

BASOTHO INDIGENOUS PLANT NAMES: AN ONOMASTICS STUDY

by

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I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality-checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

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Abstract

The Basotho people have shared a deep-rooted connection with plants since ancient times, driven by their rich indigenous knowledge. This knowledge has enabled the community to bestow meaningful names upon their native flora, making them comprehensible and significant. Within the Basotho culture, names hold immense importance and are believed to possess the power to influence situations and the characteristics of individuals, plants, or animals bearing them. This naming practice showcases the Basotho's creativity and profound understanding of their cultural and historical heritage. The objectives of this study were to identify the names of Basotho indigenous plants, to explore naming practices and cultures within the Basotho community and establish the relationship thereof; to describe the morphological features of Basotho indigenous plant names, and to describe the link between morphological and semantic aspects of Basotho indigenous plant names. The socio-onomastics framework underpinned this study. This theory studies names in a social context, including their usage and perception in interpersonal interactions. The study employed an ethnographic content analysis using the qualitative method. Two methods were used to gather data for the study. The first was a semi-structured interview with traditional healers and herbalists who gave insight into different plants that Basotho found and used in the study's Qwaqwa area. The second method was a secondary data collection method where different pieces of literature on Basotho plants were discussed. Data from semi-structured interviews and secondary sources was analysed using ethnographic data analysis, a methodical approach to identifying and comprehending human behaviour and cultural patterns using qualitative data. The study found that our ancestors' vast indigenous knowledge and environmental awareness are demonstrated by the names given to the therapeutic plants. For present and future generations of traditional healers and herbalists, their capacity to name plants according to their morphological characteristics and semantic relationship to their treatments cleared the path for indigenous plant knowledge.

Keywords: Indigenous, Indigenous Plant, Indigenous Knowledge, Name, Medicinal Plants, Herbalist, Traditional Healer, Ethnography, Basotho Name.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction and Background

Plants have been a part of the Basotho people since the beginning. In most African societies, indigenous plants are important in many people's lives. They use plants as a source of nutrition and medicine to cure diseases. As a source of nutrition, traditional food plants are accepted by the community as appropriate and desired food resources and as home remedies for some ailments (Prasad, Izam & Khan, 1993). As a source of medicine, indigenous plants are not only used to cure illnesses. Still, they are used for almost any situation, including when a need for help controlling natural or social phenomena is perceived (Moteetee & Van Wyk, 2011). Balandrin, Kinghorn, and Farnsworth (1993) agree with Moteetee and Van Wyk (2011) by saying plants have long provided mankind with medicinal agents, with natural products once serving as the source of all drugs.

South Africa has a rich ethnic and cultural diversity, and its biodiversity is globally significant. There is a strong link between cultural and biological diversity (bio-cultural diversity) with large numbers of indigenous species, particularly plants (well over 2,000 taxa), used for traditional medicine and in rituals by local ethnic groups (Crouch, van Wyk & Raimondo, N.D). According to Crouch et al. (N.D), Indigenous Knowledge (IK) practices are being researched to document plants' cultural and spiritual value to different South African ethnic groups. Indigenous knowledge has deteriorated as more South Africans enter the formal economy and shift from rural to urban lifestyles. In particular, the younger generation is at risk of forfeiting this knowledge. Moteetee et al. (2019) state that earlier publications provided useful information about plant use in Lesotho. However, this valuable information focused only on the medicinal use of plants, not plant usage in general. Moffett (2010) compiled a list of plant names and their uses by the Basotho residing in Phuthaditjhaba (Eastern Free State) and Lesotho. However, the book does not mention how these plants are named and used.

This research is an onomastics case study of the use of indigenous plants by the Basotho community. This community was chosen because it is within the area where one is expected to find individuals with the richest traditional knowledge. According to Balick and Cox (1996), the relationships between people and plants are often clearer

in indigenous/traditional societies since the link between production and consumption is more direct. The study was based in Free State province's Qwaqwa, Thabo Mofutsanyana District. This community was chosen because a variety of indigenous plants surrounds it. Traditional knowledge of biodiversity concerns the names, uses, and management of plants and animals as perceived by a given area's local and/or indigenous people. Indigenous knowledge is the systematic information that remains in diverse social structures. It is usually unwritten and preserved only through oral tradition, and it refers to the knowledge system of indigenous people and minority cultures (Khasbagan & Soyolt, 2008).

1.2. Rationale for research

People are associated with names. According to Mojapelo (2009), the proper name is used in communication to enable identification; that is, it makes a unique reference to a particular identifiable entity. When the speaker thus uses a proper name, he is referring to one, and only one individual or entity. Among the Basotho, a name is believed to be of vital importance. In most cases, Basotho believe that a name has the power to influence a situation or that anyone or anything takes after its name, be it a person, plant, or animal; hence they have proverbs like '*lebitso lebe ke seromo*' ('A bad name is an omen'), (Possa & Khotso, 2015).

Identifying indigenous names is an exploration of naming practices and cultures. It is unlikely that a scholar studying names will be unaware of the social dynamics of the place where the onomastic research practice is taking place. A study of names is, in part, a study of a society where naming takes place. The main reason I decided to embark on this study was to better understand the society that I live in and its indigenous knowledge systems. I wanted to understand and learn more about the naming of indigenous plants and their usage. Therefore, the results of this study informed and educated people about the meaning of the names of these indigenous plants and their importance to their livelihood. Finally, this study I provided reasons why these indigenous plants need to be conserved and preserved.

1.3. Statement of the problem

Plants are a neglected natural product that is not valued much in society. They are only seen as useful by the herbalists who use them for different purposes like healing. This study on plant names draws attention to the society to understand how the naming of these plants drew attention to the Basotho community and draw interest in knowing their importance.

For appropriate discussion and study of plants, botanists and researchers depend on scientific nomenclature. However, scientific names are not utilized in Basotho because they are foreign. Therefore, it is essential for Basotho to have plant names that serve a variety of significant functions, including therapeutic ones. Taxonomy, a system of plant nomenclature, aids in the classification of plants according to their traits and relationships with other species.

1.4. Aim and objectives of the study

This study sought to explore how the Basotho name their indigenous plants. The following objectives were covered to achieve the aim of this study:

- To identify the names of Basotho indigenous plants.
- To explore naming practices and cultures within the Basotho community and establish the relationship thereof.
- To describe the morphological features of Basotho indigenous plant names.
- To describe the link between morphological and semantic aspects of Basotho indigenous plant names.

1.5. Research Questions

Based on the objectives listed in 1.4 above, the study sought to answer the following four questions:

- What are the names of the Basotho indigenous plants?
- What are the naming practices and culture within the Basotho community and the relationship?
- What are the morphological features of Basotho indigenous plant names?

- What is the link between morphological and semantic aspects of Basotho indigenous plant names?

1.6. Definition of key concepts

1.6.1 Indigenous

Something that is produced, growing, living, or occurring natively or naturally in a particular region or environment (Cunningham & Stanley, 1993). In this study, it refers to plant species that are found in the research area.

1.6.2 Indigenous knowledge

It reflects the direct connection between original local communities and the environment through the knowledge and skills they possess. According to Rajasekaran (1993), indigenous knowledge refers to the structured knowledge gained by local communities through accumulated experiences, informal trials, and deep comprehension of their environment within a specific cultural context. In this case, indigenous knowledge was used as a tool for passing down information from one generation to another.

1.6.3. Indigenous plants

These are all kinds of plants that grow naturally in a specific area. Indigenous plants are sources of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) that provide energy, shelter, food, and medicine (Simelane, 2009). For this study, indigenous plants meant all plants that local community members use as medicine and a source of nutrition.

1.6.4. Name

It refers to words that help us to describe and identify things. Redmonds (2007: ix) defines names as "...special words that we use to identify a person, an animal, a place or a thing, and they all have a meaning. In many cases, that meaning will lie concealed in the name's history, but in others, it will still be transparent." Names are used to describe and identify different types of indigenous plants.

1.6.5. Medicinal plants

These are the plants that help treat and cure illnesses. Medicinal refers to something that has healing properties, such as medicinal plants, herbs, and drugs (Hornby, 1995). According to the Directorate of Plant Production (2013), medicinal plants are plants that are used in herbalism and are thought to have certain extractable/compounds in their leaves, stems, flowers, and fruit for medicinal purposes. These extracts are used as inputs in the pharmaceutical, nutraceutical, insecticide, and other chemical industries. In this study, it is referred to as traditional plants that possess healing powers.

1.6.6. Herbalist

A herbalist is someone who uses plants for healing. These practitioners are not medical doctors, though some practitioners are also referred to as medical herbalists (Aneesh & Sonal, 2022).

1.6.7. Traditional healers

Traditional healers specialise in healing different types of diseases and illnesses using herbal medicine. A literature review indicates that Africans who have been trained in the Western education system refer to traditional healers as native doctors or diviners (Malluin, 1983). For this study, traditional healers are regarded as individuals who specialise in healing physical, spiritual, and holistic problems.

1.7. Chapter Breakdown

Chapter 1: Background of the study

This chapter outlines the study's background, and the research aims, objectives, and questions that must be addressed. This chapter also includes a justification for the study and its significance in persuading future readers of its eligibility for study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The second chapter of this research reviews the literature and outlines the direction this research takes because the researcher capitalised on gaps left by previous researchers.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methods

The research methodology is discussed in Chapter 3, and the research techniques are analysed and linked to the research under consideration. The sample size and sampling techniques are discussed, and how they are used in this study to select respondents.

Chapter 4: Presentation and Analysis of Data

In this chapter, the researcher examines Basotho indigenous plant names. This chapter also examines the strategies used in name creation to ensure, looking specifically into the morphological and semantic aspects of a name.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This chapter summarises the entire research and provides a summary of the research. This chapter also includes observations drawn from the research.

1.8. Conclusion

This chapter detailed the study's objectives, the background of the study, statement of the problem, rationale of the study, aims and research questions of the study, justification of the research, and a highlight of the literature review. The definition of key concepts such as indigenous knowledge, names, medical plants, herbalists, and traditional healers, to mention a few, were made.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of available literature in areas of investigation that the study is intended. The literature review is crucial since it informs the researcher about other researchers' opinions on the chosen subject. The purpose of studying the literature is to look for authors who have written about subjects directly related to the research. This chapter presents research done by another scholar concerning onomastics.

2.2. The use and perspectives on indigenous plants

The use of plants is widespread all over the world. Plants and plant products have always enriched human culture for eternity. However, few people know that plant species are essential to our environment (Singh,1993). According to Blumenthal (2011), the African continent is vital as a source of medicinal and aromatic plants for the global food, pharmaceutical, herbal, dietary supplements, and cosmetic markets. Africa is the world's second-largest continent after Asia regarding area and population (FAO, 2012). This is mainly due to the geographical spread over the land of approximately 216,634,000 hectares of closed forest area. Over 5,000 different species of plant substances have been recognised to occur in these areas, and many have been proven helpful in traditional medicine for preventing and treating diseases (Iwu, 1993). Various plants are used in Africa as food and medicine, reflecting the abundance of cultural and genetic resources. The continent has produced enormous biodiversity throughout its tropical forests, savannahs, veldts, and sub-Saharan environments (Iwu, 2016).

Various indigenous plant materials are used for food as part of indigenous knowledge and practices. According to Bharucha and Pretty (2010), historically, indigenous plants were the sole dietary components for hunter-gatherer and forager cultures. To cope with food insecurity, local communities relied on a diet that included edible plant materials grown in their gardens and edible plant materials collected from the wild. Guinand and Lemessa (2000) state that in Africa, for example, over 95% of households supplement their diets with wild plant foods such as roots, leaves, and

grass. These communities produce and consume indigenous fruits and vegetables to ensure food self-sufficiency [sic] and sustain human populations millions of years ago, and they still do so today (USAID, 2001).

Hoffman (1997) indicates that indigenous plant foods have always been important in folk traditions. Poor households in Zimbabwe rely on wild fruits as alternatives to cultivated food plants for a quarter of all dry-season meals. Similarly, leafy vegetables and other bush foods are collected in Northern Nigeria as daily supplements to relishes and soups. Ojele and Kakudidi (2015) agree with Hoffman by adding that, in Swaziland, indigenous food plants are of great importance and contribute a more significant share to the annual diet than foods from retailers. In Ethiopia, continued reliance on edible plant species is remarkable in low-income families. According to Shackleton et al. (1998), edible wild plants have high nutritional value and play an important role in preventing malnutrition in South African rural communities.

In Africa, many plant species are reported to have medicinal value. The populations of developing countries worldwide continue to rely heavily on traditional medicines as their primary source of healthcare. Che et al. (2017, in Badal and Delgoda, 2017) state that traditional medicine is the total of knowledge, skills, and practices based on the theories, beliefs, and experiences indigenous to different cultures that are used to maintain health, as well as to prevent, diagnose, improve, or treat physical and mental illnesses. Traditional medicine adopted by other populations (outside its indigenous culture) is often termed complementary or alternative medicine (CAM). According to Gurib-Fakim (2006), most people rely on their traditional material medicine (medicinal plants and other materials) for their everyday healthcare needs. One-quarter of all medical prescriptions are formulations based on substances derived from plants or plant-derived synthetic analogues, and according to the WHO, 80% of the world's population—primarily those of developing countries—rely on plant-derived medicines for their healthcare.

The study of useful European plants dates back to ancient Greek times. According to Pardo-de-Santayana, Pieroni, and Puri (2010), since the 19th century, folklore studies in Central and Northern Europe have occasionally focused on traditional uses of plants or the ethnolinguistics of useful plants. Pardo-de-Santayana et al (2010) point out that studying European wild food plants and herbal medicines is an ancient

subject. Medieval Europeans used plants and medicinal herbs in the Mediterranean period, which led to modern botanical and medical science development. Lange (1998) states that in Europe, plants and their derivatives have been used for medicinal and aromatic purposes for thousands of years.

Europe represents a melting pot of culture and has a long history of transmitting knowledge of medical practices across geographic, cultural, and linguistic borders. Europe's early pharmacopoeia was primarily based on botanical, animal, and mineral products. Plant materials were collected or grown locally, and more exotic medicines, including spices like black pepper (*Piper nigrum* L., Piperaceae) and nutmeg (*Myristica et al.*, Myristicaceae), became accessible through early land and, later, sea trade routes (Van Gils & Cox, 1994).

Various societies worldwide attach great importance to naming as a process. Different cultures present a story and social division through naming. Different sociocultural factors drive the naming systems and practices in African societies. The plant's name also provides information about where people have historically come from and whom they have contacted and exchanged knowledge with (Van Andel, Quiroz, Towns, Ruysschaert, Van 't Klooster & van den Berg, 2014).

For centuries, the only names of plants known by most lay people [sic] have been the common names. These common names are often simple, easy to understand, pronounce, and remember. These names may be words, phrases, or sentences (Ross, 2003). Common names may vary from country to country and even nationally. You can refer to the same plant with different names and different plants with the same name. For example, *Lengana* is a plant name used by Basotho to cure flu. This plant is called *Umlonyane* in Zulus and African wormwood in English.

Indigenous people are endowed with extensive knowledge of the potential uses of local plants in the environment through long-term interactions with the environment. Indigenous knowledge is slowly being lost to modern lifestyle adjustments because the knowledge of indigenous plants is not taught in formal schools. Most young people place little value on their indigenous knowledge systems and embrace Western knowledge more. According to Liengme (1981), much of the traditional culture and knowledge of the people of Southern Africa is in danger of being lost unless recorded.

He adds that the usage of tribal plants and botanical knowledge is more than academic or historical importance and may be linked directly to plant utilisation and conservation.

2.3. African Indigenous Knowledge System (AIKS)

African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (AIKS) have existed for thousands of years. Seepe (2001) states that AIKS is also about reopening crucial files that were closed in the chaos and violence of colonialism. Hopperrs (2005) states that AIKS dynamics operate on empirical and cognitive levels. Empirical levels encompass natural, technological, architectural, and socio-cultural spheres. Natural spheres include ecology, biodiversity, agriculture, medicine, and pharmaceuticals, while technological and architectural spheres include crafts and socio-cultural aspects.

The emergence of new political, economic, and cultural realities and postmodern techniques gave rise to new opportunities for interacting with and embracing the AIKS. Nel (2008) states that AIKS is knowledgeable about and connected to every aspect of life and the environment. Nel (ibid) adds that the connection between indigenous knowledge, the people who retain it, and the tools and technologies used to apply it is tied to cosmology or worldview.

According to Emeagwali (2003), Africa's IKS is multidisciplinary. It encompasses various concepts and methods from various fields, including history, literature, agronomy, food processing, chemistry, textiles, architecture, biology, geography, and engineering.

According to Olurode (2007), oral tradition is the primary source of African indigenous knowledge, encompassing collective testimonies and recollections from previous generations. He adds that these resources, classified by scholars, include slogans, ceremonial language, poetry, leadership lists, narratives, and commentaries.

2.4. The link between IAKS and onomastics

Onomastics is the study of names and naming practices, which play a significant role in the indigenous knowledge systems of African societies. African onomastics and indigenous African knowledge systems are linked to cultural, historical, social, and

linguistic value of names within these systems. According to Ngubane (2000), African names shed light upon the whole traditional culture, serving to reach a deeper understanding of the people and their way of life. Abu (2023) concurs with Ngubane by indicating that a name carries a wealth of history, meaning, and significance in African culture. This indicates that names could reflect ancestry, religion, or customs. Through examining African names, scholars can acquire a valuable understanding of the customs and principles of African societies.

Abu (ibid) further explains that the richness, complexity, and link between African languages and indigenous knowledge systems can all be better understood by examining the linguistic features of African names. All things considered, the awareness that names are more than just labels and have rich cultural, historical, social, and linguistic connotations within African communities is the foundation of the relationship between onomastics and indigenous African knowledge systems. By understanding these connections, scholars might better comprehend the indigenous knowledge systems within African societies.

2.5. Onomastics

To understand onomastics, one must first understand the term 'name.' Names have a specific meaning for every nation since names convey the history and culture of that nation. According to Ngubane (2013), a name is a term that can refer to any concept or object. This means that a name is something that is used to address objects, plants, animals, or people. Names result from interactions between individuals, their environment, and a language community. Every person always finds meaning in something with its name, whether it be a person, a location, an item, or something else. People's thoughts and perceptions of the world are reflected in their names. A name is the centre of socio-onomastics study as it analyses the use and variation of names (Hadiati, 2021). Hadiati (ibid) defines socioonomastics as the investigation of names in a society. According to Ainiala et al. (2016), socio-onomastics reveals people's feelings, ideas, and attitudes towards names and naming. It looks at how naming customs vary among societies and social classes and how names can convey identities, prestige, and social connotations in those settings. In addition, names have a significant role in how society functions.

Onomastics is a universal aspect. It can be used in various disciplines, including geography, literature, history, and anthropology, to examine regional, racial, and linguistic variants of names (Bright, 2003: 669). Burchfield (1981, 72 cited in Chauke 1992) defines onomastics as the scientific study of names, whereas Crystal (1985:314) defines onomastics as “a branch of semantics that studies the etymology of institutionalised (proper) names, such as the names of people ('anthroponymy') and places ('toponymy')”. Crystal's definition of onomastics shows that the research around names and naming practices mainly focused on anthroponyms and toponyms. Crystal's definition is not convincing since onomastics encompasses linguistics and sociolinguistics, making it a more comprehensive category that does not solely deal with semantics. It includes more than just studying the toponyms' and anthroponyms' etymologies.

Ngubane (2000:17), on the other hand, defines onomastics as: “... the study of names, and it involves a variety of complex naming techniques. Onomastics as a science has no end but is open-ended, accommodating new thoughts and innovations through naming in any of the languages of the people of the earth”. Bright (2003) agrees with Ngubane (2000) and Burchfield (1981) by pointing out that such research is done as a part of specific broad disciplines, such as linguistics, ethnography, philology, history, and philosophy.

Burchfield (1981) further defines onomastics as the study of names as names or a practice of naming objects by humans. Bright (2003) concurs with Burchfield (1981) by discussing the term 'name', which, he says, people use when they refer to nearly anything and everything (e.g., “*Banana* is the name of the fruit.”). He observes that the words 'name' and 'noun' are almost interchangeable in this instance.

Bright's explanation that a name and a noun are almost interchangeable is incorrect because names and nouns have similar appearances but serve different purposes. Names indicate specific items, whereas nouns refer to an entire class or category of objects. For example, the names *Seruuwe* and *Theepe* identify a type of vegetable, whereas the terms *meroho* and *ditholwana* refer to a group of plants. Unlike names, which one can use even if they do not understand them, a person must understand a noun to use it meaningfully.

2.6. Phytonyms and Onomastics

Phytonyms are a branch of onomastics that focuses on plant names. According to Stan (2019), phytonyms are an umbrella term that covers the names of woody and non-woody plants such as trees, bushes, lilies, and plant body parts such as roots, leaves, and fruits, to mention a few. Pazlitdinova (2017) defines phytonyms as the specific plant names in onomastics. The explanation also supports what Stan (ibid) indicated that phytonyms could be divided into semantic groups, such as tree names, grassland names, names of melons and gourds, and names of flowers and shrubs. Dębowiak and Waniakowa (2019) elaborate further that phytonyms refer to at least two characteristics of a given plant species, such as the appearance and the place of occurrence. Yulduz (2023) is also in agreement with Stan, Pazlitdinova, Dębowiak, and Waniakowa (2023) that phytonyms have the feature of naming plants in terms of their biological appearance, utility, changeable and unchangeable. Yulduz also alluded that plant names caused the expansion of the branch of linguistics.

These scholars indicate that plant names can be divided, identified, and classified into types of species, as well as varieties. These definitions also include the morphological and semantic classification of the plant names. Phytonyms are a fundamental part of language with a rich history. Beyond reflecting culture, history, and socio-political perspectives, they also preserve the ancient traditions embedded in the language and the people who coined them, thus the correlation between onomastics and ethnobotany.

2.7. Ethnobotany

The word ethnobotany was first announced by American botanist John Harshberger in 1896 as “the study of the interaction of human beings with flora.” Balick and Cox (1996) defined ethnobotany as a branch of biology that focuses on the relationship between people and plants and, more specifically, on researching, observing, and identifying the diverse botanical species used to treat and prevent human and animal diseases. They add that indigenous people's knowledge, convictions, and customs are studied in ethnobotany. Garnatje (2017) concurs with Balick and Cox (1996), who state that ethnobotany is a field of study that examines the interaction between people and plants.

Aumeeruddy-Thomas and Shengji (2003) define ethnobotany as a multi-disciplinary field that integrates botany with anthropology, economics, linguistics, and other fields to examine how a civilisation interacts with its environment. Aumeeruddy and Shengji (ibid) further indicate that since 1992, the study of how humans interact with plants has given rise to a new term known as "applied ethnobotany," which refers to research and methods that enable direct collaboration with indigenous people and traditional healers. This allows researchers to understand better how native people acquire knowledge and create management structures that can better shape particular use practices and social dynamics. Additionally, applied ethnobotanists made every effort to bridge the gap between indigenous knowledge and modern practice and to acknowledge the relationship between indigenous practices and knowledge at the national and international levels (Aumeeruddy & Shengji, ibid).

Ijaz et al. (2017) also define ethnobotany as the study of plants to determine how different cultures use them. Heinrich et al. (2004) explain that ethnobotany does not only focus on medicinal plants but also natural products, such as food, plants used in rituals, colouring agents, fibre plants, poisons, fertilizers, building materials for homes, household items, and boats, to mention a few are also highlighted by ethnobotany. Saraj (2022) concurs with Ijaz et al. (2017) by indicating that since plants play a significant role in people's daily lives, ethnobotany encompasses several academic fields, including botany, biochemistry, pharmacognosy, toxicology, medicine, nutrition, agriculture, ecology, evolution, comparative religion, sociology, anthropology, linguistics, cognitive studies, history, and archaeology.

These scholars explained that the role of ethnobotany is to highlight how people connect to nature. It explains how people interact with plants as part of their daily use for healing, food, and spiritual practices. Ethnobotany is a way of researching, documenting, and recording plant usage of different cultures. Without ethnobotany, knowing how different societies use similar and different plants would be impossible.

2.8 The importance of studying naming practices among Basotho

In traditional African communities, naming practices are very important since names are often given to mark a testimony of what society holds dear in each community. Naming practices are significant to traditional Africans since names are frequently

used to mark a witness of what society holds dear in each community. According to Ngubane (2000), African names provide light on the entire traditional culture and could aid in discovering more about the people and their way of life. Ngubane further explains that naming practices change over time as names are given within specific contexts, with the society's belief systems, culture, and language playing a crucial role in conveying these ideas to the broader community.

Nicolaisen (1976 in Nymebe, 1994) concurs with the above researchers by indicating that a name reflects three semantic levels: lexical, association, and onomastics. The lexical level is the dictionary meaning of a word, meaning how that word is described in a dictionary. The association level is the reason for using a specific lexical and onomastic item in the naming process, which also represents the level of connotative meaning. The onomastic level refers to the meaning of a denotative name, determined by its lexical and associative semantic elements, although it typically no longer relies solely on them.

Since names are seen as indicators of identity and association, naming is a fundamental aspect of Basotho culture and language. Mokala (2020) and Guma (2001) state that the naming system among Basotho follows specific certain processes that reflect their belief systems and cultural heritage, among other things. Naming for Basotho is both cultural and linguistic in as much as culture and language are interdependent systems. Anialia et al. (2016: 20) said the following about a name:

“A name can wield magical powers. It can be used for sorcery and for power over people. The magic of a name is also founded on the custom of certain cultures to keep an individual's name a secret.”

Like other nations, Basotho attach great significance to the meaning of the names. Proverbs such as *lebitso lebe ke seromo* [a bad name is an omen] originate from the Basotho belief that a name can affect a circumstance or that anything or everyone takes after its name, be it a person, plant, or animal. The above proverb indicates that naming practices examine the techniques and mechanisms involved when a name is given. It also supports Anialia's statement that a name can be given by associating its meaning with its morphological and semantic understanding.

According to Letsoela (2015), naming is not just an act of linguistic labelling by which language speakers identify the entities they refer to in the natural or imaginary world. She adds that a name is not chosen arbitrarily but based on a combination of socio-cultural factors. Guma and Letsoela (ibid) explain that the Basotho naming system adheres to specific procedures that, among other things, represent their cultural heritage and belief systems. The above statements are supported by Ngubane (2013), who indicates that names and naming practices reflect the socio-cultural background of any society.

Plant names seem idiomatic and express certain philosophies of the Basotho society. Sesotho names of plants are expressed in short sentences to indicate either the plant's habit (e.g., its appearance, striking features, or size), habitat, or its use (primarily for medicinal purposes). These plant names are part and parcel of their users' traditions and history because they are essential in identifying their functions in different societies. For example, in Sesotho, we have *Lengana*; in isiZulu, the same plant is named *Umhlonyane*, and in both cultures, the plant is used to cure the flu. The naming tradition among Africans is fascinating because it is informative and educative about the community that bestows them.

2.9. Conclusion

This chapter review of the existing literature highlights the research on indigenous plants, AIKS, onomastics, phytonyms, ethnobotany, and the importance of naming among the Basotho people. The discussion was about how different African and European cultures use indigenous plants. It was established that indigenous plants were initially the source of food, tools, and medicine in both continents before the Industrial Revolution. Some scholars indicated that some countries within these two continents still use indigenous plants as their source of nutrition and medicine. Some scholars have established the link between these plants and AIKS. Since AIKS includes culture and history, it became easier for them to gather information relating to plants as it was passed down from generation to generation.

Also, the scholars highlighted a connection between African naming practices and AIKS and indicated that onomastics and AIKS go hand in hand. These scholars also

highlighted that through naming, there can be a valuable understanding of Africans' history, culture, and traditions.

Literature on the branch of onomastics (phytonyms) and ethnobotany was also reviewed. This indicated that these two fields of study cannot exist without each other. Phytonyms indicate how language was used to coin the names of the plants, whereas ethnobotany provides more information on how the people and plants interact.

Moreover, the literature on Basotho naming practices was reviewed. For this information to be available, indigenous knowledge had to be passed down from generation to generation, and it contained the naming practices and how the people interacted with nature. Finally, this research was carried out to confirm the current study and to find the gap in plant naming. The next chapter presents the research methodology.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter offers an overview of the analysis strategies employed within the study. It focuses on the data collection of Basotho's indigenous plants. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001), data are pieces of information that a researcher can obtain from any circumstance.

3.2. Research Paradigm

This research is situated in an interpretivism research paradigm. According to Cohen and Manion (2014:38), an interpretive researcher makes an "effort to get inside a person and understand from within". Punch and Oacean (2014) and Cohen and Manion (2013) both concur that to ensure consistency in the research findings, interpretive researchers commonly use fieldwork, participant observation, and interviews, all of which call for the researcher to spend time in close personal contact with the participants. This study used a methodology that allows the application of other methodologies in the data-gathering process to produce research findings with a higher degree of consistency and accuracy. As generally happens, this paradigm urged the researcher to use qualitative research methods, both in collecting and analysing data for this research study.

3.3. Research approach

The study approach, according to Myers (2009), entails selecting the research methods and techniques, data collection and handling procedures, and ways for summarizing and presenting findings. This study used a qualitative research design, which, according to Cohen et al. (2013), enables the incorporation of many procedures and methods for interpreting data. This was done to ensure that the research findings were consistent and accurate.

3.4. Research design

This study aims to document the names of indigenous plants. Ethnographic interviews are conducted in this study as they focus on a specific community that is studied in its natural environment. Wiersma (1986) defines ethnography as a branch of research methodology dealing with the description of individual cultures. Through the collection

of detailed observations and interviews, ethnography provides a rich and holistic insight into the views and behaviour of people and the nature of the places in which they live. They should represent the worldview of the participants being investigated (Lecompte & Priessle, 1993). In this case, ethnography examines a particular cultural context, which is the naming and usage of indigenous plants.

Most ethnographies are also considered field studies. A field study is defined by the environment in which the research takes place, usually the natural habitat or customary environment of the participants (Lecompte & Priessle, 1993). I defined my study as a field study because it was undertaken in a single community and within the natural environment of the participants.

3.5. Study setting and population

Qualitative research examines people in their territory within naturally occurring settings, such as the home, schools, hospitals, and streets. The goal of qualitative research is to gain a deeper knowledge of the subject being examined by gathering extensive descriptive data about a specific phenomenon or environment. As a result, it focuses on how people and communities see the world, comprehend it, and provide meaning to their experiences. According to Maree (2007), qualitative research as a research methodology is concerned with understanding the process and the social and cultural contexts that underlie various behavioural patterns and are mostly concerned with exploring the “why” questions of research.

The study was based in Qwaqwa, Thabo Mofutsanyane District, Free State Province. This community was chosen because it is surrounded by a variety of indigenous plants.

3.6. Sampling and sample size

A sample, according to Alvi (2016), is a group of a relatively smaller number of people selected from a population for investigation purposes. For this study, purposive sampling was used. Purposive sampling means that participants are selected because of some defining characteristics that make them holders of the data needed for the study (Maree, 2007).

People who were selected comprised elderly people, traditional healers, herbalists, and traditional herb sellers because of their traditional knowledge of biodiversity concerning the names, uses, and management of plants and animals as perceived by the local and or indigenous people of a given area. Considering that the researcher is familiar with the area of study, it was easy to identify the participants for the study. All the participants reside in Qwaqwa, and they have knowledge regarding indigenous plants.

The breakdown of the numbers is as follows:

- Elderly people (5)
- Traditional healers (5)
- Herbalists (5)

3.7. Data collection methods and procedure

Data collection is the process of gathering, measuring, and analysing accurate data from a variety of relevant sources to find answers to research problems, answer questions, evaluate outcomes, and forecast trends and probabilities (Simplilearn, 2022). In this study, two data collection methods were used: interviews and desktop methods. The discussion below describes each method.

3.7.1. Interviews

The interview method of collecting data involves the presentation of oral-verbal stimuli and replies in terms of oral-verbal responses. According to Maree (2007:87), an interview is a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participant questions to collect data and learn about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions, and behaviour of the participant. This method can be used through personal interviews and, if possible, through telephone interviews (Kothari, 2004:97). Semi-structured interviews, which this study has adopted, are conducted where first-hand information is obtained from respondents.

In this case, the study utilises the following respondents:

- Elderly people
- Traditional healers
- Herbalists

The following tools are used for gathering information:

- A camera (for plant pictures)
- An audio recorder (for interview information)

3.7.2. Desktop method

The desktop method of data collection is secondary data. This means the data that has already been collected and analysed by someone else (Kothari, 2004). The data is collected from dissertations, the internet, books, and journal articles.

3.8. Data analysis method

The information acquired from the interviews and other relevant documents is thoroughly analysed, considering all aspects, and a clear conclusion is drawn based on the subjectivity and objectivity of the findings, using an ethnographic content analysis. Ethnographic content analysis blends the methodical observation of ethnography with the framework of content analysis (Boyatzis, 1998). Ethnographic content analysis, which is used for in-depth social analysis that incorporates ethnographic elements into content analysis, focuses not only on what is said but also on how, why, and in what social or cultural environment it takes place (Alhojailan, 2012).

3.9. Ensuring rigour

According to Yin (2014), when engaging in qualitative research, researchers use many sources of evidence to increase the validity of the study. In this study, member checking was used. Curtin and Fossey (2007:92) state that member checking is one of the standards for ensuring rigour in qualitative research. Creswell and Miller (2000) define member checking as a way for the researcher to ensure an accurate representation of participants' voices by giving the participants the opportunity to confirm or deny the accuracy and interpretations of data, thus adding credibility to the qualitative study. As Johnson et al (2020) put it, rigour is best attained by careful and deliberate preparation, thorough and continual use of researcher reflexivity, and open and honest communication between the researcher and the audience about the study and its findings.

In this case, the researcher summarised and paraphrased information and then asked the participants to critically verify the findings and comment on them to determine the accuracy or inaccuracy in the representation of data.

3.10. Accuracy and reliability

According to Yin (2014), when engaging in qualitative research, researchers use many sources of evidence to increase the validity of the study. In this study, member checking was used. Member checking is used during and after data collection to get open and honest responses and to improve the reliability, validity, and credibility of a qualitative study. Creswell and Miller (2000) define member checking as a way for the researcher to ensure an accurate representation of participants' voices by allowing the participants to confirm or deny the accuracy and interpretations of data, thus adding credibility to the qualitative study. Members (participants) have the chance to review (accept) certain areas of the analysis of the data they supplied. According to Curtin and Fossey (2007:92), it is a "means of determining whether the data analysis is congruent with the participants' experiences." The researcher, in this instance, paraphrases and summarises the data before asking the participants to critically evaluate the results and make remarks to assess correctness and reduce the likelihood of inaccurate data (error reduction) and improper data interpretation.

3.11. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in research are a set of principles that guide your research designs and practices (Bhandari, 2021). According to Polit and Hungler (1995:178), this includes confidentiality, privacy, anonymity, benefits, voluntary participation, and the freedom to withdraw from participation at any time if the participants wish to do so. The researcher asked for an ethical clearance from UNISA that allowed her to conduct the research. The University's research ethics committee oversees the research proposal and ensures that a certificate of ethical clearance is received. The research is carried out per the ethical standards upheld by UNISA.

To ensure the comfort of freely offering opinions and sharing of knowledge by participants, this study ensured that they stayed anonymous. All collected information was kept in a password-protected device; the study also substituted participant names with designated codes throughout the research process and documentation. Participants were subsequently handed an invitation message that outlined the details of the study, such as its objective, and emphasised that participation was entirely optional and that participants had the freedom to withdraw at any time without providing a reason. In addition, participants were informed that no form of remuneration would be provided.

3.12. Theoretical Framework

Onomastics or onomatology is a branch of linguistics that deals with the structure and meaning of proper names. It is a fertile and broad field of research that scholars can research on anthroponyms, geographical names, brand names, and botanic names (Mushwana & Chauke, 2015; Rakgogo & Zungu, 2021). Naming is a common practice for all cultures and societies, as it serves as an identity marker. As Mphela (2010) claims, the naming of any object can describe something, and it could be the cultural value and tradition of a society. According to Kofi (2006), names are not just random labels but cultural tags with sociocultural meanings and functions.

The foundation of this research is a socio-onomastics framework, which is concerned with the examination of proper names within society. This approach is based on onomastics, which, as defined by Cuddon (2012) as the study of names and naming practices, with a focus on the patterns, principles, and origins of names, as well as their usage and associated meanings. Specifically, this study explored the Basotho indigenous plant names and the cultural contexts in which they are used.

3.13. Conclusion

This chapter outlined the research methodology utilised in this study. It explained the use of qualitative analysis as a means of gathering and analysing information, as well as the measures implemented during data collection, such as obtaining informed consent, and maintaining anonymity and confidentiality. The interview method was used to collect data. The use of interviews assured the researcher of the quality,

reliability, and validity of the responses, as it gave the researcher a chance to ask follow-up questions to gain clarity on the questions asked.

The next chapter (Chapter 4) focused on presenting and analysing the data for the research question presented in the first chapter of the thesis.

Chapter 4: Presentation and Analysis of Data

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings of the data collected from the interviews. It examines the Basotho indigenous plant names and the strategies used in name creation, looking specifically into the morphological and semantic aspects. The findings are also discussed, considering the previous research findings, where applicable, to identify similarities and differences between this study and previous studies. The table below indicates all the participants who were interviewed during data collection. Participants were given consent forms and the researcher's information sheet before they were interviewed. For ethical reasons, the names of the participants have been removed. Instead, codes have been assigned to each participant from P1 to P15, representing participant number 1 to participant number 15.

The information below indicates the categories, gender and residing areas of participants.

Table 1: Participants

Participants code	Place	Category	Gender
P1	Phuthaditjhaba	Herbalist	Female
P2	Phuthaditjhaba	Herbalist	Male
P3	Phuthaditjhaba	Herbalist	Male
P4	Naledi	Elder	Female
P5	Thella-boy	Elder	Female
P6	Bolata	Elder	Female
P7	Makwane	Elder	Male
P8	Monontsha	Elder	Male
P9	Thabanatshwana	Traditional healer	Male
P10	Tsheseng	Traditional healer	Male
P11	Makeneng	Traditional healer	Female
P12	Naledi	Traditional healer	Male
P13	Tsheseng	Traditional healer	Female

P14	Thaba-bosiu	Herbalist	Female
P15	Thaba-bosiu	Herbalist	Male

4.2. Basotho plants and their usages

The sections that follow present data that was gathered using interviews and desktop methods. The discussions covered the origin of each plant name, where these plants are found, and lastly, their usages. Where the researcher has found the scientific name, such names are written next to the Sesotho names in brackets.

4.2.1. *Kgahla* (*Gladiolus oechroleucus*)



4.2.1.1 Origin of the name

In a general setting, *Kgahla* is a verb stem meaning to attract. *Kgahla* is a small plant with a long stem. A matured *Kgahla* grows at approximately 40cm. When asked how this plant got its name, P1 had this to say:

Kgahla ke semela se setle haholo mme se o hohela o sa le hojana ka makgapetla a sona a sepharanyana hammoho le dipalesa tse hohelang mahlo le dikotlwana tsa sona, tse tswang

tlasa mobu tse bopehileng ka ho tsoteha, mme se a tsoteha, se kgahla mahlo e le ka nnete. Tsela eo moriana ona o bopehileng ka ona o a Kgahla, ha o o sheba o a kgahleha. Ke ka hoo e bitswa Kgahla ka lebaka la hore se setle, se a Kgahla.

[*Kgahla* is a beautiful plant, and it attracts you from afar with its wide petals and eye-catching flowers and its roots that are beautifully shaped and impressive, it is truly eye-catching. The way this medicine appears is attractive, and when you look at it, it is interesting.]

From the P1 information quoted above, it is evident that the plant got its name because of its physical appearance. The information quoted from P1 is also supported by P12 and other participants who have been interviewed during data collection. P12 claims that:

Kgahla ke moriana o motle. Moo e melang teng, e bonahala ka malomo a teng a fapaneng. Akere jwale hona le e kgolo le e nyane. Moriana ona o etsa malomo a matle haholo feela, a Kgahlang motho. Ke ka hoo o rehilweng Kgahla ka lebaka la malomo a yona a Kgahlang, a matle.

[*Kgahla* is a very beautiful medicine. Where it grows that, you'll see it with its different flowers. Now, there is a big and a small one. This medicine makes very beautiful flowers that attract people. That's why it was named *Kgahla* because of her attractive, beautiful flowers.]

Both P1 and P12 have attributes of beauty and attractiveness that describe the *Kgahla* plant. The above information correlates with Possa and Khotso (2015:39), who claim that “as the name states, the belief is that users become attractive when they have used this herb, and this happens no matter whether or not they have attractive faces.”

While most participants indicated that they knew the origin of the plant's name, some did not. P8 had the following to say about the name of the plant:

Yona ke e tseba lebitso la yona feela mara mane moo e metseng ha ke so e bone. Atjhe, ha ke tsebe hore ke hobaneng e rehuwe tjena. Wa tseba ha ke tsebe ke tlo e beha jwang. Wa tseba batho ba na ba kgale, ha ne re tla re hola mohlolomong, o tsamaya le yena o na botsa hore ntho ee o a e etseba ke eng? Ke pohotshehla. Pootshehla ee e sebetsa hore le hore, a sa o jwetse hobang hothwe ke pootshehla. A re ke moriana wa hlooho. Jwale wena ha o latelle o sa tsebe hore ntho tsena di tla batleha ha o ya pele.

[I only know its name, but I have never seen it before. Well, I don't know why it is named like this. I don't know how to put it. You know, the old people in the olden days when we were growing up, you'll take a walk with them, and they will show you a plant and ask if you know it. Then, they will tell you the answer and say, this is *pootshela*. Then, they will tell you that it is a headache medicine and you can also use it for other things, but they never told us how it got its name. We also did not ask because we never thought we might need to know this information.]

From the information provided by P8, one can conclude that the issue of name and naming was, at some point, taken for granted when information about plants was being transferred from one generation to another. Much effort was placed into where they are found and their usage. The name has reflected its relationship with the Basotho as the name does exist in the everyday communication within Basotho, supporting the socio-onomastic theory that is applied in the study.

4.2.1.2. Where they are found

According to most participants who were interviewed, the *Kgahla* plant is found mostly in mountainous areas. P11 said the following:

Moriana ona o fumaneha dithabeng mane, le thoteng mona o tla o Thola.

[This medicine is found in the mountains, and here in the plains, you will find it.]

While P11 does agree with most participants that the plant is dominantly found in mountainous areas, the participant further mentions plain areas where these plants can be found. Another participant, P5, had this to say:

E fumaneha thabeng mola. Ke mpa ke sa tsebe ka sehla sefe.

[You'll find it in there on the mountain. I just don't know in what season.]

Based on the information gathered, *Kgahla* plants are dominantly found in the mountains.

4.2.1.3. Usage

The majority of participants do have information about the usage of this plant. P10 argues that the plant is used with other herbs to make one attractive. P10 said:

O hlapa ka ona moriana wona, o o kopanye le meriana e meng e be hee o tla kgahleha.

[You bathe with this medicine; you mix it with other medication, then you'll be very attractive.]

The concoction of different plants, including *Kgahla*, is believed to make one attractive to others. The same sentiment is shared by P2 when the participant claims that:

O e kopanya le meriana e meng e be o hlapa ka yona. E o etsa o kgahlehe.

[You mix it with other medicines and bathe with it. It makes you attractive.]

It is believed that when one takes a bath with a *Kgahla mixture*, one becomes attractive to both males and females. The name reflects its relationship with Basotho because it is used in everyday communication within Basotho, which supports the socio-nomastic theory used in the study.

4.2.2 Thola (*Solanum supinum*)



4.2.2.1 Origin of the name

Thola is a verb stem that means keep quiet. This is also supported by Rankoana et al. (2016:355) when they said: “The name is derived from the verb stem *Thola* (keep quiet). The name has an imperative undertone. This lexical item is suggestive of the power of quietening, a command to keep quiet”. *Thola* is a plant that grows like a small tree; it has discoloured leaves and round balls that can be green or yellow. P2, when asked about *Thola*, he responded by saying:

E fuwe lebitso lena ka lebaka la hore yona e thodisa dintwa. E thodisa marata ka lapeng, le dinyeweng e a thusa, e a thodisa.

[It was given this name because it silences wars/fights. It silences family feuds, and in court cases, it helps to silence the matter.]

According to the information provided by P2, *Thola* plant was named because of its functions. The informant believes that the plant's concoction brings peace in a family, and that victims or suspects can use it to win cases in a court of law. P10 also agrees with P2 by saying:

Thola ke Thola jwalo hoba o a e utlwa le wena ke Thola. Ke moriana o thodisang.

[*Thola* is called *Thola* because it makes you quiet. It is a medicine that silences.]

P1 also agrees with P10 and P2 on how *Thola* was named. She said the following:

Thola ke setlamatlama, nkare se na le ntho e kang bolo ka hodimo e le nngwe, e tshela. E kare tamati ntho eo e ka hodimo. E bitswa Thola hoba e sebedisetswa ho thodisa, ekaba kgotla kapa ha o kula, e a thodisa.

[*Thola* is a plant; it looks like it has something like a yellow ball on the top. It looks like a tomato. They call it *Thola* because it silences you, either when in court or when you are sick, and it silences the sickness.]

P10, P2, and P1 agree that *Thola* is a medicine that makes things quiet. P1 adds that other than silencing people, it also 'silences' sicknesses. It is clear that when this plant was given a name, its function played a significant role. The name reflects its

relationship with Basotho because it is used in everyday communication within Basotho, which supports the socio-onomastic theory used in the study.

4.2.2.2. Habitat of the plant

Based on most participants' information, *Thola* is found in the mountains. P9 said the following:

O fumanaha naheng, selemo ho pota.

[You can find it in the plains all year round.]

P1 agrees with P9 that the plant is found in the mountain by saying:

Moriana ona o fumanaha dithabeng ka sehla sa Lehlabula.

[This medicine is available in the mountains during the summer season.]

Although both participants agree that the plant is found in the mountains, their knowledge of its season differs. P1 mentioned that *Thola* can be found in all four seasons, but P9 mentioned summer only.

4.2.2.3 Usage

P14 highlighted traditional uses for *Thola* as a medicine. This participant notes that local communities have utilised the plant to stop the pain. She said the following:

O ka e sebedisa ha o tshwerwe ke leino. O a e sila e be o a e pheha, metsi ano a teng o momela ka ona e be hee ho tla Thola. O ka e sebedisa hape ha ho lwanwa lapeng, e thodisa morusu. Le ha o ya court, o a e sebedisa e be ditaba tsa hao ha di sa bueha, di fella feela.

[You can use it for toothache. You grind it and boil it, stirring the water, then the pain will stop. You can also use it in domestic

fights; it calms the chaos. Even when you go to court, you use it until your case can no longer be argued, ending in a mistrial.]

P14 also mentioned that this plant can silence the chaos at home. This statement is supported by P15 when he said:

O a bona ha re bua ka Thola, re bua ka moriana o kgonang ho thodisa ntho tse ngata. O fuwe lebitso lena ka lebaka la mosebetsi wa wona wa hore o a thodisa. E thodisa hae ha ba lwanwa, le court o ka e sebedisa ho etsa case ya hao e thole, e se ke ya tswella pele.

[When we talk about *Thola*, we talk about a medicine that can silence many things. It was given this name because of its silencing work. It silences the fights in the house, and you can use it in court to make your case quiet; it will not continue.]

It is evident from these participants' information that *Thola* is a medicine used as a silencer. Both the elderly people, herbalists and traditional healers' information corollate that *Thola* is a plant named after its usage. The term reflects its relationship with the Basotho because it is used in everyday Basotho communication, which supports the socio-onomastic theory used in the study.

4.2.3 Mohaladitwe (*Zantedeschia albomaculata*)



4.2.3.1. Origin of the name

In a day-to-day use, *Mohaladitwe* means 'he who cannot be surrounded'. From the participants' responses, this plant was named *Mohaladitwe* by combining the phrase 'mohale ha a dikwe' to form a compound noun '*Mohaladitwe*'. Certain sounds are deleted to form a compound name. This is known as deletion. This indicates that it was also named after its functions. *Mohaladitwe* is a beautiful species of lilies with a white flower. P13 said the following when she was asked about this plant:

Mohaladitwe ke lelomo le letle haholo, le lesweu. Ke mohale ha a dikwe. O a bona moriana wona hee o ratwa ke batho ba nang le dira hoba o ba thusa haholo.

[*Mohaladitwe* is a very beautiful white flower. It is a hero that cannot be surrounded. You see, this medicine is loved by those who have enemies because it helps them a lot.]

According to P13, *Mohaladitwe* is called 'mohale ha a dikwe', meaning a hero cannot be surrounded by those fighting him. P10 concurs with P13 by saying:

Mohaladitwe o thusa nthong tse ngata. Ke lebolomo le leng le letle. Ha o o sebedisa moriana ona o o qhalla dira. Batho ba bang ba re ke mohale ha a dikwe.

[*Mohaladitwe* helps in many things. It's another beautiful flower. When you use this medicine, your enemies scatter. Some people call it mohale ha a dikwe (a hero cannot be surrounded).]

According to the information provided by the participants, this plant assists in ensuring that people who get to you with bad intentions stay away from you. In short, it is used as a form of protection from your enemies. The name reflects its relationship with Basotho because it is used in everyday communication within Basotho, which supports the socio-onomastic theory used in the study.

4.2.3.2. Habitat of the plant

P2 and P11 concur that *Mohaladitwe* is found in the mountains but differ in seasons in which this plant is available. P2 said the following:

O tla o fumana dithabeng mme o fumaneha selemo ho pota. Maria tjena o a fumaneha empa o tla o bona ka motlwang wa teng haeba o a tseba o jwang. Le ha o omelletse o tla kgona ho o bona ha eba o ya o tseba.

[You will find it in the mountains; it is available year-round. In winter, it is available, but you will see it by its stem if you know what it looks like. Even if it is dry, you can see it if you know it.]

And P11 said:

Mohaladitwe le ona o fumanwa thabeng le motseng mona. O tla o bona ka lelomo le letle le lesweu moo o metseng teng haholo ka sehla sa lehlabula.

[*Mohaladite* is also found in the mountains and here in the village. You will see it with a beautiful white flower where it grows, especially in summer.]

P13 also agrees with the information on the plant habitat provided by P2 and P11. She said the following:

O fumaneha dithabeng le hona motseng mona o ka o fumana. O ka o Thola mabaleng mona le thoko ho tsela mona o a fumaneha. Haholoholo o tla o fumana ka nako ya Lehwetla le Lehlabula empa ka Lehwetla ha o mongata jwalo ka Lehlabula.

[It is found in the mountains and here in the village. You can find it in the courtyard here and on the side of the road. You will get

it more often in autumn and summer, but in autumn, it is not as plentiful as in summer.]

Aubrey (2001) supports P2 and P15 information by mentioning that *Mohaladitwe* is dominant in summer and winter. In summer, it is available in the rainfall areas of the Western Cape province. The plant name has supported the socio-onomastic theory used in the study by reflecting its relationship with the Basotho, as it is used in everyday Basotho communication.

4.2.3.3 Usage

P3 said the following when he was asked what *Mohaladitwe* is used for:

Eeeh... Mohaladitwe nna ke o sebedisa ntlheng ya batho ba qabanang le nna. Ke mohale ha a dikwe. Ha ho na motho a ka nketsang letho ha ke hlapa ka ona. Kapa nka o ja ke o tlisa ka mpeng. O bolaya manyowa, le ntho tse ka hare ka mmeleng, tse ntjang ka hare. Ke moriana o thusang haholo. Nka o siila ka nwa, o thusa le ho sejeso.

[I use it in the case of people who are fighting with me. No one can surround me. No one can dare to do anything to me when I bathe with it. I can also eat it. It kills the worms and other diseases inside the body. It is a beneficial medicine. I can even grind it and drink it as an antidote to traditional medicine.]

And P14 said the following:

Ha o hlapile ka ona moriana ona, batho ba batlang ho o hlasela ha ba kgone. E boela hape e ba moriana wa diphio le senya. O pheha bokatlase ba teng e be o a bonwa.

[When you bath with this medicine, people who want to attack are unable to. It is also a medicine for the kidneys and bladder. You cook the roots of it and drink it.]

Both participants' responses to the question align because they said the plant assists with 'fighting the enemies.' There are also differences regarding other uses of the medicine. P3 mentioned that *Mohaladitwe* can act as an antidote, whereas P14 mentioned it as a kidney and bladder medicine. Beinart and Brown (2013) also mention it as a medicine used to improve fertility and retain the placenta. This information supports what P3 said about *Mohaladitwe* being able to cure other diseases inside the body. The term reflects its relationship with the Basotho because it is used in everyday Basotho communication, which supports the socio-onomastic theory used in the study.

4.2.4 *Lesoko (Alepidea amatymbica)*



4.2.4.1 Origin of the name

From the participants that were consulted, the researcher failed to get an explanation as to what the word or name *Lesoko* means. The researcher could also not get any traces of the word in the Sesotho dictionaries that were consulted. Participants for this study also contradicted themselves as they explained the origin of the name. However, Possa and Khotso (2015) provide a clue as to the origin of the name.

P9 described what *Lesoko* looks like before he explained the origin of the plant's name. He said the following:

Lesoko le ntho di ngata haholo, tsona nkekebe ra di qeta. Haholoholo taba ya pele le a sokoleha. Jwale lona ka hodimo le talanyana e kaka Kwena. Kwena o a e tseba? Kgaba la Lesoko ampore le batla le tshwana le la ka Kwena mara le sepharanyana ho feta la Kwena. Lebitso la teng le rehuwe ka hore le a sokoleha.

[Lesoko has so many things that I cannot finish. The first issue is especially difficult to find. The leaves on top are a bit green, like Kwena. Do you know Kwena? Lesoko's leaves are almost the same as those of Kwena, but they are wider than those of Kwena. Its name is derived from the fact that it is difficult to find.]

P9 mentioned that the plant was given its name because it is difficult to find. This contradicts the information that was given by P12 when he said:

Moriana ona o rehilwe Lesoko ka lebaka la hore ha o o sebedisa hantle o tla sokolla dintho tsa hao, empa ha o o sebedisa hampe o tla sokola. Ke bolela hore ha o o kopanya le meriana e meng ya lehlohonolo, e tla o etsetsa lehlohonolo empa ha o o sebedisetsa ho etsa motho e mong a sokole, o tla sokola e le ka nnete.

[This medicine is named after the fact that if you use it well, you will change your things, but if you misuse it, you will struggle. What I mean is, if you mix it with other luck medicines, it will make you lucky, but if you use it to make someone else struggle, they will struggle for real.]

What the researcher can pick up from these two participants is that the name is based on the 'struggle/difficulty' point of view. Possa and Khotso (2015:41) concur with P12 by saying, "...person who these medicinal plants are used against cannot succeed in his/her plans whatsoever." From the information provided by P9, P12, and Possa and

Khotso, the word *Lesoko* is derived from the verb 'ho sokola', meaning to struggle. I can conclude from the information provided above that *Lesoko* was given its name based on its semantic relation to its functions.

4.2.4.2 Habitat of the plant

The responses by P1 and P13 answers regarding the place where *Lesoko* is found align. They both mentioned that the plant grows in the dangerous parts of the mountain and you can smell it from a distance when looking for it.

4.2.4.3 Usage

P14 and P4 affirm each other's response by mentioning that *Lesoko* is a medicine that treats colds and flu. P14 also backs the information provided by P12 on the origin of the name by sharing his experience of *Lesoko*, which shows that one can struggle if this plant is used against him/her. He said:

Lesoko ke pheko ya sefuba, le sebetsa ho phekola sefuba. Ha ke ntse ke le sekolong ho ne ho tumme hore ka nako ya tlhahlobo bana ba a le ja hore bana ba pasang ba se ke ba kgona ho araba, ba feile.

[*Lesoko* is a remedy for colds and flu that works to cure them. When I was in school, it was popular that other children would eat it during the exam so that the clever students could not answer correctly so that they would fail.]

From the quote above, *Lesoko* helps with influenza, and it gives bad luck to other people. If you use this plant against someone, it works like a curse in their lives. Although P4 did not know how the plant got its name, she knew it was used as a cold and flu medication.

Ha o tshwerwe ke sefuba, re ye re nke Lesoko ra le pheha mmoho le lengana, Phate ya ngaka, hlwenya le boloukomo. Ke meriana e bohale ha o e kopanya, e lwantsha sefuba.

[If you have a cold, we normally take *Lesoko* and cook it with lengana, *Phate ya ngaka*, hlwenya and boloukomo. It's a strong medicine that fights colds and flu when combined.]

Moffett (2016) supports the usage of the plant as a cold and flu medicine when he says that the raw rhizomes or roots are chewed, and the concoction is drunk for colds and chest pains. The name reflects its relationship with Basotho because it is used in everyday communication within Basotho, which supports the socio-onomastic theory used in the study.

4.2.5 Modi /African Potato (*Hypoxis hemerocallidea*)



4.2.5.1 Origin of the name

Just like *Lesoko*, the researcher failed to find information on the meaning of the word *Modi* in Sesotho dictionaries. Moreover, the participants in the study were struggling to understand and know where this name is derived from. Participants' explanations of the name associate the word *modi* to be meaning *madi*. These are minimal pairs of

words that happen in many languages, including Sesotho, where words are written almost the same but differ only with one phonic. Therefore, associating *modi* with *madi* is a shady explanation.

Hölscher (2009) describes *Modi/African potato* as a tuberous perennial characterised by its strap-like leaves and yellow star-shaped blooms. The leaves can reach 400 mm long and are neatly arranged in three tiers: broad, rigid, and arching outward. They feature prominent ribs and taper to a point at the tips. The underside of the leaves is covered in dense white hairs. The leaves emerge in spring before the flowers begin to bloom.

When P14 was asked about the origin of the name *Modi/African potato*, she said the following:

Modi lebitso le leng la ona ke African Potato kapa Lotsane. Ke semela se setle haholo, se hlahisang palesa e tshela e kang naledi tjena. Ke nahana e rehilwe tjena hobane e sebetsa ka ho hlwekisa madi.

[Its other name is African Potato or Lotsane. It is a very beautiful plant, producing a star-like yellow flower. I think it is named like this because it purifies the blood.]

When P3 was asked about the origin of the name of this plant, he said the following:

Semela sena ka Sesotho ke Modi. E bitswa jwalo hobane ke ntho e lokolla madi, e sebetsana le ho cleana madi. Batho ba bangata ba ile ba e tlwaela jwalo ka African Potato.

[This plant in Sesotho is called Modi. It is called that because it is something that relieves blood; it deals with cleaning the blood. Many people are familiar with it as an African Potato.]

Both P14 and P3 agree that the plant was given its name because it cleans the blood. This information is supported by Amusan et al. (2007) when they said that hypoxia

hemerocallidea is commonly known in Siswati as "zifozonke," which translates to "the plant that can be used to treat many diseases." This plant in the Basotho and Emaswati communities is known and used to cure all blood-related diseases. From the above information, it looks like the participants associate the word *modi* with *madi* for blood.

4.2.5.2 Habitat of the plant

P12 explained that the plant is found all over the African continent. He explained that *Modi* is found in the mountains of Qwaqwa. He also described it as a plant with a yellow flower that blooms in summer. P13 concurs with P12 that the plant is found in the mountains. She further explained that this plant's roots are used the most. She described the roots as something that looks like a potato.

4.2.5.3 Usage

When P6 was interviewed about the benefits of *Modi*, she answered:

...Modi ona ke ye ke o reke ha ke qala ke ikutlwa e ka ha ke sa na matla. Ke ye ke utlwe ha ke o phehile o mpha matla e be ke kgona ho ya rwalla.

[... when I start feeling like I have no energy left, I'll go and buy *Modi*. After cooking and drinking it, it gives me strength so that I can go and gather firewood.]

P6, as an elderly woman in her early 70s, believes in the property healing of the plant. When P1 was asked about the usage of this plant, she mentioned that *Modi* helps to cure diseases such as diabetes, cancer, and headaches. She said the following:

E sebedisetswa ho phekola mafu ohle a kang botswekere, kankere, hlooho. O a e pheha e be o a enwa. Ka nako e nngwe o ka boela wa foka ka yona.

[It is used to treat all diseases, such as diabetes, cancer, and headache. You cook it and drink it. Sometimes you can splash it in the yard.]

To support the information me

mentioned by P6 and P1, Ojewole et al. (2006) said different parts of the plant are utilised to treat a range of ailments, including dizziness, burns, wounds, anxiety, depression, insanity, diabetes mellitus, cancer, polyarthritis, hypertension, and asthma. The term reflects its relationship with the Basotho because it is used in everyday Basotho communication, which supports the socio-onomastic theory used in the study.

4.2.6 *Lephelephele* (*Plectranthus cillatus*)



4.2.6.1 Origin of the name

The word *Lephelephele* is hardly used in the daily conversation of the Basotho people. According to P11, the word *Lephelephele* was derived from the word '*ho phethesela*', meaning to be crowded and busy. Interviewed participants varied in their knowledge of how this plant got its name. P3 said the following:

Moriana ona o bitswa Lephelephele hoba ke moriana o phedisang, o tswa ho lentswe ho phedisa.

[This medicine is called *Lephelephele* because it is a healing medicine, it comes from the words to be alive.]

According to P3, the plant's name was derived from the verb 'ho phela', which means to be alive. In this case, *Lephelephele* is a reduplicated word formed by repeating the verb stem 'phela', and we end up with *Lephelephele* meaning be alive-alive. P11 said the following when he was asked about the name of this plant:

Ke a kgolwa he ke hobane batho ba tla kena ba phethesela ba le bangata, ke a kgolwa ke ha ba tla e bitsa lebitso lenono Lephelephele.

[I believe it is because people will come in large numbers; I believe that is how it got its name, *Lephelephele*.]

The two participants vary in their knowledge of how this plant was named. One believes that the name derives from a reduplication process, in this case, full reduplication of verb stem, while the other one believes that the name people look for in numbers.

4.2.6.2 Habitat of the plant

According to P15 and P1, this plant is found in the mountains and the plains, mostly in summer. P15 said the following about the habitat of this plant:

Le fumanaha dithabeng mane ka nako ya Lehlabula. Mariha tjena o keke wa o bona hoba makgaba a teng a tjhele, a omelletse.

[It is found in the mountains during the summer. You will not see it in winter because the leaves become yellow and dry.]

P1 said the following when asked about the habitat of the plant:

Moriana ona o fumanaha thabeng mola. O na le dihaba tse kang tsa kwena tjena, o etsa lebolomo le lesweu. O fumanaha Lehlabula.

[This medicine is found there on the mountain. It has leaves like a mint plant; it makes a white flower. It is available in Summer.]

Both P1 and P15 agree that *Lephelephepe* is found in mountains during the summer season.

4.2.6.3 Usage

According to the information provided by P9, *Lephelephele* is a love potion. He said the following about the usage of this plant:

Lephelephele le a qabanya. Ha o ka le sebedisa o le ausi tjena, re tlo tla qabana re tseka wena, re tlo tla phethesela mona. Le ha o entse shopo, shopong ya hao e ya phethesela, o ya bona e ntse e phethesela, ke hore ha ya bela. Phelephele ena e tswa ho phethesela. Ke moriana wa ho khapha.

[*Lephelephele* makes you quarrel with other people. If you can use it, my sister, we are going to fight for you as men, and we are going to get crowded here. Even if you have a store, your store will be busy; it will be crowded and always full. This *Phelephele* comes from *ho phethesela*, meaning it is busy. It is also used for vomiting.]

P9 concurs with P11 that this plant attracts the crowd. Both P9 and P11 agree that if you use this plant for your gain or your business, you will attract many customers. P9 also mentions that this plant can be used to vomit, meaning it is not poisonous when consumed. Additionally, P9 believes that any gender can use the plant as a love potion. If one takes it, according to P9, people will love them dearly. P13 said the following when he was asked about the usage of this plant:

Ke moriana o sebediswang bakeng sa maru le sefako. O thibela letolo. O ne o sebedisetswa ho ka hlatswa letlalo la nku mehleng ya kgale, jwalo ka sesepa.

[It is a medicine used for lightning and hail. It repels lightning. It was used to wash sheepskin in ancient times, like soap.]

This statement is supported by other participants, such as P1 and P15. According to P13, P1 and P15, you can use this plant to stop lightning strikes.

4.2.7 Sehloko/Sehlehle (*Euphorbia clavarioides*)



4.2.7.1 Origin of the name

The term 'Sehloko' is a derivative noun from the noun 'tlhoko', meaning a nipple. Basotho added the prefix 'se' to the word 'tlhoko', and through a phonological process, the word resulted in 'Sehloko'. P12 and P2 are in consensus regarding the origin of *Sehloko* (the other name for this plant is *Sehlehle*). P12 said the following when he was asked about the plant:

Sehloko lebitso le leng ke sehlehle. Ha o sheba semela sena se na le tshobotsi ya tlhoko ya letswele. Ha o se seha kapa o se kgephola se tswa lero le lesweu le kang lebese. Jwale ke ka hoo ho itsweng ke Sehloko

[Another name for this plant is Sehlehle. When you look at this plant, it has a resemblance to a breast. When you cut or tear it,

a milky white juice comes out. Now, that is why it is called *Sehloko*.]

P2, when he was asked about the origin of this plant, he provided the following information:

Ke tseba hothwe ke Sehloko hobane se tshwana le thloko ya letswele. Ha o se kgephola setswa ntho e kang lebese ho sona mona.

[I know it as *Sehloko* because it looks like the breast nipple. When you break it, something like milk comes out of it.]

According to the information provided by both participants, the plant was given its name by its appearance.

4.2.7.2 Habitat of the plant

According to P1 and P11, *Sehloko* is found in the mountains and hills. P1 said the following:

Sona se fumanaha dithabeng le marallaneng. Nna ke ye ke bone se fumanaha haholo Mariha, se ba setle haholo Maria.

[It is found in the mountains and hills. I'm going to see what's available in winter; it's very beautiful.]

According to P1, *Sehloko*, unlike most of the plants, it grows more in winter, which means it can survive the dry seasons. This plant grows in rocky places and dry places. P11 said the following:

Sona se fumanaha ka dinako tsohle, thabeng le thoteng. Se dula se le teng selemo ho pota.

[It is always available in the mountains and the plains. It is available all year round.]

There is a divergence of information between P1 and P11 regarding the time or seasons of the year when *Sehloko* is found.

4.2.7.3 Usage

According to P8, *Sehloko* is a medicine for acne and pimples. It is also a medicine that helps to cure cracked heels. When he was asked about the functions of *Sehloko*, P8 answered by saying:

Se sebetsa bomaoto, se sebetsa ntho tse ngata. Le ha o hlahile tlhabela. Le ha o batla diphoofolo tsa hao, bodikgoho di behele di be ngata, o di etsetsa metsi a sona di nwe metsi ana a sehlehle e be di a ata.

[It works on the feet; it works on many things. Even if you have cracked heels, it helps. Even when you want your animals, for example, your chickens, to grow in numbers, you make them water mixed with *Sehloko*, and they will multiply.]

P15 said the following when he was asked about *Sehloko*:

Se sebetsa ntho tse ngata. Ha o hlahile lekgopho le lesesenyana o ka se sebedisa. Le ha o na le ditlhabela o ka se sebedisa. Hape se atisa dikgoho. O se tshela metsing e be o fa dikgoho di nwe, e be di beha mahe a mangata.

[It works for many things. If you have a small rash, you can use it. Even if you have cracked heels, you can use it. It also breeds chickens. You put it in water and give it to the chickens, and they will lay a lot of eggs.]

Both P8 and P15 concur about the use of this plant. Both mentioned that *Sehloko* assists with acne or pimples, and heel cracks and increases the number of chickens

one has. According to Ndlovu (2021), the cushion-form euphorbias are used by the Basotho herd boys, who make shallow incisions on the stems, causing latex to bleed out of the plant, which they then allow to dry and collect it later and use as chewing gum. She also states that *E. clavarioides* is also used in traditional medicine, dried and boiled, to treat swollen feet. Hlokoane and Sello (2021:33c) claimed that the roots of *Sehloko* are infused and used to treat wounds. The plant name has supported the socio-onomastic theory used in the study by reflecting its relationship with the Basotho, as it is used in everyday Basotho communication.

4.2.8 Moelela (*Tulbaghia acutiloba* Harv)



4.2.8.1 Origin of the name

Moelela is a name derived from the adjective '*ho ela*', meaning 'to be clear'. A compound noun was formed to name the plant. It was also named by its semantic meaning of making those who use it to be seen, no matter what.

Moelela is a plant called a wild garlic. According to Robert (2001), *Moelela* is a bulbous plant with long, narrow, hairless leaves arising from several white bases. Brownish-green flowers occur in groups of about 10 or more at the tip of a slender stalk. When P3 was asked how this plant was named, he said the following:

O bitswa Moelela hoba o etsa batho ba o elellwe. Ke ka hoo o bitswang moeellwa, o etsa hore hohle moo o fihlang teng batho ba o elellwe.

[It is called *Moelela* because it makes people notice you. That is why it is called *Moelellwa*, and it makes people notice you wherever you go.]

P3 and P1 provided correlating information pertaining to the naming of this plant. P1 said the following:

Moelela o reuwe ho tswa ho lentswe ho ela. Ho ela hona ho bolela ho hlaka.

[*Moelela* is derived from the word clarity. It means to be clear.]

Both P3, P1 and other participants agree that the plant *Moelela* was given its name because it makes a person be noticed. *Moelela* is a name that is derived from the adjective *ho ela*, meaning to be clear. A compound noun was formed to name the plant. This plant, like *Kgahla* and *Lesoko*, was named by its semantic functions of making those who use it to be seen, no matter what.

4.2.8.2 Habitat of the plant

According to P13 and P2, *Moelela* is found in the mountains, hills and in the village in summer. P13 said the following:

Moelela o fumaneha dithabeng, maralleng le motseng mona. Ka mariha botlala ba makgaba bo a tjha.

[*Moelela* is found in the mountains and hills and here in the village. In winter, the leaves become dry.]

P2 said the the following:

O tla o fumana thabeng, mme o fumaneha haholo Lehlabula, mariha ha o bonahale hantle hoba dimela tse ngata di a tjha.

[You will find it on the mountain, which is accessible in the summer, but in winter, it is not very visible because many plants dry out.]

Ndlovu (2021) concur with P13 and P3 by saying, *Moelela* grows in dry rocky grasslands, up to 1800m altitude, in summer rainfall regions of Southern Africa, including some provinces in South Africa, namely the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, Gauteng, Northwest, Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces of South Africa, and in Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana.

4.2.8.3 Usage

P10 provided the following information regarding the usage of this plant:

Moelela ke moriana a thusang haholo mosebetsing, ha o bona e ka batho ha ba sa o tsotella, o hlapa ka wona, o etsa batho ba o eellwe.

[*Moelela* is a medicine that helps a lot at work; when you see that people don't care about you anymore, you bathe with it, and it will make people notice you.]

P14 said the following about this plant:

Moelela o etsa dintho tse ngata. Moelelao o a hlapa. O etsa o be le lucky, o etsa batho ba o ele hloko, ke hore o shebehe, haholo ha e ba o sentswe ka meriana. Hape Moelela o ka o tula e be o a o tshela ka metsi nakonyana e be o a nwa ha o tshwerwe ke mala le nyooko.

[*Moelela* has a lot of functions. *Moelela* baths. It makes you lucky; it makes people pay attention to you; that is, you are more

visible, especially when you are cursed. Also, you can grind *Moelela*, pour water on it for a while, and drink it if you have an upset stomach or gall bladder.]

Isaiah et al. (2019) echo P14's assertion by saying that , 'Traditionally, the Basothos cook the leaves, bulb and roots of *T. acutiloba* to make a lotion. This lotion is used to wash incisions to avoid bacterial contamination and aid in wound healing'. According to Ncube et al. (2011), the Zulus and Xhosas domestically grow *Moelela* around their homes as a protective charm to repel snakes and other harmful reptiles. This proves that *Moelela* has many functions as a plant. The name reflects its relationship with Basotho because it is used in everyday communication within Basotho, which supports the socio-onomastic theory used in the study.

4.2.9 Phate ya ngaka (*Helichrysum caespititium*)



4.2.9.1 Origin of the name

Phate ya ngaka is a valuable plant. According to Hyde et al. (2019), *Phate ya ngaka* (*Helichrysum caespititium*) was derived from the Latin word “caespitose,” which means very much tufted and matted, about the cushion-forming or mat-forming growth habit of the species. This information aligns with what P9 said when he was asked about the origin of the name. P9 noted the following:

Phate ya ngaka ke letlalo lena la diphoofolo leo re alang meriana kapa ditlhare tsa rona ho lona. Jwale hee, moriana ona o rehilwe tjena ho ba moo o melang teng o a ikala jwalo ka phathe, ene ngaka e nngwe le e nngwe e lokela ho ba le yona phate ena. Moo e metseng teng ke moriana o moputswa tjena, o alehileng.

[*Phate ya ngaka* is this animal skin carpet on which we spread our medicine or herbs. Now, this medicine is named like this because where it grows, it spreads like a carpet, and every doctor should have this carpet. It is grey in colour where it grows and spreads on the ground.]

Both Hyde et al. (2019) and P9 information is supported by what P15 said:

Ke nahana e rehilwe jwalo hobane ha o le ngaka o lokela ho ba le phate. Phate eo e etswa ka letlalo la phoofolo. Jwale moriana o na o mela o ikadile tjena jwalo ka phate.

[I think it's called that because you must have this carpet when you're a traditional doctor. The carpet is made of animal skin. Now, the medicine grows, spreading like a carpet.]

From the information provided by P9, P15, and Hyde et al. (2019), this plant was given its scientific name and Sesotho name based on how it grows and looks. P9 and P15's contributions also offer a cultural context. The metaphor of spreading "like a carpet" effectively conveys the plant's growth habit and significance, while the expression "animal skin carpet" highlights its practical application in traditional healers' culture. This link between the name of the plant and its usage is important because it shows how naming conventions are influenced by local knowledge.

4.2.9.2 Habitat of the plant

P12 and P13 said the following when they were asked about the habitat of the plant:

P12:

E fumaneha thoteng, mangopeng le thabeng haholo ka sehla sa Lehlabula.

[It is found in the plains, hills, and mountains, mainly in summer.]

P13:

E hlaha haholo naheng le thoteng. E putswa e na le malomo a nyane tjena. E fumaneha selemo ho pota.

[It grows mainly in the fields and the plain. It is blue with small flowers like this. It is available all year round]

The above information is supported by Maroyi (2019), who said that this plant species has been recorded in open spaces in the grassland and savanna biomes, particularly in disturbed areas.

4.2.9.3 Usage

Both P4 and P6 said they use the plant to cure the common colds and flu. P4 mentioned that she infuses the *Phate ya ngaka* with *Lesoko*, *Lengana*, *Hlwenya*, and *Bloukomo* to cure common colds and flu. She said the following:

Ha o tshwerwe ke sefuba, re ye re nke Lesoko ra le pheha mmoho le lengana, Phate ya ngaka, hlwenya le boloukomo. Ke meriana e bohale ha o e kopanya, e lwantsha sefuba.

[If you have a cold, we normally take *Lesoko* and cook it together with *lengana*, *Phate ya ngaka*, *hlwenya* and *boloukomo*. It's a strong medicine, and when you combine it, it fights colds and flu.]

P6 concurs with P4 that the plant cures flu. She said the following:

...ke a tseba hore Lesoko le Phate ya ngaka ke meriana ya sefuba.

[...I know *Lesoko* and *Phate ya ngaka* are medicines for colds.]

Possa and Khotso (2015) said that *Phate ya ngaka* is a medicinal plant that is used to cure the common cold. Cock and Van Vuuren (2020) also support the information provided by P4, P6, Possa, and Khotso by saying that Southern Sothos inhale the smoke from burning leaves of the plant to treat colds. Since the name is used in Basotho everyday speech, it has represented its relationship with the Basotho and supports the socio-onomastic theory used in the study.

Chapter 5: Research Findings, Recommendations, and Conclusion

5.1. Introduction

This chapter is the conclusion to what has been discussed and presented in the previous chapters; it seeks to summarise the findings and provide the study limitations, recommendations, and the contribution of the study in the academic field.

The research aimed to explore the naming practices of Basotho indigenous plants. Specifically, this research aimed to identify the names of Basotho indigenous plants, explore naming practices and cultures within the Basotho community, and establish the relationship thereof. Additionally, the study aimed to describe the morphological features of Basotho indigenous plant names and the link between the morphological and semantic aspects of Basotho Indigenous plant names.

5.2. Findings of the study

5.2.1. Names and the naming of Basotho Indigenous plants

This section covers objectives one and two of the study. During the data collection process, it was discovered that the Basotho give names to their indigenous plants according to their appearance, usage (healing properties), and habitat. These names often describe different morphological characteristics, such as the plant's size, shape, colour, smell, texture, arrangement of leaves and shapes of flowers, harmful properties (e.g., toxic), and healing properties.

5.2.1.1. Names based on their appearance

In many cultures, including Basotho people, it is common to name plants based on their appearance. For example, plants such as *Kgahla*, *Sehloko*, and *Phate ya ngaka* were named based on appearance. *Kgahla* was given its name because of the beautiful flowers it makes that are attractive to the eyes. *Sehloko* was also named based on its appearance and resemblance to a nipple. *Phate ya ngaka* was named because of how it grows; it is also part of the plant's appearance. This not only provides a clear, visual reference for recognising the plants but also reflects the cultural

significance of these physical characteristics. The names such as *Kgahla*, *Sehloko* and *Phate ya ngaka* are often embedded in what the community observes in their daily lives, and it serves to make the plant more recognisable and meaningful. The name reflects its relationship with Basotho because it is used in everyday communication within Basotho, which supports the socio-onomastic theory used in the study.

5.2.1.2. Names based on their usage

It is common practice to name plants according to their practical uses, whereby the plant's name is influenced by its everyday use. The Basotho people name their plants according to their medicinal, ceremonial, or ritual usage. For example, *Modi* (*African Potato*) was named for its healing properties that cure blood-related diseases. *Moelela* and *Lephelephele* were named based on their ability to break curses and bring luck to the one who uses them. *Thola* was given its name for its healing properties to silence pain, but it can also be used as a ritual medicine for its ability to make people silent. These names reflect a clear ethnobotanical relationship in the community, with each plant being valued for its practical role in supporting people's health, well-being, and cultural practices. Once again, the plant name has supported the socio-onomastic theory used in the study by reflecting its relationship with the Basotho, as it is used in everyday Basotho communication.

5.2.1.3. Names based on their habitat

Some plants are named based on their habitat. The name givers used the environment where the plant naturally grew as a key feature in its name. This practice reflects the relationship between the plant and its environment by identifying the location where the plant is commonly found, such as wetlands (rivers, ponds, and riverbanks), forests (branches, mud, and moss), or rocky regions (hills, mountains, and cliffs). For example, the Basotho people have plants such as *Setlalemanyolo*, *Madinokana*, and *Lesoko* that are named based on their habitat. *Setlalemanyolo* was named like this because it grows after plant fertilizers have been poured into the garden. *Madinokana* is a plant found next to the rivers, and it thrives along riverbanks. *Lesoko* was named because it is difficult to find; hence, this name was derived from the verb *ho sokola*. It

grows on cliffs and dangerous places in the mountains where an individual who wants to harvest it must be very careful not to fall to their death. These names highlight the relationship between the environment and the circumstances that support their growth. This naming method also assists in identifying plants concerning their environment, promoting a deeper understanding of the plant's role in the ecosystem.

5.2.2. Morphological Features and Semantic relationship of Basotho Indigenous plants names

Objectives three and four are covered in this section. These objectives indicate that the study aimed to describe the morphological features of Basotho indigenous plant names and the link between the morphological and semantic aspects of Basotho indigenous plant names.

The research found various indigenous plant names within the Basotho community, each reflecting specific cultural and linguistic values. Also, it revealed that names in Basotho communities use the three main characteristics that classify the semantics of the plant names: physical characteristics (plant appearance), properties of the plants (usage), and the habitat. The naming practices are strongly influenced by the community's entire experience, beliefs, values, language, norms, and traditions, which are regarded as important to be passed down through generations.

The findings indicate that Basotho indigenous plant names reflect culture and ethnobotanical relations within the community. The morphology and semantics of the plant names have a significant connection, highlighting the crucial role of language and ethnobotany in the Basotho community. The morphological features of plant names align with its physical characteristics. The semantic meaning of the plants' names indicates the intricate relationship between Basotho and their environment. The naming practices also serve as a form of knowledge preservation. The names carry a medicinal and historical significance to the name givers; they are a window that can express the communities' knowledge, attitude, and observations. The Basotho naming system stands out for its understanding of linguistics, cultural, botanical, and historical knowledge that contributes immensely to the growing body of Indigenous Knowledge

Systems research. Since the name is used in Basotho everyday speech, it has represented its relationship with the Basotho and supports the socio-onomastic theory used in the study.

5.3. Recommendations

Based on the research findings of the names of the Basotho indigenous plants, I recommend that more research be done on how indigenous edible plants were named, and pictures should be available for future generations. Future research should not only be limited to Qwaqwa but also to a broader geographic area with Basotho people, such as Senekal, Bethlehem, and Bloemfontein, to mention a few. This will assist in finding the synonyms of these indigenous plants and their usage by different Basotho communities. I also recommend the creation of an indigenous plants garden that will help preserve species and be easily accessible to those who want to learn about indigenous plants.

The findings discovered that the Basotho people do not know how some edible plants were named except for food and medicine. Edible plants such as *Qhela* and *Thope tsa Natala* are food and medicine simultaneously. There is a need to discover how some of these common plants were named. The study also found that the information regarding various plants will vanish with the elders if not documented. However, some books have names of Basotho plants but do not classify which are edible or medicinal.

The list below shows participants' common names of edible plants (P1-P15).

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Bobatsi | 12. Monakaladi |
| 2. Leshwabe | 13. Seakgwe |
| 3. Qhela | 14. Maleshwane |
| 4. Theepe | 15. Sebitsa |
| 5. Seruwe | 16. Sehwetempuswe |
| 6. Sepatlapatla | 17. Sehwetemptjhatle |
| 7. Tenane | 18. Sewakgi |
| 8. Sewediwetla | 19. Lehaba |
| 9. Tshaane | 20. Mmodi |
| 10. Monokotshwai | 21. Tlhako ya kgomo |
| 11. Setla-le-manyolo | 22. Papasane |

23. Sefeamaeba

25. Madinokana

24. Mabetsa

5.4. Conclusion of the study

This study has highlighted the importance of phytonyms practices in the Basotho community. It demonstrates how the naming practice is linked to cultural identity, ethnobotanical, and ecological knowledge. It is a mirror that connects people and their environment. To understand these practices, one must have an extensive knowledge of botany, culture, history, and language; this is important for preserving and contributing to indigenous knowledge of Basotho. The plant's name can relate to traditional medicine, food, and ritual performance. Indigenous plant names contain the local knowledge of seasonal changes connected to when the plants are available and where they might be located.

The naming of the medicinal plants shows the extensive indigenous expertise of our forefathers and how well they knew their environment. Their ability to name plants based on their morphological and semantic connection to their remedies paved the way for indigenous plant knowledge for current and future generations of traditional healers and herbalists. The names of medicinal plants in the Basotho language are related to their reality, which reflects the characteristics of colour, shape, healing property, and impact on a person. The practical use of plants also determined the value of the plant name, as most of these plants are named based on their healing properties (*Modi*), power to seal court proceedings (*Thola*), hindering success (*Lesoko*), and power to break curses (*Kgahla*). The naming of the Basotho medicinal plants also reflects their belief in their practical activities.

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Appendix 1: Researcher acknowledgment form

Research title: **Basotho Indigenous Plants: An Onomastics Case study**

Researcher: Mamoya Vinolia Letseleha

Hereby, I Mamoya Vinolia Letseleha, ID number 930526 0860 089 in my personal capacity as a researcher, acknowledge that I am aware of and familiar with the stipulations and contents of the

- Unisa Research Policy
- Unisa Ethics Policy
- Unisa IP Policy

and that I shall conform to and abide by these policy requirements

Signature: 

Date: 01/09/2023

Appendix 2: Request for permission to conduct research at Qwaqwa.

“Basotho Indigenous Plants: An Onomastics Case Study”

September 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

I, Mamoya Vinolia Letseleha, am doing research with Dr. A Mushwana, in the Department of African Languages, towards a MA degree at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: **Basotho Indigenous Plants: An Onomastics Case Study**

The aim of the study is to investigate the names of the indigenous plants, their usage, and how they can be preserved.

The benefit of this study will help to preserve indigenous knowledge for the upcoming generation.

The feedback procedure will entail that the finding will be used for academic purposes towards the improvement of Basotho’s indigenous knowledge.

Yours sincerely



.....

Miss Letseleha MV

Appendix 3: Participant information sheet

Ethics clearance reference number: _____

Research permission reference number (if applicable): _____

Title: **Basotho Indigenous Plants: An Onomastics Case Study**

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Mamoya Letseleha Vinolia and I am doing research with Dr A Mushwana, a lecturer in the Department of African Languages at the University of South Africa. I am studying towards a Master's Degree in African Languages. I am inviting you to participate in a study entitled: **Basotho Indigenous Plants: An Onomastics Case Study**. I am conducting this research to find the history behind the Basotho indigenous names, the usage of these plants and how can we preserve these plants.

This study on indigenous plant names will draw attention to the society to see to understand how the naming of these plants came about and draw attention to the Basotho community and draw interest to know their importance. This study will document these plants for future generations.

As an ELDER/ HERBALIST/ TRADITIONAL HEARLER/TRADITIONAL HERBS SELLER, you are invited to participate in the study because you have vast knowledge regarding specific indigenous plants. Your interviews will be recorded for accuracy and effective analysis.

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. Please note that no benefits will be offered in exchange for your participation and your confidentiality is guaranteed as your identity and information obtained will not be revealed or shared with anyone. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

Participation is voluntary and that there is no penalty or loss of benefit for non-participation.

All the electronic information will be stored on a password-protected computer for a minimum of 5 years. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. All hard copies will be shredded and/or electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through the use of a relevant software program.

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the Department of African Languages at Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be if you so wish. If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Ms. MV Letseleha at 073 506 5263 or email: letsemv@unisa.ac.za. The findings are accessible for 5 years. Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact the Supervisor: Dr A Mushwana, and the research ethics chairperson of the Department of African Languages.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.



.....

Ms. MV Letseleha

Appendix 4: Consent to participate in this study

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the interviews and observable facts.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname..... (please print)

Participant

Signature.....Date.....

Researcher's Name & Surname.....(please print)

Researcher's signature.....Date.....

Appendix 5: Ethical Clearance

College of Human Science_CREC

Date: 11/06/2024

Dear: Miss Mamoya Letseleha

NHREC Registration # : (Rec-240816-052)

Ref #: 3736

Name: Miss Mamoya Letseleha

Student #: 61631108

**Decision: Ethics Approval from 11
June 2024 to 10 June 2025**

Researcher: Miss Mamoya Letseleha

Qwaqwa

Qwaqwa

letsemv@unisa.ac.za xxxxxxx

Supervisor: Dr Arnold Mushwana xxxxxxx@unisa.ac.za

Basotho Indigenous Plants: An Onomastics Case study

Qualification: MA

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the College of Human Science_CREC for the above-mentioned research study Ethics approval is granted for one year.

The **low-risk application** was **reviewed** by the College of Human Science_CREC on **11 June 2024** in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the College of Human Science_CREC.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.

5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date (**10 June 2025**). Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal, for Ethics Research Committee approval.

Additional Conditions

1. Disclosure of data to third parties is prohibited without explicit consent from Unisa.
2. De-identified data must be safely stored on password protected PCs.
3. Care should be taken by the researcher when publishing the results to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the university.
4. Adherence to the National Statement on Ethical Research and Publication practices, principle 7 referring to Social awareness, must be ensured: "Researchers and institutions must be sensitive to the potential impact of their research on society, marginal groups or individuals, and must consider these when weighing the benefits of the research against any harmful effects, with a view to minimising or avoiding the latter where possible." Unisa will not be liable for any failure to comply with this principle.

Note

The reference number 3736 should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Kind regards,

Prof Khatija Khan
Chair of College of Human Science_CRE
E-mail: khankb@unisa.ac.za

Executive Dean / By delegation from the Executive Dean of College of Human Science_CRE
E-mail: onyanob@unisa.ac.za