonous snake which lives on rock-rabbits)
- (c) superordinate: seletsšô (musical instrument)
- hyponyms: dipela (Sotho xylophone)
- meropa (drums)
- botsorwane (violin)
- lekope (Jewish harp)
- lengwane (bone-flute)
- phalafala (horn of sable antelope used as bugle in wartime; bugle).
- (d) superordinate: bogôbê (porridge)
- hyponyms: mohunê (porridge made from pumpkin and ground pumpkin pips)
- kgelêlê/mphi (porridge made from whey)
- kgôdu/thophi (porridge made from liquid of boiled pumpki)
- ting (sour porridge)
- lemopa (cooked mung-bean)
- (e) superordinate: bjang (grass)
- hyponyms: mohlwa/mohlakahlaka (quick grass)

(a) Idioms based on a noun

- (i) motho wa moriri, (lit. a person of hair, used to describe a very reliable person).
- (ii) motho yo motala, (lit. a raw person, used to describe an uncouth, unschooled and unlettered person).
- (iii) nku gare ga dioudi, (lit. a sheep among goats, used to describe a strange or ill-equipped person among diligent ones).
- (iv) dinala tše tšêlêlê, (lit. long nails, used when one is speaking of one who is lazy or is a notorious thief).
- (v) ntepa le lešago, (lit. a skin apron that hangs from the waist and covers the buttocks, used when speaking of two persons who are very close friends).
- (vi) pheta ya thaga, [lit. a necklace of a finch (perhaps with reference to colour) worn by members of royal blood. Idiomatically the phrase means a very precious object].
- (vii) selabi maswing, (lit. a fly in the milk, which is equivalent to the English idiom "a fly in the ointment").

- tšea o kwē! (lit. take and hear, i.e. receive a
blow or thrashing)
- go tšea malebeša (lit. take aims, i.e. learn from
the good example of others)
- go tšea mosela (lit. take the tail, i.e. be surpassed
by all, take last position in a test
or competition)
- go tšea mpa ya naga (lit. take the belly of the
country, i.e. disappear, get
lost, lose one's way)
- go tšea kgang le péré (lit. take an argument with a
horse, i.e. be a fast runner)
- go tšea ka maotomabēdi (lit. take by two feet, i.e.
run, avoid danger)
- go tšea lehlotlo (lit. take a walking stick, i.e.
move away, become aged)
- go tšea tša gago (lit. take what is yours, i.e.
challenge someone to a fight)
- go tšewa ke phiri (lit. be taken by a hyena, i.e. die)

- YA eya kua! (lit. go there, i.e. you talk nonsense!)
- go ya nabjô (lit. go with it (sleep), i.e. be fast
asleep)
- go ya ga maotwanahunyêla (lit. go to a place of small
bent legs, i.e. die)
- go ya badimong (lit. go to the ancestors, die)
- go ya gôdimo le fase (lit. go up and down, i.e.
undertake a project seriously)
- go ya le melômo ya batho (lit. go with people's mouths,
be credulous)

go ya mahlông (lit. go to the eyes, i.e. proceed on one's journey, show progress in one's work)

go ya le ditaba (lit. go with the news, i.e. idle)

2.2.30 From the foregoing discussion the importance of context in the meaning has been indisputably proved. We conclude with the words of A.S. Diamond (1959, p. 165):

".....words derive their meaning from the circumstances in which they are used and the use to which they are put. Language, in its most important and characteristic aspect, is the reverse of what it is generally supposed to be. Instead of consisting of a bundle of labels which name the thing to which they are attached, it rather consists of labels which obtain their meaning from the things to which they are attached; and these things, like all else in the world, are for ever changing, and with them changes the meaning of the labels. In all these cases there is, as before an objective resemblance between the old and new meanings - for example, the physical relation between person and object; a closer functional resemblance, in that the relation still serves much the same purpose; and also a still closer affective resemblance, which, though it may seem small, has widespread relations with the whole of a man's general way of life and what it means to him".

-bôna (see), /-tse-/ in motse (village, homestead).

Prefixal morphemes are preplaced to roots or stems and include noun prefixes, qualificative and predicative concords, and those used to form copulatives and adverbs, e.g. le- in lefase (world), ba ba- in ba bagolo (big ones), ba- in ba tlilê (they have come), ka- in ka selêpê (with an axe). Suffixal morphemes are attached after the root or stem to form diminutives and feminines of nouns and adjectives; derivative of verbs and changes in the verb conjugation; locatives from nouns, e.g. tabana / taba (small matter), sekôlông / sekôlô (at school), -ratana / -rata (love one another).

3.0.02 We now turn to the influence in meaning that is concomitant with a change in the structure of a Northern Sotho word. We have stated that morphologically the root constitutes the core of the word. As such the root is the principal carrier of meaning, i.e. it gives the word its basic meaning. The root /-LEM-/ has the basic or potential meaning of "plough" but by itself has no independent meaning unless a suffix is attached to it, e.g.

-LEMa (plough), -LEMiša (cause or help plough),
-LEMêla (plough for, at), -LEMišana (help each other plough), -LEMilê (have ploughed) etc.

Similarly the root /-THO/ has the basic or potential meaning of "human" which can only be specified by attaching

a prefix to it, e.g.

moTHO (person)

baTHO (people)

boTHO (humanity, goodness, kindness, good disposition)

seTHO (human kind, mankind, Bantu culture)

It is evident, therefore, that the root becomes a meaningful word or utterance depending on the particular morphemes that are attached to it.

INFLUENCE ON THE NOUN

3.1.00 Much has been written on the morphology of the noun and it will not be necessary to refer to all the findings of the various scholars who have undertaken this task. Our main concern will be to show that a change in the prefix or suffix of a noun results in a change of meaning.

3.1.01 Changes in the structure of the noun are brought about by prefixal and suffixal morphemes.

Change in number is effected by the change of prefixes, e.g. sebata (predatory animal), dibata plural form; mokgwa (custom, habit), mekgwa plural form.

3.1.02 A further change in the meaning of nouns is effected in the same way, except that it is not only number but significance that is effected, through the

class system, e.g.

monna (man, husband)

senna (the way a man acts)

bonna (manhood, masculinity)

3.1.03 The importance of prefixes lies in the fact that nouns are divided into classes distinguished by their prefixes. The mo-/ba class is popularly referred to as the "person class" because nouns with these prefixes, singular and plural, indicate human beings, e.g.

mosadi (woman, wife) basadi

mokgalabjê (old man) bakgalabjê

Mopêdi (a Pedi tribesman) Bapêdi

moêng (visitor) baêng

3.1.04 The deverbatives in this class are derived by placing the class prefix, singular or plural, before the verb stem and by replacing the terminative -a with -i. Lombard (1969, p. 109) justifiably draws a distinction between deverbatives that indicate persons who are directly involved in the process and those that indicate persons for whom the process is characteristic or to whom the process applies. The first classification includes the following examples:

mogami / -gama (milker)

mmêtli / -bêtla (carpenter)

mohwi / -hwa (one who is dying)

moruti / -ruta (pastor, minister, priest)

3.1.05 In the second classification we include the following examples:

modiidi / -diila (poor and needy person)

mohu / -hwa (the deceased, dead person)

morongwa / -roma (angel)

It is interesting to note that the original meaning of moruti which is "teacher" has been shifted through the process of specialization to "pastor", "minister", "priest". Matsepe (1974, p. 5) brings out the original meaning in "moruti wa gagwê wa bongaka o bolêtše gore a se kê a bê a kgwatha goba a kgwathwa ke motho" (his teacher in the profession of divining bones instructed him neither to touch, nor to be touched by somebody). The word used for "teacher" today is morutiši.

3.1.06 In contrast the personal nouns of the le-/ma-class indicate persons with undesirable or contemptible characteristics, acquired as a result of habit or frailty of character, as also people of non-Sotho origin:

letagwa (drunkard)

lefšêga (coward)

lešilo (fool)

<u>lehôdu</u>	(thief)
<u>letšhōpša</u>	(one who flees from initiation school)
<u>legwaragwara</u>	(rogue, rascal)
<u>lefamolebê</u>	(one who has been away from home for a long time)
<u>lefetwa</u>	(old maid, spinster)
<u>letêbêlê</u>	(Ndebele tribesman)
<u>lêthōsa</u>	(Xhosa tribesman)

3.1.07 Personal nouns of the se-/di- class, on the other hand, indicate human beings with exceptionally good or exceptionally bad characteristics.

The first group includes:

<u>seagi</u>	/ -aga	(expert builder, master builder)
<u>sebêtli</u>	/ -bêtla	(expert carpenter)
<u>serutêgi</u>	/ -ruta	(an intellectual)
<u>sehlalefi</u>	/ -hlalefa	(a highly intelligent person)

The second group includes

<u>sefôfu</u>	(blind person)
<u>seota</u>	(dunce)
<u>seôtswa</u>	(adulterer)
<u>setagwa</u>	(alcoholic)

3.1.08 Personal nouns of the [N-] / diN- class indicate people distinguished on the grounds of a particular function they perform or those who possess a

particular characteristic:

<u>kgôši</u>	(chief, king)
<u>hlatse</u>	(witness)
<u>tlhôdi</u>	(spy)
<u>phuti</u>	(paramour, mistress)
<u>ngaka</u>	(doctor, witch-doctor)
<u>tšhuana</u>	(orphan)

3.1.09 From the foregoing examples we may conclude that the personal nouns with prefix mo- indicate ordinary human beings whereas those with prefix le- indicate people characterized by some weakness or by their social status or caste. In point of fact in some instances the use of the le- prefix reveals a derisive attitude on the part of the speaker to the one spoken about, cf. Monêdi and Lepêdi. Personal nouns with prefix se- indicate people who possess human qualities in excess, that is to say, to a much greater or worse degree than those with the le- prefix, cf. letağawa and setağawa. Lastly, personal nouns with the prefix (N-) signify people of some special rank or profession or status or function.

3.1.10 As regards the plural prefix bô- (class 1a) many scholars have described its semantic value as being the plural of proper nouns and terms of relationship as well as indicating the equivalent of English "and company", but none has shown that this prefix may also be

used to indicate respect. Accordingly the sentence bômalome ba fihlilê may mean my uncle has arrived (respect) or my uncles have arrived (plural) or my uncle and company have arrived. We shall discuss this point in greater detail under honorifics in Chapter IV.

3.1.11 Nouns of the mo-/me- class are miscellaneous and impersonal. Our interest however centres around the impersonal deverbatives, which are derived from the verb stem by prefixing the class prefix mo- or me- and by replacing the terminative -a with -ô. According to Ziervogel (1969, p. 14) "this kind of deverbative indicates the manner and/or action of the product of the verb stem". To these significances might be added the method by which, and the style in which, the process is carried out. Lombard (1969, p. 135) rightly concludes that the semantic value of suffix -ô stands in contrast to that of -i, that is to say that deverbatives with the terminative -ô are impersonal and indicate indirect involvement in the process, while those with the terminative -i are personal and, to a large extent, indicate direct involvement in the process. moôpêlô / -ôpêla (sing) is the manner or act of singing, e.g. moôpêlô wa sebjalêbjalê (modern type of singing, i.e. modern music); molemô / -lema (plough) is the manner or method of ploughing, e.g. molemô wa monna yô o ka se mo atlê (this man's method of ploughing will not profit him); modumô / -duma (rumble, thunder) indicates the result of a

process, e.g. ke kwa modumô wa sefofane (I hear the booming of an aeroplane): mphagô / -faga (add mealie-meal to boiling water) indicates the product of a process, e.g. mosetsana o lokiša mphagô wa leêtô la gagwê (the girl is preparing provision for her journey).

3.1.12 Impersonal deverbatives of the mo-/me-class stand in contradistinction to those of classes N-/din- which indicate more of the activity of the process than merely the manner in which the process is executed, e.g.

kôpêlô / -ôpêla (sing) means "a song"

temô / -lema (plough) means "ploughing, ploughing occupation", e.g. molemi o phela ka temô (the farmer lives by ploughing)

tumô / -duma (rumble, thunder) means "rumbling", "thundering", "fame", e.g. katlêgô ya gagwê diphadišanông e mo filê tumô (his success at the competitions made him famous).

phagô / -faga (add mealie-meal to boiling water) means "manner or act of adding mealie-meal to boiling water", "a bee-hive", e.g. phagô ya bogôbê e kgônwa le ke bana (even children can add mealie-meal to boiling water in the preparation of porridge) or phagô ya dinôse e hwêtšwa mohlareng (a bee-hive is found on a tree).

3.1.13 Impersonal deverbatives of classes N-/din- can be contrasted with those of the le-/ma- class which, in the main, may be divided into two groups: (i) those with suffix -i that indicate objects distinguished by the execution of the process and (ii) those with suffix ô that indicate abstracts, habits or inclination. In the first group we have the following examples:

<u>lekwapi</u>	(dried fruit)
<u>lerôthi</u>	(drop)
<u>lediri</u>	(verb)

In the second group we have the following examples:

<u>leratô</u>	(love)
<u>lehlôyô</u>	(hatred)
<u>lehumô</u>	(wealth, richness)
<u>lephelô</u>	(state of living, lifespan), e.g.
	<u>lephelô la motho mô lefaseng ke nywaga yê masome a a šupago</u> (a person's lifespan on earth is 70 years)
	<u>lephelô la bafsa ga le kgahliše</u> (the way of life of the youth is not exemplary)

3.1.14 Impersonal deverbatives of the se-/di- class usually indicate instruments that carry out or influence the execution of the process, i.e. they are agents of the process. These nouns are further distinguished by the suffixal morphemes -i and -ô, those with

suffix -i being active agents or instruments while those with suffix -ô are instruments specially designed for a purpose, i.e. passive agents:

- (a) setagi (intoxicant) sefadi (pot scraper)
selomi (pest, parasite)
sebadi (adding machine)
- (b) sebatô (flat piece of wood used to flatten floor by
pounding)
sefagô (calabash by means of which meal is scooped
into a pot)
seaparô (cloth, garment, dress)
senwêlô (jug to drink from, chalice)
segô (calabash for drinking water)

3.1.15 In addition impersonal deverbatives of this class indicate the product or result of the process, e.g.

- senô (drink)
sejô (food)

3.1.16 Lastly a few impersonal deverbatives of this class indicate the abstract result of an action, e.g.

- semelô (character)
setšô (origin)
sewêlô (chance)

3.1.17 When the prefix bo- (class 14) is prefixed to noun stems, pronouns and qualificative stems, the nouns thus formed are abstract, e.g.

<u>bonna</u>	/	<u>-nna</u>	(manhood)
<u>botswatswa</u>	/	<u>-tswatswa</u>	(neatness, tidiness)
<u>bobôna</u>	/	<u>-bôna</u>	(themselves, their personality)
<u>bohe</u>	/	<u>-be</u>	(evil, badness)

3.1.18 Deverbatives with this prefix may be semantically divided into two main groups:

(a) those abstracts with the terminative -i which indicate direct involvement in the process, e.g.

<u>boagišani</u>	(neighbourliness)
<u>bolaodi</u>	(leadership)
<u>bogaswi</u>	(madness)
<u>bokgôni</u>	(ability)

(b) those with the terminative -ô which indicate the place where the process is performed, e.g.

<u>botšhabêlô</u>	(place of refuge)
<u>bodulô</u>	(living place)
<u>botšô</u>	(place of origin)
<u>boyô</u>	(destination)

3.1.19 The following derivations from verb stems -bolaya and -rata will show the effect morphemes have on the meaning of a word:

- (a) mmolai (killer)
sebolai (murderer, assassin, agent of death, i.e. poison)
sebolaô (weapon, instrument used for killing, i.e. gun)
mmolaô (manner or method of killing)
polaô (murder, killing, assassination)
mmolawa (one who is killed)
- (b) morati (lover)
serati (expert lover, Don Juan, creature that loves)
moratô (manner of loving) e.g. ke mo rata moratô wa digaswi (I love her the manner of lunatics, i.e. I am madly in love with her)
leratô (love)
thatô (will), e.g. thatô ya Modimo a e dirêgê (may God's will be done)
moratwa (loved one)

3.1.20 Prefixal and suffixal morphemes may precede or follow a noun, or pronoun to indicate the place or locality in connection with which an action is carried out. In Northern Sotho the locative may be expressed in several ways, one being by suffixing the locative morpheme -ng to the noun, e.g.

sekôlô (school) - sekôlông (at/in/from/to school) the specific meaning being determined by the context:

bana ba ilê sekôlông (children have gone to school)

bana ba tšwa sekôlông (children come from school)

bana ba bapala sekôlông (children play at school)

3.1.21 The reference or application of the locative in the above sentences (cf. 3.1.20) may be modified further by the use of the secondary morphemes kua (kwa) implying relative distance, fa implying relative proximity and mô specifying the locality without reference to the distance involved, e.g.

bana ba ilê kua sekôlông (some distance away)

bana ba tšwa fa sekôlông (nearness implied)

bana ba tšwa mô sekôlông (locality specified without reference to distance)

3.1.22 It is easier to determine the distinction in meaning between kua on the one hand and either fa or mô on the other, than to see the distinction between fa and mô. To illustrate this close distinction between the meaning of fa and mô we shall examine the following two sentences:

bana ke ba tlogêtše mô moriting

bana ke ba tlogêtše fa moriting

In the first sentence, the children were left under the shade of a tree while in the second sentence they were left in the vicinity of the shade. It is therefore

improbable to say monna o rōbêtšê mô mollông but probable to say monna o rōbêtšê fa mollông (the man is sleeping by the fire).

3.1.23 The locative may also be expressed by the use of prefixal morphemes go- and ga-, which exert a semantic influence on the succeeding noun or pronoun, e.g.

ke ya go Kgalema (I go to Kgalema)

ke ya ga Kgalema (I go to Kgalema's courtyard,
homestead or village)

or

ke ya go bōna (I go to them)

ke ya ga bōna (I go to their home or residence)

3.1.24 When the instrumental or locative morpheme ka- is placed before a noun or pronoun the word-group thus formed in many cases expresses the concept conveyed by the English adverb of time or manner or place. The ka- has no meaning unless it is used with the following noun or pronoun. In some cases the ka- conveys the meaning of "about" or "concerning" when used with nouns or pronouns, e.g.

ba mmolailê ka mpholô (they killed him with poison,
i.e. they poisoned him)

o pšhatlilê kômiki ka boomo (she broke the cup
purposely)

baêti ba tlô sepela ka mahubê (the visitors will
depart at dawn)

re tla khutšša ka maabane (we will rest in the evening)
banênyana ba bolêla ka wêna (girls talk about you)
o botšišša ka Matome (he is asking concerning Matome)
lesogana le tsêne ka ngwakông (the young man entered
into the house)

3.1.25 Similarly the connective morpheme le, which has no independent meaning, is always used with a following noun or pronoun and the word-group thus formed assumes an adverbial function which expresses the idea of English "and", "with", "together with", "also", e.g.

go tlišê monna le mosadi (there came a man and a woman)
Maria o ratana le Kamêla (Maria is in love with Kamela)
le Hunadi o tlišê (Hunadi has come also)

3.1.26 The diminutive morpheme -ana is suffixed to nouns to signify smallness in respect of (a) size, (b) quantity and (c) age, e.g.

- (a) lapana (small courtyard) / lapa
ngwakwana (small house) / ngwakô
kgôššana (chief's son, petty chief) / kgôši
mogobjana (small pool, puddle) / mogobe
- (b) namana (piece of meat) / nama
bjalwana (small quantity of beer) / bjalwa
mêêtsana (small quantity of water) / mêêtse
bogôbjana (piece of porridge) / bogôbê

(c)	<u>mmutlana</u>	(leveret)	/	<u>mmutla</u>
	<u>kolobjana</u>	(piglet)	/	<u>kolobê</u>
	<u>pêšana</u>	(foal, pony)	/	<u>pêrê</u>
	<u>kwana</u>	(lamb)	/	<u>nku</u>
	<u>putšane</u>	(kid)	/	<u>puđi</u>

3.1.27 Although in general there is no distinction in meaning between the diminutive morphemes -ana and -ane, there are instances in Northern Sotho where the two cannot be used interchangeably. According to Jordan (1956, p. 203) -ane "signifies distinction not only in size or quality but also in essential nature". To illustrate this point we shall make reference to some of Schuring's findings (1971, p. 57). From the noun thipa (knife) we have thipana (small knife) and thipane (official title of a man who performs the operation at initiation school). While thipana shows comparative smallness in size, thipane signifies association with the object indicated by the simple form of the noun. From sekgopêdi (an habitual beggar) we have sekgopêšana (a young habitual beggar, an irritating beggar) and sekgopêšane (a night star). This star is so named because it resembles a beggar by being the first to appear daily on the firmament. From (le)naô (foot) we have (le)nawana (small foot) and Nawane (a name given to a vagabond, especially one whose movements are detested). It is therefore evident that -ana and -ane are not complete synonyms.

3.1.28 Diminutives may have affective connotations of love, disgust or contempt depending on the context in which they are used, especially when the morpheme -nyana is suffixed to nouns. This point is borne out by the following groups of sentences:

- (a) Thômo o nyêtše mosatšana wa setswatswa (Thomo has married a pretty neat wife)
mosatšana yô ga a na tlhômphô (this unpleasant woman has no respect)
mosatšanyana yô o nthogilê (this despicable woman has insulted me)
- (b) o na le molôngwana wa nthokolwana (she has a round charming mouth)
o na le molômonyana, o tlô itiwa (she has the little mouth but she will be thrashed, i.e. she has much to say but will be punished for it).

3.1.29 The incidence of the use of suffixal morpheme -gadi to signify the feminine of nouns or the idea of the opposite sex in Northern Sotho is very limited. A good example is mohlôlôgadi (widow) / mohlôlô (widower). In the greater portion of the Northern Sotho speaking area, however, mohlôlôgadi wa monna is used instead of mohlôlô, a point that indicates that this suffixal morpheme has doubtful or indefinite feminine significance. Another

example is mogwêgadi (a man's father-in-law or mother-in-law). There are, however, a few nouns with suffix -gadi which indicate the feminine. These are:

mohumagadi (lady, woman of high rank) / mohumi (a wealthy man)

kgôšigadi (chieftainess, chief's wife) / kgôši (chief)

3.1.30 In the light of the above examples it is gross overstatement on the part of Mojapelo (1967, p. 29) to say that the suffix -gadi is used with generic names of animals to indicate the female of the species. He cites the following examples:

taugadi / tau (lioness)
kgômogadi / kgômo (cow)
nkugadi / nku (female sheep)
mpšagadi / mpša (bitch)

3.1.31 Typical Northern Sotho feminines of the above nouns are:

tau ê (ya) tshadi
kgômo ê (ya) tshadi
nku ê (ya) tshadi
mpša ê (ya) tshadi

3.1.32 The tendency to use the suffix -gadi with any noun is a recent contrivance to fill the gap

created by the scarcity of typical feminine forms of nouns in Northern Sotho. This tendency is encouraged by some Northern Sotho writers as well as Northern Sotho Language Committees. Today words like morutišigadi (lady teacher) and mohlomphegadi (lady) enjoy popular use. Even the outstanding Northern Sotho novelist and poet Matsepe (p. 102) incorrectly coined mohlalagadi / -hlala to refer to "a woman divorcee". The correct deverbative should have been mohlalwa. According to Northern Sotho culture a woman does not marry someone but gets married to him; therefore she cannot divorce him.

3.1.33 The use of -gadi with augmentative significance is not found in literary Northern Sotho, so that the examples given by Mojapelo (p. 29) and Schuring (p. 113) should be regarded with extreme caution. A rare example of its application is found in Phala's praise name of Sekwati Thulare (1935, p. 78):

šiba-šiba, tlôuzadi, tlogêla di a go tlogêla

(press on, mighty elephant, the fleet-footed ones are outrunning you).

3.1.34 The tendency to use this suffixal morpheme to indicate the augmentative is a result of the influence of Southern Sotho. For instance, in the Lutheran hymnal (hymn 198) we have the line: monggadi ô re šôkêlwang, in which monggadi refers to the Almighty.

Today radio announcers use ditšhabagadi to refer to "The Big Powers" and lehulêgadi to refer to "much foam or soapiness". Necessity might force speakers to use this morpheme but it is not typical of Northern Sotho.

INFLUENCE ON THE QUALIFICATIVE

3.2.00 A qualificative is also subject to semantic change by morphological means; yô mogolo can only refer to a person; yê botse to a thing or an animal or a bird; while la go bolêlwa can only refer to singular nouns of the le- class, e.g. leleme (tongue, language).

3.2.01 The suffixal morpheme -ana is suffixed to colour adjectives to indicate the feminine, e.g.

kgômo yê swana (a black cow)

kgogo yê tšhwaana (a white hen)

3.2.02 The suffixal morpheme -ana may also be used with adjective stems to denote the comparative degree, just as the reduplication of the stem will indicate the superlative degree, e.g.

- (a) mošemane yô mogolo (a big boy)
mošemane yô mogolwane (a biggish boy)
mošemane yô mogologolo (a very big boy)
- (b) tsela yê têtêlê (a long road)

may mean "brother" or "chief" depending on the subjectival concord used, e.g.

hosi ya mina u fambile (my brother is gone)

hosi ya mina yi fambile (my chief is gone)

3.3.02 Verbal prefixal and suffixal morphemes express modal and time-determining concepts. Taking the verb re rata (we love) and using different prefixal and suffixal morphemes, we observe the following changes in meaning:

re a rata (we are loving)

re sa rata (we are still loving)

re tlô rata (we will love)

re ka rata (we may love)

re ratilê (we have loved)

3.3.03 Similarly we can effect changes in the meanings of the above utterances by using verbal morphemes of negation, e.g.

ga re rate (we are not loving)

ga re sa rata (we no longer love)

re ka se ratê (we will not be loving)

re ka se rate (we may not be loving)

ga re a rata (we have not loved)

3.3.04 The use of the suffixal morpheme -ng with verb stems has been dealt with by Ziervogel (1969),

and more fully by Louwrens (1971) and it will not be necessary for it to be discussed in detail here. The general rule is that where it appears in the imperative, hortative and subjunctive verb, it indicates that the addressee is in the plural, e.g.

(a) Imperative:

<u>ruta!</u>	(teach!),	plural	<u>rutang!</u>	(teach ye!)
<u>kitima!</u>	(run!),	"	<u>kitimang!</u>	(run ye!)
<u>ja/eja!</u>	(eat!)	"	<u>jang/ejang!</u>	(eat ye!)
<u>di bôfê!</u>	(tie them!)	"	<u>di bôfêng!</u>	(tie them!)

(b) Hortative:

a (ga) re yê (let us two go)
a (ga) re yêng (let us (more than two) go)

a nkê o nthuŝê (please help me)
a nke le nthuŝêng (please help me)

(c) Subjunctive:

ŝoma ka pele gore re sepele (work quickly so that we two may leave)
ŝomang ka pele gore re sepele (work quickly so that we (three people or more) may go)
ba bitŝê ba tlê (call them so that they may come (one person))
ba bitŝêng ba tlêng (call them so that they may come (many people))

3.3.05 We now come to the change in meaning that is effected by the different verbal extensions. Cantrell (1967, p. 146) defines an extension as "a suffix which may be added to a verbal root, thereby modifying the effect of the action described more in respect of its application rather than its essential nature. It is followed by the usual verbal terminatives". We shall briefly discuss the various extensions found in Northern Sotho in an attempt to prove that change in morphological structure results in change in meaning though use in specific contexts.

3.3.06 APPLIED EXTENSION

The applied or directive verb stem is formed by means of the extensions -êl- and -êtš-. It indicates that the action is carried out for, on behalf of, at, towards in respect of a person, thing or place, e.g.:

<u>-šomêla</u>	(work for),	cf	<u>-šoma</u>	(work)
<u>-bopêla</u>	(mould for),	cf	<u>-bopa</u>	(mould)
<u>-dišêtša</u>	(herd for),	cf	<u>-diša</u>	(herd)
<u>-senyêtša</u>	(spoil for),	cf	<u>-senya</u>	(spoil)

3.3.07 Taking as example the verb stem -êma (stand) we may extract the following shades of meaning by the use of the applied extension -êl- :

ke tlô go êmêla kêrêkêng (I shall wait for you at church)

êmêla sehlareng (stand towards the tree)

ke yô êmêla nawana kêrêkêng (I am going to stand for the child at church, i.e. I am going to be god-father at the christening of the child).

ke yô êmêla mohwêlwa (I am going to stand for the bereaved person, i.e. I am going to give condolence to the bereaved person)

monna yô o tlô êmêla Kôôši Phasha lekgotlông (this man will represent Chief Phasha at the meeting)

êmêla mafêlêlông a kwêdi ke tlô go lefa (wait until the end of the month and I will settle my debt)

- 3.3.08 When the applied extension is used with the reflexive morpheme i- it expresses the idea of "by oneself, alone, on one's own accord", e.g.

ke tla ikêla gagêšo ka gobane le a ntlaiša (I shall go to my home because you illtreat me)

mohlôlôgadi o itulêla le bana ba gagwé (the widow lives alone with her children)

- 3.3.09 When the applied extension is followed by the interrogative suffix -ng it expresses the question "what for?" or "why", e.g.

o mpilêtsang (why do you call me?)

le tlogêlang le sa ja (why do you leave without eating?)

3.3.10 The passive applied extension is often used idiomatically, e.g.

monna o ilê a wêlwa ke kôtse (the man was fallen upon by danger, i.e. danger fell upon the man)

malome o fêlêlwa ke leruô (uncle is finished by his livestock, i.e. uncle's livestock has dwindled)

3.3.11 COMPLETIVE EXTENSION

The completive verb stem is formed by means of the extension -êlêl-, and indicates that the action is performed completely, fully or to its conclusion, e.g.

-bôfêlêla (tie completely), cf -bôfa (tie)
-tsênêlêla (enter deeply), cf -tsêna (enter)
-swinêlêla (fasten tight), cf -swina (fasten)

3.3.12 The following examples will show the various shades of meaning that may be extracted from -gatêlêla, cf -gata (step on):

mošemane o gatêlêla Molefe fase (the boy presses Molefe down)

bolwêtši bo fo no gatêlêla (illness has just pressed him down, i.e. he is bed-ridden)

sebolêdi se ilê sa gatêlêla tlhokômêlô ya bana polêlông ya sôna (the speaker emphasized child-welfare in his speech)

bahumi ba bangwê ba gatêlêla bahlôki (some rich
people oppress the poor and needy)

3.3.13 CAUSATIVE EXTENSION

The causative verb is formed by means of the extensions -iš-, -š-, -tšh- and indicates that the action is caused, made or helped to happen, e.g.

-botšiša (ask), cf -botša (tell)

-badiša (cause, make or help read), cf -bala (read)

-tsênya/-tsêntšha (cause to enter, put in), cf

-tsêna (enter)

-tloša (remove, take away), cf -tloga (go away)

-tliša (bring), cf -tla (come)

-kwiša (cause to hear or taste or feel), cf -kwa
(hear, taste, feel)

3.3.14 The following sentences illustrate the use of the causative extension:

ke botšiša gore bana ba ilê kae (I ask where the children have gone)

morutiši o badiša bana (the teacher makes the children read)

mosetsana o badiša mogwêragwê lengwalô (the girl allows her friend to read her letter)

ka gê o sa bône gabotse ke tlô go badiša buku yê /as you do not see well, (as your sight is poor) I shall help you read this book/

3.3.15 INTENSIVE EXTENSION

The intensive verb stem is formed by means of the extension -išiš-, and indicates that the action is carried out intensively, e.g.

- nyakišiša (search thoroughly, undertake research)
cf -nyaka (seek, want)
- latišiša (pursue carefully, follow closely), cf
-lata (follow)
- lêkodišiša (observe carefully, examine critically),
cf -lekola (observe)
- botšišiša (ask repeatedly, interrogate, cross-examine), cf -botša (tell)
- badišiša (read carefully or intensively), cf -bala
(read)
- kwišiša (understand), cf -kwa (hear, taste, feel)

3.3.16 In contrast to botšiša and badiša in 3.3.14 above, we have the following examples of the use of the intensive extension:

badišiša temana yê gore o kgônê go fêtola dipotšišô
tšê di latêlago (read this passage carefully so that you may be able to answer the questions that follow)

ke bê ke re o re ke tlê lehôno, eupša gê ke badišiša
lengwalô ka lêmoga gore o re ke tlê ka moswana
(I thought you said I should come today but on

re-reading the letter I realized that you wished
I should come tomorrow)

agêntê e ilê ya botšišišiša mosenyi (the lawyer cross-
questioned the criminal)

monna o ilê a botšišišiša bašemane gore nku ya gaswê e
bolailwê ke mang (the man asked the boys repeated-
ly who had killed his sheep)

3.3.17 NEUTER EXTENSION

The neuter verb stem is formed by means of the
extensions -êg-, -al- and -agal- and indicates
an intransitive state or condition. It is not followed
by an agent determining the state or condition, nor can it
be made passive. In English it corresponds to the use of
the auxiliary verb "become" or the suffixes "-able" and
"-ible", e.g.

- (a) -rôbêga (become broken, be breakable) cf -rôba (break)
-ratêga (be lovable, be amiable), cf -rata (love)
-rutêga (be teachable, become taught or educated),
cf -ruta (teach)
-lahlêga (become lost), cf -lahla (lose)
- (b) -bônala (be visible, be seen), cf -bôna (see)
-kwala (become heard, be audible), cf -kwa (hear)
- (c) -bônagala (be visible, be obvious), cf -bôna (see)
-diragala (become done, happen), cf -dira (do)

- kwagala (become heard, audible), cf -kwa (hear)
 -hlôkagala (become scarce, die), cf -hlôka (be in
 want)

3.3.18 The following examples illustrate the use of the
 neuter extension:

- pudi ya bôna e lahlêgilê (their goat is lost)
kgarebê yêla ga e dumêdišêge (that girl is ungreet-
 able, i.e. is ugly)
go bônala dikgômo ka tšhemong (cattle can be seen in
 the field)
kôtse e kgolo e diragêtše (a big accident has occurred)

3.3.19 ITERATIVE EXTENSION

The iterative or extensive or frequentative verb
 stem is formed by means of the extension -ak-,
 and indicates that the action is repeated continually or is
 carried out extensively, e.g.

- rogaka (curse violently), cf -roga (swear, curse)
 -hlabaka (stab repeatedly), cf -hlaba (stab)
 -gataka (trample down), cf -gata (tread upon)
 -rêmaka (hack to pieces), cf -rêma (chop)
 -gašaka (scatter indiscriminately), cf -gaša
 (scatter, broadcast)

3.3.20 The following examples illustrate the use of
 the iterative extension:

ge batho ba tšhaba ba ilê ba gataka monna yô a bêgo
a wêtše fase (when the people ran away they
trampled down the man who was lying on the ground)
monna o ilê a rogaka mahôdu ao a mo utswêditšêgo
dikgômo (the man cursed the thieves who had
stolen his cattle)
ngaka e gašaka dihlare le motse go thibêla balôl (the
witch-doctor scatters the charms about the
village to keep out the witches)

3.3.21 RECIPROCAL EXTENSION

The reciprocal verb stem is formed by means of
the extension -an- and indicates that the action
described by the verbal root is carried out by two or more
people or groups of things in relation to one another.
In English it is rendered by "each other" and "one another",
e.g.

-ratana (love each other), cf -rata (love, like)
-bônana (see each other), cf -bôna (see)
-rutana (teach each other), cf -ruta (teach)
-bolayana (kill each other), cf -bolaya (kill)

3.3.22 The following examples illustrate the use of
the reciprocal extension:

lekgarebê le lesogana ba a ratana (the girl and the
young man are in love)

mpša le phiri di hlôyane (the dog and the wolf hate each other)

Lesiba o tsebana le Mokgadi (Lesiba and Mokgadi know each other or Lesiba is familiar with Mokgadi)

ba bônana bošego (they see each other at night, i.e. they meet at night)

3.3.23 ASSOCIATIVE EXTENSION

The associative verb stem is formed by means of the extensions -agan- and -akan-, and indicates that two or more agents or participants are associated in the action described by the verbal root, e.g.

- bôfagana (be entertwined), cf -bôfa (tie)
- menagana (be folded together), cf -mena (fold)
- rokagana (be sewn together), cf -roka (sew)
- hlômagana (be stringed together), cf -hlôma (erect)
(follow one another)
- pitlagana (be pressed together), cf -pitla (press, squeeze)
- thubakana (get smashed to pieces), cf -thuba (smash)
- kgobakana (get heaped together), cf -kgoba (heap up)

3.3.24 The following examples illustrate the use of the associative extension:

dikala tša mehlare di bôfagane (tree branches are intertwined)

mo setimêlêng bašomi ba vitlagana gê ba ya modirông

(on their way to work workers are often crowded
in the train)

banna ba kgobakana mošate (the men gather at the
chief's kraal)

pitša e rilê go wêla fase ya thubakana (the earthen-
ware pot fell down and broke to pieces)

3.3.25 REVERSIVE INTRANSITIVE EXTENSION

The reversive (inversive) intransitive extension is formed by means of the extensions -og- and -olog- and indicates that the action described by the verbal root is reversed or undone or capable of being reversed or undone, e.g.

-gatoga (remove foot from, cf -gata (step on))

-fahloga (become awake, i.e. realize), cf -fahla
(disturb vision)

-tloga (leave, depart, move away), cf -tla (come)

-hlômoga (become plucked out), cf -hlôma (erect)

-bôfologa (become loose), cf -bôfa (tie)

-utuloga (become revealed), cf -uta (hide, secret)

-sôkologa (be turned round, be converted), cf -sôka
(face the wrong direction)

-thibologa (become unplucked, uncorked), cf -thiba
(plug, cork)

-rutologa (become untaught, be re-orientated), cf
-ruta (teach)

-forologa (become aware of the truth), cf -fora
(deceive)

3.3.26 The following examples illustrate the use of
the reversive intransitive extension:

gatoga kobô ya ka! (step off my blanket!)

o rilê go tsêna mathatêng a fahloga (he learned
through difficulties)

lefofa lêo le bêgo le le kêfêng le hlômogilê (the
feather that was in his hat has been plucked out)

thopa ya gagwê e utulogilê (his secret has been
revealed or divulged)

gê bjalwa bo bela sethibô se tla thibologa (as the
beer ferments the cork will be thrown off)

gê bana ba šêtše ba ithutilê tšê mpe go bothata go
rutologa (once children have developed bad
habits, it is difficult for them to change)

3.3.27 REVERSIVE TRANSITIVE EXTENSION

The reversive (inversive) transitive extension
is formed by means of the extensions -ol- and
-oll-, and causes the basic action of the verbal root to be
reversed, e.g.

-bôfolla (untie, loosen), cf -bôfa (tie)

-fêgolla (take down), cf -fêga (hang up, put up)

-kgatlolla (demolish stone wall), cf -kgatla (build
stone wall)

- hlôpholla (scatter, analyse), cf -hlôpha (heap up, gather)
- bopolla (cause to change from), cf -bopa (mould)
- alola (take off bed clothes), cf -ala (make the bed)
- gamola (squeeze out, wring out), cf -gama (milk)
- fokola (administer charms to decrease yield), cf
-foka (administer charms)
- hlômola (pluck out), cf -hlôma (erect)
- laola (command, control, divine), cf -laya (instruct)

3.3.28 The following examples illustrate the use of the reversive transitive extension:

fêgolla dipuku tšêo rakêng! (take down those books from the book shelf)

ge a kgatlolla morakô o hwêditšê nôga (when he demolished the stone wall he found a snake)

re hlôpholla lefoko ka dithabe tša lôna (we analyse the sentence into its component clauses)

ge mosadi a fêditšê eo hlatswa diaparô o a di gamola (after washing the clothes the woman wrings them out)

monna o hlômola mootlwa leotong (the man plucks out a thorn from his foot)

kgôši e laola madira (the chief commands the warriors)

3.3.29 PASSIVE EXTENSION

The passive verb stem is formed by means of the

passive extensions -w- and -iw-, and indicates that "the subject undergoes the action or that it is subjected to the action by someone or something" (Ziervogel 1969, p. 40), e.g.

-fiwa (be given) / -fa (give)
-kwiwa (be heard) / -kwa (hear)
-bônwa (be seen) / -bôna (see)
-râtiwa (be loved, be liked) / -rata (love, like)

3.3.30 The following examples illustrate the use of the passive extension:

ke bônwa ke mang (who sees me?)

nama e jewa ke banna, bana ba nwa morô (meat is being eaten by men, children drink the gravy)

Rapudi o lomilwê ke phêphêng (Rapudi is bitten by a scorpion)

go iwa kae lehôno (where is it gone to today, i.e. where do we go today?)

3.3.31 Two or more extensions can be compounded to bring about different meanings:

(a) Applied-reciprocal: -bôfêlana, -dišêtšana

basadi ba bôfêlana dingata tša dikgong (women tie for one another bundles of wood)

banna ba dišêtšana dikgomo (men herd cattle for one another)

- (b) Applied-causative: -gapêdiša, -lomêdiša

Matome o gapêdiša Lesiba dikgomo ka šakeng (Matome helps Lesiba drive cattle into the kraal)
bašemane ba lomêdiša namane lebôtlêlô la maswi (the boys cause the calf to drink from a bottle)

- (c) Causative-reciprocal: -rokišana, -lemišana

basadi ba rokišana dirôkô (women help one another sew dresses)
gê batho ba lemišana ba fêtša tšhemo ka pele (when people help one another they complete the field quickly)

- (d) Reciprocal-causative: -bôfantšha (-nya), -ratantšha (-nya)

bôfantšha dipôkôlô gore di fulêlê kgauswi (tie the donkeys together so that they may graze nearby)
Modimo o ratanya batho le manaba a bôna (God makes people love their enemies)

- (e) Causative-applied: -hlapišêtša, -rothišêtša

hlapišêtša ngwana yo ka sekôtlêlông (bathe this child in the dish)
ke rôthišêtša sehlaro ka komiking pele ke se nwa (I pour drops of medicine into the cup before I drink it)

- (f) Causative-applied-reciprocal: -hlapišêtsšana,
-rôthišêtsšana

basadi ba hlapišêtsšana bana ka phapušeng (women wash
one another's children in the room)

baagêlani ba rôthišêtsšana makhura a lebônê (neighbours
pour drops of lamp oil for each other)

- (g) Reversive-reciprocal: -apollana, -bôfollana

bagwêra ba atiša go apollana diphiri (friends usually
reveal each other's secrets)

bagolêgwa ba bôfollana mabja gore ba tšhabê (convicts
loosen each other's straps so that they may
escape)

- (h) Reversive-applied: -utollêla, -fêgollêla

ke tlô go utollêla diphiri tša ka (I will reveal my
secrets to you)

mphêgollêlê kuane yêla e bêgo rakêng (take down for me
the hat on the cupboard)

- (i) Reversive-applied-reciprocal: -utollêlana,
-fêgollêlana

bagwêra ba makgônthê ba utollêlana diphiri (bosom
friends share their secrets)

bana ba fêgollêlana diaparô mphêgêlông (children take
down one another's clothes from the wooden
hanger)

(j) Reversive-causative: -utolliša, -ngwalolliša

maphôdisa a utolliša lehôdu dipahlô tšáo le di

utswitšêgo (the police cause the thief to reveal
the whereabouts of the stolen goods)

morutiši o ngwalolliša newana taodišô (the teacher
makes the child rewrite the essay)

(k) Reversive-causative-reciprocal: -ngwalollišana,
-êpollišana

barutwana ba ngwalollišana ditaodišô tša bôna (the
pupils help each other rewrite their essays)

re tlô êpollišana tšhêlêtê yê e fihlilwêgo ke mahôdu
(we will help one another dig out the money which
was hidden by the thieves)

CONCLUSION

3.4.00 It has been shown in this chapter that with every change in morphological structure, there is a corresponding change in the semantic shape. No more appropriate way can be found to close this chapter than by referring to the verb stem -BÔNa (see) and its various deverbatives and extensions from "The Comprehensive Northern Sotho-Afrikaans-English Dictionary" by Ziervogel and Mokgokong.

CHAPTER IV

MEANING IN THE CONTEXT OF CULTURE

4.0.00 In an attempt to give the Afrikaans version of "Papago Lina, sebatakgômo!" a court-intpreter is reported to have said: "Papelina sy bees", whereupon the judge amazedly asked what relevance a beast had in a rape case. Quite rightly it had none, nor is a beast implied in the above utterance. The utterance makes no sense apart from its cultural context into which it fits perfectly. Culturally sebatakgômo (which is an abbreviation of sebata dikgômong) refers to a monster or a very dangerous beast of prey which will require an army of men to subdue. A cry of "sebatakgômo!" has come to mean a cry in distress, i.e. an S.O.S. Accordingly, when the complainant in the above case saw the assailant suspiciously approach her, she called for help in the most poignant of terms: "Lena's father, come to my rescue!"

4.0.01 The dependence of meaning on cultural context can also be observed in the use of the verb -bolaya. When a Northern Sotho speaker says: ke bolailê (I have killed, i.e. I have appropriated something, which may be money picked up or a windfall), he is in fact reflecting the traditional hunting pursuits of his people. According to Northern Sotho culture men usually go game hunting and at the end the proudest are those who come

back with the biggest kill. The modern English equivalent of ke bolailê might be "I have struck oil" or "my ship has come home".

4.0.02 The above examples underline the fact that we cannot isolate language from the cultural environment, of which it is an inseparable part. Each language is a product of a particular culture, and it reflects the culture of the people and their view of the world. The lack of true equivalences between any two languages is merely the outward expression of inward differences between two peoples in premises, in basic categories, in the training of fundamental sensitivities, and in the general view of the world. This fact is borne out by Ziervogel (1965, p. 197) who points out that it is imperative for an anthropologist to become an expert in "the direct method", i.e. to learn the language of a tribe or a community he intends studying, by using that language. He says:

"Die mens se kultuuruiting word versinnebeeld in sy taal want deur middel van taal gee hy betekenis en inhoud aan 'n besondere kultuuruiting. Vir die Zoeloe hou die term hlonipha veel meer in as wat die Afrikaanse weergawe 'respek betoon' kan uitdruk. Dit is 'n klankkompleks wat 'n hele kultuuruiting simboliseer en geen term in byvoorbeeld 'n Europese taal kan dit weergee nie omdat die Europese kultuur nie 'n sodanige ekwivalent het nie en bygevolg nie daarvoor in die taal voorsiening maak nie. Op dieselfde vlak verteenwoordig die Sotho-begrip go bolla nie net die gaan na die stamskool nie maar alles wat saamhang met hierdie besondere kultuuruiting".

4.0.03 It is gratifying to note that some anthropologists,

notably Malinowski and Boas, realised that to know and understand the speech of the people under investigation is the fieldworker's master-key. They therefore, in the words of Kluckhohn (1962, p. 44), "tended less than other students to isolate speech from the total life of the people". To them language was a part of cultural behaviour with many interesting connections to other aspects of action and thought. According to their functional approach, knowing a language did not entail a knowledge of phonology and morphology but of meaning in context of time and culture. Marett (1933, p. 137) emphasizes the close relationship between an anthropologist and a linguist in the following terms:

"Out of time and history is, in the long run, out of meaning and use. The philologist, then, if he is to help anthropology, must himself be an anthropologist, with a full appreciation of the importance of the historical method. He must be able to set each language or group of languages that he studies in its historical setting. He must seek to show how it has evolved in relation to the needs of a given time. In short, he must correlate words with thoughts: must treat language as a function of the social life".

4.0.04 In this chapter we shall discuss meaning in a cultural context under the following sub-headings:

- (a) honorifics
- (b) kinship terminology
- (c) linguistic taboo
- (d) ordinary cultural words
- (e) the proverb

4.1.00 Honorifics

By honorific we understand a grammatical form used to convey the idea that the speaker is being polite or respectful to the hearer. Honorifics are based on social stratification, and in some languages it is exceedingly important, if one is to speak to people without grave social consequences for having used the wrong form. Of course what passes for politeness or respect in one culture may appear to a member of another culture as slavishness or boorishness. Some languages demand that a speaker make reference to his rank, age, sex, or social position, relative to the addressee when speaking. In Northern Sotho, however, honorification involves the use of the plural form when one addresses an older person or one who surpasses one in status, i.e. the speaker either actually is lower in status than the addressee, or is speaking as if he were. This is not surprising because plurality is ingrained in the social system of the Northern Sotho people. That is to say that an individual is viewed in the light of his social background, i.e. he is one of a group of relatives, friends and tribesmen. To divorce him from this group is to degrade him.

4.1.01 An examination of the following sentences will illustrate that the meaning may be either singular or plural indicating respect:

bômma ba tliîê (mother has come or mothers have come
or mother and company have come)

ke boditšê bômalome gore ba ka se hwêtšê borekgadi
ka gaê (I told uncle that he would not find my
paternal aunt at home or I told my uncles that
they would not find my paternal aunts at home or
I told uncle and company that they would not find
my paternal aunt and company at home).

4.1.02 The singular is generally used when one expresses
disgust or disapproval:

mpša towê! (thou dog!)
tloga fa! (get thee hence!)
o molôi (you are a witch)

4.1.03 Plurality is also used in the form of greeting
although one person may be addressed, e.g.

ke a le tamiša (I greet you)
tamêng (greetings to you)
le kae (where are you, i.e. how are you?)
re gôna or re sa phela - re ka ra lena (We are there,
i.e. we are well or we are still alive. We
may ask you)
le rena re sa phela/re sa ba êkiša (we also are still
alive or we still imitate them)

4.1.04 The above dialogue indicates that in his culture a Pedi is always conscious of the vicissitudes of life, particularly the incidence of witchcraft which is to him the main cause of death. That is why some Northern Sotho speakers will actually answer a greeting by: re sa palêtše balôi (we have still baffled the witches).

4.1.05 Pedi women usually address their husbands and other men by their praise-names: Hlabiwa, Nape, Ngwato, Gôbêtsê, Dimo, Phaahlê, Ngwanamorêi, Molôtô, Tšhidi, Kanyane, Gosêbô. They address one another also by their praise-names: Hunadi, Napšadi, Mologadi, Mosêbjadi, Mogaleadi, Modipadi, Pheledi, Ngwato-mosadi, Mahlaku, Bolêdi. Husbands address their wives and other women as "mother of so and so", e.g. Mmago Lesiba, mmago Namêdi. In many dialects of the Northern, North-western and North-eastern Transvaal the giving of a name to a new bride is regarded as an honour. This same name suggests that she will bear a child by that particular name, e.g. MmaMaropeng (mother of Maropeng), MmaSelaêlô (mother of Selaêlô), MmaNoko (mother of Noko).

4.1.06 As an alternative, men may be addressed by other men and women by their respective totems:

Tau or Sebata or Mminašoro (lion)

Tlôu (elephant)

Kolobê (wild boar)

Kwêna (crocodile)
 Noko (porcupine)
 Hlagahlagane/Tlhantlhagane (finch)

4.1.07 Sometimes tribal names are used as a mode of addressing men:

Motlôkwa (a Tlokwa tribesman)
 Mopêdi (a Pedi tribesman)
 Motau/Motswakô (a Tau tribesman)
 Mokône (a Kone tribesman)
 Letêbêlê (a Ndebele tribesman)

4.1.08 Men from initiation school deem it a pride and honour throughout their lives to be addressed by their regimental names: Matladi, Mangana, Madima, Mankwê, Makgau, Malêma. In fact they are so proud of these regimental names that they even swear by them to express their determination or truthfulness. If one of them says: ka Matlakane ke tla go bolaya (I swear by the Matlakane regiment that I will kill you), you know that he really means it. Similarly if you doubt his sincerity and he interjects, ka Maswena, then you should realise that he is telling you the truth.

Kinship Terminology

4.2.00 Kinship plays a uniquely important role in the study of different cultures of the world. All

societies have clearly delimited sets of kinship terms that segment the universe of all possible kinsmen into a limited number of name categories. The universal nature of the human family and of genealogical reckoning make it relatively easy to assign meanings according to genealogical ties between the speaker and the people to whom the various terms refer. No one should imagine, however, that the kinship terminology of his own culture will be similar to that of another culture. Anthropologists must have been rudely shaken to find that in some communities people address their mother's sister as "mother", something that is unthought of in the western world. This point justifies our standpoint, viz. that a proper understanding of meaning can only be attained in the context of culture.

4.2.01 According to Northern Sotho culture tatê/papa is not necessarily a biological father, but every male old enough to be one's father is addressed as such. The same applies to mmê (mother), koko/makgolo (grandmother) and rakgolo (grandfather). This principle is embedded in the social organisation of the people, whereby "each person has to respect all people belonging to age-grades older than his own, irrespective of their relative genealogical status". (Mönnig 1967, p. 240).

4.2.02 A distinction is made between the full brothers of one's father as ramogolo and rangwane, elder paternal uncle and younger paternal uncle, but not between

the brothers of one's mother, all of these being called malome and their wives mogatšša-malome (wife of uncle). The term ramogolo also refers to one's mother's elder sister's husband, while rangwane also refers to one's mother's younger sister's husband. Conversely, there is no distinction between father's sisters, all being rakgadi, but mother's sisters are either mmamogolo (elder maternal aunt) or (elder paternal uncle's wife) or mmangwane/mmame (younger maternal aunt) or (younger paternal uncle's wife). The husband to rakgadi is also addressed as rakgadi. Likewise the children of a father's elder brother or a mother's elder sister are all mogollê (elder brother or sister), and of a father's younger brother or mother's younger sister all samme/moratho (younger brother or sister), while all the children of a father's sisters or mother's brothers are grouped together as motswala (cross-cousin), disregarding age and status.

4.2.03 The term morwarrê/warra is used to designate a full brother or half-brother, i.e. son of tatê, ramogolo, or rangwane, while kgaitšêdi designates one's full sister or half-sisters (man speaking), i.e. daughter of tatê, ramogolo or rangwane; or one's full brother or half-brothers (woman speaking), i.e. son of tatê, ramogolo or rangwane.

4.2.04 Two other terms remain to complete the broad picture of Northern Sotho kinship terminology,

viz. motlogolo and setlogolo. Since there is a tendency nowadays to regard these words as synonymous it is necessary to explain the difference in meaning between them. Motlogolo designates the child of kgaitšêdi, i.e. it is the term a maternal uncle uses to refer to his sisters' children. His wife is also entitled to use it to refer to the same children; setlogolo designates a grandchild, as also grand-nephews and grand-nieces. Its diminutive setlogolwana, designates a great-grand-child.

4.2.05 Notwithstanding the embracing application of the term morwarrê or warna, i.e. designating my father's sons, those of my paternal uncles as well as those of my mother's sisters, it is, in the final analysis my father's and my paternal uncles' sons who matter for purposes of family discussions and perpetuation of the clan; while my mother's sisters' sons, like my maternal uncle's sons, may be involved in family matters by invitation. The same applies to the term rakgadi, with reference to family discussions only. Mönnig (1967, p. 243) sums up the importance of Pedi kinship in these words:

"The fact that all cross-cousins refer to one another as motswala, irrespective of age or status, is characteristic of the free and friendly association which exists between these relatives. Taken as a whole the whole kinship terminology classifies those relatives who are superior or inferior to someone, and the behaviour should be correspondingly respectful or expecting respect".

Linguistic Taboo

4.3.00 Like many other languages Northern Sotho has certain verbal taboos which cannot be used in ordinary discourse. They may be conveniently classified into two groups: euphemistic expressions and mountain language.

4.3.01 A euphemism is a softened, indirect expression used instead of one that seems too harsh and direct. Gustaf Stern (1931, p. 330) defines it as "a tendency to tone down or veil dangerous, indecent or otherwise unpleasant things, and also as the linguistic result of this tendency". A very large group of euphemisms is formed by expressions intended to put something in a way that shall not wound the feelings of the hearer. Here again the extent to which pleasantness or unpleasantness, vulgarity or politeness are applicable will differ from culture to culture or from language to language.

4.3.02 In Northern Sotho the first group of verbal taboos are words dealing with excretion. It is culturally indecent to say: monna o ilô nya (the man has gone to defecate) but polite to use any of the following: o ithomilê (he has sent himself), o ilê kgakala (he has gone far), o ilê ntlê (he has gone outside), o ilê mošatê (he has gone to the chief's kraal), o ilê go bôna ngaka (he has gone to consult a doctor), o ilê go hlômola

mootlwa (he has gone to pull out a thorn), o ilê pôôšê (he has gone to the bush). In the case of a child it is customary to say: o a fapoga (she is deviating) or o a tšhologa (he has diarrhoea). Similarly it is regarded as vulgar to talk of masepa (faeces), the euphemism being mantlê (the outside things) or mampho (from the ideophone pho! (of a nasty smell) or mafapoga / -fapoga. Even for an animal like a dog we would not use lešepa.

4.3.03 Additional euphemisms connected with excretion are: go ntšha mêêtse (take out water), go fahla magôtlô (blind the rats), go itia phoka (beat the dew) and go hlapologa (be unwashed) instead of the blunt go rota (urinate), go ntšha môya (take out air), go thêlêlwa/ phonyokgwa ke môya (be escaped by air) and go gata katse (step on a cat), instead of go pshinya (fart).

4.3.04 In Northern Sotho culture words having to do with anatomy and sex have remarkable affective connotations. It is considered vulgar to speak of nnyô (woman's private parts) but polite to speak of mapele (the frontal parts) or matlase (the underneath parts). So also a man's private parts are referred to as ntoto/ntotwana (penis) or modišana (a small shepherd) or noselana (a small tail). It is thought vulgar to speak of go nyôba (have sexual intercourse), and the following euphemisms are used instead: go kgopêla dikobô/mapai (ask for blankets), go kgopêla thethô/ntepa (ask for a skin apron), go alêlwa

(have blankets spread for someone), go šišinya lepai (shake the blanket), go lala kgarebê (lie on a girl). Similarly mogwêtê/motete/tôkô (anus) is substituted by ka mafuri (at the back courtyard). Nakedness is severely censured and one is alerted against such a state by such expressions as madi phatlêng! (blood on the forehead, i.e. your fly is open), kgômo di a timêla! (cattle are going astray!), kgogo di ja mabêlê! (the fowls are eating the corn!). If anybody should see another's private parts the latter would complain: o mpônêtše (he has seen for me) or o bône selô sa ka (he has seen my thing).

4.3.05 Pregnancy among the Northern Sotho speaking people is viewed from two angles: legitimate and illegitimate. Legitimate pregnancy is expressed as follows: ke mothwana (she is a small person or a doll), o gobêdi (she is two in one), ke motho wa kgôbê (she is a proper person), ke kgôlê (she is physically incapacitated, i.e. advanced stage of pregnancy), o na le moritšhana (she is in the penumbra), o thokwana (she is a little aside). Illegitimate pregnancy is expressed as follows: o senyêgilê (she has been spoiled), o rôbêgilê leoto (she is crippled/maimed), o lomilwê ke dimoša (she has been bitten by dogs), o gagogêtšwe ke thethô (her apron has been torn). The general expressions covering these two categories, viz. go ima (conceive) and go ithwala (carry oneself) may imply disrespect. Normally most pregnant women are inclined to

isolate themselves from the public. This gives rise to the expressions o thokwana and o na le moritšhana.

4.3.06 Child-birth is associated with emerging from a pool. The blunt expression, go tswala, is reserved mainly for animals. For human beings the following euphemistic expressions are used: go ya madibêng (to go to the deeps), go imologa (be relieved), go hunologa (be untied), go fiwa ngwana (be given a child). However the concept of fathering a child is expressed by monna o tswala ngwana and not monna o bëlêga ngwana.

4.3.07 The verb -fôlôtša, used with reference to animals, expresses the idea of still-birth. The same concept with reference to human beings is expressed thus: go boa tselêng (return on the way), go boa fêla (return empty-handed), go palêlwa (be unsuccessful), go phuma mêêtse (accidentally break the calabash or water-pot).

4.3.08 It is interesting to note that no definite word exists to express menstruation except the use of euphemisms such as go hlapa (wash), go bôna kgwêdi (see the moon), go ipôna (see oneself), go ya basading (go to the women).

4.3.09 The fear of death carries over into fear of the words connected with death. People, therefore, instead of saying motho o hwilê (the person is dead)

substitute such expressions as o ithôbalêtše (he has just slept), o biditšwê (he has been called), o ilê badimong (he has gone to the ancestors, from the belief of ancestral worship) o ilê boikhutšông (he has gone to the place of rest), o ilê bohuna-matôlô (he has gone to the place of bended knees, from the custom of burying a body by cutting the sinews of the knees and elbows to prevent the witches from later making use of it), o hlôkagêtše (he is no more), o re tlogêtše (he has left us), o kgaogilê (he has snapped off), ga a gô (he is not there), o ikhomolêtše (he is just quiet), o tšêrwe ke phiri (he is carried away by the wolf). Accordingly critical illness is expressed by go bakwa le badimo (be competed for with the ancestral spirits). Lebitla (grave) is referred to as malaô (bedding) or ntlo (hut/house) or molete-mohlaêla-thupa (a hole without a stick). The customary grave is shallow and round.

4.3.10 Another group of euphemisms includes indirect expressions used instead of those that appear too harsh and direct. Instead of saying: hlatse e bolêla maaka (the witness is telling lies), the following euphemisms may be used:

<u>hlatse e fošitšê</u>	(the witness is mistaken)
<u>hlatse e okêditšê</u>	(the witness has exaggerated)
<u>hlatse e tšhêtše taba letswai</u>	} (the witness has salted the matter)
<u>hlatse e nokilê taba</u>	

hlatse e nōntšhitšê taba (the witness has enhanced
the matter)

hlatse e re apêilê (the witness has cooked us, i.e.
deceived us)

In the case of someone older than the speaker it would be
said: o a swaswa (he is joking).

4.3.11 There are several euphemisms connected with
drunkenness, a fact that shows that drunkenness
itself was not regarded with respect. Instead of saying
monna o tagilwê it is more respectful to use any of the
following expressions:

monna o khoše (the man has eaten to the fill)

monna o fihlišitšê (the man has caused to reach the
brim, i.e. he has had enough)

monna o gamotše/sorilê (the man has sipped)

monna o hupilê (the man has filled his mouth)

monna o itlhabêgilê (the man has enleavened himself)

monna o boilê ka megôlô/makôpô (the man has been sub-
merged up to the throat/eyebrows)

monna o gapa dinku (the man is driving sheep)

4.3.12 Madness in Northern Sotho is regarded as an un-
desirable condition. That is why go gafa is
softened to:

go se tšêê gabotse (be unwell)

go se fêlêlê (be incomplete, i.e. in the senses)

<u>go hlakana hlôgô</u>	(be mixed up in the head)
<u>go namêla thaba</u>	(climb a mountain)
<u>go gapa tše tšhwêu</u>	(drive white ones)
<u>go ja ditala</u>	(eat the raw ones)

4.3.13 Go hlatša (vomit) is softened to go buša (cause to return) or itia hôpane (strike the iguana); while go utswa (steal) is softened to go ba le dinala tše têtêtê (have long nails), go tšea ka mahlô/mosela (take with eyes/tail) and go tôpa (pick up).

Mountain (Initiation) Language

4.3.14 Male initiation among the Pedi, as with other groups, is a sacred institution which is strictly taboo to women and the uncircumcised. The men are extremely reticent when asked about it, believing that one who reveals the secrets of the school will be punished supernaturally. Initiation schools instruct the young in the traditions of the tribe (the legends myths, proverbs and customs), they teach the skills of hunting and fighting, inculcate the beliefs about religion, sex and responsibility to elders, and test courage by ordeals, such as whipping with lashes. The language of the initiation school is secretive, and all members of the in-group (past and present) can always communicate with one another in the presence of a member of the outer group without his under-

standing their conversation. The popular linguistic device of shrouding meaning is by use of euphemisms and antonyms.

4.3.15 Euphemisms:

thipane refers to the witchdoctor who performs the operation, cf. thipa (knife)

motšabêlô is a specially prepared leather skirt covering private parts of initiate to protect his wound from being hurt by grass and shrubs, cf. -tšabêla (hide)

kwalankwata: thick, unsalted mealie-meal porridge eaten by initiates and dished out into special wooden bowls. The porridge is fashioned into a pyramid with mealie-cob cores. The process is similar to making decorations (makwala) on a clay pot; kwata is a block of wood.

tawana: normally a small lion but "fire" at initiation school - probably a comparison of the dangers inherent in both.

kgwale: partridge, but in a cultural context is a mock-song aimed at exposing a family for some wrong committed during initiation school - the wrong may be food not properly or cleanly prepared or some family quarrel.

bana ba kgwale! chickens of a partridge, but at

initiation school, a warning: "Hide yourselves! Lie flat!" - to avoid being seen by passers-by.

ihlwana! (small eye), but at initiation school means: "Close your eyes, we are passing"- said by initiated person to a group of initiates.

kgôkông is a blue wildebeest; but kgôkông ê ntsho means "there is danger about" - a term used at initiation school to warn initiates to hide themselves.

molaô (law) but go hlaba molaô means to recite poems taught at initiation school, i.e. to prove that one has been circumcized.

mêmêmêe! (tell lies), cf. bleating of a goat. Also refers to punishment meted out at initiation for such a wrong.

kgêtla means substitute one's brother in a marriage procession hence the modern sense of "best-man" or "bridesmaid". At initiation school the word means "to wash", probably as an indication in both cases of the passage from boyhood to manhood.

morw'a marungwane: literally son of the small spears, refers to letšatši (sun), i.e. the sun's rays compared to a shower of spears in battle.

maru a rotoga (the clouds are gathering), used when an intruder gets into conversation.

go tšholla melôra (throw away ash) means to urinate.

Usually the initiates have an ashen appearance.

phôrôhlô! abbreviation of phôrôgôhlô (sparrow, characterized by chirping incessantly). At initiation school the word is used as an interjection of negation: You are wrong!

Antonyms:

maruthông (at the warm places) means mô go tônyago (at a cold place).

modungwane, dim cf. modumô (sound) means lešata (noise, clamour)

Ordinary Cultural Words and Expressions

4.4.00 As has been pointed out, meanings of words usually reflect not only the cultural behaviour of people but also the circumstances in which they live. All elements in the culture of a people are intimately related to the problems of communication. In this section selected words and expressions to show that the connotations of words abound in cultural influences will be discussed.

4.4.01 In the book of Genesis Chapter 38, verse 8, we read:

ke mô Juda a itšego go Onan: Tsêna go mosadi wa

mogolwago, gomme o mo tsênêlê, gore o tsošêtšê
mogolwago pêu.

English version:

Then Judah said to Onan, Go into your brother's wife, and perform the duty of a brother-in-law to her, and raise up offspring for your brother.

Afrikaans version:

Toe sê Juda vir Onan: Gaan in by die vrou van jou broer en sluit die swaarshuwelik met haar en verwek vir jou broer 'n nageslag.

The above verse indicates that there are evident similarities between the culture of the Israelites and that of the black people of the Republic of South Africa. Go tsênêla (Xhosa: ukungenela, Zulu: ukungena, Venda: u dzhenela) is a custom whereby a brother selected at a family gathering, becomes an overseer and performs the duties of the deceased. He does not marry the widow. Ideally the levir should be the younger brother of the deceased lest the children should prefer to claim status from their biological father rather than from their sociological father. To the Northern Sotho speaker, therefore, the words "gore o tsošêtšê mogolwago pêu" not only become redundant but they also confuse the meaning.

4.4.02 The term go tsênêla is also used in connection with a child. In Northern Sotho culture it is

taboo to enter the home of a new-born baby before its mother has been "doctored", usually during the first ten days. Go tsênêla ngwana in this context means to visit the baby's home before its mother has been strengthened medicinally against witches and other evil spirits.

4.4.03 A story is told of how a father accosted his sons who arrived back late from school and asked why they were late. The sons replied: Re bê re sa ngwala molekô (we were still writing a test), whereupon their father retorted: Molekô, molekô, motho a ka le leka le ka phela! (you talk of a test, if a person tests you can you live!) Clearly the boys thought of molekô in terms of schooling; but their father understood molekô in terms of his own cultural background, i.e. in terms of witchcraft. Go leka to him meant "to bewitch someone" and one who has been bewitched has no chance of survival.

4.4.04 The word -seleka ordinarily means "to disturb or annoy someone", e.g. homola, o a ntshелеka (keep quiet, you are disturbing me) or o ntshелеkilê ka go mpotšaa maaka (he annoyed me by telling lies). It may also mean "to be naughty", e.g. ngwana wa gagwê o a seleka (her child is naughty). Used in a cultural context however, the word signifies "practising witchcraft", o se kê wa nyala gaSeloma ka gobane ba a seleka (don't marry in the Seloma family because they practise witchcraft). Therefore one should refrain from saying of an adult o a seleka because one could

run ~~the~~ risk of being charged for defamation of
in ~~the~~ traditional court.

4.4.05 Ala and its reversive form -alola ca
fully understood from a cultural con
means ~~to~~ spread the mat and blankets (usually a
preparation for sleeping. Alola means to roll
fold ~~the~~ blankets and suspend them on a wooden l
(mphê ~~elô~~) in a hut. The two processes imply i
sleeping room is also used for other purposes li
food during the day and in the evening. This i
to western cultures whereby specific rooms are p
the preparation of food and for sleeping, and a
usually made up in the morning.

4.4.06 To illustrate how culture preserves an
its own concepts by means of language
examine certain words connected with specific bel
the Northern Sotho people. Ditšhila commonly me
but in cultural context means "impurity", espec
"ritual impurity", and those who have acquired it
cleanse themselves lest they infect those with who
come into contact. The circumstances under which
acquire impurity are so wide and embracing that v
people can avoid it. For instance, if a man has
course with a widow or comes across somebody from
it is believed he will contract makgoma / -kgoma (C
a kind of illness following upon contamination with

attend initiation school before his elder brother, it is said, o mo tshetše, i.e. he has usurped the brother's birth-right and therefore has reduced the elder brother to an inferior position. In addition, if a child who wets his bed at night should jump over the outstretched legs of an adult, it is believed he will thereby infect the adult with bed-wetting, thus disgracing him. To remove this infection, the child should immediately retrace his steps by crossing backwards. This is called go tshelologa, intransitive reversive form of -tshela. These connotations of -tshela are always associated with degradation and always demand to be reversed to signify an act of contrition. Matsepe (1969, p. 25) has aptly applied this sense of the word in Leilane's report:

"...a bê a bolêla le gore Nthumule yêna o sa tšilê go mo tshelologa ka gê a lefišitšê Tšhidiyamotse".

/he (Lefehlo) even said that Nthumule will abjectly ask for pardon from him since he fined Tšhidiyamotse/.

4.4.10 Among the Northern Sotho people it is generally believed that the deceased enjoy a life after death as ancestors, during which they supervise the activities of the living. Misdeeds are often punished by way of famine, pestilence, disease and death. To avoid these ill-

fates, the ancestors need to be placated, i.e. be made to rest in peace. Hence the expression: go latšša badimo (make the gods sleep). This expression may also be used to signify placating one's senior or living parent.

4.4.11 Some Northern Sotho words are associated with the agricultural and pastoral pursuits of the people. The word letšema / -lema (plough) basically means a hoeing party, but may also include any other working party requiring community cooperation on a voluntary basis. The owner of the task or project prepares food or drink for the occasion, and the job is completed in a spirit of goodwill signifying one good turn deserves another. Loosely applied the word letšema might denote a large group of people with a common objective.

4.4.12 The word -upa commonly means to set things right, to keep everything in its proper place. Hence the expression, ke tla go upa (I will put you right, i.e. I will correct your bad behaviour). In a cultural context, however, the word -upa means to employ medicinal charms to ward off pests from destroying crops, e.g. go upa mogôkông (ward off the army worm); go upa mabêlê (protect corn against all forms of pests).

4.4.13 The word -tôpa commonly means to pick up, e.g. money, fallen fruits. Culturally it denotes the use of medicinal charms on a field or garden to trap

thieves. It is customary to allow anybody to satisfy his hunger by making use of the produce in another man's field or garden provided he leaves behind the stubble. If he fails to do so he is regarded as a thief and is, therefore, liable to be caught in a trap, which act is described as go tōpa monwana (pick the fingers). From this idea we have setōpa or setōpa-monwana, the charms that pick up or maim the fingers. Northern Sotho culture associates theft with having long fingers which need to be cut to stop the theft. The cultural significance of this act is that someone's property should be treated with respect.

4.4.14 The word mafiša is derived from -fiša, which means to loan one's cattle to someone else who has no cattle or has very few, so that he may enjoy the benefit of possessing cattle. The act is motivated by the desire to help the less fortunate and less gifted fellowmen and the fear of witchcraft which may be prompted by the envy of one's neighbours. It may also be influenced by the desire to hide one's possessions for fear of plundering or exploitation. Although the caretaker enjoys the service of the cattle, i.e. he feeds on the milk and uses the oxen for ploughing, he has no ownership rights. Hence the expression: mogama-kgōmo tša mafiša o gama a lebêlêtše tsela, i.e. he must always be prepared to surrender them to the rightful owner when the occasion demands it.

4.4.15 The word go loma ordinarily means to bite, but culturally it means to taste the first fruits or crops, a right that is accorded to a chief or a senior in the tribe, thereby formally declaring to his followers that the fruits or crops are ready for consumption. Sometimes the ritual is referred to as go loma ngwaga (bite the year). To outwit the enemies (witches or spies) the chief may be substituted by a counterfeit usually known as kgôši ya lerôtsê. His duty is to taste the first fruit even before the chief to ensure that it is not poisoned.

The Proverb

4.5.00 In this section the proverb will be discussed from the viewpoint of its cultural significance. An examination of the studies on the proverb clearly reveals that this aspect has not been adequately emphasized. Some scholars, notably Lestrade and Guma, have made elaborate analyses of the formal features of the proverb, neglecting completely the cultural background, i.e. the dominant philosophy of the people who composed the proverbs at the time they did. A few proverbs, selected at random, will illustrate that the cultural significance of proverbs is even more important than its formal features. In addition the contexts in which these proverbs are usually used will be indicated.

most important quality to look for in choosing a wife is her industriousness rather than her beauty or good looks). The concept of a good wife is clearly revealed in this proverb: she must be hard-working — keeping the home trim, feeding the children, tilling and harvesting the lands in the absence of her husband either on the battlefield or in labour centres. Over and above this she must make herself available for communal tasks within the family or community. Another aspect of her duties is child-bearing, which even takes precedence over industriousness. This is the basis of the practice of prearranged marriages whereby the would-be husband need not even know the prospective bride before marriage. She may be ugly or crippled but as long as she fulfils the above duties she is acceptable. This makes child-bearing and industriousness the major qualities to look for in selecting a wife. The proverb is often applied to wives who complain about the demands of running a home or who are inclined to lighter pursuits.

4.5.04 Lebitla la mosadi ke bogadi (lit. the grave of a wife is at her in-laws, i.e. once married, married). The proverb implies that in Northern Sotho culture divorce is not countenanced except in very rare cases involving witchcraft. This is motivated by the custom of magadi which, like money, seem to change hands frequently, making a refund very difficult. On the other hand, restriction of divorce maintains the equilibrium of

relationships in the community. This custom is so adhered to that even when a husband dies his wife is not allowed to remarry, although provision is made for her further procreation. Almost invariably this proverb is the bride's last advice by her closest of kin before she leaves for her new home.

4.5.05 Legôtlô le lefa ka setopo (lit. the rat pays with its own carcass, i.e. everyone must suffer for his own misdeeds). According to Northern Sotho culture the law of retribution is "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth". That is why in the original culture a life was demanded for another life with total disregard of extenuating circumstances. This applies specifically to murder cases, in which usually men and young men are involved. Where reimbursement is involved, then ngwana gê a ôba molato o ôbêla tatagwê (the father is responsible for the misdeeds of his child). In cases involving corporal punishment (usually boys and young men), the wrong-doer must suffer the punishment. The proverb, therefore, is the pronouncement of the judgement when corporal punishment is to be applied.

4.5.06 Northern Sotho culture discourages laziness and parasitism. There are two similar proverbs which inveigh against this conduct: lapa ga le je le lengwê (a courtyard does not live on another) and ntlo ga e je ê

nngwê (a house does not live on another). That is to say that one must not be a parasite but must work hard to earn one's living. The cultural significance of these proverbs is that in a hardworking community there is always abundance to eat and share and, therefore, happiness and peace. Even if one enjoys a long-term loan, it must eventually be refunded. The above proverbs are usually applied when one does not wish to repay a loan or settle a debt. To be positive the following proverb is also used: mphê-mpê e a lapiša, motho o kgônwa ke sa gagwê (it is disgraceful to be a beggar).

4.5.07 Ba bôna tša bôpudi bokgakaša, tša bônku di bipilwê
 (lit. they see those of the goat and company because they are exposed, but those of the sheep and company are obscured by the tails, i.e. misdeeds of lesser men are more exposed to public discussion than those of higher rank). The proverb is true for Northern Sotho culture. For instance, if a chief misbehaves nobody has a right to discuss it in public lest he earn the displeasure of the chief and his counsellors. The chief is not subject to the rebuke of the common man. Even if he assaults someone or farts, the only response would be his praise-name, as if he has done something very great. In contrast, however, the misconduct of common men are decried vociferously. The excuse for this behaviour is embodied in the saying: batho ga ba lekane e se mênô (people may not be treated alike as they are not all equals).

4.5.08 Mowa-kgotla ga a bolawe (lit. one who falls at a kgotla is not killed, i.e. if what is said at the kgotla is considered offensive, the speaker will nevertheless not be punished for it). The cultural significance of this proverb is that one is free to express oneself at the kgotla without fear of litigation. This attitude keeps down gossip among men in Northern Sotho culture. In the settlement of cases it is everyman's duty to contribute freely and consequently the chief's judgement is usually received unreservedly.

4.5.09 O re o hwētša la thakana o tšhabê, la thakana le tšhêla motho marolê (lit. when you find the youth, flee, the youth covers one with dust, i.e. an adult should not associate with the youth lest he is involved in their silly pranks). At the base of this proverb is the cultural practice of age-grading which is the pivot of all social activities. One should associate more with members of one's age-group to avoid disappointment and disgrace. The proverb is usually a remonstrance against failure to observe age-grading.

4.5.10 Dira di/tša sêbja ga di hule motse (lit. the enemy that has been reported does not plunder in a village, i.e. forwarned is forearmed). Culturally the proverb reflects the practice of posting sentinels around settlements to ensure that they are not taken by surprise. In the event of a sentinel being captured he

is customarily not killed, as the saying goes: tshêbi ya dira ga e bolawe (a sentinel is usually not blamed for the bad tidings he brings).

4.5.11 Dibêtlwa di bêtlwa bathong. monalemadimabe a fahlwa (lit. the carving is done in public, no matter whether the splinters land in someone else's eyes, i.e. the truth must always be told, even if it hurts). Culturally the proverb postulates the philosophy that at the kgotla one should be free to speak the truth even if it is at someone else's disadvantage. It underlines the fact that in life honesty is the best policy.

4.5.12 Hlabang tlôu ka diloka, tšhukudu mošimane! (lit. if you stab an elephant with thistles even a rhinoceros becomes but a small boy, i.e. many a mickle make a muckle). The elephant is generally regarded as the largest animal that needs tens of spears to fell it; but if hundreds of thistles are used, the Northern Sotho maintain, it is possible to kill it. Myriads of thistles would render even the ferocious rhinoceros innocuous. As can be seen this proverb is based on the Northern Sotho military pursuits. By implication many hands make light work. Therein lies the concept of community cooperation.

4.5.13 This brings to an end our happy rambles in the vast field of meaning in the context of culture.

We have tried to prove that unless one has insight into a culture of a people one would not grasp the nuances of their language. Joseph Raymond (1954, p. 57) rightly observes: "As a man's speech mirrors his thoughts, so do a people's proverbs reflect dominant attitudes and patterns".

CHAPTER V

MEANING IN THE CONTEXT OF BORROWING AND DIALECTAL USAGE

5.0.00 In the preceding chapter, an attempt was made to show that the meaning of a word or an expression is largely influenced by the culture of a people, i.e. their attitudes, beliefs and customs. In other words, we have tried to highlight the strong link that exists between language and culture. In this chapter the semantic effect of culture contacts will be examined, i.e. the shifts of meaning that may occur when one word or expression in one language is borrowed into another language. We shall also concern ourselves with the shifts in the meaning of a word or expression from one dialect to another.

Borrowing context

5.1.00 Language, like culture, is subject to change. In some cases old words are extended in meaning, others become obsolete or archaic, and new words are imported and assimilated to the language. As society changes, there are new things that need new names: physical objects, institutions, sets of attitudes, values, concepts; and new words are coined to describe them. That the meanings of words are neither immutable nor static is emphasized by Robins (1971, p. 133) in the following words:

"The conditions of life of individuals in society, their artefacts, customs, forms of organization, and the like are constantly changing; and consequently the referents of many words in languages and the situations in which they are employed are equally liable to change in the course of time. New products often require new designations, and some words pass out of current vocabulary as the particular sorts of objects or ways of behaving to which they refer become obsolete".

5.1.01 Word borrowing is motivated by several factors, the most important being the non-existence of indigenous vocabulary for new and alien material objects as well as abstract ideas that have been coming into Bantu culture from other cultures. Borrowing from one culture by another is essentially the action of individuals. In general, men are more likely to introduce innovations than are women, for men tend to have more outside contacts.

5.1.02 When Northern Sotho words are borrowed from English or Afrikaans they are said to be sothoized, i.e. they are assimilated to the phonetic, phonological, morphological and lexical systems of Northern Sotho and thereby acquire the distinctive imprint of Northern Sotho. In some cases the borrowed word exhibits functional variations that do not conform to those of the source language. Thus from Afrikaans "vanmelewe" (adverb) we have lefamolêlê (noun) referring to one who stays for a long time at a place of work without returning home, and molebê (adv.) meaning "for good", "for a long time", e.g. mosadi wa gagwê o ilê gagabê molebê (his wife has gone to

her parental home for good). From Afrikaans "môre kom" we have môrôkômo (work without holiday or pay), e.g. nakô ya go buna gê e fihlilê re šoma môrôkômo (we work without rest at harvest time). From Afrikaans "dit moet" we have the infinitive expression go teta mmutê (persist, persevere, screw up courage). In fact, to render it possible that "dit moet": o tetilê mmutê gore a fihlê (he spared no effort to make it possible to come). From English "market street" we have the verb go makêta (go about the streets looking for employment, as well as the noun makête (an unemployed person seeking employment).

5.1.03 Lexically, borrowing mostly carries over into Northern Sotho the meaning of the loan in the source language. Thus borôthô / Afr. brood (bread); borokgo / Afr. broek (trousers); gauta / Afr. goud (gold); hêkê / Afr. hek (gate); pêipi / Afr. pyp (pipe); sekêro / Afr. skêr (scissors); tôlôka / Afr. tolk (interpret); ôfisi / Engl. office; sutu / Engl. suit; taamane / Engl. diamond; paesekela / Engl. bicycle; mmôtôrô(kara) / Afr. motor(kar) (motor-car).

5.1.04 Borrowed words, however, are under no obligation to retain their original meanings - in fact, the evidence is quite to the contrary. There are instances where the meaning of the loan covers a semantic field wider than that of the lending language, and where

the meaning is different from that of the loan in the source language. Since we hold the view that context determines the meaning of a word, we shall examine selected words to prove that the borrowed words are not in all cases identical in meaning with the original words. In other words, we shall illustrate that the meaning of the borrowed word is either narrowed or widened.

5.1.05 We shall first consider those borrowed words which bear specialized meanings while previously they bore more generalized meanings. The Afrikaans word "huis" means "house", "home" in English and its Northern Sotho equivalent is ngwakô. But Northern Sotho gaišši which is the sothoized form of "huis" is restricted to mean a four-cornered house, a corrugated-roof house. Under no circumstances is gaišši used in the sense of "home". Kôšô (food) is borrowed from Afrikaans "kos". When this word is used in the plural form dikôšô in Northern Sotho, it does not refer to food in the broader sense but it refers to pig's food. It is only when it is used in the singular form that it bears the sense of human food, as when one says: ga go na kôšô ye e ka lewago (there's no food to eat). Afrikaans "stoel" means "chair", "seat", "stool" in English, but Northern Sotho setulo / Afr. "stoel" bears a specialized meaning of "chair" only; the deverbative sedulô / -dula (sit) is used to refer to seat or something to sit on, which may be a log or a stump or a carved stone.

5.1.06 The next group of borrowed words are those whose meanings have been narrowed or widened through the process of borrowing. Bêrêka / Afr. "werk", although it retains the basic meaning of work, it is specifically used to refer to working for remuneration or working under a white employer. In addition it may also mean "to deceive" or "to disappoint", e.g. gê o sa hlôkômêle bašomêdi ba gago ba ka go bêrêka (if you do not keep a watchful eye on your employees they may do you down). Tšhôfa / Eng. "shove" retains more or less the original meaning of "push vigorously", but we may also say: monna o tšhôfa naesekele (the man pedals the bicycle). Fôla / Eng. "fall in" has its reference widened to "drill" and not merely part of drill as suggested by "fall in". Kariki / Afr. "karretjie" (small cart) retains the meaning of "cart" but does not refer to "motor-car". Kampa / Afr. "kamp" which means a small temporary residence or an enclosed grazing field has, in addition, assumed the meaning of the paddock system in many Northern Sotho speaking areas. Piri / Eng. "beer" or Afr. "bier" has been narrowed to refer to European beer only and is not used to refer to Bantu Beer.

5.1.07 An examination of the following words will indicate that the borrowed words bear totally different meanings from the original words. The Northern Sotho word matšekelane / Eng. "march in a line" is used to refer to a night watchman, whether on the beat or seated by

his brazier; the concept of marching in a line does not exist. Agêntê / Afr. "agent" is used to refer to a lawyer, solicitor, attorney and bears no reference to "agentskap". Jôforôu / Afr. "juffrou" is used to refer to a white missionary's wife, and hence a pastor's wife, as opposed to the Afrikaans meaning of "miss", "young lady", "lady teacher". Monôri / Afr. "meneer" (my lord, sir) is used to refer to a white missionary or priest. Misîsi / "Mrs" (address to a married woman) is used to refer to a white lady employer or a white employer's wife. Mestêrê / Afr. "meester" (teacher, dominie) is used to refer to an evangelist, although nowadays the Northern Sotho word moêbangêdi seems to be gaining ascendancy over mestêrê. Lokhêishênê / Eng. "location" has come to mean a Bantu township, i.e. where blacks stay in white areas; whereas lokasi, i.e. / Afr. "lokasie" refers to a Bantu reserve in the homelands. Rafêntlêlê / Afr. "laventel" has come to mean not perfume but toilet soap. Pôngpông / French "bon-bon" via English is not used to refer to sweetmeat but to sweets in general. Lefôkisi / Eng. "Fox street" has come to be used to refer to a detective. Setwebele / Afr. "duiwe!" has shifted from the devil or Satan to a ghost or apparition. Mašilône / Eng. "marshall law" is now used to refer to force or compulsion, in which context it is synonymous with kgang, as in the following example:

le gê a sa rate o tla ya ka mašilône (even if he does not want to go he will be compelled to do so).

From "maumau", Kikuyu nationals who murdered whites and looted their farms in the fifties, Northern Sotho has coined maemae, which is used to refer to ritual murderers who often kidnap children and even adults for medicinal charms. One often hears the warning:

o mo tšhabê, ke maemae (steer clear of him, he is a ritual murderer).

5.1.08 A very interesting example of the extent to which borrowing may alter the meaning of a word is afforded by setôkôfêlê / Eng. "stock fair", via Nguni. In English "stock fair" is used to refer to a periodical gathering for the sale of livestock, usually characterized by feasting and merry-making. In Northern Sotho setôkôfêlê has come to refer to a kind of savings and recreation club. Each member of the club undertakes to contribute a fixed sum, weekly or monthly. Each member in turn becomes the "owner" of the stokfel, which means that all the contributions of that week or month are given to him. He must then arrange a party and provide the refreshments. The profits from the sale of the refreshments also go to the "owner" of the stokfel. Today one occasionally hears the word mogôdišanô / -gôdišana (cause or help one another receive wages) used instead of setôkôfêlê.

5.1.09 In the realm of Christianity we have the words moapôstola (apostle) and mophaphathisa (baptist,

follower of the Baptist Church). Today moapôstola/leapôstola/lepôstola is popularly used to refer to a follower of a sect which bases its teaching on magic. Its members are prohibited from drinking intoxicants, smoking and eating pork. One of their members, who is called a prophet, is believed to be able to communicate direct with God. Mminele (1966, p. 39) uses this current sense of the word in the words of the old man to Phankga's father:

"gê o itirilê lepôstola o sa fihle mô go fihlago banna, rena re tla go thabiša ka eng gê re tšhonnê re itšalôŠala le bopôstola bjôô bja gago".

(Since you are determined to behave as an apostle by not doing what men do, how will we entertain you as poor as we are...stay behind with your apostolic inclinations).

The reference in the above passage is to a teetotaler rather than a member of a particular sect, which shows a vast shift from the original Biblical meaning of apostle, i.e. messenger of the Gospel of Christ.

5.1.10 Similarly mophaphathisi/lephaphathisi is a religious fanatic, a member of a sect that believes in total immersion in their baptismal ritual. Usually members of this sect congregate around pools or dams for the ritual. Similarly to the average Northern Sotho speaker the name Siône (Zion) no longer means Jerusalem but is used to refer to the headquarters of the Lekganyane sect (Z.C.C.) Hence mosiône is a follower of the Lekganyane sect.

5.1.11 The Northern Sotho word sônô / Afr. "sonde" bears no reference to sin but to cruelty, e.g. ke sônô go latša bana ka tlala (it is cruel to send children to bed on empty stomachs). However talêntê / Afr. "talent", in addition to referring to special aptitude or high mental ability, i.e. gifts from God, is used to refer to special silver collections made during church festivities, e.g. basadi ba išitšê talêntê kêrêkêng ya Luthêrê (the women have organized a silver collection at the Lutheran Church).

5.1.12 Nowadays Northern Sotho, like other Bantu languages, tends to accommodate foreign objects and new concepts by making use of existing words, thereby giving them additional connotations. The Northern Sotho word ngaka originally meant a witchdoctor but is today used to refer also to a medical practitioner or anyone with a doctoral degree. Dialoga culturally refers to graduate initiates but in the academic context it refers to university graduands or graduates. Dihlaba traditionally refers to a G-string worn by initiates but in the modern sense it is used to refer to academic regalia. Lebaka basically means time but today it is also used to refer to tense in the grammatical sense. Sekgorokgoro basically means a toy, i.e. a reed is stuck through a kiti watermelon and this is pushed like a wheel; because gadgets which make a noise are attached to the "wheel", it causes a din when pushed. In addition sekgorokgoro has come to be used with reference to a worn-out motor-car.

5.1.13 We shall bring this discussion to a close by making reference to loan translations, which give a literal translation of the component words in the source language. Examples that readily come to mind are modulasetulô (chairman), môyamokgêthwa (Holy Ghost) and leotwana (bicycle). Modulasetulô is not an apt description of the man who controls and directs the meeting but merely someone who sits on a chair; moswara-marapô, which is commonly used to refer to a master of ceremonies at a function would in fact have been more apt and precise. With regard to môyamokgêthwa, the ambiguity is brought about by the fact that môya is a blanket term which might refer to wind, air, breath, feeling, attitude and spirit, so that it is not suitable to express a complex concept like spirit in the Biblical sense. In both these examples the meanings are entrenched by continued usage. For instance, a man who does not attend meetings in the modern sense will not make out what modulasetulô really means. Similarly a non-Christian may not grasp the reference of môya o mokgêthwa. As for leotwana for bicycle, it is almost impossible to explain, for basically it means a small wheel. The concept of riding on a small wheel is far removed from that of riding on a bicycle (with two wheels)! Maybe it could be associated with the old bicycle which had a small back wheel.

5.1.14 The same criticism holds good for ntlokgêthwa (holy house), sekôlôkômiti (school committee)

and kgômobolêkana (condensed milk). Ntlokgêthwa, used in the Schwellnus's translation of the Bible to refer to a church, is so ambiguous that kêrêkê / Afr. "kerk" should have been preferred. Sekôlôkômiti, used by Mminele in Ngwana wa mobu, is not even in accordance with the Northern Sotho rules of forming compound nouns, where the basic word comes first and the qualifying or descriptive word follows. For instance in sebatakgômo the basic word is sebata while kgomo describes the kind of sebata. Accordingly sekôlôkômiti should have been kômitisekôlô. With regard to kgômobolêkana the reference might equally be to condensed milk or corned beef depending on which aspect of cattle - milk or meat - is in question.

5.1.15 This trend of loan translations leads to very inapt translations of idioms and proverbs from other languages. For instance, Radio-Bantu announcers regularly use: go raloka/bapala/tšea karolô e bohlokwa (play an important role) which is not in accordance with Northern Sotho idiom. The idiomatic equivalent for the English expression is go kgatha tema e bohlokwa. In St. John's Gospel, Chapter 4, verse 44, we read: moprôfeta ga a na kgodišô motseng wa gabô, which is a literal translation of "A prophet has no honour in his country", (although motseng is used instead of nagêng). The correct equivalent should have been the proverb: ngaka ya kgolê e na le serokolo sê bogale / ngaka ya kgolê e phala ya gaô.

Similarly molaô o na le letsôgô le letêlêlê (the law has a long arm) should have been rendered by the proverb: molato ga o bôle, which emphasizes that before the culprit has been brought to book and punished, the case will not be closed.

5.1.16 With regard to tšhêlêtê ke modu wa sebe (money is the root of all evil), what does the average Northern Sotho speaker understand by sebe (sin)? In fact both sebe and tšhêlêtê are borrowed concepts. In the context in which it is used, tšhêlêtê signifies not only money but avarice; so that the more apt expression should have been tšhêlêtê e na le pelo e têtêlê / tšhêlêtê e a wêtša.

5.1.17 Likewise the expression thutô e nnyane ke kôtse (a little learning is a dangerous thing) is too literal a translation and often baffles the listeners as a little learning is better than no learning at all. Perhaps go tseba bohlaêtšana go a lahlêtša would express the concept more aptly.

5.1.18 Although context itself helps specify the meaning, borrowing should be done with circumspection lest the intended meaning is missed.

Dialectal context

5.2.00 The Northern Sotho speaking area comprises several dialects, some of which share closer

resemblances phonologically while others exhibit marked differences. Since no two words in any language ever refer to the same thing under all circumstances, even lexical differences may be observed among these dialects. It is not unusual to find that two dialects have the same word with slightly different meanings. Marked semantic distinctions seem to exist between dialects around Sekhukhuniland and those in the Pietersburg area. Nida (1960, p. 81) observes

"The picture of meaning is even more confused by the fact that, though a general agreement exists among participants in any speech community, there is never an absolute agreement; for people differ from one another not only in their pronunciation of words but also in the meanings they habitually assign to them. This type of disagreement is inevitable, for a person's use of a term is dependent upon his experience with this symbol in the context of his own life. Since each of us differs to some extent in our experiences, conceptions corresponding to verbal symbols will inevitably differ".

5.2.01 The word -kanama in Tlokwa means to lie on one's back; in Pedi it has acquired an added connotation, viz. to lie on one's back with a view to having sexual intercourse. The Pedi word for lying on one's back is -kwaéla. In Pedi, therefore, it is taboo to say: ke kanamiša karebê (I cause a girl to lie on her back), although it is permissible to say: ke kanamiša lesogana ka letswele (I knock down a young man). The word setsiba in Tlokwa is used to refer to men's drawers, but in Pedi it has acquired a totally different meaning, viz. a patch, a

fool. The word ipôna in all dialects means to see oneself (as through a mirror) and to be proud or haughty; but in Pedi it has acquired an added connotation, viz. to menstruate. The word -ôtsêla in Pedi means to slumber, but in Tlokwa it means to sleep. The Tlokwa word for slumber is -pôtuma, and the Pedi word for sleep is rôbala. The word -alama in all the dialects of Sekhukhuniland means to lie flat, attack, shield, as in the following sentences:

ke yô alama moriting (I am going to lie down in the shade)

tau e alama phuti (the lion attacks the buck)

monna o bê a nyakô itia ngwana, mmagwê a mo alama
(the man wanted to thrash the child but her mother shielded her).

In Tlokwa, however, -alama means "to brood" as in kgogo e a alama (the hen is broody).

In the applied form -alamêla in all dialects means "to brood", "to protect" as in kgogo e alamêla mae (the hen is broody)
kgogo e alamêla matswiana (the hen protects the chickens).

5.2.02 Sometimes it is important to know the dialect of the speaker in order to get a clearer picture of what he intends to convey, as meanings of words may vary from dialect to dialect. The word -phophotha among the dialects in Sekhukhuniland means to apologize or send

somebody to do that on one's behalf. Culturally this action may be accompanied by some token payment in respect of the commission or omission involved. The word -phuphutha among these dialects means to roll in the dust. Among the Northern, North-eastern and North-western dialects, however, phuphutha is largely used to refer to the meanings conveyed by Sekhukhuniland -phophotha and very rarely used to mean "roll in the dust".

5.2.03 The word kgêkê among the central dialects is used to refer favourably to a pretty girl in contrast to the dialects around Pietersburg where it is used to refer to a girl of loose morals. Hudua in all dialects basically means to stir; but among the Sekhukhuniland dialects it had acquired added connotations of stirring porridge, in which context the Pietersburg dialects use -thêpêla. Kgoma among the Pietersburg dialects means to touch; but in Sekhukhuniland it has acquired a specialized meaning of "touching private parts". Taboga in Sekhukhuniland means to jump, but in Pulana it means to run; fofa in Sekhukhuniland means "to fly" while in the Northern, North-eastern and North-western dialects it is used to refer to both "fly" and "jump over". Hlobola in all the dialects means to undress, strip, uncover, unveil; but among the Pietersburg dialects it has acquired an added connotation of "stamping (grain)".

5.2.04 The word -roga among the Pietersburg dialects is used to refer to swearing at and reprimanding; but among the Sekhukhuniland dialects it refers only to swearing at, with ômanya used to refer to reprimand, e.g.

gê ke tsêna bošego batswadi ba tla nthoga (Pb)

gê ke tsêna bošego batswadi ba tla nkômanya (Sek)

(If I arrive late my parents will reprimand me)

BUT

mošimane gê a roga mosadi o a hlokofatšwa (Pb & Sek)

(if a boy swears at a woman he is punished)

5.2.05 The word kgopa among the Pietersburg dialects is used to refer to a snail, including its shell; in the Sekhukhuniland area, however, kaopa refers to the shell only, and kgôhu is used to refer to the snail. In most dialects the word mokgôši is used to refer to an alarm as opposed to mokgolokwane, a shout of joy; but among the dialects around Potgietersrus mokgôši is used to refer to both an alarm and a shout of joy. The word molamo among the dialects around Pietersburg is used to refer to a brother-in-law; but among the Central dialects it is used to refer to both brother-in-law and sister-in-law. In order to specify the Central dialects use mogwaka (brother-in-law) and mogadibô (sister-in-law).

5.2.06 It has been established that context plays an

important role in determining meaning with regard to borrowing and dialectal usage. It is not sufficient merely to know the meaning of a word in the source language but to examine its use in the context of the borrowing, just as it is of vital importance to know the use of a word in the dialectal context concerned.

CHAPTER VI

MEANING IN THE CONTEXT OF SYNTAX AND SEMOTAXIS

6.0.00 In the foregoing chapter the meanings of words were examined as single entities, i.e. how words were modified in meaning through the process of borrowing and dialectal usage. But in actual speech words never occur in isolation; they are used in certain syntactic and semotactic constructions that given them their intended meanings. In this chapter it will be argued that meaning is intimately connected with syntactic and semotactic structures and, although it is not intended to cover the whole field of syntax and semotaxis, we shall, however, examine to what extent they help modify the meanings of words in particular contexts.

THE SYNTACTIC CONTEXT

6.1.00 "The meaning of a sentence", says Strawson (1971, p. 95) "is a syntactic function of the meanings of its parts and their arrangement". In a majority of cases, the particular meaning of a word may be specified by the syntactic constructions in which it occurs. In the sentence: o ja bogôbê (he eats porridge), the subjectival concord o forces us to take the sense that applies to a person, in contrast to: e ja bogôbê (it eats porridge)

which would refer to a non-human, although in respect of words like kgôši (chief, king), belonging to a non-human class, the SC e would be used to refer to a human. That is why it is not permissible to say: monna e a ja (the man (it) is eating). Syntax specifies the permissible combinations of words and word-groups in grammatical constructions. The fact that the noun functions as subject, object or complement; the verb as predicative; the adjective, the relative, the possessive as qualificative, helps in the selection of specific meanings of words.

6.1.01 An important syntactic marker is word-order in a sentence. Taking this as our starting point, we shall follow Prof. Louw's (1957, p. 111) definition of emphasis:

"Since the word-order is so important in Xhosa to indicate which word is being selected as the arrow head of the meaning of a sentence, i.e. the word which stands out in significant, contrasting, prominence above all others, it can safely be said that when emphasis is used in connection with wordorder that it is covered by the phrase: 'The use of language in such a way as to imply more than is actually said'".

6.1.02 The normal order of words in a Northern Sotho sentence is subject - qualification of subject - predicate - object of predicate - qualification of object - adjunct. The word-order, however, is not fixed, but the subject or object or predicate may be changed from its normal position and the change so effected

results in various nuances of meaning. In general, the initial word or word-group in the sentence carries strong emphasis; and in the case of an object, especially when it is used with its objectival concord:

lesogana le rata makgarebê (the young man loves girls, i.e. the subject, lesogana, is uppermost in the mind of the speaker).

makgarebê, lesogana le a a rata (as for the girls the young man loves them, i.e. the object, makgarebê, is uppermost in the mind of the speaker).

le a a rata makgarebê, lesogana (the young man really loves the girls, i.e. the predicative, le a a rata, is uppermost in the mind of the speaker).

6.1.03 To illustrate further how change of word-order results in changes in meaning we shall consider the sentence: monna o lemilê tšhemo (the man has ploughed the land) which may take the following forms:

tšhemo monna o e lemilê in which the emphasis is placed on tšhemo

o e lemilê tšhemo monna in which the emphasis is placed on o e lemilê

monna, tšhemo o e lemilê in which the emphasis is placed on monna.

6.1.04 The same rule applies even when the sentence contains an adjunct or descriptive of the predicate, i.e. the adjunct or descriptive is emphatic or non-emphatic depending on its position in the sentence:

dinalêdi di kganya bošego (stars twinkle at night)

bošego dinalêdi di a kganya in which the emphasis is placed on "at night"

di kganya bošego dinalêdi in which the emphasis is placed on "the twinkling"

and

Gautêng ga go rôbalwe (people do not sleep in Johannesburg) in which the emphasis is placed on Gautêng, i.e. particularly in Johannesburg

ga go rôbalwe Gautêng in which the emphasis is placed on "not sleeping", i.e. using one's wits.

6.1.05 In fact various nuances of meaning can be effected by the change in the position of an adjunct in a sentence:

ruri Setlakalana ke ngaka (indeed Setlakalana is a doctor, i.e. it is true that he is)

Setlakalana ke ngaka ruri (Setlakalana is an efficient doctor)

and

ka kgônthê o bêtlilê molamo (indeed he has carved a stick)

o bêtliilé molamo ka kgônthê (he has carved a stick beautifully or he has carved a beautiful stick)

6.1.06 A classical example of various nuances of meaning is provided by the use of the word fêla in different positions in a sentence. The word fêla restricts the reference or application of a word or word-group immediately preceding it in a sentence. In the sentence:

bana ba ipapalêla lepatlêlông (children play on the playing field), changes in meaning can be effected by the insertion of fêla thus:

1. bana fêla ba ipapalêla lepatlêlông (only children and no adults)
2. bana ba ipapalêla fêla lepatlêlông i.e. they do nothing else
3. bana ba ipapalêla lepatlêlông fêla i.e. nowhere else

6.1.07 The sentence: monna o kôpana le basadi (the man meets women) may also effect changes in meaning by the introduction of the nôši in different positions:

1. monna a nôši o kôpana le basadi (only the man (and neither the boy nor the girl, i.e. only an adult man) may have sexual intercourse with women).
2. monna o kôpana le basadi a nôši (the man meets women being alone, i.e. unaccompanied)

6.1.08 The normal position of the qualificative in a sentence is immediately after the substantive it qualifies. When the qualificative precedes the substantive there is usually a change in meaning, e.g.

pudi ya ka e sa phela (my goat is still alive)

ya ka pudi e sa phela (my own goat is still alive, usually used when someone has killed another's goat and the owner implies that he needs a live one to replace it)

6.1.09 In sentences containing several qualificatives to one substantive the normal sequence is (1) quantitative or enumerative, (2) possessive, (3) adjective and/or relative. This sequence is, however, subject to change depending on the shift of emphasis as the following sentences will illustrate:

1. ke banna ba motse ba bagolo ba ba šomago (it is the big men of the village who work, i.e. it is not the big men from any other locality)
2. ke banna ba bagolo ba motse ba ba šomago (it is the big men and not the young ones)
3. ke banna ba ba šomago ba bagolo ba motse (it is the industrious men as opposed to the indolent ones)

6.1.10 Cole (1955, p. 438) draws the following interesting distinctions from change of the normal sequence

of the qualificative:

1. dikgômo tša ka tšê dintši di hwilê (my many heads of cattle are dead)
2. dikgômo tšê dintši tša ka ôi hwilê (many of my cattle are dead)

to which we add a third:

3. tšê dintši tša ka dikgômo di hwilê (many of my cattle are dead, i.e. I have already lost many)

and

1. dinku tša ka tšê di hwilêgo tšôhle (my sheep all of which have died)
2. dinku tšôhle tša ka tšê di hwilêgo (all my dead sheep, i.e. all those which have died)

6.1.11 Another syntactic marker is the tone pattern of a word-group or a sentence. The word-group Tladi wa Dikgati may have two interpretations determined by the tone pattern:

- (a) Tladi wa Dikgati (Tladi, the son of Dikgati, a title of a Northern Sotho novel by N.C. Fhatudi, which is usually mispronounced as (b) below)
- (b) Tladi wa dikgati (Tladi who carries lashes).

6.1.12 Similarly Prof. Endemann (1969, p. 18) distinguishes the following meanings of the word-

group: ngwana wa mosetsana:

ngwaná wá mosétsana (the baby of the girl)

ngwaná wá mosetsana (the baby girl)

6.1.13 The following are additional examples of the distinction of meanings of word-groups through tone pattern:

(a) taú yá mokgalabjê (an old lion)

taú yá mókgalabjê (an old man's lion, i.e. the lion
the old man has killed/seen/alluded to)

(b) sedibana sá pele (the water-well that lies ahead)

sedibana sá péle (the first water-well)

6.1.14 The change from the indicative to the participial is effected through tone pattern:

(a) o bapêtsê (you have played)

ó bápêtsê (you having played)

(b) bá gapá dipúdi (they drive the goats)

bá gápá dipúdi (they driving the goats)

(c) molômo ó rúrúgilê (the mouth is swollen)

molômo ó rúrúgilê (the mouth being swollen)

6.1.15 The distinction between a statement and a question or an exclamation is purely a question of tone pattern, except for the fact that length distinguishes between the question and the exclamation:

ó tli lê (he has come)
ó tli lê (has he come?)
ó tli ::lê (he has surely come!)

6.1.16 The change of tone-key within a sentence (usually accompanied by a pause, i.e. a comma) may also specify the meaning intended as the following sentences will illustrate:

- (a) morúti ó a rérêša (the pastor is right)
moruti, ó a rérêša (pastor, he i.e. someone else, is right)
moruti, o a rérêša (pastor, you are right)
- (b) Kgôši Sejánoši ké molata wá Taudi (Chief Sejanoši is Taudi's subject)
Kgôši, Sejánoši ké molata wá Taudi (Chief, Sejanoši is Taudi's subject)
Kgôši Sejánoši, ké molata wá Taudi (Chief Sejanoši, I am Taudi's subject)

6.1.17 An even more intriguing example of the use of a pause i.e. a comma in writing, as a syntactic marker will be observed in the following two sentences:

- (i) maphôdisa a tsoma monna yô a utswitšêgo
 (ii) maphôdisa a tsoma monna, yô a utswitšêgo.

The absence of the comma in the first sentence indicates that the relative clause yô a utswitšêgo restricts or defines the antecedent monna, and the sense understood is that there are many men in the area or locality but only one is sought by the police. In the second sentence, the relative clause is non-restrictive or non-defining, and the sense understood is that there is one man in the area or locality, and he happens to be sought by the police. "Restrictive clauses", says Langacker (1973, p. 143), "are normally represented orthographically with no special punctuation, but nonrestrictive clauses are set off by commas".

6.1.18 In addition to word order, intonation and punctuation, there are miscellaneous markers which effect changes in meaning. The repetition of the possessive concord in a sentence may change or restrict the meaning. An examination of the following pairs of sentences will illustrate this point:

- (i) dikgômo tša tatê le malome di fula thabêng
dikgômo tša tatê le tša malome di fula thabêng

In the first sentence the cattle that graze on the mountain belong jointly to both my father and my maternal uncle. In the second sentence the repetition of the possessive concord indicates that the

cattle are owned separately, i.e. some belong to my father and the others belong to my uncle — they may not even be grazing together as a herd.

- (ii) bašemane ba swele le maaka ba tla itiwa
bašemane ba swele le ba maaka ba tla itiwa

In the first sentence the boys who will be punished are both stubborn and untruthful. In the second sentence the boys fall into two groups, i.e. those who are stubborn and those who are untruthful.

- (iii) o rêkilê lerumô la go hlasêla le go itšhirêlêtša
o rêkilê lerumô la go hlasêla le la go itšhirêlêtša

The first sentence denotes that he has bought one spear which he uses for both attack and defence. The second sentence implies that he has bought two spears, one for attack and the other for defence.

- (iv) ba mo filê sebjana sa go jêla le go nwêla
ba mo filê sebjana sa go jêla le sa go nwêla

The first sentence refers to one container for both food and drink; while the second refers to two containers, one for food and the other for drink.

6.1.19 Similarly the repetition of the instrumental prefix ka with the infinitive may modify the meaning as the following sentences will show:

- (i) motswadi o thuša ngwana ka go mo kgala le go mo êlêtša
motswadi o thuša ngwana ka go mo kgala le ka go mo
êlêtša

In the first sentence the parent helps the child by reprimanding and advising simultaneously; while in the second sentence the reprimanding and advising are done alternately.

- (ii) motho o phela ka go ja le go nwa
motho o phela ka go ja le ka go nwa

The first sentence implies that the eating and drinking are done simultaneously; while in the second sentence it is denoted that the actions of eating and of drinking are done alternately.

6.1.20 Likewise the repetition of the instrumental prefix ka with a noun following may modify the meaning:

- o bolêtše ka Sesotho le Seisimane
o bolêtše ka Sesotho le ka Seisimane

The first sentence denotes that the speaker mixed both languages, Sotho and English; while the second sentence denotes that the languages were used alternately.

6.1.21 The use of the associative connective le with qualificatives may effect changes in meaning, e.g.

monna yô moso yo mogolo o tlilê (a black big man has
come)

monna yô moso le yô mogolo ba tlilê (a black man and a
big man have come)

Note that the change of the SC already indicates that plu-
rality is implied in the second sentence.

6.1.22 Sometimes a change in meaning is observed when
an adjunct is used with both the simple imperfect
and long imperfect tenses of the indicative mood, e.g.

ke raloka ka mehla (I play everyday, i.e. I am in the
habit of doing so)

ke a raloka ka mehla (I do play everyday, i.e. I
certainly do the playing)

6.1.23 Emphasis may be effected by the use of the
absolute pronoun in apposition to a substantive:

1. monna yêna re mmône (as for the man we saw him)
as opposed to

monna re mmône (we saw the man)

2. basadi bôna ba rata lesêbô (as for women they like
gossip)

as opposed to

basadi ba rata lesêbô (women like gossip)

Note that the substantive may also be used in apposition to the absolute pronoun with emphatic effect:

yêna monna re mmône

bôna basadi ba rata lesêbô

6.1.24 The absolute pronoun may be used with the demonstrative for the sake of emphasis:

ke bône tšôna tšê, e sego tšêla (I saw these very ones,
not those yonder)

ke rata sôna sê, e sego sêo (I like this very one, not
that one)

6.1.25 The absolute pronoun may also be used with a locative for the sake of emphasis:

1. ke mo hwêditšê gôna nokêng (I found him definitely at
the river)

as opposed to

ke mo hwêditšê nokêng (I found him at the river)

2. o lêtšê gôna mohlareng (he slept right there on the
tree)

as opposed to

o lêtšê mohlareng (he slept on the tree)

6.1.26 The use of the copulative construction may also help bring about emphasis on the substantive:

1. ke monna wa ka yô a hwilêgo (it is my husband who has passed away)
 as opposed to
monna wa ka o hwilê (my husband has passed away)
2. ke lenông lê ke le bônego (it is the vulture that I saw)
 as opposed to
ke bône lenông (I saw a vulture)

6.1.27 In Northern Sotho the negative may also be used for emphasis:

ga a bolêle, ga a bolêle (he talks too much)
ga se pula lenyaga (there is much rain this year)
ga se bjalê a sepetše (he left long ago)
ga se lešata ka ngwakông (there is too much noise in the house)
e bê e se batho monyanyêng (there were very many people at the wedding)

6.1.28 In typical Northern Sotho idiom the contrast between the negative and the positive serves as a means of emphasizing the positive. In fact this is the basis of hyperbole:

ga se batho, ke tšîê/mabu le matlakala (lit. it is not people, it is a swarm of locusts/soil and leaves, i.e. there are very many people)

ga se go ja, ke go fula (lit. it is not to eat, it is to graze, i.e. he is a gourmand)

ga se go nôna, ke kolobê (lit. it is not to be fat, it is a pig, i.e. he is very obese)

ga se go nwa, ke go tšhêla (lit. it is not to drink, it is to pour in, i.e. he drinks a lot)

ga se go lêtla, ke thutlwa (lit. it is not to be tall, it is a giraffe, i.e. he is very tall)

ga se go lapa, ke lehu, (lit. it is not to be tired, it is death, i.e. he is very tired)

6.1.29 Lastly reference should be made to the use of the causative suffix, which may bring about a change in meaning:

1. Maria o bêša nama le Matome
Maria o bešiša Matome nama

In the first sentence Maria and Matome roast the meat, i.e. they are carrying out a task assigned to both of them. In the second sentence it is implied that the task is assigned to Matome alone; Maria either helps him or causes him to perform the action.

2. Sefôlôkô o baka bogôši le tatagwê
Sefôlôkô o bakiša tatagwê bogôši

In the first sentence neither Sefoloko nor his father

is chief, but both are aspiring to the chieftainship. In the second sentence Sefoloko's father is a chief and Sefoloko alone is aspiring to the chieftainship.

SEMOTACTIC CONTEXT

6.2.00 Marking of meaning by semotaxis implies that the specific meaning which is intended of a word is marked by the interaction of that word with the meanings of other words in its environment, i.e. as Nida (1969, p. 58) rightly observes, "categories of meanings are compatible or incompatible, and they mutually select or eliminate each other in specific contexts". In this connection Hill (1967, p. 9) says:

"The influence of context and situation as determinative factors is such as to make all other aspects of meaning of a word vanish completely. Only those are called up, are 'activated', which are at that moment intended by the speaker or writer. The other aspects of meaning simply do not occur to us, neither to the speaker or hearer".

And Strawson (1971, p. 91) emphasizes the same point when he says:

".....we must acknowledge, as two complementary truths, first, that the meaning of a sentence in general depends, in some systematic way, on the meanings of the words that make it up and, second, that for any word to have a particular meaning is a matter of its making a particular systematic contribution to the meanings of the sentences in which it occurs.

6.2.01 Semotactic marking may be illustrated by the use of hlôgô (a head) in a number of different contexts as follows:

1. banna ba ja hlôgô ya kgômo (men eat the head of a beast)
2. Sekôbô ke hlôgô ya sekôlô (Sekobo is principal of the school)
3. hlôgô ya leina lê ke mô (the prefix of this noun is mo-)
4. hlôgô ya kanêgêlô-kopana yê ke "Monna wa mohumi" (the heading/title of this short story is "Monna wa mohumi")
5. ngwana yô o na le hlôgô, o phasitšê ditlhablobô tša gagwê (this child is intelligent, she has passed her exams)
6. o dirišê hlôgô gê batho ba go tlaiša (keep cool when people illtreat you)
7. ba mo alafilê hlôgô (they cured his headache)
8. kgôši ke hlôgô ya setšhaba (a chief is the leader of the tribe)

In sentence (1) the commonest sense is understood and specified by -ja (eat). In sentence (2) the only sense of hlôgô which fits is "head and shoulders above others" and sekôlô (school) specifies "principal". In sentence (3) the grammatical term leina (noun) specifies mo- as a prefixal morpheme. In sentence (4) kanêgêlô-kopana (short story) specifies the meaning of hlôgô as title or heading. This is further accentuated by the use of inverted commas with "Monna wa

mohumi". In sentence (5) the addition of o phasitšê ditlhahlobô tša gagwê specifies o na le hlôgô as pinpointing intelligence. In sentence (6) the sense of coolness and patience is specified by gê batho ba go tlaiša. In sentence (7) the use of alafilê specifies hlôgô as some illness, i.e. headache. In sentence (8) the use of setšhaba suggests an organism in which the chief is the controlling organ, i.e. the leader.

6.2.02 The word monna (man) also shows a variety of meanings depending on the context in which it is used. Apart from the concept of "husband" it may have complimentary meanings of bravery, diligence, trustworthiness and greatness in the following examples:

1. Noko ke monna wa Hunadi (Noko is Hunadi's husband)
2. Noko ke monna, o bolailê tau (Noko is brave, he has killed a lion)
3. Noko ke monna, o agilê ngwakô ô mogolo (Noko is diligent, he has built a big house)
4. Noko ke monna, ga a bole dikôma (Noko is trustworthy, he will not let the cat out of the bag)
5. Noko ke ngwana wa monna, ka fao ga a bôife bolôi (Noko has been doctored by a great medicine man, therefore he fears no witchcraft)

6.2.03 When used in the negative the word monna may have derogatory meanings as in the following sentences:

1. Noko ga se monna, ga a na lapa (Noko is but a bachelor)
2. Noko ga se monna, ga a imiše (Noko is impotent)
3. Noko ga se monna, ga a tšwe thabêng (Noko is uncircumcized)
4. Noko ga se monna, o wêla ditaba godimo (Noko is not meticulous)
5. Noko ga se monna, o fêla-fêla pelo (Noko is short-tempered)

6.2.04 Not only are nouns subject to contextual variations in meaning but also verb stems. The verb -rata may have the following meanings:

1. ke rata go mmôna (I wish to see him)
2. o rata dijô (he is gluttonous)
3. o rata basadi (he is a sex-maniac)
4. o rata ntwá (he is bellicose)
5. o rata metlae (he is jocular)
6. o rata ditaba tša bangwê (he is inquisitive)

6.2.05 The importance of contextual conditioning may also be illustrated by the use of -swarêga in the following sentence:

1. digalase ga di swarêge (pieces of glass are difficult to hold, i.e. they are apt to slip)
2. ka gê ke bê ke swarêgilê, ke šitilwê go ya lekgotlêng
(as I had other commitments I was unable to go to the meeting)
3. lehôdu le swarêgilê (the thief was caught redhanded)
4. o lekile go ba radia eupša a swarêga ka dipolêlô tša gagwê (he tried to deceive them but his words betrayed him)
5. ke swarêgilê, ka gôna ke sa yô fahla magôtlô (I am going to relieve myself)
6. bana ba lehôno ga ba swarêge (modern youth are unmanageable)

CONCLUSION

6.3.00 It is evident from the foregoing discussion that the meaning of a word is largely controlled by the environment in which it is used, i.e. the syntactic and the semotactic constructions. We agree completely with Richard's assertions (1942, p. 237) and (1965, p. 69):

"Words acquire their value from their togetherness"

and

"The utterance and the unit of discourse is not the word so much as the sentence - is an organism, in that the various parts of it need the aid of surrounding bits to make a meaning, just as a seen colour is only what it is with respect to the other colours co-present with it in the visual field".

CHAPTER VII

INTERPRETATION

7.0.00 In this chapter an attempt will be made to analyse two passages of prose (one from Matsepe's Kgorong ya mošate and the other from Mminele's Ngwana wa mobu), a traditional poem (Sereto sa Sekhukhune I) and a modern poem (Moratiwa wa ka) by Bopape & Ratlabala. These analyses will also serve as an overall application of our standpoint, i.e. that the intended meaning of a word or construction is determined by the context in which it is used.

7.1.00 The following is an extract from Kgorong ya mošate, p. 79. A translation of this extract will be found in Appendix A:

Di a bopelana, bjale di batamelane di bile di tšhelana ka moya wo o fišago o tletšego pefelo ya lehu; di budulogile, di thatafaditše melala ka go tatapolla megano.

Lerumo le thothobetša le tšwelelela ka magetleng, selepe se pšhatla legata bjalo ka lerotse, motho o tšhaba a gokere mala a tšewa ke mantladima, a re go thula mohlare ka hlogo a pharame a bokolela ka lentšu le nkego ke la lefase le lengwe e sego le; aowa, ga di bolelwe - o mongwe o re go hlabo ka hlogo a be a ntšhe mešwang ka dinko, bohloko bja

lerumo bo nametša monna mohlare a sa ipone — marumo a ja batho ka tlhoka-pelotlhomogi. E swarane thaka e tshese, e tshela meokana bjalo ka diphala; madi a themile, ke bobete bjo bo sa elelego lehlakoreng la goregore; fela e ile ge le thoma go fiša la hlephiša bana ba Letšaga ka go se tsebe naga gomme madi a thoma go elela lehlakoreng la bona ka mokgwa wo o šišago. Ge go le bjalo, ba phatlalala ka mabothwabothwana, ntwā ba lwa ya itia o tšhabe, ka kgonthe ba senya bana ba Matshelo letlalo, ka selepe ba ba kgabela mo nkego ba yo ba apea — fela gwa tla le ba bangwe go tla go thuša. Ka yeo nako ke ge boBošitsi ba hweditše sekgobothwana sa bašimanyana le banna bao ba bego ba tšhabišitše maruo a motse, gwa lla lerumo, maruo ale a puputlwa ka lebelo; ya re ba Matshelo ba tla fela maatla, mokgoši wa hlabja ka sebong sa mošate fao bana ba Letšaga ba bolayago e le ruri — ya ba gona go fenywa ga bona!

SITUATION

7.1.01 This is an extract taken from Kgorong ya mošate, the Mqhayi prize-winning novel by C.K. Matsepe. It depicts a fierce battle scene between Letšaga's troops and those of Matshelo. The cause of the fight was the self-exile of Monoši and Diphaphu from Letšaga's tribe, and the fact that when Letšaga sent messengers to inquire about the whereabouts of his subjects Matshelo rudely and provocatively ordered them to tell Letšaga that the men he

wanted were in his stomach. And so the stage is set, and the two bulls are ready and willing to go hammer and tongs at each other.

INTERPRETATION

7.1.02 The writer begins by emphasizing the wrath of both Letšaga and Matshelo by likening them to two bulls bellowing at each other and, with stiffened necks, breathing wrath at each other. The metaphor of the two bulls is not explicitly stated in the text, but what precedes the passage is indicative of preparation for a battle; so that it is only from the context that we are able to deduce that di a bôpêlana megano denotes the two bulls (dipôô), i.e. two belligerents, Letšaga and Matshelo. This also justifies the use of the expressions budulogilê, thatafišitše melala and tatapolla megano which are in keeping with the picture of two bulls ready to fight.

7.1.03 The writer describes the fierce battle scene in the most horrifying and bloody terms, seemingly untouched by all the slaughter. It is this ironical and semi-bemused approach which Matsepe uses to bring out the weakness of man and all his folly. He starts by naming the war weapons, lerumo (spear) and selêpê (axe), and their actions and devastating effects on the warriors. In a lucid simile he describes a chopper smashing someone's skull like a pumpkin: selêpê se pšhatla legata bjalô ka

lerôtsê. Note that go pšhatla legata already suggests that the force is so great that the brains are scattered. Someone else runs holding his entrails and starts howling in a voice not of this earth: motho o tšhaba a gokêre mala a bôkôlêla ka lentšu le nkêgo ke la lefase le lengwê e sego lê. The word mala in a gokêre mala would normally refer to "intestines"; but in this context it signifies the whole entrails, which could be expected when the belly is cut open.

The word bôkôlêla is associated with severe physical or spiritual pain which finds a natural outlet in moaning and wailing. It is always the unknown which introduces the idea of fear, and here fear of the unknown is given expression in a terrible voice bemoaning the lot of a cruel death (which leads also to unknown worlds).

7.1.04 In a characteristic understatement which brings out Matsepe's irony to its full he says: Aowa, ga di bolêlwe, (yes, it is horrible to relate). The interjection aowa normally means "no", but in this context it suggests an affirmation to the expression ga di bolêlwe. This expression almost removes one from the scene; but then immediately the writer continues with his action picture: ô mongwê o re go hlaba ka hlôgô a bê a ntšhê mešwang ka dinkô (someone, falling down head foremost, regurgitates his stomach contents through his nostrils). In this appropriate statement the writer has here given the

image of severe pain as also the result of a terrible nausea. The word go hlaba basically means "to stab", but in the context above, go hlaba ka hlôgô is used metaphorically to mean to fall down head foremost as a result of the pain inflicted on one. The word mešwang is generally used to refer to animal chyme, but in this context a bé a ntšhê mešwang implies dying of acute pain.

7.1.05 Fear and helplessness come out in the sentences: bohloko bja lerumô bo namêšša monna mohlare a sa ipône (the pain created by the spear forces a man to climb a tree unconsciously). And then in a verbal metaphor the writer describes the spears as eating the people and lacking in sympathy: marumô a ja batho ka tlhôka-pelotlhômogi. Note that the writer has coined a new descriptive phrase ka tlhôka-pelotlhômogi whereby the positive is accentuated by the use of the negative.

7.1.06 The agility of the warriors is portrayed in the apt simile: E swarane thaka e tshêsê. e tshela meokana bjalô ka diphala (the young men are engaged in fierce battle, they spring over the little mimosa trees like springboks). The change in word order in e swarane thaka e tshêsê is intended to emphasize the action, i.e. fierce battle.

7.1.07 The acumen of the warriors on both sides is brought out by the metaphor: madi a themilê

(blood has coagulated). The word thema means to thicken as in the case of milk turning sour impairing flow; when blood thickens it also fails to flow. Liquid will always flow from the higher to the lower plain; coagulated blood does not flow, and this gives a notion of an equilibrium. This explains that the two armies were of equal strength. This picture presents both armies as close-knit units with every screw tightened. Such was the position until midday when most of the screws went loose in Letšaga's army, who were not well-versed with the environment. The writer says: fêla e ilê gê le thôma go fiša la hlêphiša bana ba Letšaga ka go se tsebê naga, gomme madi a thôma go êlêla lehlakoreng la bôna ka mokgwa wo o šiišago (but as it became hot the heat demoralized Letsaga's children because they were not well-versed with the environment, so blood began to flow towards their side in a fearful manner).

The use of bana in bana ba Letšaga has cultural significance. In Northern Sotho culture the chief is father of a tribe; so that in the context of battle his children are his warriors. The importance of context is also shown by the use of naga in ka go se tsebê naga. It is only through the context in which it is used that we are able to detect that the word naga is used to refer to locality or environment and not to country; in other words, the range of meaning of naga has been restricted.

7.1.08 Faced with the prospect of defeat, Letšaga's men strategically broke into smaller units and adopted hit and run tactics: ntwa ba lwa ya itia o tšhabê (although ya itia o tšhabê is a borrowed concept, it describes very aptly the idea of "hit and run"). In an understatement again the writer says: ka kgônthê ba senya bana ba Matshelo letlalô (indeed they ruined the skin to Matshelo's children, i.e. they made them suffer great losses). The metaphor go senya letlalô has cultural significance, being derived from fighting with sticks (lashes) where the weaker fighter usually emerges with more bruises all over the body, i.e. his skin is spoilt. Note that the phrase bana ba Matshelo in this context refers to his warriors cf. par. 7.1.07). To add more pain to his picture the writer uses another apt simile: ka selêpê ba ba kgabêla mo nkêgo ba yô ba aepa (with an axe they chopped them as though they were preparing to cook them). This is a way in which Matsepe brings out his tragic humour, in these descriptions of the utmost violence which he compares with some deed which emphasizes the horror.

7.1.09 The tone of the passage now changes from a fierce fight to the horror and panic of those who are fighting, i.e. Matshelo's men. A subtle effect is created here by the short dispassionate sentence: gwa ila lerumô (the thud of the spear was heard), which depicts the sound of the spear as it is used on the human body. Abruptly

the whole scene ends, for Letšaga's men have entered Matshelo's headkraal and are trilling there, so an alarm is sounded (mokgôši wa hlabja ka sebông sa mošate) and - ya ba go fênywa ga bôna (and that was their defeat, i.e. Matshelo's men). The possessive construction sebông sa mošate is apt to be ambiguous. It may mean the refuge belonging to the headkraal or the refuge within the headkraal. It is only from the context that we are able to deduce that it is a refuge specifically set aside for members of the royal family. Therefore, once Letšaga's men had captured it, the whole tribe had to surrender.

7.1.10 In highly colourful language Matsepe presents this lively scene to the reader by making use of all the senses and emotions. There is action; examine all the action words he uses: thôthôbêtša (pierce through); tšwêlêlêla (go through); pšhatla (crush); tšhaba (flee); kgabêla (cut into bits); puputla (drive forcibly, i.e. animals); namêtša (cause to climb); tshela (jump over); ntšha (take out).

7.1.11 The writer also appeals through the use of colour and words suggesting colour to our imagination: mešwang (chyme); madi (blood); bobêtê (blood).

7.1.12 We have besides, the many words with harsh sounds which are in keeping with the din of

battle - bônêlana, tšhêlana, thatafišitšê, tatapolla, pšhatla, tlhōka-pelotlhōmogi - words and expressions suggestive of sound like bōkōlêla, gwa lla lerumô, mokgōši wa hlabja.

7.1.13 The passage is lightened by a strange blood humour so often used by Matsepe. Like so many passages in his novels, it deserves note and distinction worthy of the best literature produced by black writers in this country.

7.2.00 The following passage is taken from Mminele's Ngwana wa mobu, pp. 40-42. A translation of this passage will be found under Appendix B.

Ka mo kerekeng ye ya Makgwareng madulo a badiši a ka lehlakoreng la go ja kua pele, a ithekgile ka lebotō. Ke gona mo phuthego e atišago go bona Lahlang, mokgalabje Mootli le Mokhura ba dutše ka Matšatši a Morena. Ka lehlakoreng la ntsogošo go beilwe madulo a sehlopha sa Phankga sa baopedi, a lebane le a badiši.

Le ge lapa la Mokhura le le kgauswi le kereke, ga se a itlwaetša mokgwa wa go ba ketapele ya bokgomo ka mo kerekeng. Go pataganapatagana le boradimpana le bohlogopudutšwana mo mojakong wa kereke ga se mokgwa wo a o kwišišago.

E tla re mola go feditšwe ditumišo tša tlhotlamadiba, a tsene mokgomana, a feleletše ka sutu e ntsho ya go bitša, e sego ditshabatshaba tša majaja tše di aparwago ke boLahlang, o

hwetšago sutu ya gona e thothomela o ka re motho wa gona o tsenwe ke motlhakgaselo. O tla re ge a putla mo gare ga phuthego a gopotše go yo itahlela madulong a gagwe kua pelepele, wa hwetša mahlo a digotlane le a difofu a mo dumediša, mokgomana a taramolla maoto se nkego o tshela mekero, diatla di sobeletše ka dipotleng, di bile di kukile borokgo ka gonnyane gore dikaušu tša maswi le tšona di dumediše phuthego; a thatafišitše molala a bile a o sekamišitše ka gonnyane, maswethe ka morago o ka re ke mekgopo ya mahea e hlatlagantšhitšwe; hlogo yona o ka re ke šagwana la ngwana le tshatshitšwe ka makhura a lefehlo.

Ge e le lebakeng la thero lona, ga ke kgolwe go le seo a se topago. O tla hwetša a tekotše "tšwelopele" o ka re ke senana, a haraladitše maoto, molala wa sekhina o momile boithekgo bja setulo ka maswethe, lefatla le tshotshoma makhura a mašuhu — sebata se ile ka boroko.

Se se ka se kego sa mo phona ke go ntšha mpho ya kereke. E tloga e le o mongwe wa mešomo ya gagwe go sepela le dipanka a swere sebjana sa go kgopela dimpho. Mošomo wo o o rata kušu. Gantši go thoma yena a khwešenketša lefakorong goba mafahla a lona. Ge a feditše go ntšha, o tla thoma go gwataka le dipanka a sobeleditše seatla se sengwe ka potleng. Bao ba phakago boroko ka go se iše seatla potleng, o ba phafošša ka go šikinya sebjana se sa dimpho gore tšhelete yeo e šetšego e ntšhitšwe e ipiletše bomotswala wa yona.

app

Mošomo o mongwe wo Mokhura a o ratago ka potego ke go homotšša bana ba ba dirago lešata ka mo kerekeng. Lešatana la bona o kabe wa re o le kwa le ge a robetše. Gantši o tla bona phokgo e ponyologa, e ba tswapa ka mosela wa leihlo, e thoma go ba tsatsela. Ba tla re ba sa ngapana ba kwa a šetše a ba šoga tsebjana tše, ba bangwe a ba phasola dirotswana tše. Ge ba babedi ba na le dintwana, o tla nganga yo ka tsebe a fihla a mo šunyetša kua morago mo go dutšego bakgekolo, a tloga a topa yo mongwe ka lebinakošana a fihla a mo phara kua go dulago yena mong, a ba a mo šupa ka monwana — Thero yona e tšwela pele.

SITUATION

7.2.01 The passage gives a depiction of the character of Mokhura with special reference to his attendance at Church service. It also helps to introduce to the reader the man who is to be co-conspirator with Phankga, the hero of the novel, in a plot to oust Lahlang from the position of principal of Rethuše School.

INTERPRETATION

7.2.02 The writer starts by sketching the stage in Church indicating Mokhura's usual seat in relation to those of the other members of the congregation. Together with the other elders of the Church he occupies a pew which commands the view of the whole congregation.

7.2.03 Mokhura attends Church regularly, which suggests that he is a very devout Christian. But although his house is near the Church the writer says: ga se a itlwaétša mokgwa wa go ba kêtanele ya bôkgômo ka mô kêrêkêng (he has not cultivated the habit of punctuality at Church services). The use of the word itlwaétša, however, indicates a weak spot in Mokhura's religious convictions. His attendance at Church services does not emanate from a strong religious urge but is a mere habit. While he succeeds in cultivating the habit of attending Church services, he fails dismally in cultivating the habit of punctuality. His rationalization about his failure is the aversion to crowd in with the children and the old people. In the words of the writer, go pataganapatagana le bôradimpana le bôhlôgôpudutšwana mô mojakông wa kêrêkê ga se mokgwa wô a o kwišišago. The concept, ga se mokgwa wô a o kwišišago (it is not a practice he appreciates) has undertones of contempt for the congregation he should lead by precept and example. To him the congregants are too dirty for his tolerance. He might lose his grandeur by mixing with them. How different he is from Jesus Christ who mixed with the publicans and sinners!

7.2.04 To display the disparity between Mokhura and the congregation the writer refers to the children as bôradimpana (pot-bellied ones) and the old people as bôhlôgôpudutšwana (the grey-headed). As a rule the pot-

bellied are under-nourished and have probably come to Church to receive spiritual sustenance. In addition little children are apt to eat continually and might even get constipated and cause unpleasantness to Mokhura. The word bôhlôgôpudutšwana does not only indicate that the old people's hair has lost its lustre, but that they themselves have become wrinkled and decrepit. In addition lack of self-care and stench of snuff are implied. Such a spectacle would not appeal to the dandy Mokhura. Note the use of the diminutive to express contempt.

7.2.05 The writer continues: E tla re môla go fêditšwê ditumišô tša tlhôtlamadiba, a tsênê mōkgômana (after the introductory liturgy, the great man would enter). The compound tlhôtlamadiba implies the greatness of God. His power is deeper than the oceans, wherein dwell fearful creatures. God is awe-inspiring. Like the deep he must be fathomed first lest man provokes His wrath. The cultural way of fathoming the deep is by putting into the water one's walking-stick (go hlôtla madiba). In like manner the service must start with the liturgy whereby God is induced to be well-disposed towards the worshippers. The sermon that is preceded by the liturgy has all chances of being a success.

7.2.06 The word mōkgômana conjures up a variety of associations. Basically it is used to refer

to a member of the royal family, with blue blood in his veins. He is usually at home in the royal kraal; to use Shakespeare's words, "he bestrides the narrow world like a Colossus". He swaggers around at leisure, eats and sleeps when he likes. Similarly Mokhura is a mokgômana at Church. He is of the same royal blood as Christ. He swash-buckles around the Church. A mokgômana is beyond censure. Even Christ would disapprove if one tried to censure Mokhura. That is what Mokhura was in the unpretentious Makgwareng Church. Note the change in word order in a tsêne mokgômana which lays emphasis on "the entering" into Church.

7.2.07 A fêlêlêtše ka sutu e ntsho ya go bitša (wearing a black expensive suit). The use of the expression ya go bitša in this context is more emphatic than its synonym ya go tura (an expensive one). It may have two implications which could go concurrently: (i) it costs a lot of money and is beyond the reach of the poor and humble; (ii) it is very attractive; it does not only attract the people's gaze but brings him honour and prestige. One wonders if Christ Himself holds him in as great esteem as the people do!

7.2.08 In contrast Lahlang's suit e a thothomêla (it trembles). It is scared; it humbles itself before Christ in Church. It seems it is aware of the fact that Christ accepts us not through principalship or possession of a butchery but through His grace. We cannot attract

the Lord to ourselves through appearances as Mokhura tried to do; ours is to humble ourselves before Him like Lahlang. Their respective suits betray their respective characters.

7.2.09 The writer continues to describe Lahlang's suit as ditshabatshaba tša majaja. Lahlang appears to lack self-assurance before God; he shuffles along with uncertainty (cf. the type of dance called "shuffle" - tshabatshaba). Such suits are usually made of material that is cheap and not durable. This concept is brought about by the word majaja (material that will not stand washing). Nobody can ever be proud of such a suit. True enough, people who are meek and humble and have cultivated the good habit of observing all regulations and social practices like Lahlang are usually regarded with contempt and as the very dregs of society. But the writer sympathises with those typified by Lahlang - the meek, humble yet sincere, who "shall inherit the Kingdom of Heaven".

7.2.10 a gopotše go yô itahlêla madulông a gagwê kua pelepele (thinking of going to throw himself on to his seat there in front). The word go itahlêla suggests taking one's seat with confidence, conceit and comfort. It also suggests taking one's seat with a thud. Yes, Mokhura is a great man, even his seating must be felt; he is a mokgômana. The phrase madulông a gagwê denotes that he claims (almost usurps) his rightful place in the Church. Lahlang, in contrast, is restive; he feels, and rightly so, that he is a beggar in Church.

7.2.11 wa hwêtsa mshîô a digôtlane le a difôfu a mo dumêdiša (you find the eyes of the kids and those of the blind greeting him). What a beautiful hyperbole! One could even imagine that the kids were on the point of cheering him. The word dumêdiša in this context suggests a very warm welcome from the kids and even from the blind. One could even deduce metaphorical implication in the concept of the kids and the blind. Since the kids can see they symbolize the semi-enlightened community such as Makgwareng, who may possess a slight idea of what a good suit is; the blind symbolize the unlettered who would not distinguish between a good suit and a bad one. Yet all of them unanimously acclaim the entry of Mokhura into Church.

7.2.12 In an apt simile the writer describes Mokhura's gait: a taramolla maoto sê nkêgo o tshela mekêrô (stretching his legs as though he is leaping across furrows). The word taramolla suggests the expansion as of a catapult which requires some sizable force. This gives the impression that Mokhura did attempt unnatural long strides in his movement towards his "front seat".

7.2.13 diatla di sobêlêtše ka pôtlêng di bilê di kukilê borokgo ka gonnyane (with hands deep in his pockets and the trousers slightly lifted up). These words underline Mokhura's calculated conceit; that the trousers were lifted slightly indicates that this was done with a definite purpose — self-display.

7.2.14 gore dikaušũ tša maswi le tšona di dumêdišê
phuthêgô (so that even the snow-white socks may
 greet the congregation). In this apt metaphor the colour
 of the socks is compared to milk, and with the background
 of a black suit, the socks looked snow-white, and could be
 seen and admired by all and sundry. Hence they also greeted
 the congregation - di dumêdišê phuthêgô. However, one can-
 not exclude the possibility of ridicule directed at Mokhura
 for his ignorance of matching colours. Note that cultural-
 ly whiteness is associated with milk rather than snow
 (which is a rarity in these parts of the Northern-Sotho
 speaking area).

7.2.15 a thatafišitšê molala a bilê a o sekamišitšê ka
gonnyane (having stiffened his neck and tilted it
 slightly to one side). These words emphasize Mokhura's
 conceit referred to in 7.2.10 above.

7.2.16 In another appropriate simile the writer de-
 scribes the folds of Mokhura's neck thus:
maswethe ka morago o ka re ke mekgopô ya mahea a hlatla-
gantšhitšwê (the folds at the back of his neck were like
 mealie-cobs stacked together). Emphasis is here laid on
 Mokhura's stoutness. Culturally after mealies have been
 reaped the cobs are stacked beautifully in tiers. When
 one has seen this the writer's simile becomes very clear.

7.2.17 hlôgô yôna o ka re ke šagwana la ngwana le
tšhatšhitšwê ka makhura a lefêhlô (the head

being like a baby's buttock smeared with milk cream). In the simile Mokhura's bald head is compared to a baby's buttock. A baby's buttock is smooth, tender and shiny, but when it is smeared with fat, it glistens. So Mokhura's bald head glistened. There is an element of ridicule in this simile because culturally a genuine person is referred to as motho wa moriri (lit. a person with hair). So the writer pokes fun at this man whose head has half its hair. This reminds one of what befell Elisha in Bethel as recorded in the Second Book of Kings, Chapter 2, verse 23:

"And he went up from thence unto Bethel; and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head."

7.2.18 Gê e le lebakêng la thêrô lônâ ga ke kgôlwe go le sêo a se tôpago (as for the sermon itself I don't believe there is anything he picks up). The word tôpa in this context does not only refer to mere picking up but feeding, as in the case of fowls or as in the Biblical picking of manna with the intention of sustenance. So the blown-up Mokhura receives no spiritual sustenance in an environment of spiritual plenty.

7.2.19 o tla hwêtsâ a têkotšê tšwêlôpele o ka re ke senana (you will find him sitting back with his belly protruding). The word tšwêlôpele in this context is used to refer to a belly because it distends forward, some-

times making it impossible for the possessor to bend forward. Tšwêlôpele actually means progress. Progressive people in business and other professions are inclined to grow obese; so that obesity symbolizes progress. Mokhura is a progressive butcher, the chairman of the local school committee and an elder in the Church. He is aware of his own importance and answers to the description of a progressive man. He does not even doubt that before God he is very important. But he is obese and it is common knowledge that obesity is not a sign of good health. Herein lies the writer's ridicule. This ridicule is accentuated by comparing Mokhura in his obesity with a senana (a species of small frog but when angered it swells up to frighten the enemy away. It does not bite but defends itself by exuding some milky poison). This is a subtle comparison with Mokhura's pompous disposition.

7.2.20 a haraladitšê maoto (sitting with feet astride).
This description of his posture portrays Mokhura as most uncomfortable in his fool's paradise.

7.2.21 molala wa sekhina o momilê boithêkgô bja setulô ka maswethe (the thick neck gripping the back rest of the pew in its lip-like folds). In this description the writer has personified the neck, giving it massive lips with which to grip the back rest of the pew. The writer, while portraying Mokhura as a giant, does not fail to leave him with an element of insecurity.

7.2.22 lefatla le tshotshoma makhura a mašuhu (his bald head oozing huge columns of fatty sweat). The word tshotshoma implies sweat oozing from his pores building up into little rivulets. But what oozes out through Mokhura's pores is not sweat but fat. Fat can only ooze from meat that is fried, not from a human being. The expression used with reference to human perspiration is go nyaganyaga mphufutšô/sethithô/kudumêla. The above description adds an inhuman quality to Mokhura.

7.2.23 sebata se ilê ka borôkô (the beast was fast asleep). The word sebata in this context is used with many connotations. It may refer to Mokhura's totem, i.e. the lion (ke nminatau, mminašoro, sebata). It also indicates that he is a prominent businessman or member of the school committee or member of the congregation. He is also a relentless guardian of order and discipline among the children at Church services. Therefore he is feared by all. Hence, if he sleeps during a Church service nobody dare wake him up.

7.2.24 sê se ka se kêgo sa mo phôna ke go ntšha mphô ya kêrêkê (what will not escape him is to contribute his Church offering). The word phôna in this context refers to missing something one is interested in; so we are made aware of the fact that Mokhura gives his Sunday offering with alacrity. This giving builds up his image in the congregation. The construction sê se ka se kêgo sa mo phôna

lays emphasis on his interest in giving Sunday offering, so that he does not miss the opportunity of doing so.

7.2.25 E tloga e le ô mongwê wa mešomô ya gagwê go sepela le dipanka a swêre sebjana sa go kgopêla dimphô (it is actually one of his duties to carry the offering plate around the pews). This sentence emphasizes the ample opportunity he gets to build his image (cf. 7.2.24 above). That is why he loves this duty.

7.2.26 Gantši go thôma yêna a khwêšênkêtša lefakôrông goba mafahla a lônâ. Gê a fêditšê go ntšha o tla thôma go gwataka le dipanka a sobêlêditšê seatla se sengwê pôtlêng. Bao ba phakago borôkô ka go se išê seatla pôtlêng o ba phafoša ka go šikinya sebjana sê sa dimphô gore tšhêlêtê yêo e šêtšego e ntšhitšwê e ipilêtšê bômotswala wa yônâ. (Several times he begins to throw in a half-a-crown or a crown. After that he will swagger around the pews with one hand deep in his pocket. Those who do not respond quickly he awakens by shaking the offering plate so that the coins that are already in it may invite more cousins, i.e. the tinkle will encourage people to give more).

The word khwêšênkêtša is derived from the ideophone khwêšênkê which denotes the tinkle of coins as they fall into the offering plate. It is definitely more effective than lahlêla (throw into). The word gwataka (swagger) is in keeping with Mokhura's character, which is further enhanced by one hand

in the pocket and the tinkle of coins in the plate; go phaka borôkô (receive one's share of sleep) metaphorically implies becoming unmindful of one's responsibilities.

7.2.27 mošomô ô mongwê wô Mokhura a o dirago ka pôtêgô ke go homotšša bana ba ba dirago lešata ka mô kêrêkêng (one other duty that Mokhura performs very faithfully is to stop the children from noisemaking in the Church). We all know how difficult it is to keep a group of children quiet over long periods; it is indeed nettling. But Mokhura does it faithfully and with relish, simply because it enhances his prestige.

7.2.28 lešatana la bôna o ka bê wa re o le kwa le gê a rôbêtše (the noise they make it seems he is able to hear even in his sleep). The preacher speaks aloud but Mokhura cannot hear him; only the noise of the children which is the centre of his attraction will wake him from his sleep. This is another example of ridicule directed at Mokhura.

7.2.29 Gantši o tla bôna phôkgô e pônnyologa, e ba tswapa ka mosela wa leihlô, e thôma go ba tsatsêla (ofttimes you will see the great one opening his eyes, stealing a glance at them and creeping stealthily towards them). The word phôkgô in this context is used to refer to a bully; his greatness lies in the force he uses to attain it. The children adorn the service; their pranks are part and parcel

of it. But Mokhura's peace of mind is disturbed thereby. They sin against Mokhura and against Heaven and must be brought to book. Hence the malicious glance and the feline stealth with which he creeps after them.

7.2.30 Ba tla re ba sa ngapana ba kwa a šêtše a ba šoga tsêbjana tšê, ba bangwê a ba phasola dirotswana tšê (while they are still scratching one another he will surprise them by pulling them by the ears and slapping others on their thighs). Like a true beast of prey Mokhura will always succeed in surprising his quarry. The punishment is usually the pulling of the ears (šoga ditsêbjana). The word šoga basically refers to tanning of a hard skin to render it soft and usable. Disobedient children are said to have hard ears or no ears at all. To make them obedient their ears have to be "tanned". Hence the expression šoga ditsêbjana tšê. The word phasola is derived from the ideophone pha which denotes the sound of an open palm brought to land forcefully on soft flesh, i.e. slap. That is Mokhura's second punishment of the little miscreants. This makes him the more feared - a true sebata! Note here the use of the diminutive in tsêbjana and dirotswana which clearly brings out the disparity between the huge fearful Mokhura and the innocent, tender little children.

7.2.31 Ge ba babêdi ba na le dintwana, o tla nganga yô ka tsêbê a fihla a mo šunyêtša kwa morago mo go

dutšego bakgêkolo, a tloga a tôpa yô mongwê ka lebinakôšana
a fiñla a mo phara kua go dulago yêna mong, a ba a mo šupa
ka monwana. (If two are engaged in a petty fight he will
 drag one by the ear and thrust him at the back where old
 women sit, and take the second one by the foot and forcibly
 place him where he himself sits and even point at him with
 the forefinger).

In this context the diminutive dintwana suggests an innocent
 petty fight which should not really bother a normal adult.
 The word nganga already suggests some resistance though very
 futile on the part of the kids, because they dislike being
 removed from their friend's company. The word šunyêtša
 denotes cramming something soft into a container like a bag.
 The child is forced in between the old ladies who are seated
 on the floor into a space too small for him. This is a
 mark of disregard for childhood and disrespect for old age.
 The phrase a tôpa ka lebinakôšana suggests picking up by the
 small leg. Here the word tôpa implies picking up, as of a
 light object. What the writer actually wishes to convey is
 that Mokhura dragged the child by the leg. Finally the word
phara is derived from the ideophone phara which suggests the
 thud of some soft weight thrown onto the ground. These
 two punishments give the impression of innocence being sen-
 tenced to solitary confinement - a very painful spectacle,
 which Mokhura enjoys!

7.2.32 In the background thêrô yôna e tšwêla pele (the sermon continues). In other words Mokhura's activities interfere with the hallowed atmosphere of the divine service. No wonder he could not derive any benefit from the services.

7.2.33 The atmosphere created by this passage gives specific connotations to the words used in it. For instance, bôradimpana le bôhlôgôpuđutšwana (cf. par. 7.2.04) could have been used with admiration but in this particular context, where Mokhura dominates, they are used with contempt. Similarly the words mokgômana and sebeta (cf. 7.2.05 and 7.2.33 respectively) are normally associated with respect and homage, but in their particular contexts they are used with the intention of ridicule.

7.2.34 After reading the above passage the reader is left in no doubt about the real character of Mokhura. The attitude of the writer to Mokhura is one of disdain because of his pomp. He, Mokhura, looks down upon everybody and is not an example of a good leader. The message we can draw from this passage is that society has a dim future if led by such leaders.

7.2.35 The Encyclopaedia Britannica defines satire as follows:

"Satire, in its literary aspect, may be defined as the expression in adequate terms

of the sense of amusement or disgust excited by the ridiculous or unseemly, provided that humour is a recognizable element, and that the utterance is invested with literary form. Without humour satire is invective; without literary form, it is mere clownish jeering".

If the definition is accepted then the above passage is an excellent example of satire.

7.3.00 The following praise poem is taken from Ramaila's *Serithi sa Thabantsho*, pp. 15-16. A translation of the poem will be found under Appendix C.

Sereto sa Kgoši Sekhukhune I

- I. 1. Ke maphikološe 'a matswaka le mabu Theledi 'a Marot.
 2. Theledi ka Borwa o tšo senya, Theledi 'a Marota.
 3. Ke masenyeletše 'a Matuba,
 4. Masenya magadi a batho.

- II. 5. Tšhukutšwana 'a mphantana lena madira tšhabang,
 6. Tšhabang mantšokodi a etla.

- III. 7. Ke Mantšana 'a Lehlokwa sehvirihwiri se maso,
 8. Mphiri moloma serethe, ke tatago Ngwan'a Mohube.

- IV. 9. Ke sebolai sa Matuba ntšee ka manaka di a lla,
 10. Theledi 'a kgalatloia 'a mešito,
 11. Theledi 'a kgalatlola 'a Makwa.

- V. 12. Mašileagatiša 'a boNgwakwane,
13. Ke mogale ge a gatiša ka lekopelo.

- VI. 14. Ke Mašile 'a boDiphale šibašiba sebatana,
15. Tloukgolo di a go gata.

- VII. 16. Lena ba Mahlako 'a Makoro, ge le hloma nkutunkutu,
17. Lekutu keng mola lekutu e le nna?
18. Ke tiba ka hlako gwa tiba Nyekelele,
19. Kua ga Mahlako 'a Makoro.

- VIII. 20. Mmanaka-difetšaseatla Mašile 'a boDiphale,
21. O re: Gagešo ga re tsorotsopege, re a purankela;
22. Go tsorotsopa ke go lahla marumo.
23. Ke matopo a Matšhoba a gaKoselekatse.

- IX. 24. Nokan'e ya Bakgatla ke nokana mang?
25. Ke nna. Ke Moretele 'a noka ke retetše,
26. Ke reteletše maburu a ga Jubene,
27. Ke tlo retelela le masole a Ramapantana.

- X. 28. Bošego nka robala boroko,
29. Ga ke sa tlo lora Ramapantana,
30. Gobane bjale tšhošane tše tšhweu
31. Tše tšhweu bjalo ka yena di a mo lona.

INTERPRETATION

7.3.01 The serêtô opens with imagery on different levels of meaning. In lines 1 and 2 the victor, Sekhukhune, is the one who causes his enemies to roll over and become one with the soil, whereas he himself, Theledi, can slip away (pun with go thêlêla) when attacked. The name Thêlêdi is repeated thrice, and Marota twice. The word senya in line 2 is taken up again in lines 3 and 4; in the latter there is the implication that Sekhukhune is destroying not only his fighting enemies but their wives and children - future generations - as well as the homesteads (magadi a batho). Marota is a clan name of the Pedi of Maroteng, derived from the regimental name Marota of Chief Thulare's full brother Mothôdi; matuba is a Pedi regimental name. There is also the typical repetition of the prefix ma - throughout the stanza for the sake of musical effect.

7.3.02 In stanza II the comparison between the pugnacious Sekhukhune and an angry rhinoceros digging up the earth with its horns is appropriate as a warning to the armies of the enemy to fear him, who is shaking with rage. The word mphatana (stocky) in tšhukutšwana 'a mphatana brings out Sekhukhune's stature, which is also reinforced by the use of the diminutive tšhukutšwana (small rhino) / tšhukuđu. There is a linking in the repetition of tšhabang (run away) at the end of line 5 and the beginning of line 6, as well as marked alliteration in the interplay of words with tšh and tš sounds.

7.3.03 In stanza III allusion is made to the Ntšana people whose progenitor was Lehlokwa and who are also members of the Pedi household of Maroteng. Like a truly magnanimous leader Sekhukhune praises one of these people through whose wiliness and clever tactics he has won many a battle; and by means of the imagery of the copper anklet and the idiomatic expression go loma serêthê (pursue persistently) the danger of his guile is underscored. He is like a beautiful copper anklet worn as an ornament but secretly smeared with poison which causes death. The repetition of -iri in lines 7 and 8 links these two thoughts. Finally Sekhukhune is praised for being the father of Ngwan'a Mohube. Ngwan'a Mohube, sister of Morw'a Motšhê, is the leading kgadi of Maroteng. Historically she was married to the people of Mphahlele and was mother of Phatudi III.

7.3.04 Stanza IV lays stress on the fact that the laurels of achievements of a regiment are usually piled upon their leader. Sekhukhune is praised for being the leading killer in the Matuba regiment, especially in times of fierce fighting. He performs this duty so that through the wars they fight and the victories they gain the chieftainship of the Pedi should retain its majesty and dignity. Line 11 is an allusion to the fact that among the initiation schools he conducted he was particularly interested in the initiation of the Makwa regiment, whose leader was Morw'a Motšhe, so that through him the Maroteng people would have a future chief of the same calibre as

himself. Note that the word mešito (line 10) does not refer to musical rhythm but to activity in battle.

Sekhukhune engages in warfare not for his own selfish ends but for pro bono publico and safety of the people of Maroteng. This thought is accentuated by the repetition of Thêlêdi and Kgalatlola.

7.3.05 In stanza V the chief's name is a compound: the one who presses his grinding stone on the grains while he rests, instead of laying it aside and going home with the work unfinished. The idea of perseverance is expressed here. The lekopêlô (broken earthen pot) in line 13 emphasizes the fact that although Sekhukhune perseveres in the face of danger, he is also a preserver, i.e. he deals sympathetically with the vanquished.

7.3.06 In stanza VI Mašilê (grinder, crusher) is repeated. There is allusion to Diphale, Sekhukhune's sister, who is the fountainhead of the Pedi of Magakala. There is a warning to the little beasts of prey (his enemies) to beware of the huge elephants who will trample over them, and here we have an echo of gatiša of lines 12 and 13. The warning is a reference to Sekhukhune's historical enemies, the Matebele, referred to in the next lines. They may protect themselves by actual fighting or by fortifying themselves medicinally or by sending presents to the probable attackers. There is a marked repetition of consonant š.

7.3.07 With the linking of nkutunkutu with lekutu and the repetition of the latter, and with the marked recurrence of the sounds l, hl, k, and t these four lines of stanza VII must have a forceful effect when declaimed correctly and in the right setting. The words nkutunkutu and lekutu are ideophonic in character and are used to refer to the strange sounds of Ndebele language, according to Sekhukhune himself. The Matebele are asked what their preparation for war - their rustling noise - can be, when he, Sekhukhune, is the rustling noise himself? There is pun in the name of the enemy Mahlako (Mahlangu) and sehlako (hoof). There is a strong sensory appeal in the metaphor of the angry bull (Sekhukhune) stamping its hoof as a challenge, and the other bull (Nyekelele) doing the same. It is clear that this image and that of the rustling noise in lines 16 and 17 have the same source, i.e. angry bulls challenging each other to fight; but while Sekhukhune is bull over all Sekhukhuneland, Nyekelele's influence can only be localised to the Ndebele area. Clearly Sekhukhune's attitude towards the Ndebele of Mahlangu is one of contempt.

7.3.08 The name of Mašile, introduced in line 14, is repeated with this addition that he is the possessor of five medicinal horns, i.e. fortified against all dangers. Mmanaka-difêtsaseatla is a compound word. This same man says that at his home people do not flee from danger, do not walk like lanky persons but like well-set ones, which may be a mockery to the tall people of Mahlangu.

On the other hand it may be an allusion to Sekhukhune's stocky stature referred to in 7.3.03 above. The essence of stanza VIII hinges on two words of opposite meaning: go tsorotsopa (throw away spears, flee in face of danger) and go purankela (withdraw steadily, withdraw according to plan). It emphasizes the fact that the brave Sekhukhune is not one who flees in face of danger; he stands his ground, unlike the Ndebele. It should however be noted that the Mzilikazi ravages in Sekhukhuneland took place during the reign of Sekhukhune I's father, Sekwati, and that the Ndebele referred to in the serêtô must have been the descendants of Mzilikazi. It is these whose method of fighting Sekhukhune alludes to.

7.3.09 The repetition of nokana and the variations of the verb go retela are one aspect of stanza IX. There is also a play on the word go retela in the name of the river Moretele and the sense of defiance such as one would encounter in a bull ready to fight. The effectiveness of the above-mentioned devices is enhanced by the reference to historical persons, but above all, by the sheer force of the metaphor. Sekhukhune claims that the pride of the Bakgatla in their river is due to himself, as he is the river. Here allusion is made to the origin of the Pedi, who were originally Bakgatla. The word go retela is associated with a bull ready to fight. Sekhukhune maintains that as he displayed this attitude to the Boers under General Piet Joubert, he will show the same stubbornness to Sir Theophilus Shepstone. The insertion of le before masôlê a

Ramapantana is an indication that the English are feared, and this fear of Ramapantana looms large even in the following and the last stanza. The name Ramapantana is derived from the manner of dress of the English soldiers under Shepstone, i.e. the wearing of the baldric. Note that the use of the diminutive Ramapantana instead of Ramapanta is indicative of contempt or, in fact, pretended contempt.

7.3.10 After reading these last four lines of the serêto, one senses sad irony, since the proud hope of not even having to dream about the English any more (line 29) was shattered when Wolsey defeated the Pedi in 1878 and took the chief himself prisoner. This feeling may have been the reason for the addition of this stanza X later, as the triumph of these lines is not the outcome of the Anglo-Boer War I, which was that Sekhukhune was set free again and reinstated by the Boers. The real triumph is in the spectacle that the white ants who had undermined his empire are fighting one another. The metaphor of the white ants is not only relevant to what is to be expressed, but also revealing of the attitude of Sekhukhune to the Whites, that is, scorn, but also frustration. Structurally speaking there is linking in the repetition of tše tšhwêu. The use of bjalê (now) in line 30 underscores the feeling of relief from fear, expressed so concretely in lines 28 and 29. Note the repetition of consonants b, k, r which enhances the musical quality of this stanza.

7.3.11 From the above analysis it will have become clear that understanding of traditional poetry depends on the historical context. Without a knowledge of the history and the customs of the relevant people it is an arduous task to fathom the imagery portrayed in the poem. For instance, the phrase Mantšana 'a Lehlôkwa (line 7) is meaningless unless one knows that Ntšana is one of the heroes of Marotêng, renowned for his strategy in battle and that his forebear was Lehlôkwa. Hence Sekhukhune compares himself to a battalion of Ntšanas. Similarly only context can help us pinpoint the fact that mmanaka-difêtšaseatla (line 20) refers to five medicinal horns that are believed to be the source of Sekhukhune's prowess in battle. Substituting ordinary horns for medicinal horns makes no sense in a poem of praise. Lastly the word retelêle / -retela basically means to withstand all manner of cooking or washing; but in the context in which it is used in the above poem (stanza IX) it does not only mean to defy but also to defeat. It was Sekhukhune's vainglory that he would defeat the English under Shepstone. The importance of context in the understanding of traditional poetry can be summed up in Mashabela's words (1973, 28 - 29):

"To get to its root (i.e. traditional poetry) one has to 'live' its language, so that it speaks to one on all levels of perception, i.e. the sensory, the emotional and the intellectual level. A greater sensitivity, born out of this 'living' the language of traditional poetry, will reveal

why it was always so appealing to those who were born and bred under the conditions in which it flourished".

7.4.00 The following poem is taken from Bopape and Ratlabala's volume of Northern Sotho poetry, Ithute Direto, pp. 15 - 17. A translation of this poem will be found under Appendix D.

MORATIWA WA KA

Ke gosasa	
Phoka e wele,	
Dinoka di a ela.	3
Go kwala melodi ya dinonyana.	
Botala bja bjang	
Ge bo gahlana le phoka	6
Bo a ngaima seetšeng.	
Phefšana e a foka.	
Madi a diphedi a ela botse.	9
Ge letšatši le le godimo,	
Ka theogela nokeng.	
Ka fase ga mohlome,	12
Lephameng la noka,	
Motshwerere: o thithile	
o adile	15
o palegile maloba.	
Lephameng le lengwe,	
Mohlatswa o obamile.	18
o hwibitše,	
o nkgā,	
dinonyana di o ja.	21

Bodibana bja ka tlase, bo tonya, bo thotše.	24
Ka tšwa ke opela, Ke opela ka lethabo, Ke myetla ke re: "Lala sithandwa, Lala o phomole."	27
Ke sa dutše gwa tšwela Kgarebe ye tshehlana Ya matswele a go ema. Ka e lebelela, Ya ema pho. E ke e setšwe.	30
Ka re: "Botse wa ka!" Ka itebala, ka batamela Kgauswi ga gagwe Ka tšewa ke madi, Ka kwa e ke ke Sepelwa ke kese mmeleng, E ke ke gogwa ke tšhipi Ye e momelwago ke ditšhitswana Tše dingwe tše sa bonalego, Ya di goga ka mogogela. Ka mo lebelela, A ntebelela.	33
Gwa re kgwatha-tu. Ka mo swara, A ntshwara, Ka mmetha ka molomo.	36
	39
	42
	45
	48
	51
Morago ga sebaka, Ra boledišana, Ra tšhelana ka tšona. Ka mo utullela Tše di utilwego ke pelo.	54

Ka ribulla,	57
Tše di ribegilwego	
Go yena, dinkgahlago:	
Mekgwa, botho le boleta.	60
Yena a bitulla	
Tše a di bitietšego.	
Ra tlengwa ke tše swanago	63
Ra kgahlwa ke ditee,	
Ra bonela gotee,	
Ra kwela gotee,	66
Ra gopolela gotee.	
Ra thea motheo	
Wa lapa la rena.	69
Lerato la rena,	
La theiwa leswikeng.	
Ra aga ntlo ya rena	72
Ka maswika le semente.	
Pula e ka na bjang,	
Phefo e ka foka gakaakang,	75
Ledimo le ka tšutla bjang,	
Di ka se e phušule.	
Moratiwa wa ka ke kgopetšane	78
E bonegela leselawatle	
Le le timetšego	
Tšatšing la ledimo.	81
Botse bja Botse	
Bo ka letšoba la mohlopi;	
Mohlopi wa lona	84
O swana le nose	
O nthata ke le lethabong	
Le manyaming,	87

Ge ke eja makhura
 Le ge ke eja nta
 Ke šeba ka lekgai. 90

O nthekga ke le diphatheng.
 Ke moriti wa montlhameetse
 Mo ke nwago 93
 Meetse a go tonya.
 Re tla aroganywa ke lehu.

INTERPRETATION

7.4.01 "A great poet" says George Steiner (1971, p. 125),
 "is one around whose use of any individual word is
 gathered a live cluster of resonance, of overtones and under-
 tones". We shall now analyse Ratlabala's poem, Moratiwa wa
ka, to illustrate the truth of Steiner's statement.

7.4.02 From the very beginning to the end one realises
 the use of emotive words that excite the feelings
 of the reader to what the poet experiences. The poem opens
 in a joyful and peaceful mood: the birds are singing
 melodiously; the vegetation is luxuriant, and the river
 flows gently. The diminutive phefšana in phefšana e a foka
 (line 8) adds to the idea of calmness where phefô (wind,
 cold) might have suggested discomfort.

7.4.03 The second stanza depicts hope that wells in the
 poet's mind as he anticipates the arrival of his
 loved one: Motshwêrêrê.....maloba (lines 14 - 16). Here
 Nature spreads her carpet as adilê implies. This word

further evokes a feeling of comfort and peacefulness in nature that acts as a foil to the love scene. It symbolizes mellowness in flowers and fruits, but it means more than this, for it implies not only the bursting open of flowers but also the heavy perfume emitted by them. These words further call forth the idea that the poet's lover has reached physical maturity and that the latter is pent up with gushing youth and energy.

7.4.04 Beauty image is reinforced by the words:

Mohlatswa.....di o ja (lines 18 - 21),

where mohlatswa symbolizes the poet's lover heavily laden with love; hence obamilê suggests or evokes emotional heaviness that needs relief. The word hwibitšê extends the meaning of over-ripeness of fruit that makes the mouth water at the idea; hence Nature's mellowness enriches the love drama of the couple. These words aid in heightening emotional responses in the reader as the poet solicits him to join in sharing what the poet experiences before the arrival of his loved one.

7.4.05 In the third stanza, Bodibana.....o phomole

(lines 22-29), the use of the endearing diminutive in Bodibana (small pool) implies tenderness and calmness and is in keeping with the image suggested by pheššana (cool breeze) in line 8. So happy and relaxed is the poet in these congenial circumstances that he unconsciously finds himself singing the lullaby: Lala sithandwa, lala o phomole (sleep beloved, sleep and rest).

7.4.06 Stanza IV paints a graphic picture of the long expected loved one. The words yê tshêhlana (line 31) depict natural complexion and beauty. The use of the endearing diminutive reveals the poet's love for the girl. The phrase: ya matswêlê a go êma (line 32) is suggestive and helps in stimulating one's feelings since matswêlê (breast) is associated with the seat of love. Culturally matswêlê a go ema is indicative of virginity. This concept enhances the imagery portrayed above. Protruding breasts are suggestive of pent up love and youth that are stored in them; hence mere looking at the breasts is sufficient to evoke tense feelings and thoughts of love. The emotive context of the poem is further revealed in the line: ya êma phô (line 34), which suggests that she was spellbound and incapable of action. The ideophone phô tells us that the girl submitted herself completely to her lover, i.e. it depicts her willingness to share the best with the young man, as suggested by: e ke e sêšwe (line 35), which implies powerlessness and submission. Culturally the word go sêlwa is associated with the moon as the sun rises, its glory fades completely. Secondly, it is associated with a young man who, having stolen into a young lady's hut under cover of darkness, unfortunately oversleeps and is seen by early risers - an abominable disgrace! Thirdly, it is associated with witches who, after their nocturnal prowls, fail to leave the spot before sunrise. With these associations in mind one is able to comprehend

precisely how the damsel came to a standstill - mesmerised.

7.4.07 Lines 36 - 45, ka remogogêla, depict how the poet loses control of himself, for he is magnetized by the beauty of his lover. In the phrase, Botse wa ka! (my Beauty!) the beauty of the girl is personified, so that Botse, denotes both the name of the girl and the quality she possesses. The words: ka tšewa ke madi (line 39) denote a sudden rush of blood, but go further than mere rush of blood. The phrase is indicative of the breathtaking throb that permeates the poet's body as he stretched out his arms to embrace his loved one. A sensation like an electric shock triggered his emotions, i.e. his entire body became involved in the dynamic emotional upheaval that for a short while left the poet powerless, as suggested by ya di gôga ka mogogêla (line 45) - which completes the feeling conveyed by the word kêšê (line 41). The word kêšê (electricity) suggests a very strong force; hence an intense emotional experience.

7.4.08 The ideophone kgwatha-tu (line 48) suggests perfect silence induced by some greater force. It is during this silence that the two lovers discover each other, and in a logical prelude to the acts that follow:

"Ka mo swara,
A ntshwara,
Ka mmêtha ka molômo

(I got hold of her
 And she got hold of me (i.e. we embraced)
 And I smacked her with my lips).

The image suggested by ka mmêtha ka molômo (line 51) is rather coarse and ungentle and not in keeping with the tender atmosphere of the whole poem; but it emphasizes the magnetic beauty of the girl. Maybe the poet was influenced by the Northern Sotho idiom go bêtha ka tladi ya molômo which lays more stress on the resultant smack that follows a loud kiss (cf. Afrikaans "klapsoen") than on the emotional fruition thereof.

7.4.09 After the storm follows the calm, and each lover in turn expresses the depth of his or her love. The rhythm of the poem too has slowed down. This the poet achieves by making use of words with two l's: utullela, ribulla, bitulla.

7.4.10 The poem ends on a confident note that the poet's love for his lover will be built on solid rock that will defy Nature's winds and storms. In line 79 the poet depicts his loved one as a star (kgopêšana) that provides a beacon for sailing ships (perhaps an exaggeration here!). The concept of a beacon for ships is foreign to Northern Sotho culture, and must be one of those images that the writer has borrowed. Of course one cannot exclude the possibility of allusion to the Biblical star that the Magi followed. Note the continued atmosphere of tenderness

suggested by the diminutive in kgopêšane.

7.4.11 In lines 83 - 85 the poet uses a rather involved simile:

Botse bja Botse
 Bo ka letšoba la mohlôpi,
 Mohlôpi wa lôna
 O swana le nôse

In the first part of the simile the poet compares the beauty of his loved one to a flower of a capparid tree (cf. Afrikaans "witgatboom"), by which he emphasizes the rarity of such beauty. For the Northern Sotho speaking people it is very rare to come upon the flowers of this tree. In the second part the sweetness of the nectar of that flower is likened to honey, by which the sweetness of the poet's loved one is underscored. Note the pun on mohlôpi (type of tree) and mohlôpi (nectar).

7.4.12 The quality of the poet's love for his loved one is further enhanced by reference to cultural associations in lines 89 - 91. Culturally a well-to-do man is described as "living on fat" (o ja makhura), while an indigent man is described as "living on a louse and its larva". (o ja nta o šêba ka lekgai). So for weal or for woe the two lovers throw in their lot together. The same thought is expressed in the following and last stanza in which the poet emphasizes the fact that their love will

last till death parts the two.

7.4.13 It has been shown how meanings may be shaped in new contexts and how words may be used creatively in poetry. This makes it very clear that the various contexts have to be taken into consideration in order to understand the imagery that the novelist or poet intends to depict.

CHAPTER VIII

GENERAL CONCLUSION

8.0.00 It has been observed from the discussions in the foregoing chapters that while form may be the primary determinant of meaning, it is definitely not the dominant factor. The root may provide the core of the meaning, and the prefixal and suffixal morphemes complete the basic meaning, yet it is only in the context in which it is used that the intended meaning of the word shows itself. The deverbative sebolai < -bolaya may be used to refer to an expert killer or an animal or bird or reptile that kills, in contradistinction to sebolaô (an instrument that kills). Only context will determine which of these meanings is applicable. This fact is made abundantly clear by Hayakawa (1965, p. 64) when he says:

"Words do not have a single 'correct meaning'; they apply to groups of similar situations, which might be called areas of meaning In each use of any word, we examine the particular context and the extensional events denoted (if possible) to discover the point intended within the area of meaning."

8.0.01 The above quotation leads us inevitably to the conclusion that words have no specific meanings when considered in isolation; their meanings are specified by their usage as part of a sentence or an utterance, i.e. all words within a given context interact upon one another.

Robins (1971, pp. 20-21) emphasizes this point in the following words:

"Words, therefore, are, in general, convenient units about which to state meanings, and no harm is done provided it is borne in mind that words have meanings by virtue of their employment in sentences, most of which contain more than one word, and that the meaning of a sentence is not to be thought of as a sort of summation of the meanings of its component words taken individually".

8.0.02 The discussions have also shown very clearly that borrowed words may not necessarily retain the meaning or meanings of the source language. The semantic field of the borrowed word may be either widened or narrowed, or it may be totally different from that of the lending language. It is only context that will indicate whether the meaning is widened, narrowed or different. For instance, the word -tšhōna < Zulu -shona / (i) sink, go down; (ii) go out of sight, disappear; (iii) set (of sun), go down (of moon); (iv) die; (v) lose heavily, become poor, bankrupt or insolvent, ruined/ retains only one of the five meanings, i.e. the last, when used in Northern Sotho. Mminele (1966, p. 39) applies this sense when he says:

"rena re tla go thabiša ka eng gē re
tšhōnnē re itšalō"

(how will we entertain you as poor as
we have become)

8.0.03 It has also been established that the meaning of words changes from speaker to speaker, dialect to

dialect, culture to culture. That a word should have, in addition to its intellectual meaning, some emotional connotations is largely dependent on the hearer's experiences associated with that word. Only the context of those experiences can reveal the intended meaning fully. Similarly the same word may denote different things to people in different age-groups. The fact that there is idiomatic language is enough evidence of the fact that people of various age-groups, professions and ranks usually give peculiar connotations to words that exist in a language. For instance, when a little boy makes the request: ke kgopêla mošanyana (may I have a puppy), it is understood that he literally asks for a puppy; but a father of several young men who have reached marriageable status making a similar request, may be referring to a bride for one of his sons. If the utterance, o sepela kudu (he walks a lot) is referred to a small boy, it is usually literal in meaning; but when it refers to an adult, it may imply promiscuity. The word legala when used in connection with initiates refers to some type of porridge; otherwise it is used to refer to a live coal. Lastly when the word -hlapa is used with reference to a male it denotes "wash"; but used with reference to females, it may mean "menstruate". In all cases context will denote the connotation that is intended.

8.0.04 Similarly a word in one dialect may not mean exactly the same in another dialect. Generally among most dialects of the Northern Sotho speaking area the

word -kgerega means to crumble and may be used with reference to a wall that breaks down brick by brick. Bopape and Ratlabala (1967, p. 35) however, applying it in the context of Lobedu dialect, use it to denote "crumple" with reference to an egg:

"(Bophelo) ke lee
La wa le a kgerega."

/(Life) is an egg
If it falls down it crumples/

This dialectal difference in meaning is often reflected in the common remark: ga se Sepedi (it is not Pedi) when a word is used in the dialectal context alien to the Sekhukhuneland dialect.

8.0.05 We have also proved beyond reasonable doubt that language and culture are intimately related and that the full meaning of a word or word-group can only be grasped by reference to its cultural context. "In fact", says Nida (1960, p. 35) "people can only communicate among themselves because they share a common culture." Without a knowledge of the cultural context words whose use is deeply embedded in some peculiar aspect of the culture of a people would be unintelligible or only partially intelligible. We refer here to words peculiar to certain beliefs and customs as well as to ceremonies of particular religious communities. For instance, the verb stem -tšhabiša derived from -tšhaba (run away from) may have the following connotations: cause

or force to run away from, help to run away, take to safety:

- (a) sehlogo sa monna se tšhabiša bana ba gagwe gaê (the man's cruelty causes/forces his children to flee from home)
- (b) gê manaba a etla re tšhabiša dikgômo (when the enemy comes we take the cattle to safety).

Culturally, however, -tšhabiša means to abduct a girl with a view to marriage. When a young man has no cattle to pay lobola and has his eyes on a certain girl, he waylays her and carries her forcibly to his own home. The girl may be willing or unwilling, but her parents will be forced to accept the match.

8.0.06 It is therefore evident that cultural context gives an invaluable guide to the understanding of the full meaning of a word. Ullmann (1963, p. 61) stresses this point in the following words:

"It is now increasingly realised that the non-verbal elements of the situation, and the wider influence of social setting and cultural background, are also of direct relevance to the full understanding of an utterance and its components. These contexts can be pictured in the form of concentric circles clustering around the concrete act of speech."

8.0.07 From the foregoing conclusions, we can now accept Robin's definition of meaning which embraces the context of situation, a concept developed by Malinowski and Firth as a means of explaining the working of language in

society (1964, p. 27):

"Meaning in language is therefore not a single relation or a single sort of relation, but involves a set of multiple and various relations holding between the utterance and its parts and the relevant features and components of the environment, both cultural and physical, and forming part of the more extensive system of interpersonal relations involved in the existence of human societies."

APPENDIX A

(A translation of the passage from Matsepe's Kgorong ya mošate page 79)

They are bellowing at each other, now they are at close-quarters and are even breathing at each other the breath that is full of the wrath of death; they are puffed up, their necks are stiffened by toughening their sinews.

The spear pierces (through the chest) and appears through the shoulder-blade, the axe crushes the skull like a melon, someone runs around delirious claspng his entrails and, knocking his head against a tree, he slumps down yelling in a voice that seems to belong to the other world and not this one; no, it is horrible to relate — another, falling down head foremost, regurgitates his stomach contents through his nose, the pain created by the spear forces a man to climb a tree unconsciously — the spears devour the people without sympathy. The young men are engaged in fierce battle, they spring over the little mimosa trees like springboks; blood has coagulated, it is blood which does not flow to any particular side; but as it became hot the heat demoralized Letšaga's children because they were not well-versed in the environment, so blood began to flow towards their side in a fearful manner. This being the position, they stragetically broke into smaller units and adopted hit and run tactics, and indeed they ruined the skin of Matshelo's children, with

axes they chopped them as though they were preparing to cook them — but others came to their aid. At that very moment Boditsi and his men fell upon a group of boys and men who had driven the village herds to safety, the thud of the spear was heard, and those herds driven away at full speed; what demoralized Matshelo's men completely was when a war-cry was heard in the refuge of the royal family where Letšaga's children were carrying out a massacre — and that was how they (Matshelo's men) lost the battle.

APPENDIX B

(A translation of the passage from Mminele's Ngwana wa mobu pages 40-42)

In this Church of Makgwareng the elders' pews are on the right-hand side in front against the wall. This is where the congregation usually sees Lahlang, old Mootli and Mokhura seated on Sundays. On the left-hand side, facing the elders' pews, are seats for Phankga's choir.

Although Mokhura's house is near the Church, he has not cultivated the habit of punctuality at Church services. To crowd into the Church with children and old people is a practice he does not appreciate.

After the introductory liturgy, the great man would enter, wearing an expensive black suit, and not the light cheap stuff worn by Lahlang and company, which suits tremble as if the wearer is shivering. Then he cuts across the whole congregation with the intention of going to throw himself on to his seat right in front, you will find the eyes of the children and the blind greeting him, as the great man stretches his legs as if springing over furrows, with hands deep in his pockets, lifting the trousers slightly so that his snow-white socks also may greet the congregation; having stiffened his neck and tilted it slightly to one side, the folds at the back of his neck looking like mealie-cobs stacked together; the head shining like a baby's buttock smeared with milk cream

As for the sermon itself I do not believe there is anything he picks up. You will find him sitting back and his belly protruding like a species of frog, with feet astride, the thick neck gripping the back rest of the pew in its lip-like folds, his bald head oozing huge columns of fatty sweat — the beast being fast asleep.

What will not escape him is to contribute his Church offering. It is actually one of his duties to carry the offerings plate around the pews. This duty he likes very much. Several times he begins to throw in a half-a-crown or crown. After that he will swagger around the pews with one hand deep in his pocket. Those who do not respond quickly he awakens by shaking the offerings plate so that the coins that are already in it may invite more cousins, i.e. the tinkle will encourage people to give more.

One other duty that Mokhura performs very faithfully is to stop children from noise-making in the Church. The noise they make it seems he is able to hear even in his sleep.

Oftimes you will see the great one opening his eyes, stealing a glance at them and creeping stealthily towards them.

While they are still scratching one another he will surprise them by pulling them by the ears and slapping others on their thighs. If two are engaged in a petty quarrel he will drag one by the ear and thrust him at the back where old women sit, and take the second one by the small leg and forcibly place him where he himself sits and even point at him with his forefinger — the sermon continues.

APPENDIX C

(A translation of the praise poem of Chief Sekhukhune I)

- I. 1. I am the one who tumbles others and make them one
with the soil, I Theledi of Marota clan,
2. In the south Theledi has wrought destruction,
Theledi of Marota clan.
3. I the spoiler for others (i.e. destroyer of other's
chances) I of Matuba regiment,
4. (I am) the destroyer of other people's marriages.
- II. 5. You armies beware of the puny rhinoceros,
6. Beware, the whirlwind is approaching.
- III. 7. I am (one of) Mantšana of Lehlokwa, the wily one,
8. The copper anklets that bite the heel (i.e. per-
sistently on the pursuit), I am the father of
Ngwan'a Mohube.
- IV. 9. I am the killer belonging to the Matuba regiment,
drag me by the horns when the bugles blow,
10. I the active Theledi of tumult (i.e. battles).
11. I the active Theledi, champion for the Makwa
regiment.
- V. 12. The crusher and preserver of Ngwakwane and company,
13. I am the brave man who preserves in a broken
earthen pot.

- VI. 14. I am Mašile (grinder) of Diphale and company,
protect yourself beastie,
15. The huge elephants are trampling over you (i.e. are overtaking you)
- VII. 16. You of Mahlangu of Makoro, when you utter these
queer sounds (i.e. Ndebele language),
17. What are those queer sounds if they are not about m
18. (Whereas) I stamp with my hoof, and only then can
Nyekele stamp,
19. There at Mahlangu of Makoro.
- VIII. 20. Possessor of five medicine horns, Mašile of Diphale
and company
21. Says: At my home we do not flee, but withdraw
steadily,
22. Fleeing means throwing away the spears
23. Which become "the picked up" of Matšhoba of
Mzilikazi (i.e. of Mzilikazi of Mashobane).
- IX. 24. This rivulet of Bakgatla what type of rivulet is it
25. It is I. I am the Moretele river, I am furious,
26. I was furious with the Boers of Joubert,
27. I will be furious even with the soldiers of
Ramapantana (i.e. Sir Theophilus Shepstone).
- X. 28. At night I may then sleep restfully,
29. I shall no longer dream of Ramapantana,
30. Because now the white ants
31. The white ones like him are biting him.

As I sat there appeared
A beautiful damsel
With protruding breasts.
I looked at her,
She stood still
As though she had got up late (i.e. entranced)
I said: "My Beauty!"
I forgot myself, I drew nearer
Nearer to her
I was overcome by blood (i.e. emotion)
I felt as if
An electric current moved through my body,
As if I was drawn by a magnet
To which smaller pieces adhere
Which are not seen (invisible),
Which it draws to itself.

I looked at her,
She looked at me.
There was perfect silence.
I embraced her,
She embraced me,
I kissed her.

After some time,
We talked,
We discussed.
I revealed to her
What was hidden in my heart.

I unearthed,
What was hidden
In her, which I appreciated:
Manners, kindness and gentleness.
She revealed (to me)
What she had concealed.

We were bound together by similar ties
 We had similar interests,
 We had similar outlook,
 We had similar feelings
 We had similar thoughts.

We laid the foundation
 Of our family.
 Our love,
 Was founded on a rock.
 We built our house
 Of stones and cement.

No matter how the rain poured,
 No matter how the wind blew,
 No matter how the storms raged,
 They cannot destroy it (house).
 My beloved is the evening star
 It lights the way for a ship
 That is lost (that has lost its way)
 On a stormy day.
 The beauty of Beauty
 Is like the bloom of a mohlopi tree;
 Its nectar
 Is like honey.

She loves me when I am happy
 And when I am sad,
 When I eat fat
 Even when I eat a louse
 And sauce it with the larva.

She supports me when I am ill.
 She is the shade of the montlhomeetse tree
 Where I drink
 Cool water.
 We shall be parted by death.

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