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**A SOCIOLECTAL AND DIALECTAL STUDY
OF SOUTHERN SOTHO IN LESOTHO**

by

MALESHOANE RAPEANE

**SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES**

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

SEPTEMBER 1996

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation we examine variation, in both speech and writing, in the South Sotho spoken in Lesotho. We indicate that the South Sotho used by a majority of speakers today shows a shift from both earlier and prescribed varieties.

Open-ended questionnaires and informal conversations were used to study aspects of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and the lexicon of South Sotho. Samples were collected from speakers with ages ranging from twelve to over eighty. The dissertation shows that the age, social status, sex and locality of speakers are contributing factors in their language repertoire.

We argue that South Sotho lacks the homogeneity that is claimed by language purists in Lesotho, and therefore has non-standard varieties, namely, dialects and sociolects. Although the structure of standard South Sotho sentences is relatively stable, the phonology, lexicon and semantics are indicative of major endogenous and exogenous changes. On the other hand, Sotho morphology shows endogenous changes only.

The influence of English on South Sotho is increasing at the expense of Afrikaans influence.

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements		iv
Abbreviations		v
Chapter 1	Introduction	
1.0	Introduction	1
1.1	Methodology	2
1.2	Definition of Terms	3
1.3	Sotho and Dialectology	6
1.4	Inevitability of Language Change	9
1.5	Variation and its Parameters	10
Chapter 2	Phonological Variation	
2.0	Introduction	12
2.1	Orthographic Change as a Reflection of Phonological Change	14
2.2	Phonological Variation	19
2.2.1	Vowel-deletion in Noun Prefixes	19
2.2.2	Consonantal Variation	22
2.2.3	Vowel and Glide Variation	28
2.2.3.1	V (y) V	29
2.2.3.2	V (w) V	31
2.2.4	Vowel-copying	32
2.2.5	Deletion of Intervocalic /h/	32
2.3	Morphophonemic Processes	34
2.3.1	Reflexive Prefix, /i-/ , and the Object Prefix of the 1st p.sg., /N-/	34

2.3.2	Passive Extension	39
2.3.3	Causative Extension	48
2.3.4	Diminutives	54
2.4	Conclusion	63
Chapter 3	Morphological Variation	
3.0	Introduction	64
3.1	Perfective Suffix <i>-ilê</i>	64
3.2	Demonstratives	67
3.3	Conclusion	71
Chapter 4	Lexical Variation	
4.0	Introduction	72
4.1	Internal Variation	74
4.2	Variation Between Sotho Items and Adoptives	78
4.2.1	Sotho and Afrikaans Adoptives	79
4.2.2	English Adoptives	85
4.2.3	Sotho and Nguni Languages	107
4.2.4	Variation Between Adoptives	109
4.3	Conclusion	115
Chapter 5	Syntactic Variation	
5.0	Introduction	116
5.1	Noun Prefixes: Classes 6 and 10	116
5.2	Adjective and Relative	120
5.3	Concordance with Co-ordinated Noun Phrases	123
5.4	Diminutives and Verb Stems	126

5.5	Interrogative Marker <i>na?</i>	128
5.6	Conclusion	129
Chapter 6	Semantic Variation	
6.0	Introduction	130
6.1	Applied Extension	130
6.2	Individual Lexemes and Phrases	131
6.3	Conclusion	140
Chapter 7	Conclusion	141

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'Mamathe High School

Life High School

Maseru High School

'Masentle High School

Siloe High School

Masitise High School

Lesotho National Council of Women Vocational School

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Abbreviations and Symbols

Adj.	Adjective
bk	Back
C	Consonant
Cl.	Class
Conc.	Concord
Dem.	Demonstrative
G	Glide
N-	Homorganic Nasal
Neg.	Negative
NP	Noun Prefix
NS	Non-standard
OP	Object Prefix
Pos.	Positive
Rel.	Relative
RP	Reflexive Prefix
S	Standard
SP	Subject Prefix
syl	syllabic
V	Vowel
∅	zero (represents either a zero morpheme, or the deletion of a consonant, or lenition of a consonant to zero)
>	Becomes, yields
→	Produces, yields, changes to

Districts

BB	Butha-Buthe
LR	Leribe
BR	Berea
MS	Maseru
MF	Mafeteng
MH	Mohale's Hoek
QT	Quthing



CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Southern Sotho, henceforth Sotho, or "Sesotho" as it is called by its speakers, is the mother-tongue of most people in Lesotho. It is also spoken by many people in South Africa, mainly in the Free State and some parts of Gauteng. Lesotho has two official languages, Sotho and English. However, this does not mean that standard Sotho and English are the only languages in Lesotho, rather that they are the only varieties recognised by the state, at the expense of other dialects and languages.

Lesotho is completely landlocked by South Africa. This means that the Sothos are in constant contact with South Africa, a country in which many Sothos work, go to tertiary institutions, and even do their shopping. Lesotho is divided into ten districts, and three regions. The regions are the lowlands, foothills and the mountains. In the lowlands are the urban areas, while the other two regions are mainly rural. The lowlands are full of young Sothos from the other regions, working or looking for jobs, attending school or enjoying urban life. On the other hand, the foothills and mountains are populated mainly by old Sotho men, women, and children who are too young to go to the urban areas alone. The influx into towns, mainly Maseru, the capital, robs the mountains of populations, resulting in Maseru being the Lesotho metropolis.

Language purists in Lesotho seem to deny the existence of non-standard varieties. Instead, they term everything out of the standard as a language error. Although there are clear signs of variation in Sotho, purists still maintain that Sotho is homogeneous.

More often than not, there is mutual intelligibility between speakers of different dialects and sociolects. However, in cases involving codeswitching, there might not be mutual intelligibility as speakers mix Sotho and English. Sometimes this may be done deliberately to cut the uneducated out of a conversation, on the other hand, some speakers get used to codeswitching to the extent that they can hardly ever speak Sotho only. Similarly, when lexical variation is involved, speakers outside a specific isogloss may need time to acquire the unknown lexemes. When urban-speakers move to rural areas, the practice is that those around them shift to urban dialects. However, when rural-speakers move to towns, they normally acquire urban dialects, because of the negative attitude to those who are associated with rural practices.

1.1 Methodology

The material used in this study was gathered in various ways. We studied the earliest Sotho literature, the early Sotho Bible, the newspaper *Leselinyana la Lesotho*, which dates back to 1894. We also use the second earliest Sotho newspaper, *Moeletsi oa Basotho*. Grammar books were also used, especially for reference to the current prescribed variety. Of these, we study Doke and Mofokeng [1957], Guma [1975] and Lekhotla la Sesotho [1994, 1995]. We used 320 students from eight different high schools in the following districts:

- (a) Butha-Buthe
- (b) Leribe
- (c) Berea
- (d) Maseru
- (e) Mafeteng
- (f) Mohale's Hoek
- (g) Quthing

In Maseru we used pupils from two high schools. Since Maseru is the capital of Lesotho, and has a large population of Sothos from the other districts, the first sample we used had few pupils who were originally from Maseru, so we used more pupils to get the varieties that occur in Maseru. We also used 220 adults, trying to cover as many social groups as possible.

Some of the data used in this study was gathered during the teaching of high-school Sotho. The arguments of the prescriptive linguists are laid down in Lekhotla la Sesotho [1994,1995]. In addition to that, we also received more arguments from the various Sotho-teachers' workshops that we attended. We observed spoken Sotho from different speakers. Material was also drawn from other relevant sources from time to time.

1.2 Definition of Terms

We give below definitions of terms as they will be used in this essay.

1.2.1 Dialect

According to Crystal [1992:101] a dialect is:

a language variety in which the use of grammar and vocabulary identifies the regional... background of the user.

while Edwards [1979:39] uses MacDavid's definition:

an habitual variety of a language, set off from other such variety by a complex of features of pronunciation, grammar or vocabulary.

In this dissertation the term "dialect" is used to refer to a variety of a language which is associated mainly with certain geographical areas. This term will be used to refer to varieties which are supposed to be of the same status unless stated otherwise.

1.2.2 Urban dialects

These are varieties of language which are popular in towns and cities. The lowlands in Lesotho are associated with these varieties as it is there that towns and cities are situated. These dialects show influences of the different

people who frequent Lesotho's urban areas, and also of the Sotho who either visit or work in South Africa. Urban dialects normally show changes long before rural dialects do. In his study of Xhosa varieties Thipa [1989:26] supports this observation thus:

...urban Xhosa tends to be more 'innovative' than rural Xhosa which tends to be very conservative.

1.2.3 Rural dialects

These are varieties which are used in rural areas. The mountain areas in Lesotho are where these are used. Areas immediately next to these highlands also use rural dialects.

1.2.4 Sociolect

Crystal [1992:101] says a sociolect is a variety which conveys information about the speaker's class, social status, educational background, occupation, or other such notions. Under this will fall varieties such as those used by men, women, and other social groups.

1.2.5 Isogloss

Crystal [1992:197] defines an isogloss as a line on a map showing the boundary of an area in which a linguistic feature is used. However, Trudgill [1983:46] indicates that an isogloss is a fictional concept. He says that according to definitions such as the above the implication is that one variant gives way to another at some particular point in space, which is not necessarily the case. Nonetheless, this term will be used as defined above, but with an awareness of its "fictionality". In most cases we use the districts and the three main regions as our boundaries.

1.2.6 Mutual intelligibility

As Crystal [1992:260] states, this is the criterion used in linguistics to refer to the ability of people to understand each other. This, however, is problematic as understanding is a subjective phenomenon. Although setting the standard of judging seems quite difficult, this definition suffices for indicating that in communication understanding each other is vital.

1.2.7 Standard dialect

Edwards [1979:46] says that the standard dialect is the variety used in print, and on those occasions when speech most closely resembles the written form. Its standardised nature is most apparent in writing, and it is easy to exaggerate both its uniformity and consistency in speech. This dialect is used for government purposes, in educational institutions and formal occasions. However, for a dialect to be labelled "standard", it does not necessarily have to be the best for communication purposes. In most cases it is enough for a dialect to be standard just because it is used by a powerful group within a particular language group. This is the dialect of the media and it enjoys prestige over the other dialects.

1.2.8 Non-standard dialects

These are all the varieties which exist in a language community but which are either neglected or given second-class ranking by the ruling class. This has nothing to do with their being inadequate as varieties, but rather with political and economic power. Negative attitudes are often associated with these dialects, which is why they are sometimes labelled "wrong" or "poor" language by speakers of the standard dialect. Ager [1990:9] shows that:

The situation sometimes provokes social or political conflict, ... people reject the negative label of inferiority and wish to promote a positive image of the local image.

This normally leads to deliberate efforts to ignore the standard or to use it abusively, thus hurting its speakers.

1.3 Sotho and Dialectology

Lesotho has a body called the Lekhotla la Sesotho 'Sotho Academy', this is responsible for the codification of Sotho. This body is similar to the French Academy. Matšela [1992:75] quotes the Lekhotla la Sesotho thus:

The main causes of non-standard language usage are carelessness, indifference and ignorance of official standard language requirements.

He continues:

Carelessness and indifference are alleged to occur among those who know what is correct and yet purposely prefer to ignore this and use non-standard or officially unacceptable items, that is, forms which are not normally acceptable in educational and official circles. On the other hand, there are those who may not have benefitted from any schooling or other basic education concerned with appropriate language usage. These people's language patterns may show signs of weakness which could have been suppressed through constant practice of correct language usage patterns in, for example, education.

The above quotation shows the prescriptive nature of the Lekhotla la Sesotho. This body concludes that there is only one form of Sotho and that everything else is "wrong". The indifference that is referred to is quite understandable, as people whose dialects are despised are likely to have a negative attitude toward the favoured dialect and its speakers. The quotation does not reveal whose, and which standards are used in judging the correctness of a dialect. The fact that Matšela [1992:76] shows that some speakers use non-standard Sotho because they have not been to school is proof enough that there is something other than the standard that people use to communicate since some speakers only acquire standard Sotho when they go to school. Not everybody goes to school in Lesotho, and even those who do sometimes stay for such a

short time that they do not acquire all of the prescribed standard Sotho. Also, urban children go to school when they are about six years old, rural children normally go to school later. By this time they already have a repertoire of their home language, which might not be standard.

Ambrose, as cited by Coplan [1992:8], quotes Moshoeshe I of the Sotho as follows:

My language is nevertheless very beautiful ...
 We are only beginning to realise this since we have seen it
 written down. Thanks to the little books of the
 missionaries, it will not be altered... My language remains
 my language on paper.

The fact that Moshoeshe I emphasises that his language is only that committed to writing indicates that as early as Moshoeshe's days in the early nineteenth century, Sotho did show signs of change, hence the effort to save a particular variety, that spoken by Moshoeshe's clan. Coplan goes on to say that Sotho is a blend of the Kwena dialect of the ruling clan, Fokeng of the aboriginal Fokeng and Tlhaping, a Tswana dialect, which had elements from it incorporated by the missionaries. But these are not the only clans which comprise the Sotho nation today. The modern Sotho nation includes the above clans as well as clans such as the Tloung, Sia, Tshweneng, Kgwakgwa, Tlokwa and even some Nguni clans. All these clans have their own histories. This means that all the dialects of the above clans, together with their cultures and norms are what are today given the general term "Sesotho". But at the same time we cannot overlook the fact that there are things which are peculiar to each clan, or sometimes shared by a certain group of clans. This is why sentences such as the following are normal: *o boloditswë Sefokëng*, meaning "He was circumcised and initiated the Fokeng way". It therefore follows that individual clans may have their own "languages" which co-exist with their diverse cultural and historical backgrounds. The Sotho language is as

heterogeneous as Sotho culture. Corson [1990:278] writes:

We all make errors in our language use at some time or other, especially when speaking informally, but "errors" that people often hear in the language of others [who are usually from slightly different social groups] are not really errors at all, they are evidence for the existence of a different variety of the language, a variety which preserves its features as systematically and regularly as any language variety.

In the case of Sotho, the errors which are referred to by the Lekhotla la Sesotho above, are aspects which need to be analysed within their contexts and not just summarily discarded. As Corson [ibid] indicates, "errors" in language may be interpreted as signs of other varieties of the same language. This means that these varieties will be recognised as dialects and not poor language use. It is clear that a language does not normally have several varieties as standard varieties, but, on the other hand, dialects which are non-standard should not be looked down upon simply because they were not lucky enough to be identified as the standard.

An investigation of the standardisation of Sotho does not show that this process followed any thorough research on the suitability, or the superior claim of a particular dialect over other dialects. Rather, it seems as if the standard variety was the one the first missionaries to arrive in Lesotho came into contact with and later learnt and wrote. This is why Moshoeshoe I as quoted earlier, thanks the missionaries for writing down his own dialect. The written and spoken forms of Sotho do show differences; the written form is relatively stable while the spoken form is changing at an observable pace.

On the existence of dialects of the same language, Edwards [1979:45] observes that:

Dialect differences reflect, and reinforce, different frequencies of interaction. They also have a symbolic value in identifying the group... The greater the distance between speakers, spatial or social, the more unlike their speech will be.

1.4 The Inevitability of Language Change

In fact all living languages change though the rate of change varies from time to time, and from language to language.

Barber [1972:50]

The above quotation supports the notion that language is bound to change at some stage in its life. The present standard Sotho might be very similar to what Moshoeshoe I spoke, but it cannot be said to be exactly the same language. Similarly, a century from now will see further changes in Sotho. Aitchison [1994:3] states that:

Everything in this universe is perpetually in a state of change... Language like everything else, joins in this general flux.

On a similar note Hughes and Trudgill [1979:8] observe that "The grammar of a dialect changes with time, but very slowly."

That language changes, seems inevitable; therefore, efforts to stop it from changing or criticising speakers who use such changes are as impossible as trying to stop rain from falling. This does not mean that one is not aware of the need for a standard variety of some sort, rather, that whatever variety is standardised and made relatively stable for the good of most speakers and not just for the convenience of a small population, should not be overemphasised. Also the non-standard varieties should acquire the respect that they are worth and be allowed to exist in contact with the preferred variety.

Sotho, like any other language, is showing signs of change. This

incorporates all those varieties which are labelled "wrong" usages. However, this reaction seems to be a normal one. Aitchison [1994:5] indicates that as some English speakers observed the changes in their language they reacted negatively; one speaker is quoted:

We go out of our way to promulgate incessantly... the very ugliest sounds and worst possible grammar.

Emotions such as the above do exist among Sotho-speakers, but all the same language change is unavoidable.

1.5 Variation and its Parameters

Francis [1983:42] indicates that a community of language speakers is found to be subdivided into various groups, with each group exhibiting some linguistic features different from those of other groups. Four of the five parameters discussed by Francis [ibid] will be dealt with.

1.5.1 Geographical variation

Groups of speakers of a language may have different varieties peculiar to their locality. Urban-dwellers use varieties which differ from those of rural-dwellers.

1.5.2 Social variation

Chambers & Trudgill [1980:75] say:

It appears that people are influenced linguistically, as might be expected, much more by members of the social networks to which they belong than by anybody else.

The above extract indicates the existence of varieties of a language which are a result of society's stratification and individual interests. Under this would fall groups such as those of different professions, sports and even priorities. Priests, teachers, nurses, lawyers, burglars and policemen would be found to have some form of variety peculiar to each group.

1.5.3 Sexual variation

Chambers & Trudgill [1980:71] state that linguistic differences have been found to correlate with the sex of a speaker, and that "Sex differentiation in language has been shown to occur even in the speech of children".

An observation of Sotho indicates that the language of women is markedly more polite than that of men. Also women's language is affected by their relationship with babies, and teaching them language, while at the same time accommodating *their* language. This is what results in sentences such as that criticised by the Lekhotla la Sesotho [1994:11]:

Kö kwano, nana, ênkênana

instead of:

Tlöö kwano, ngwana, êkê Come here, child, right.

Language which is normally not so pleasant to the ears of most speakers would more often be heard from men than women. These observations will be dealt with in detail later in this dissertation.

1.5.4 Age variation

Age plays an important role in language variation. The language of the elderly is different from that of the youth. Most young speakers are normally censured for incorrect language usage, while they in return criticise their parents' or grandparents' language as lacking in spice.

CHAPTER TWO : PHONOLOGICAL VARIATION

2.0 Introduction

Hoenigswald [1960:72-73] makes the following observation:

any sound can change into any sound... A phonetic comparison between earlier and later forms in sound change very often, perhaps generally, suggests a rationale: a simplification in the articulatory movement. A given phone is replaced by one which resembles the phones that precede or follow [not necessarily immediately] or which for some anatomical reason combine more easily with surrounding phones or represent a less taxing combination of distinctive features.

In the light of the above observation it is not surprising to observe the variation in the Sotho spoken by Moshoeshe I in 1854 and the current standard form.

An example of the former is quoted by Setiloane [1976:233]:

Ki Molao oa Yaloa ba Makhua

Yoala ba makhua bo ne bo sa
tseyoe ke Matsie, leha e le
Motlomi le bagolo ba sechaba
go isa go BoMonageng.

Me Mokhachane o golile a inoela
lebese le metsi.

Ke ka baka la gobane moatloleli
oa bokhabane ga a lokeloe ke se
tagang.

Yoala ke kgang, ke phosiso ya
litaba, ga bo gagise motse; ba
makhua yona ke mollo.

Mei oa molao oona ki nna Moshoeshe,
ke na le bagolu ba sechaba.

Thaba Bosigo, 8 Purungwana, 1854.

Today the above law would read:

Ke molaô wa jwala ba Makgowa

Jwala ba Makgowa bo nê bo sa
tsejwe ke Matsiê, leha e le
Mohlömi le baholo ba setjhaba
ho isa ho böMonahëng.

Mme Mokgatjhane o hodilë a inwëlla
lebese le mëtsi.

Ke ka baka la hobane moahlodi wa
bokgabane ha a lokëlwe ke së
tahang.

Jwala ke kang, ke phösisô ya
ditaba, ha bo hahise motse; ba
Makgowa bôna ke mollô.

Mmëi wa molaô ôna ke nna Moshwêshwê
ke na le baholo ba setjhaba.

Thaba Bosiu, 8 Pudingwana, 1854.

The following translation is from Setiloane [ibid]:

This is Law Concerning European Drink

European beer was unknown to
Matsie, nor even to Mhlomi [sic] nor
the elders and fathers of the
nation [tribe] back to the age
of Monageng. Mokhachane grew up
drinking only milk and water.

It is because a worthy judge
[president of a judicial court]
should not be involved with
intoxicating beverages.

Intoxicating drink brings
unnecessary argument; it causes
error in judgement. It is not
conducive to good relationships
in the community. As for European
beer, it is fire!

This law is directed [passed]
by me Moshoeshoe, together with
the Elders of the nation [tribe].

Thaba Bosigo, 8 August, 1854.

Moshoeshoe I's quotation above leads us to our first discussion — variation in the written language.

2.1 Orthographic Change as a Reflection of Phonological Change

In dealing with this variation we refer to the earliest Sotho newspapers, *Leselinyana la Lesotho* and *Moeletsi oa Basotho*, henceforth *Leselinyana* and *Moeletsi*, respectively. *Leselinyana* is traced from 1894, while the earliest *Moeletsi* we have was published in 1947. The Bible has also proved to be useful for this discussion.

Only in the quotes from the Bible, *Leselinyana* and *Moeletsi* below is the Lesotho orthography used. Elsewhere in this dissertation the South African orthography is used, even in quotes from sources in which the Lesotho orthography is used. Note that we have employed Paroz's system of vowel marking:

[i] = i, [i] = e, [e] = ë, [ó] = ê, [a] = a,
[o] = ô, [o] = ö, [ç] = o, [u] = u

In the earliest publications of *Leselinyana* there is clear variation in the use of the letter 'y' as opposed to 'j'. Today 'j' is used in place of 'y'. Setiloane [1976:233] gives the impression that there are two sides to this story when he says about Moshoeshoe's statement quoted earlier:

If as Willoughby claimed, and it is well accepted, the missionaries reduced the language as spoken phonetically to writing, this must be SeSotho as spoken by Moshweshwe in 1854.

However, Janson and Tsonope [1991:36] remind us that writing was introduced to Southern Africa by Europeans who, for a long time, were the only ones who could write. This observation makes us aware of the fact that the missionaries who first wrote Sotho did not use it as their mother tongue, hence their perception of Sotho sounds was not always accurate. Because no Sotho could

write, the missionary orthography would have been unchallenged until a Sotho speaker was educated enough and had sufficient linguistic insight to correct the mistakes made by the missionaries. The examples we cite support the argument that the orthography has changed.

In *Leselinyana* [1894:1] we get the following examples:

[1]	<i>Leselinyana</i>	Current Orthography	
	a. Yesu	a. Jësu	'Jesus'
	b. yara	b. jara	'year'
	c. hoya	c. hōja	'if'
	d. Yoele	d. Jöêlê	'Joel'
	e. Yonathane	e. Jônathane	'Jonathan'

However, both the 1947 *Leselinyana* and *Moeletsi* indicate change in orthography as the following examples illustrate:

[2]	<i>Leselinyana</i>		<i>Moeletsi</i>	
	a. Jesu	'Jesus'	a. Jesu	'Jesus'
	b. joale	'now'	b. Josiele	'Josiel'
	c. kajeno	'today'	c. Joele	'Joel'
	d. Jehova	'Jehova'	d. Jonathane	'Jonathan'
	e. joang	'how'	e. joale	'now'

In the above examples, both newspapers show a shift from earlier orthography to the one found now.

However, if we believe that variation between 'y' in early literature, and 'j' in the current orthography, is a result of a shift, in some cases, in the spoken language, the following example given in Mabile and Dieterlen [1985:383] may make sense:

[3]	a. rialö	'say so'
	b. re jwalö	'say so'

Mabile and Dieterlen [ibid] say that 3b means 3a. We surmise that originally **re jwalö** 'say so' was written, **re yoalo** 'say so', with subsequent

contraction to **reyoalo** or **riyoalo**, later shifting to **rialö**. Although there is variation between Lesotho and South African Sotho, we also have an example in South African Sotho showing variation between 'y' and 'j':

- [4] a. yanöng 'so'
b. janöng 'so'

[j] in English words is replaced by [dʒ] in Sotho adoptives:

- [5] a. yard > jarete
b. university > junifësithi
c. uniform > junifômô

Similarly, [j] in Afrikaans words is replaced by [dʒ] in Sotho adoptives:

- [6] a. juk > jökö 'yoke'
b. jaar > jara 'year'
c. ja > jaa 'yes'

However, [dʒ] in donor languages remains unchanged in Sotho adoptives:

- [7] a. jam > jêmê
b. jelly > jëli

The above pattern is perhaps because of the rare occurrence of the /y/ phoneme in stems in Sotho.

The 1916 version of the Bible has examples such as the following:

- [8] **Bible** **Current**
a. feiga fëikha 'fig'
b. veke bëkë 'week'

and many others which are not accepted today. The letter 'g' as in *feiga* is not recognised in the Sotho orthography; instead the sound [kxh] is represented by 'kh' in the Lesotho orthography, and 'kg' in the South African one. Linguistically there is nothing particularly wrong with 'g' representing [kxh], but this is not

accepted in the orthography. We assume that there has been a change in the pronunciation from an original [x] to [kxh], so that the change in orthography reflects a change in pronunciation, as is the case with 'j' and 'y' above. On the other hand we might argue that the missionaries who committed Sotho to writing were confused because of the different dialectal velars that they heard among Sothos and interpreted them as different sounds. We say this, because in the above quotation from Moshoeshe, there are three different orthographic representations which could be interpreted as one or three different sounds today, depending on the speaker. These are 'kh', as in *Makhuoa* 'Whites', 'kg', as in *kgang* 'trouble', and 'g', as in *bagolo* 'elders'. These could, in different dialects, represent the sounds [kh], [kxh] and [x], respectively. We assume that 'g' reflected a dialect closer to Tswana than to Sotho. However, we should remember that the division of Sotho into South Sotho, Tswana and Pedi is a linguistic figment, particularly with historical reference, since at that time the notion of three different Sotho languages was almost certainly invalid, cf. Janson and Tsonope [1991:44]. Even today there are pockets of "Tswana-speaking" people living in the Free State who speak a Sotho dialect which would often be closer to the Sotho of Maseru than that of Gaborone. Certainly, the *Difaqane* wars resulted in the dispersion and destabilization of Sotho communities both in present-day Lesotho and South Africa. It is almost certain that early missionaries would have come across a range of dialects, some closer to present-day South Sotho and some closer to present-day Tswana.

The letter 'v' which appears in early Sotho literature represents the fricative [v]. This appears in borrowed words, especially from Afrikaans as in [8]b above. Mochaba [1992:65] gives the following examples to illustrate this shift.

- | | | | | |
|-----|--------------------|---|-----------|-------------------------------|
| [9] | a. we:rk [vɛrk] | > | bêrêka | 'work, especially for whites' |
| | b. wo:rs [v rs] | > | bôrôsô | 'sausage' |
| | c. winkel [vɛŋkəl] | > | lebênkêlê | 'shop' |

For a long time the Sotho words for 'shop', and 'week', were written as *levenkele* and *veke*, respectively. *Veke* 'week' appears in the 1919 Sotho Bible, but now both of them are unacceptable. These are now used by old and, in general, uneducated Sothos.

In early Sotho writings, there are many examples of consonant clusters, which are nowadays broken up by the insertion of vowels. We give only a few from Mabile and Dieterlen [1985] first published in the first half of the twentieth century. These are (a-g), below, while (h-j) are from Ballot [1971:15].

[11]	Earlier Form	Current Form	
a.	almanaka	alemanaka	'almanac'
b.	Bokreste	Bokerësete	'Christianity'
c.	moprofeta	moporöfeta	'prophet'
d.	testamente	têsetamêntê	'testament'
e.	tramontene	teramötêne	'turpentine'
f.	tabernakele	tabanakêlê/ tabarenakêlê	'tabernacle'
g.	laksense	lakesênsê	'licence'
h.	alfabeta	alefabêta	'alphabet'
i.	albastera	alebasetêra	'alabaster'
j.	advente	adevêntê/ atefêntê	'advent'

The earlier forms of the above examples are now unacceptable because the rules for Sothoising borrowed terms in writing seem to have changed. Consonant clusters are broken up by the insertion of a vowel.

The last variation we examine involves an English spelling and a Sotho pronunciation. This variation is between 'f' and 'ph' in the orthography. The Sotho consonant [f] is always spelt as 'f', while in English [f] may be spelt as 'f' or 'ph'. Some Sothos use this English spelling but pronounce it as [f], rather than [ph] as for the native Sotho words. The following example supports this point:

[12] a. fönö b. phönö 'phone'

Both [12a] and [12b] are pronounced as [fono], even though according to Sotho orthographic rules *phönö* should be pronounced [phono].

It seems as if this variation is a result of the learning of English by Sotho-speakers who then transfer English orthographic elements into Sotho. This English spelling is used by educated Sothos. It is not surprising to find that [12b] is becoming popular, as educated Sothos in borrowing from English sometimes retain elements of English spelling as well.

2.2 Phonological Variation

In Example [11] above, the earlier forms are common in the speech of urban and educated Sothos while their current counterparts are what is prescribed, and therefore appear in books. A similar social distinction is found in the categories examined below.

2.2.1 Vowel-deletion in Noun Prefixes

Referring to the non-insertion of a vowel between consonants in adoptives, Ballot [1971:15] quotes Kunene who associates this practice with urbanisation. On a similar note the deletion of vowels in noun prefixes is observable among both urban and educated Sothos. This results in examples such as the following:

[13]	<i>Standard</i>	<i>Non standard</i>	
a.	mokötla	mkötla	'bag'
b.	mose	mse	'dress'
c.	mokete	mkete	'feast'
d.	letsatsi	ltsatsi	'day'

e.	letsöku	ltsöku	'red ochre'
f.	lehlabathe	lhlabathe	'sand'
g.	sekêtê	skêtê	'skirt'
h.	sefatê	sfatê	'tree'
i.	selemô	slemô	'year'

The above examples indicate a new phenomenon in Sotho syllabification. In this case we are not looking at adoptives only, but at core vocabulary too. What has happened is that speakers have deleted the vowel of the noun prefix, resulting in the noun prefix being a syllabic *m*, *l* or *s*, for Classes 1, 3, 5 and 7, respectively. It should be noted that this happens where the NP vowel is *e* or *o*, that is, a vowel of the second degree, and where the preceding consonant is a continuant. This does not apply to the NP of Class 15, *ho-*. This new syllabic pattern seems similar to what has happened in Xhosa where the original *u* of the noun prefix of Classes 1 and 3 is deleted.

This vowel-deletion creates new types of syllable structure in Sotho. Typically, Sotho syllables have the shape CV, the only exceptions being as follows (syllabic consonants are underlined>):

(a) a nasal followed by a stop, whether oral or nasal, is always syllabic:

[14]	n.ta	'louse'
	hlö.m.pha	'respect'
	o m.më.m.më	'she has invited me'
	mo.n.na	'man'

(b) word-final *-ng* [ŋ] is syllabic:

[15]	jwa.ng	'grass'
	le.nö.ng	'vulture'

(c) / is syllabic when followed by /:

- [16] mo.l.lô 'fire'
 se.l.la.l.lane 'crybaby'

With vowel-deletion in noun prefixes, the following rules for syllabic consonants emerge:

(a) *m* is syllabic when followed by any consonant:

- [17] m.se 'dress'
 m.kö.tla 'bag'
 m.rê.na 'chief'
 m.hlö.mo.ng 'perhaps'

Note that previously, syllabic *m* was always homorganic with the following consonant. This rule of homorganicity is now broken, once again altering the structural rules of Sotho.

(b) / is syllabic when followed by any consonant, except *w*:

- [18] l.tsa.tsi 'sun'
 l.hla.ba.the 'sand'

Under previous rules syllabic / occurred only in geminate clusters. Its domain has now been increased.

(c) *s* is syllabic when followed by any consonant, except *w*:

- [19] s.fa.tê 'tree'
 s.le.mô 'year'
 s.kö.lö 'school'

Previously, syllabic consonants had to be voiced sonorants. With *s* as syllabic consonant, this constraint no longer has absolute validity.

2.2.2 Consonantal Variation

In the past a general pattern emerged in adoptives to replace the voiced stops [d] and [g], which are not found as discrete phonemes in Sotho, by their voiceless equivalents. However, the way Sotho has handled such adoptives in the past has differed in detail in each case, and there are now new strategies as well. Also in borrowing words with a voiced bilabial stop [b], Sotho-speakers make use of different strategies. These strategies are discussed below. Similarly, in the case of adoptives where the source item contains a voiced labiodental fricative [v], different strategies are adopted in Sothoising the lexeme concerned.

2.2.2.1 Stops

A general pattern emerges in adoptives involving voiced stops whereby the foreign voiced sounds are replaced by voiceless equivalents in Sotho.

(A) [d] and [t]

In order to understand borrowing involving the voiced stop [d], expectations are somewhat different. The voiced stop [d] does occur in Sotho, but only as an allophone of /l/, and not a discrete phoneme: [d] occurs preceding /i/ and /u/, provided it is not itself preceded by /l/, while the lateral liquid [l] occurs elsewhere. It is thus to be expected that in adoptives [d] preceding vowels other than /i/ and /u/ would be nativised as [t], which, in fact, is what normally happens.

[20]	taemane	'diamond'
	tönki	'donkey'

But when [d] occurs medially it is not replaced with [t]:

[21]	Madatjhe	'the Dutch'
	madëira	'Madeira'

It would be expected that where [d] occurs before close vowels in the donor language, Sotho would use the allophone [d], since this fits in with Sotho phonology, and once again this does happen.

[22] rēdiô 'radio'

However, it is often the case that even where the borrowed word contains the segments [di] and [du], these are replaced by [t'i] and [t'u], either as the norm, or as a variant to forms with [di] and [du].

[23] rēdiô / rētiô 'radio'
 tipi / dipi 'dip'
 Tumu / Dumu 'Doom' [brand name of an insecticide]

In the case of some items, for example, 'dinner' it could be argued that in the speech of the majority of Sothos, the first vowel is pronounced [ɪ], if not [e], and therefore does not provide the correct environment for the occurrence of the allophone [d] of the Sotho phoneme /l ~ d/. In other cases, however, this argument does not hold. With the English [di] where the i is more or less as in Sotho and where the borrowed form has only [ti] in Sotho.

[24] tinare 'dinner'

A possible explanation for the occurrence of [t'] in such environments is the fact that the voiced stops of English are weakly voiced, or are not voiced throughout, by contrast with the Sotho voiced stops, which are more fully voiced. The English voiced stops are thus heard as voiceless by Sothos (See also (B) below). Doke and Mofokeng [1967:14], however, observe that the pronunciation of Sotho [d] is 'softer' than is common in English, and Mochaba [1992:63] also states that [d] is not as strongly articulated as the English [d]. We have no experimental evidence as to the comparative degrees of voicing between English and Sotho voiced stops. In our view, however, the evidence

of Sotho adoptives suggests that for whatever reason, English voiced stops are frequently interpreted as voiceless by Sothos. Variation between [d] and [t] is also seen in the following English name:

[25] Dan > Dên / Tên

Although some speakers use 'd' in writing yet pronounce it as [t'], a majority of speakers use [t']. We should note that in *rêtiô* / *rêdiô* the source 'd' is word-medial, here too there are speakers who pronounce *rêdiô* with the [d] being very similar to the English [d].

Older people tend to use [t'] instead of [d], but younger people, especially products of private schools use [d]. The use of [t] is associated with rural areas or with products of government and church schools in Lesotho. The use of [d] in an "incorrect" allophonic environment in Sotho reveals the speaker's social status; that they have been to a private school, and are more familiar with the "correct" pronunciation of English than those who have not been thus privileged. This is quite understandable as it is in private schools that mother-tongue teachers of English are found and rarely in government schools.

In the case of speakers who use [d] before vowels other than /i/ and /u/, as in *daemane* 'diamond', and *dômô* 'stupid', there has been a change in the phonological system, in that the constraints on the occurrence of the "allophone" [d] are ignored, so that [d] must be interpreted as a discrete phoneme, thus increasing the phoneme inventory of the language.

In Afrikaans adoptives [di], [dy] and [du] are replaced by [t'i] or [t'u]:

[26]	lepantiti	<	<i>bandiet</i> [bandit]	'convict'
	turu	<	<i>duur</i> [dy:r]	'expensive'
	tuku	<	<i>doek</i> [duk]	'head scarf'

(B) [k] and [g]

Since the sound [g] does not occur natively in Sotho, it would be expected that in adoptives it would be replaced by its voiceless equivalent /k/, which is what normally occurs.

- [27] gate > kēiti / gēiti
 goal > kōulu / göulu
 garage > karaje / garaje
 guava > kwafa / gwafa

/k/ is more popular than /g/, which is used mainly by the youth and products of private schools.

(C) [b] and [p]

In Sotho /b/ is a voiced bilabial stop [b], while /p/ is realised as a voiceless ejective, bilabial stop [p']. Although both of them exist as independent phonemes in Sotho, when foreign words with [b] are Sothoised, this consonant is sometimes substituted by /p/. Similarly, when foreign words with [p] are Sothoised, this consonant is sometimes substituted by /b/.

The normal Sotho equivalent for foreign [b] in adoptive words is /b/.

- [28] bara < bar
 basekêtê < basket
 betere < Afr. *beter* 'better'
 lebôkôse < box
 bôlô < ball
 Leburu < Afr. *Boer* 'Afrikaner'

There are a very few cases, by contrast, in which a foreign [b] is replaced by the voiceless Sotho /p/.

- [29] lepantiti < Afr. *bandiet* 'convict'
 patala < Afr. *betaal* 'pay'
 pöpöng < French *bonbon* 'sweet'

In the examples above there appears to be no particular reason for the occurrence of a voiceless stop in the adoptives. In the following example, the English /b/ has two variant replacements in Sotho — /b/ and /p/.

- [30] *banana* / *panana* 'banana'

However, in Sotho *banana* means "little girls", and we may argue that speakers who use *panana* for "banana" do so in order to differentiate the meanings "little girls" and "banana". It is usually the older and rural speakers who make this distinction, while other Sothos do not.

The following examples show variation in the use of /p/ and /b/ corresponding to foreign /p/:

- [31] *polasetiki* / *bolasetiki* 'plastic bag' < plastic
pölöne / *bölöne* 'polony' < Eng.¹

In summary, we have the following phonological pattern:

English		Sotho
b	>	p/b
d	>	t/d
g	>	k/g

2.2.2.2 Dentilabial Fricatives

(A) [f] and [v]

While the unvoiced labiodental [f] is a native Sotho consonant, the voiced [v] is not. However, some speakers have introduced /v/ into their

¹ Note that in both Lesotho and South Africa, Sotho speakers in general would not be familiar with the American *baloney/boloney*.

phoneme inventory in adoptives. Our examples include the following:

- [32] a. *teraefa / teraeva* 'driver'
 b. *föllumo / völlumo* 'volume'
 c. *fitiô / vitiô* 'video'
 d. *foranta* 'veranda'

In the case of English adoptives */f/* is associated with old, rural or uneducated Sothos, while */v/* is used by other Sotho-speakers. However, for Afrikaans adoptives, Sothos, more often than not, substitute *[v]* with */b/*:

- [33] *bêlêtê* < Afr. *wild* 'wild'
bôrôsô < Afr. *wors* 'sausage'
bêrêbêrê < Afr. *werwel* 'latch'
lebidi < Afr. *wiel* 'wheel'

In a few Afrikaans adoptives, older speakers tend to substitute the non-native Sotho */v/*:

- [34] *vêkê / bêkê* < Afr. *week* 'week'
levênkêlê / lebênkêlê < Afr. *winkel* 'shop'

(B) [f], [b] or [v]

A number of Sotho adoptives involve three-way variation, depending on the strategy adopted by Sotho-speakers to cope with the foreign sound *[v]*. The first is to substitute its voiceless equivalent, as seen above. In other words, its status as a fricative is maintained in the borrowing, with a change of voicing to fit in with Sotho phonological structure, which does not permit voiced fricatives, [3] is a special case, in that it is a variant to the affricate [dʒ]. An alternative strategy is to replace *[v]* with */b/ [b]*, that is, to retain its voiced status, but since Sotho does not allow for voiced fricatives, this is replaced by the equivalent stop. The third strategy is to adopt the foreign sound, and in so-doing to

increase the Sotho phoneme inventory.

[35]	fênê / bênê / vênê	'van'	<	Eng.
	fëine / bëine / vëine	'wine'	<	Afr. wyn [vɜin]
	Fimi / Bimi / Vimi	'Vim'	<	Eng. [brand name for a cleaning agent]
	föuta / böuta / vöuta	'vote'	<	Eng.

We found that rural, old and uneducated Sothos use /f/ and/or /b/ where the original foreign item has /v/, while educated, and young Sothos use the variety with /v/.

2.2.3 Vowel and Glide Variation

In this section we intend to examine variation between VV and VGV in Sotho today. From a diachronic viewpoint, the variation has differing explanations. In some cases the semi-vowel or glide is a lenited reflex of a stronger Proto-Bantu consonant, while variants without the semi-vowel represent the ultimate in lenition, that is, $C > \emptyset$. For example:

[36] *phigo > phiyo² > phio [i.e. *phiô*] 'kidney'

Thus, Proto-Bantu *g > y / \emptyset in Sotho. In some instances, however, it would appear that the occurrence of a glide in various items, represents the *reintroduction* of a glide, that had previously gone to \emptyset . This appears to be the case particularly with root-initial glides.

[37] *kugend-a > *huyet-a > huet-a > huyet-a [i.e. *hoyêt-a*] 'travel'

Though there is no certainty that *yet-a (stage 2 of the above derivation) had universally changed to *êt-a*, evidence in the form of early written records, suggests that this was probably the case. The variant *yêt-a* emerged subsequently by a process of generalizing glides between vowels.

² In this, and the following derivations, we do not claim that all stages in the derivation are indicated here.

From a synchronic point of view, the source of the variance is irrelevant. The fact is that the current tendency is that young Sotho-speakers seem to use the VGV structure even where the prescribed form does not, while older speakers stick to the standard variant, which may, or may not include a glide. This means that young Sotho-speakers have a more consistent phonological pattern than the older Sotho-speakers.

2.2.3.1 V (y) V

Being a front glide, /y/ [j], normally occurs in an environment before or after a front vowel (We classify the Low, Front-of-Centre vowel, /a/, as a front vowel, though it is excluded in Rule 2). Thus, we can posit the following optional rules:

Optional Glide-insertion Rule 1: V V → V y V
[- bk] [± bk]

[38]	diaba / diyaba	'wonders'
	sediadia / sediyadiya	'type of Sotho game'
	diila / diyila	'wander'
	fafiêlla / fafiyêlla	'patch up'
	masadiô / masadiyô	'cattle given to boy's uncle when he starts work'
	seithati / seyithati	'egotist'
	mapheô / mapheyô	'wings'
	haila / hayila	'crush'
	maeba / mayeba	'pigeon'
	maëlë / mayëlë	'proverbs'
	belaêla / belayêla	'complain'

Optional Glide-insertion Rule 2: V V → V y V
[+ bk] [- bk]
[- Low]

[39]	ruisa / ruyisa	'enrich'
	boëki / boyëki	'treachery'
	moëng / moyëng	'man's relative'
	hoêla / hoyêla	'go for'

The above rules are an explanation for the intervocalic insertion, or reinsertion, of glides. There are also clear cases, where an optional, probably lexically-determined, glide-deletion rule results in synchronic variation. This rule takes the following form:

Optional Glide-deletion Rule 1: y → Ø/V ___ V

Since the semi-vowel y is a rare phoneme in standard Sotho, the application of this rule is highly limited. We have found it to apply essentially to the verb stem

y-a 'go to', and the tense prefixes derived from it. The verbal radical *y*- already has, in certain environments, the surface realization \emptyset -, even in standard Sotho. It is a phonological rule of standard Sotho that $y \rightarrow \emptyset / ____ \{i, u\}$. Thus, this radical is manifest as \emptyset in the Perfective and before the Causative and Passive extensions:

- [40] Ba ya tēng 'They are going there'
 Ba [\emptyset]ilē tēng 'They have gone there'
 Ke ba [\emptyset]isa tēng 'I am taking them there'
 Ho [\emptyset]uwa tēng 'People are going there, lit. it is being gone there'

In addition, *y*- is realized as \emptyset , before the Applied extension *-ê/-*:

- [41] Ke tla o [\emptyset]êla 'I shall go for you'

Note that it is not a phonological rule that $y \rightarrow \emptyset / ____ \{e, ê\}$ since *y*- does occur before these vowels, as evident in the following examples:

- [42] Ha ke ye 'I am not going'
 Ha ke yê 'Let me go'

In certain non-standard varieties of Sotho *y*- of the verb meaning 'go to' is replaced by \emptyset throughout.

- [43] S: Ba ya tēng 'They are going there'
 NS: Ba a tēng
 S: Ha ke ye 'I am not going'
 NS: Ha ke e
 S: seyalemôya 'radio; lit. it goes with the air/wind'
 NS: sealemôya

By contrast, in the case of the marker of the Present Tense, long form, it is the standard variety that applies the above glide-deletion rule, while at least some non-standard varieties do not.

- [44] S: O a ya 'She is going'
 NS: O ya ya
 S: Ba a ja 'They are eating'
 NS: Ba ya ja

2.2.3.2 V (w) V

The variation between VV and VwV is found when the first vowel is [+back], with the second vowel being [\pm back]. Even from a diachronic viewpoint, it is often impossible to determine whether the above variation is the result of glide-insertion or glide-deletion. In other words, of the two possible rules set out below, it is frequently not clear which one has been applied.

Optional Glide-insertion Rule 3: $V \quad V \rightarrow V w V$
 [+ bk] [- bk]
 [+ Low]

Optional Glide-deletion Rule 2: $w \rightarrow \emptyset / V ____ V$

- [45] Sekgoa / Sekgowa 'English'
 moqhoa / moqhowa 'pile'
 bohlo-a / bohlow-a 'explode'
 bu-a / buw-a 'speak'

2.2.4 Vowel-copying

Sotho has the following, lexically-determined, optional vowel-copying rule:

Vowel-copying Rule: $C \quad V_1 \quad C \quad V_2 \rightarrow C V_1 V_2 C V_2$
 [+ bk] [- bk]

A subsequent vowel-consonantalization rule, converts V_1 into a semi-vowel:

Vowel-consonantalization Rule: [+ syl] [+ syl] \rightarrow [- syl] [+ syl]
 [+ bk] [-bk] [+ bk] [- bk]

- [46] senômaphödi / senwamaphödi 'soft drink'

it. We assume that the inclusion of intervocalic /h/ in writing is deliberate and a conscious effort as our research shows that the very speakers who elide it in speech include it in writing. However, a small number of young speakers elide intervocalic /h/ in both speech and writing. Our results are summarised below:

2.2.5.1 Before front vowels

From our data, it appears that *h*-deletion is found mainly before front vowels (including *a*), though not as C_1 of a stem. While, older Sotho-speakers tend to retain intervocalic /h/ in most cases, younger speakers may do two things. They may elide it and put nothing in its place, or they may replace it by [y] as is illustrated below.

[47]	mohihi / mohii / mohiyi	'one who cries'
	sefutuhi / sefutui / sefutuyi	'attacker'
	selohi / seloi / seloyi	'weaver'
	sehahi / sehai / sehayi	'builder'
	dinêhêlo / dinêêlô / dinêyêlô	'collections'
	mariha / maria / mariya	'winter'

In the above examples, *h*-deletion occurred in the final syllable, whereas in the following ones, the deletion occurs as C_2 or C_3 :

[48]	hauhilë / hauilë / hauyilë	'have pity'
	lohilë / loilë / loyilë	'knitted'
	jahisa / jaisa / jayisa	'hurry'

However, when /h/ is preceded by the back vowels, and followed by /a/, the transitional glide /w/ may be inserted thus:

[49]	ruruha / ruruwa / ruruwa	'swell'
	pholoha / pholowa / pholowa	'escape'

There is at least one instance of *h*-deletion stem initially, and that is in the commonly-used verb *hah-a / ah-a*, and its derivatives. In this instance the form with *h* is the norm in speech, while in writing the form without *h* is standard.

2.2.5.2 Before back vowels

h-deletion before back vowels *does* occur, but appears to be rare. The following are examples of it.

[50]	mahodimo / maodimo	'heavens'
	mohloho / mohloo	'cupping-horn'

The elision of intervocalic /h/ in non-standard varieties results in increased constraints on its occurrence, while the constraints of the glides [j] and [w] are done away with.

2.3 Morphophonemic Processes

There are a number of morphophonemic processes found in Sotho, which may or may not be observed by different speakers.

2.3.1 The Reflexive Prefix, /i-/, and the Object Prefix of the 1st p. sg., /N-/

We treat the Reflexive Prefix (RP) and the Object Prefix (OP) together, since the morphophonemic changes involved are very similar.

(A) Reflexive prefix

We examine first the changes brought about when the reflexive prefix /i-/ [henceforth RP] is prefixed to verb stems.

Standard	Non-standard
i + b > ip	i + b > ib
i + l/d > it	i + l/d > il/d
i + j > itj	i + j > ij
i + Ø > ik	i + Ø > iØ
i + w > ikw	i + w > iw
i + f > iph	i + f > if
i + r > ith	i + r > ir
i + s > itsh	i + s > is
i + hl > itlh	i + hl > ihl
i + sh > itjh	i + sh > ish
i + h > ikg	i + h > ih

(B) Objectival Prefix

The following tables give the results of the juxtaposition of the OP for the 1st p.sg., with certain consonants at the beginning of a radical:

Standard	Non-standard
N + b > mp [mpʰ]	N + b > mb
N + l/d > nt [ntʰ]	N + l > nl/nd
N + j > ntj [ntʰʲ]	N + j > ngj ³ [ŋdʒ]
N + Ø > nkØ [ŋkʰ]	N + Ø > ngØ
N + w > nkʷ [ŋkʰw]	N + w > ngw
N + f > mph [mph]	N + f > mf / nf / ngf [mf] [ɲf]
N + r > nth [nth]	N + r > nr / ngr [ɲr]
N + s > ntsh [ntsh]	N + s > ns/ ngs [ɲs]
N + hl > ntlh [ntlh]	N + hl > nhl / nghl / ngtlh [ɲt] [ɲtʰh]
N + sh > ntjh [ntʰh]	N + sh > nsh / ngsh [ɲʃ]
N + h > nkg [ŋkxh]	N + h > ngh [ɲh]

³ /ng/ in these examples represents a velar nasal.

We provide examples below to show how the above rules are applied.

[51]	Verb stems		With Reflexive Prefix	
			Standard	Non-Standard
	bôna	'see'	ipôna	ibôna
	lata	'pick up'	itata	ilata
	jabêla	'slap'	itjabêla	ijabêla
	ahlola	'judge'	ikahlola	iahlola
	wabala	'strike'	ikwabala	iwabala
	fala	'scrape'	iphala	ifala
	rata	'like'	ithata	irata
	sia	'leave'	itshia	isia
	hlatswa	'wash'	itlhatswa	ihlatswa
	shapa	'beat'	itjhapa	ishapa
	hobosa	'expose'	ikgobosa	ihobosa

Similarly, for the OP, the following standard and non-standard varieties exist:

[52]	Verb Stem		With OP	
			Standard	Non-Standard
	bua	'talk'	mpua	mbua
	lôya	'bewitch'	ntôya	nlôya / nglôya ⁴
	jabêla	'slap'	ntjabêla	njabêla / ngjabêla
	utswa	'steal'	nkutswa	ngutswa
	wêla	'meet by chance'	nkwêla	ngwêla
	fumana	'find'	mphumana	mfumana / nfumana / ngfumana
	ruta	'teach'	nthuta	nruta / ngruta

⁴ Both /n/ and /ng/ here represents the heterorganic occurrence of the velar nasal [ŋ]. In other words, they are merely orthographical variants in this context.

sêba	'gossip'	ntshêba	nsêba / ngsêba
hlatswa	'wash'	ntlhatswa	nhlatswa / nghlatswa ngtlhatswa
shêba	'watch'	ntjhêba	nshêba / ngshêba
hata	'tread on'	nkgata	nhata / nghata

The non-standard varieties with /ng/ result in the breaking of the constraint in the standard variety whereby syllabic N- must be homorganic, that is, the 1st. p. s. OP is no longer N- throughout, but /m/ before bilabials, and /ng/ elsewhere.

(C) Geographic spread of variants with the Reflexive Prefix

A chart is provided to give a picture of the spread of the standard and non-standard varieties under study. We should, however, note that these figures apply to the written language, and that the tendency seems to be different in speech where speakers are aware that they are not under strict rules applied in writing. The figures are in percentages:

	BB	LR	BR	MS	MF	MH	QT
S	95	92	86	90	75	88	90
NS	5	7	14	10	25	12	10

As our chart illustrates, Mafeteng has the highest percentage of speakers who use the non-standard variety. This figure increases drastically in speech. Although figures vary from sound to sound, Mafeteng is still the district with the highest numbers of speakers who do not use the standard variety. We quote a few of these percentages to support our point:

	LOWEST	2nd HIGHEST	HIGHEST MAFETENG
ib	Quthing 3	Maseru 10	24
ih	Butha-Buthe 3	Berea 31	42
ij	Butha-Buthe 3	Mohale's Hoek 13	21

On the other hand, in Butha-Buthe, speakers tend to use the standard variety. But as with the other districts, this is not necessarily the case in speech. Butha-Buthe has only one case where around twenty percent of its speakers use the non-standard version, that is with *-if-*, the other figures are less than six percent. The capital, Maseru, which is home to Sothos from all parts of the country shows a tendency towards favouring the non-standard variety only in speech, and not in writing. We assume that speakers in Maseru write the standard variety because they are generally more educated than their rural counterparts, who, sometimes, do not stay in school long enough to master writing skills. The argument that uneducated Sotho speakers often seem to lack mastery of the standard variety is supported by Matšela [1992:75]:

... there are those who may not have benefitted from any schooling or other basic education concerned with appropriate language usage.

The above observation makes sense, as we have indicated that not everybody in Lesotho speaks the same type of Sotho. In some cases even rural and uneducated speakers use the non-standard variety until they are exposed to formal education. It is generally true that rural spoken Sotho is closer to the standard than the urban language, but this is not *a/ways* the case.

(D) Geographic spread of certain features involving the OP, 1st p.s.

There are two features which are considered non-standard in this respect:

- (a) The heterorganic occurrence of *n-* and *ng-* with respect to following consonants
- (b) The failure of C1 of stem to change

The percentages for the spread of both the standard and non-standard OP are as follows:

	BB	LR	BR	MS	MF	MH	QT
S	82	79	71	75	61	86	78
NS	18	21	29	25	39	14	22

As with the RP, Mafeteng still has the highest percentage of the non-standard variety usage. But as our chart shows there is a more significant move away from the standard variety, even in writing. Note that the non-standard forms are used by young speakers.

2.3.2. The Passive Extension

The passive concept is expressed by an extension after the verbal radical. This extension has the following allomorphs: *-w-* ~ *-uw-* ~ *-ow-* ~ *-ew-*. According to the *standard* rules, their distribution is as follows:

- (a) The allomorph *-ew-* occurs with the following C radicals:

j- 'eat' > jew-
 tjh- 'burn' > tjhew-
 n- 'rain' > new-
 ny- 'shit' > nyew-
 pjh- 'dry up' > pjhew-
 s- 'be naughty' > sew-
 s- 'clear up [of weather, clouds]' > sew-

- (b) The allomorph *-ow-* occurs with the following C radicals:

hlw- 'climb' > hlow-³
 kgw- 'be weaned' > kgow-
 nw- 'drink' > now-
 shw- 'die' > show-

³ The deletion of the semi-vowel *w* is a regular phonological process before back vowels.

(c) The allomorph *-uw-* occurs with all other C radicals:

f- 'give'	>	fuw-
kg- 'pick'	>	kguw-
tl- 'come'	>	tluw-
tsw- 'go/come out'	>	tsuw-
y- 'go to'	>	uw-

(d) The allomorph *-uw-* occurs with radicals ending in *u*:

bu- 'speak'	>	buuw-
fudu- 'stir'	>	fuduuw-

(e) The allomorph *-uw-* occurs with radicals ending in a semi-vowel, with subsequent deletion of this semi-vowel:

utsw- 'steal'	>	utsuw-
lôy- 'bewitch'	>	löuw-

(f) The allomorph *-w-* occurs elsewhere:

rat- 'love'	>	ratw-
thus- 'help'	>	thusw-

When the allomorph *-w-* is suffixed to radicals ending in a labial consonant or *ny*, the following morphophonemic changes occur:

p + w	>	pjw [pʃ ^h w] / tjw [tʃ ^h w]
ph + w	>	pjhw [pʃ ^h hw] / tjhw [tʃ ^h hw]
b + w	>	bjw [bʒw] / jw [dʒw] / [ʒw]
f + w	>	fjw [fʃw] / shw [ʃw]
m + w	>	ngw [ŋw]
mm + w	>	nngw [ŋŋw]
ny + w	>	nngw [ŋŋw]

Doke and Mofokeng [1957:153] say [with orthography adjusted]:

An alternative, though rarer, longer form of the passive employs the suffix *-uwa* instead of *-wa*:

rata (love) > *ratwa* or *ratuwa*

ětsa (do) > *ětswa* or *ětsuwa*.

Certain speakers prefer this longer form instead of palatalizing or velarizing...

While Doke and Mofokeng say that "certain speakers" prefer this longer form, it appears that today, it is the *majority* of speakers who prefer this form. In the case of speakers who do use the standard *-w-* with radicals ending in labials and *ny*, the standard morphophonemic changes are often not adhered to. Either, *-w-* is suffixed *without* the prescribed morphophonemic change taking place (e.g. [53g, 58c], or, alternatively, one of a range of non-standard morphophonemic rules is applied. For each change, we have selected one radical as test case.

2.3.2.1 p + w > pjw / tjh

We used the verb *bopa* 'mould', as a test case in the seven districts studied. Doke and Mofokeng [1957] give the standard forms *bopjw-a* and *botjw-a*. Our study, reveals the following variants:

[53]	<i>Variants</i>	<i>Districts</i>
a.	boptjwa	LR, MS, MH, QT
b.	botjwa	QT
c.	bopuwa	BB, MF
d.	bobjwa	MS, LR
e.	bofjwa	BR
f.	bopjwa	BR, MS, MF, MH, QT
g.	bopwa	BR
h.	bobtjwa	MS

The above variants illustrate that there are many non-standard rules which speakers use, resulting in non-standard variants. The standard variants, *bopjwa/ botjwa*, do occur but not as popularly as the non-standard ones among young speakers. Both of them are used by around six percent of the youth we worked with in the seven districts.

2.3.2.2 ph + w > pjhw / tjhw

Similarly, for radicals ending in /ph/ several non-standard varieties exist. As a test case we used the verb *hlöneph-a* 'honour, respect', for which the standard Passive forms are *hlönepjhwa / hlönetjhwa* 'be honoured, respected'. In the examples below, we have included a phonetic transcription of the morphophonemically changed syllables:

[54]	Variants	Districts
a.	hlönetjhwa [tʃhw]	All except MF
b.	hlönepjhwa [pʃhw]	LR, BR, MS, MF
c.	hlönephuwa	All
d.	hlönephjhwa [phʃw]	LR
e.	hlöneptjwa [ptʃʷ]	LR, MS, MF, MH, QT
f.	hlönepjhuwa [pʃh]	QT
g.	hlönephtjwa [phtʃʷ]	LR, MS, MF
h.	hlönepjwa [pʃʷ]	BR
i.	hlöneptjhwa [ptʃhw]	BR
j.	hlönetjwa [tʃʷ]	All except MF
k.	hlöniphuwa	BR

The standard variant *hlönepjhwa*, which occurs only between Leribe and Mafeteng, is used by around ten percent of all speakers we worked with in seven districts. Likewise, *hlönetjwa* is not very popular, although it appears in

all districts, with the exception of Mafeteng. Just over seven percent of Sotho-speakers use it. In other words, it is roughly seventeen percent of all studied speakers who use the standard variety, the remainder of the Sotho-speaking population do not use the prescribed rule. As the above list shows, there is a wide range of varieties for this form, all of which seem to follow rules formulated by individual speakers. These varieties indicate that some speakers do palatalise the labial /ph/, but not following the standard rule, while others just suffix *-w-*, or *-uw-*, which involves no morphophonemic change.

The most popular variant, *hlönephuwa* is an example of speakers suffixing *-uw-* to stems. The explanation for the popularity of this non-standard variant over the standard one is perhaps the fact that this allomorph causes no morphophonemic changes to the radical, whereas *-w-* does.

2.3.2.3 **b + w > bjw / jw**

We use the radical *sêb-* 'gossip about' as test case. Doke and Mofokeng [1957:152] give *sêbjwa* / *sêjwa* as standard variants. Our survey produced the following range of variants:

[55]	Variants	Districts
	a. <i>sêjwa</i>	All
	b. <i>sêbjwa</i>	LR, BR, MS, MH
	c. <i>sêbuwa</i>	All
	d. <i>sêbua</i>	BR, MS, MH, QT

For radicals ending in /b/ the standard variants are more popular than the standard variants of labials discussed earlier. However, as with earlier cases, the non-standard variants are still more popular than the standard forms.

In this case *sébuwa* which is non-standard, is the most commonly used variant among young Sotho-speakers, with around 49 percent of this group using it, followed by *séjwa* with 37 percent. The rest of the variants are used by few young speakers, while both standard forms are quite commonly used among the older Sotho-speaker.

2.3.2.4 f + w > fjw / shw

The Passive of the verb *bôf-a* 'bind', had the following range of variants, including the standard forms, *bôfjwa* / *bôshwa* 'be bound':

[56]	<i>Variants</i>	<i>Districts</i>
a.	<i>bôfjwa</i>	All
b.	<i>bôshwa</i>	BB, LR, MH, QT
c.	<i>böfuwa</i>	All
d.	<i>böfua</i>	MS
e.	<i>böfwa</i>	MS
f.	<i>böfjuwa</i>	MS
g.	<i>bôftjwa</i>	BB, BR
h.	<i>bôtjwa</i>	MS, BR

Although we have eight variants above, it is the non-standard variant, *böfuwa*, and the standard *bôfjwa*, that are popularly used, with the non-standard variant being more popular than the standard one. The variant *böfuwa*, is easy to form, as speakers just suffix *-uw-* to *bôf-* without any morphophonemic rules being applicable. The other variants are used by comparatively few speakers.

2.3.2.5 m + w > ngw

For the verb *rom-* 'send' the following variants were observed:

[57] Variants	Districts
a. <i>rongwa</i>	All
b. <i>romuwa</i>	All except BR
c. <i>ronngwa</i>	LR, MS
d. <i>ronguwa</i>	BR, MS, MF
e. <i>rumuwa</i>	BR, MH, QT

Variants (a) and (b) are the standard forms according to Doke and Mofokeng [1957:152] but (b) is considered non-standard by language purists. Although both forms are popular, in schools *rongwa* seems to be the preferred form. This is why some speakers may use *rongwa* in writing, but shift to *romuwa* 'send' in speech, especially in informal conversations. In this case, the variant (a) is the most commonly used form in all districts. However, (b) follows in popularity, with Mafeteng and Butha-Buthe having over forty percent speakers using it and the other districts just around thirty percent, with the exception of Maseru. In the latter district (e) is the second most popular form, being used by around thirty percent of its popularity.

2.3.2.6 ny + w > nngw

For the verb *seny-* 'spoil', the standard Passive form is *senngw-*. Our data yielded the following passive forms:

- [58]
- a. *senngwa*
 - b. *sengwa*
 - c. *senywa*
 - d. *senyuwa*
 - f. *senyua*
 - g. *senyowa*

The above rule says that *ny* has to undergo velarisation, but as our examples show, some speakers do not abide by this rule. [58a], which is the only variety following the rule is the prescribed form. However, it is not used by the majority of speakers, as the following table illustrates. The figures are in percentages:

	BB	LR	BR	MS	MF	MH	QT
67a	39	31	24	44	50	47	24
67b	25	8	14	10	14	5	9

The main difference between [58a] and [58c] is that the former has undergone velarisation before *-w-* is suffixed while the latter has not. In (d), (f), and (g), *-uw-*, *-u-*, or *-ow-* is suffixed, and since these suffixes are vowel-commencing they do not cause velarisation.

2.3.2.7 C radicals

As seen above, standard rules prescribe that the allomorphs *-ew-*, *-ow-* or *-uw-* occur with C radicals, the distribution being morphologically determined.

(A) *-ew-*

In most cases, young speakers suffix *-ow-* instead of *-ew-*, thus:

[68]		<i>Standard</i>	<i>Non-Standard</i>
j-a	'eat'	jew-a	jow-a
tjh-a	'burn'	tjhew-a	tjhow-a
s-a	'naughty'	sew-a	sow-a

The allomorph *-ew-* is not as common as *-ow-*. In their effort to regularise Sotho, young speakers seem to prefer using *-ow-* in almost all cases which are "supposed" to have the other suffix. Although young speakers use the prescribed suffix in writing, in speech they apply non-standard allomorphs.

(B) -ow-

The rules applying to *-ow-* are not observed by all young speakers, who apply non-standard rules as illustrated below. For example, the standard Passive form for the radical *h/w-* 'climb' is *hlow-*, but it has the following range of variants:

- [69] a. *hlow-a*
 b. *hluw-a*
 c. *hlu-a*
 d. *hluuw-a*

The standard is the most widely used form in five of the seven districts. Seventy percent of speakers in Butha-Buthe and fifty percent of speakers in Mafeteng use [69b]. [69c] occurs only in Maseru and Mohale's Hoek, albeit rarely. [69d] was found only in Leribe, where over thirty percent of speakers use it.

(C) -uw-

According to the prescribed rules above, *f-* 'give' > *fuwa* 'be given', but this is not always the case with language users:

- [70] a. *fuwa*
 b. *fua*
 c. *fuuwa*
 d. *fiwa*
 e. *fanuwa*

Variant (a) is the most popular, with more than eighty-five percent of speakers sampled in all districts using it, and in Berea all speakers use the standard variety. (b) is found minimally in Butha-Buthe, Maseru, Mohale's Hoek and

Quthing, while (c) occurs infrequently in Leribe and Mafeteng. Variants (d) and (e) are peculiar to Butha-Buthe.

(D) Radicals ending in -u- suffix -uw-:

However, according to our study **ru-** 'possess' has the following varieties:

- [71] a. ruuwa
 b. ruwa
 c. ruua
 d. ruhua

From Butha-Buthe to Mafeteng more than sixty percent of speakers use (a), while in Mohale's Hoek more than sixty percent of speakers use (b), and in Quthing about forty-eight percent use (a), while the same percentage use (b).

2.3.3 The Causative

The Causative in Sotho communicates the idea of 'cause to do/be'. Historically {-is-} and -y- were discrete suffixes with different meanings, but they have tended to merge and become allomorphs. However, there are still some cases where either suffix could be used with the same radical, but with a difference of meaning, for example:

- | | | | | |
|------|---------|-------|------------|--|
| [72] | ll-a | 'cry' | llis-a | 'cause to cry' |
| | | | lets-a | 'cause to resound, play an instrument' |
| | lekan-a | | lekantsh-a | 'equalise, make sufficient' |
| | | | lekany-a | 'estimate, measure, compare' |

Therefore we treat them as separate morphemes.

2.3.3.1 The first suffix is realized as /-is- ~ -s- ~ -es-/

(a) The allomorph -es- occurs with the following C radicals:

j-	'eat'
nw-	'drink'
ny-	'defecate'
pjh-	'evaporate'
kgw-	'be weaned'
tjh-	'burn'
hlw-	'climb'
s-	'be naughty'
s-	'clear up [of weather, clouds]'

(b) The allomorph -s- occurs with radicals ending in *n* or *ny*, with the following morphophonemic changes:

$n + s > ntsh$

$ny + s > ntsh$

bin-	'sing'	>	bintsh-
nôn-	'gain weight'	>	nöntsh-
hlany-	'be mad'	>	hlantsh-
bëny-	'shine'	>	bëntsh-

(c) -is- occurs elsewhere

lef-	'pay'	>	lefis-
hlatsw-	wash'	>	hlatswis-

(d) For radicals ending in *y*, the *y* is deleted before -is- is suffixed.

tsamay- 'go, travel' > tsamais-

However, some speakers apply other rules, as seen in the various Causative forms in our data, and which are illustrated below:

(A) As seen in 2.3.3.1 some C radicals take the suffix *-es-*. In the case of the radical *kgw-* 'be weaned', however, a number of variants were found.

- [73]
- a. *kgwesa*
 - b. *kgwisa*
 - c. *kgwaisa*
 - d. *kguisa*
 - e. *kgwasisa*
 - f. *kgusa*
 - g. *kgwahisa*
 - h. *kgweisa*
 - i. *kgwadisa*

Thirty-nine percent and thirty-five percent of the general population use (b) and (c), respectively. These are the most widely used varieties. Although (a) and (f) are the prescribed forms, (f) is not popular, and appears only in Leribe and Berea. The other variants occur rarely throughout Lesotho, with the exception of (d) which also seems relatively common.

(B) Although the prescribed Causative allomorph for verbs ending in Vn is *-tsh-*, we observed a degree of variation, which we exemplify for the verb *bin-a* 'sing':

- [74]
- a. *bintsha* 'cause to sing, conduct in singing'
 - b. *binntsha*
 - c. *binisa*
 - d. *bintshisa*
 - e. *binesa*

[74a] follows the above rule, and is the most popular variant, though [74c] is

common in all districts. (b) occurs in Berea only, while (d) and (e) occur in Mafeteng and Quthing, respectively.

(C) In the case of radicals ending in *y*, our study shows a number of varieties as well, as can be seen in the Causative forms of the verb *lôy-a* 'bewitch' which appear below:

- [75] a. löisa
 b. löhisa
 c. löyisa

Variant (a) is the standard form and observes the *y*-deletion rule, while in (b), /*h*/ is inserted after application of the *y*-deletion rule, and in (c) the *y*-deletion rule has not been applied. The last practice is found mainly in Maseru and the southern part of Lesotho. Form (a) is widely used in all districts. On the other hand, (c) was not found in Berea and Mohale's Hoek.

It should be noted that even those speakers who normally elide intervocalic /*h*/ (cf. 2.2.5), insert it before the Causative extension.

2.3.3.2 -y-

The morpheme *-y-* is manifest only as a morphophonemic change in the preceding consonant. The changes involved are:

- (a) *l + -y- > ts*
 kgathal- 'be tired' > kgathats-
 hopol- 'remember' > hopots-
- (b) *h + -y- > s*
 tloh- 'go away' > tlos-
 aloh- 'go to graze' > alos-

- (c) $n + -y- > ny$
- arohan- 'separate' > arohany-
- kôpan- 'come together' > kôpany-

(D) With respect to the extension *-y-*, which is the prescribed form for polysyllabic verbs ending in *l*, we find a number of variants, which we illustrate with the verb *makala* 'wonder, become surprised':

- [76] a. makatsa
 b. makadisa
 c. makatsisa

The standard version, [76a], has only around thirteen percent of the Sotho-speaking population using it, while the non-standard variety, [76b], is used by around eighty-seven percent of Sotho-speakers. This, therefore, means that there is a small number of speakers who use [76c], and these are in Maseru only. Note that in (b) the change from *l* to *d* is irrelevant since [d] is an allophone of *ll*, which occurs before *il*.

(E) As seen in 2.3.3.1 $n + y > ny$ (This process appears to be confined to verbs ending in reciprocal suffix *-an-*). However, for *kôpan-a* 'meet', speakers use the following variants:

- [77] a. kôpanya
 b. kôpantsha
 c. kôpanisa
 d. kôpanyisa
 e. kôpantjisa

The standard variant, (a), is only third in popularity in the seven districts, with (b) and (c) being the most commonly used versions. [77d] occurs between Leribe and Mafeteng while (e) is found Maseru, though to a lesser extent.

(F) As seen in 2.3.3.1 $h + y > s$.

Although Doke & Mofokeng [1957:163] give us the causative of *aloha* 'go to graze', as *alosa* 'herd', we observed the following variants:

- [78] a. *alosa*
 b. *alohisa*
 c. *aloisa*
 d. *alosisa*
 e. *alodisa*
 f. *alontsha*
 g. *alohantsha*
 h. *oloisa*

The standard form, [78a] is used significantly from Maseru to Quthing, but [78b] is both non-standard and very popular in all districts as the following table illustrates:

	BB	LR	BR	MS	MF	MH	QT
A	3	3	9	17	29	29	19
B	97	97	76	78	67	47	77

Some speakers apply the morpheme in inappropriate environments according to the prescriptivists. This is how [78b] is formed, speakers suffix *-is-* to the verbal radical *aloh-*, instead of changing *-h-* to *-s-* as the rule prescribes. Likewise, [78a], does not seem to be causative to some speakers. In fact, some even indicate that the original meaning of 'going to graze' is not retained in [78a], which is just associated with the meaning 'to herd'. Varieties [78c] to [78h] are heard among teenagers, from Berea to the south.

The above discussion indicates that young Sotho-speakers are shifting from the standard construction of the causative. This is possibly a result of the many rules which Sotho-speakers have to internalise before mastering the causative, so these speakers tend to opt for few and general rules. The application of these general and non-standard rules results in "causative" unacceptable constructions such as *löyis-a* 'cause to bewitch', *binis-a* 'cause to sing', *kgwais-a* 'cause to wean', and many others which involve the suffixation of the causative suffix *-is-*, without adhering to the necessary morphophonemic changes that individual verbs have to undergo. Though non-standard, this practice gives a regular and easy to see pattern.

2.3.4 The Diminutive

We look at variation in nominal diminutives in Sotho. The significance of the diminutive is generally that of diminution in either quantity or quality, often associated with a pejorative significance.

In Sotho when noun diminutives are formed, certain morphophonemic processes may occur. However, this is not always the case as some nouns just add suffixes which do not require any phonetic changes. The suffixes, *-nyana*, *-anyana* or *-ana*, may be used depending on the noun involved. The suffix *-nyana* does not involve any morphophonemic processes, whereas the other two do. Because of the greater simplicity of using the suffix *-nyana*, this often ends up being the most common way of forming diminutives, thus resulting in non-standard varieties.

The following are the *standard* rules for nominal diminutive formation:

(A) Nouns ending in *a* replace it by *-ana*.

taba 'matter' > tabana

However, for the diminutive of *modisa* 'herdboy', Sothos use the following varieties:

- [79] a. *modisana*
 b. *modisanyana*
 c. *modisananyana*

The variant (a) is both prescribed and the most popular one. However, (b) is also quite commonly used, except in Mafeteng where it does not occur. Instead, (c) is peculiar to, and relatively popular in, Mafeteng. In (b) speakers have suffixed the general diminutive suffix *-nyana* to the noun, *modisa*, whereas in (c) two things have been done, suffixing *-ana* to the noun in question and then suffixing *-nyana* to the so-formed diminutive noun.

However, *sehlôpha* 'troop', in the standard variety behaves differently as it undergoes alveolarisation, becoming *sehlôtshwana* 'small troop'. Speakers, on the other hand, use the following variants:

- [80] a. *sehlôtshwana*
 b. *sehlôphanyana*
 c. *sehlôtjhwana*
 d. *sehlôphana*
 e. *sehlôpshwana*
 f. *sehlôtjwana*
 g. *sehlôpjana*
 h. *sehlôptjhwana*
 i. *sehlôptjwana*

Most speakers use the standard form in both speech and writing. But as in earlier discussions, [80b], the variety with the general diminutive suffix *-nyana*, also exists, though not widely. (c) appears in Butha-Buthe, Berea,

Maseru, Mafeteng and Quthing, while the other varieties occurs in Maseru and southern districts, but among small numbers of speakers.

- (B) For ending nouns in a back vowel, *-ana* is suffixed, with concomitant consonantalisation of this final vowel:

lemao 'needle' > lemawana

Once again, however, Sotho-speakers have a variety of different rules that apply instead of the standard rule. For example, the following is a list of the different diminutives for *tau* 'lion':

- [81] a. tawana
 b. tauwana
 c. tauana
 d. tahwana
 e. taunyana
 f. tautsana
 g. tautjwana

Item (a) is the standard form, and it is popular in all districts, with (e) next in frequency. It is not surprising that (e) is used by many speakers as it is generally easier to form than (a). The other varieties occur between Butha-Buthe and Maseru, but among few speakers.

- (C) i. For nouns ending in the bilabial /b/, followed by e, ê, ô and o, palatalisation occurs when diminutives are formed:

thêbê 'shield' > thêjana

Nevertheless, for the noun *bohôbê* 'bread', the following varieties exist:

- [82] a. bohôjana
 b. bohôjwana
 c. bohôbjana

- d. bohôbjwana
- e. bohôtjwana
- f. bohôbênyana

Although (a) is the prescribed version, it occurs less frequently than (b). In both of them, palatalisation has occurred according to rule, but (b) has a glide after the palatal, which (a) lacks. The same variation holds for (c) as against (d). Most young speakers tend to use (f) and (e), while fewer use (c) and (d) which occur in Berea and Maseru, respectively.

- ii. The dentilabial /f/ followed by [ɔ] and [e] undergoes palatalisation.

sêfê 'sieve' > sêfjwana / sêshwana

However, not every Sotho-speaker observes this rule as the example below illustrates. For *sefefô* 'storm', the following variants exist:

- [83]
- a. sefeshwana / sefefjwana
 - b. sefefwana
 - c. sefefana
 - d. sefefônyana
 - e. sefenyana
 - f. sefetjana
 - g. sefetjwana
 - h. sefefjwana

The two variants given as (a) are the prescribed varieties, but they are not as commonly used as (d), the most popular variety. (c), (g), and (h) are peculiar to the south, while (e) occurs in Butha-Buthe only, and (f) appears in Berea. (b) is second to (d) in popularity in all districts, excluding Quthing. As our example above shows, in some varieties palatalisation does occur, while in others it does not.

iii. With nouns ending in *the* or *thê*, the consonant undergoes palatalisation.

bêthê 'bed' > bêtjhana

For *mmethe* 'grain-bag', Doke & Mofokeng [1957:96] give the diminutive *mmetjhana* 'small bag', but our survey provided the following variants:

- [84] a. mmetjhana
 b. mmetjana
 c. mmethenyana
 d. mmethana
 e. mmetsana
 f. mmetswana
 g. mmetjwana
 h. mmethwana
 i. mmethjana

Variants (e), (f), (g), (h), and (i) occur to a small extent between Leribe and Mohale's Hoek, while (b) is found Leribe alone. Though (d) appears in all districts, it is relatively more common from the central to the southern part, while (b) exists from the central to the northern part of Lesotho. Variant (c) is second in popularity.

iv. When the alveolar stop *t* occurs in the final syllable of a noun, it undergoes palatalisation to *tj* [tʃ] when *-ana* is suffixed:

monate 'fun' > monatjana

However, for our test case, *sefatê* 'tree', we have the following diminutives:

- [85] a. sefatjana
 b. sefatênyana

- c. sefatana
- d. sefajana
- e. sefatswana
- f. sefatsana
- g. sefatjhana

Although we have several varieties, the prescribed form, [85a], is the most commonly used variant. Variants (b), (c) and (d) appear in Butha-Buthe, while (f) occurs in Butha-Buthe and Leribe. The remaining varieties, though not very common, are found in Maseru and Mafeteng.

(D) i. Alveolarisation is undergone by nouns with final syllable *di* or *lô*:

- mosadi 'woman' > mosatsana
- mohlôlô 'surprise' > mohlôtswana

For *phôôfôlô* 'animal', we noted the following variants:

- [86] a. phôôfôtswana
- b. phôôfôtsana
- c. phôôfôlwana
- d. phôôfôtjwana
- e. phôôfôlônyana
- f. phôôshwana
- g. phôôfôjwana
- h. phôôfôshwana
- i. phôôtjana
- j. phôôfôtsanyana

In these diminutives different rules have been used, some involving alveolarisation, and others not. [86a], the standard variety, is the most widely

used variety, with (e) next in popularity, although to a much lesser degree. With the exception of (h), (i) and (j) which occur in Maseru, Berea and Leribe respectively, the other varieties are scattered all over Lesotho in very small numbers.

- ii. When *-ana* is suffixed to nouns ending in *r* followed by a non-low, front vowel, *r* is replaced by *tsh*:

bere 'bear' > betshana

For our test noun, *nare* 'buffalo' the following diminutives are used by different speakers:

- [87] a. natsana
 b. naretsana
 c. najwana
 d. narana
 e. najana
 f. narenyana

The above rule does not hold for some speakers as the standard variety, (a) is not the most popular version of the diminutive under discussion — rather, (f) is. Variant (a) is considerably less popular than (f). (e) occurs in all districts except Mafeteng, which has (c). (b) is peculiar to Maseru while (d) is scattered throughout Lesotho, but popularly used in Quthing where fifty percent of speakers use it.

- (E) In nouns ending in *m* followed by a vowel other than *a*, *m* undergoes velarisation to *ngw*.

For the noun *leleme* 'tongue', the diminutives are:

- [88] a. lelengwana
 b. lelemana
 c. lelemanyana
 d. lelejana
 e. lelenyana
 f. lelejwana
 g. leletjana
 h. lelemejana

[88d] occurs in Butha-Buthe and Berea, but is mostly popular in the south, particularly in Mafeteng. Variant (b) occurs in Butha-Buthe, Maseru and Quthing. (c) is the second most widely used variety, and occurs throughout Lesotho as does the standard variety (a). In this instance (a) is much more popular than (b).

Lastly, we study one of the "irregular" nouns, as Doke & Mofokeng [1957:98] put it. In this case there is no clear rule, as nouns which form part of this section have more differences than similarities. We studied the noun *fariki* 'pig', which is also quoted by Doke & Mofokeng [ibid]; they have *fakatshana* 'small pig' as its diminutive, we have the following:

- [89] a. fakatshana
 b. farikitshana
 c. faritshana
 d. fakitshana
 e. farakatshana
 f. farikatshana
 g. farakana

- h. farekana
- i. farikana
- j. farikinyana

The standard form, (a), is common in Butha-Buthe and Leribe, while in Berea and Maseru (e) is most frequent. Mafeteng has (f) as the widely used variety; this variety occurs also in Maseru and the southern parts. (j) appears significantly in six of the seven districts, with the exception of Mohale's Hoek. Actually, in Mohale's Hoek there is no clear pattern as to which variety is peculiar to this district as almost all of them are scattered around the district. The varieties which we have not discussed in detail appear throughout Lesotho, but in relatively small numbers.

Below, we take one noun, in which no morphophonemic process is involved in its diminutive formation, and show how the suffixes *-ana* and *-nyana* both occur in the speech of our informants. For *mëtsi* 'water', we have the following varieties:

- [90] a. mëtsana
- b. mëtsinyana

From Butha-Buthe to Maseru, we found that in writing there is roughly the same number of speakers who use (a) and (b), but in the south, (a) is more popular than (b). However, in speech, (b) is much more commonly used than (a) throughout Lesotho. It is very common to hear sentences such as the following:

- [91] a. Mphê mëtsinyana, ngwanaka!
Give me a little water, my child!
- b. Ke rata mëtsinyana a batang.
I like some cold water.

instead of the standard forms:

c. Mphe *mëtsana*, ngwanaka.

Give me a small quantity of water, my child.

d. Ke rata *mëtsana* a batang.

I like some cold water.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter we discussed phonological variation in Sotho today. In the different sections, we have shown that young speakers seem to be moving away from the irregular phonological system to a more systematic pattern. Although this practice is not accepted by language purists, it however looks more popular than the prescribed variety, more often than not. We have indicated that the non-standard forms that exist are also rule governed, with the main difference between them and the standard variety being their simplicity and regularity.

CHAPTER THREE : MORPHOLOGICAL VARIATION

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter we study morphological variation between earlier and current Sotho, and also between the existing Sotho dialects and sociolects.

Matthews [1993:3] gives the following definition of morphology:

Morphology, therefore, is simply a term for that branch of linguistics which is concerned with the 'forms of words' in different uses and constructions.

He goes on to define morphemes thus [78]:

the morpheme is established as the single minimal primitive unit of grammar, the ultimate basis for our entire description of the primary articulation of language.

Fromkin and Rodman [1988:303] make the following observation on morphological rules:

Rules of morphology may be lost, added, or changed. We can observe some of these changes by comparing older and newer forms of language, or by looking at different dialects.

Basing ourselves on the above extracts we attempt a comparison between the morphological rules applied by different Sotho-speakers and writers. Our discussion concentrates on morphemes as defined by Matthews above.

3.1 The Perfective Suffix -ilë

There seem to be differences between early and current Sotho literature with regards to the formation of the Perfective. Most early literature uses the suffix *-ilë* where other suffixes generally occur today. In the 1916 Bible we have examples such as the following:

- [92] a. ömilë
 b. phahamilë
 c. ngödilë

which today would normally be:

- [93] a. ömmë
 b. phahame
 c. ngötse

In the current hymn book of the Lesotho Evangelical Church the following example appears:

- [94] a. Ke *tëdilë* tsa lefatshe.
 I have given up earthly things.

This would now read:

- b. Ke *tëtse* tsa lefatshe.

Younger Sotho-speakers today fail to associate *tëdilë* 'have given up', with the Perfective of the verb *têla* 'give up' which now has the Perfective, *tëtse*, and thus have difficulty in understanding the above sentence.

Examples in [95] Perfective forms for verbs ending in *-ma*, and *-la*. Variation is as illustrated below:

[95]	<i>Present</i>		<i>Perfective</i>	
			<i>Earlier Form</i>	<i>Current form</i>
a.	tima	extinguish	tumilë	tummë
b.	tlama	bind	tlamilë	tlammë
c.	phahama	stand	phahamilë	phahame
d.	ngôla	write	ngödilë	ngötse
e.	têla	give up	tëdilë	tëtse
f.	hola	grow (up)	hodilë	hotse

A close look at the works of different Sotho linguists indicates that they do not share the same view on the formation of the Perfective. Doke and Mofokeng [1957:181] make the following observation [We have adjusted the orthography to match that used here]:

With disyllabic verbs ending in *-la*, some assume the suffix *-ile*, some change *-la* to *-tse*, with vowel adjustments.

The above observation fails to clarify as to which verbs take either suffix. A similarly neutral statement is made by Jacottet [1927:101]:

In a general way we may say that most disyllabic verbs in *-ala* take *-ilĕ*, most in *-ĕla* and *-ula* take *-tse*, and all verbs in *-ola* take both *-ilĕ* and *-tse*.

On verbs ending in *-ma* Doke and Mofokeng [1957:179] say:

There is varied treatment with verbs ending in *-ma*:

[a] Most verbs in *-ma* suffix *-ilĕ* according to the general rule:

lema (cultivate) > *-lemilĕ*

tlama (bind) > *-tlamilĕ*

NOTE: Such forms as *-lemmĕ* and *-tlammĕ*, sometimes heard, should be avoided as they belong rather to the original Tlokwa dialect.

Doke and Mofokeng [ibid] do not only indicate the rule used in the formation of the Perfective, but they also explain why *-ilĕ* was widely used for some time, because other forms were labelled non-standard and therefore were unacceptable to language purists. That they regard the other forms as belonging to the Tlokwa dialect reminds us that Sotho is the end product of the languages of all the clans mentioned earlier, and not just a dialect of the powerful and ruling Kwena clan. Contrary to this argument, Khaketla [1951:10] illustrates that both *-ilĕ* and *-mĕ* are acceptable Perfective suffixes. He lists examples such as the following to support his point:

- [96] a. lema 'plough' > lemilë / lemmë
 b. loma 'bite' > lomilë / lommë
 c. roma 'send' > romilë / rommë

Although the Lekhotla la Sesotho [1994:46,47] only gives examples without any explanation, these prove that it does not agree with Doke and Mofokeng, and Khaketla's Perfective forms with the suffix *-ilë* above. Our questionnaires proved that older speakers use the forms given by Doke and Mofokeng [1967], while younger speakers use the forms given by the Lekhotla la Sesotho [1994].

The following examples were used by young speakers, agreeing with the Lekhotla la Sesotho [1994].

- [97] a. loma 'bite' > lommë
 b. mēma 'invite' > mēmmë

Whatever argument was put forward, it did not justify the fact that *-ilë* was preferred over *-më* and *-tse* initially. Because the Lekhotla la Sesotho writes prescribed texts in Lesotho, its argument prevails in classrooms today. This, therefore, means that the dialect which Doke and Mofokeng [1967:179] regarded as non-standard is now the standard variety, having been blessed by the Lekhotla la Sesotho.

3.2 The Demonstrative

Sotho has three positions for the Demonstrative, each denoting a particular distance from the speaker, with two different sets for each position. Our interest focuses on the first position Demonstrative as variation is observable in it. This is the form which indicates that the object is near the speaker, thus 'this' and 'these', for singular and plural Classes, respectively.

The one set of the first position Demonstrative is made up of two parts, the first part is the relative concord, while the second part comprises the vowel occurring in the noun prefix, except for Classes 8 and 10, which have *i* in the NP, but *e* in the Demonstrative.

Rel. concord	NP	Dem.
Cl. 7 sē	se-	sēe
Cl. 8 tsē	di-	tsēe
Cl. 14 bö	bo-	böö

The second set of the first position Demonstrative is made up of the relative concord and the suffix *-na*.

Rel. concord	Suffix <i>-na</i>	Dem.
Cl. 7 sē	-na	sēna
Cl. 14 bö	-na	böna

However, for both sets, Cl. 1 behaves differently. The first part of the first set is not a relative concord as is the case with the other noun Classes, while for the second set *-nwa*, and not *-na*, is suffixed.

The following is a list of **Set A** of the first position Demonstratives:

Cl.	S	NS
1.	ëo	ëo
2.	baa	bae
3.	öö	öe
4.	ëe	ëe
5.	lëe	lëe
6.	aa	ae
7.	sëe	sëe

- | | | |
|-----|------|------|
| 8. | tsëe | tsëe |
| 9. | ëe | ëe |
| 10. | tsëe | tsëe |
| 14. | böö | böe |
| 15. | höo | höe |
| 18. | möö | möe |

The non-standard forms above are mainly used by rural-dwellers and younger speakers, while the other Sotho-speakers use the standard form. In Set A, above, rural speakers generalise rules which are applied in the formation of the first position Demonstrative given above. Since for the first set, Classes 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10 have -e as second syllable, rural speakers suffix -e even where it does not appear in standard Sotho. This means that speakers regularise on the basis of the most frequently used form.

Similarly, in forming Set B, below, of the first position Demonstrative, rules are generalised. This time it is as if speakers look at the morphology of the second sets of the second and third Demonstrative positions and then apply similar rules which are applied in their formation, reduplicating the last syllables. We surmise that reduplicating the last syllable of the second set of the first position Demonstrative is not acceptable to language purists as they only make statements involving the second sets of the second and third position Demonstrative. For example, the Lekhotla la Sesotho [1994:39] make the following statement:

For the second and third positions we may reduplicate the last syllable of the Demonstrative.

Similarly, Doke and Mofokeng [1957:111], and Guma [1975:127], indicate that the last syllables of the second sets of both the second and third

positions may be reduplicated without affecting the meaning, but do not say anything about the second set of the first position. Because the above observations fail to say anything about the first position Demonstrative it is logical to conclude that it is exempted from them.

For **Set B**, we give a list of only one set of the second and third Demonstrative positions as they are relevant to our current discussion:

Cl.	<i>First Position</i>		<i>Second Position</i>	<i>Third Position</i>
	<i>S</i>	<i>NS</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>S</i>
1.	ënwa	ënwana	ëno/ënono	yane/yanene
2.	bana	banana	bano/banono	bane/banene
3.	öna	önana	öno/önono	wane/wanene
4.	ëna	ënana	ëno/ënono	yane/yanene
5.	läna	länana	läno/länono	lane/lanene
6.	ana	anana	ano/anono	ane/anene
7.	sëna	sënana	sëno/sënono	sane/sanene
8.	tsëna	tsënana	tsëno/tsënono	tsane/tsanene
9.	ëna	ënana	ëno/ënono	yane/yanene
10.	tsëna	tsënana	tsëno/tsënono	tsane/tsanene
14.	böna	bönana	böno/bönono	bane/banene
15.	höna	hönana	höno/hönono	hwane/hwanene
18.	möna	mönana	möno/mönono	mane/manene

The generalisations discussed above result in the following variety of the first position Demonstrative. In the first set, Cl. 1 is exceptional. In the second set, Cl. 1 is different as *-na* has been suffixed to *ënwa* which is the prescribed form. So in this case we do not observe the reduplication of the last syllable,

but rather the suffixation of two allomorphs, *-nwa* and *-na*. However, we still surmise that this results from rural speakers' effort to generalise rules, hence for the second set of the first position Demonstrative the rule would be to suffix *-na* after the basic set; as seen above.

3.3 Conclusion

In this chapter we studied morphological variation. As we have indicated above, some of the studied items demonstrate variation resulting from a shift over time in the form of a morpheme into another. Generally, morphological changes which are observable today indicate a shift from a more complicated system, to an easier one. As we have indicated above, the non-standard varieties of Sotho that exist are morphologically less complex than the standard.

CHAPTER FOUR: LEXICAL VARIATION

4.0 Introduction

The issue of lexical variation in Sotho is quite a sensitive one. This is perhaps so because it does not seem easy for language purists to accept a shift from early standard Sotho to current Sotho which has both internal and external changes. A similar case is dealt with by Heah [1989:3] on Bahasa Malaysia, a Malaysian language. We do not consider lexical variation in isolation, but within cultural and other changes, as Thipa [1989:92] observes about Xhosa:

In considering lexical differences between rural and urban Xhosa varieties in terms of standard and non-standard varieties, the point that needs to be made at the outset is that an important aspect that will emerge is that of language change. If language is part of culture, and if culture is dynamic, language can equally be expected to be dynamic, to be continually changing.

The dynamism of both language and culture is not peculiar to Xhosa and Sotho, it is universal. Bavin and Shopen in Romaine [1991:105] make the following observation, supporting our point:

Change has taken place in the life-style of the Warlpiri people quite rapidly over the past 50 years and there has been lack of time to develop standard forms for talking about new things. If people are talking about the land, hunting trips, ceremonies or kinship ties, there are traditional terms, but if they are talking about shopping, living in houses, doing new kinds of jobs, driving or repairing motor vehicles, or playing basketball, softball... the necessary words are usually borrowed from English.

The observations above also apply, to a large extent, to the change that is now observable between early and current, rural and urban, Sotho. *Sesotho*, "the language and culture of the Sothos", has clearly changed. It is this change which is the core of our discussion in this chapter.

Lexical variation in Sotho is of three types:

- (a) There is internal change. Langacker [1973:185] indicates that not all changes in language are brought about by the influence of other languages. This type of change involves a shift from one Sotho lexeme to another.
- (b) Secondly, there is variation involving a shift from a Sotho lexeme to an adoptive. This includes codeswitching. Borrowing itself poses a problem to purists as some adoptives fail to be adapted "properly" into Sotho, while sometimes an existing Sotho word disappears because of a new and borrowed one.
- (c) On the other hand, we have variation resulting from a shift from the borrowed lexicon as well.

The Lekhotla la Sesotho [1994:22-30] has tabulated 341 words which have been adopted into Sotho, giving their standard versions. However, this does not mean that for this new lexicon speakers do not have their own variety. Similarly, for all those many words which do not appear in any Sotho text, speakers have their own Sothoised varieties, following rules which seem easy enough to apply.

We study lexical differences under the following sub-headings:

- (a) within core vocabulary;
- (b) involving Sotho and other languages, generally English and Afrikaans;
- (c) involving the borrowed lexicon only.

4.1 Internal variation

Lexical variation involving two or more Sotho items is not common. However, we examine this variation where it exists. Examples include the following:

[98] Le na le *tjepa* tsë kae?

How many *cattle* do you have?

Out of over three hundred students on whom we tried the first item, *tjepa* 'cow', only six were familiar with it, the rest were not. We could not get an answer until we substituted *tjepa* 'cow', with *kgömo* 'cow', the common term. But when we tried the same item on older speakers the results were different, all were familiar with it although it was not everybody who used it in their speech. Some rural and old men, however, seem to prefer *tjepa* 'cow', over *kgömo* 'cow', but they constitute a quite insignificant number. We surmise that *kgömo* 'cow', is the earliest word. The Nguni languages have *n.komo*, which is close to *kgömo*, for 'cow'. On the other hand, *tjepa* 'cow', was initially used to refer to an ox, but extended its meaning to 'cow'.

[99] *Lemati* ha le a tshwanêla ho kgahlêlwa.

A *door* is not supposed to be banged.

In the example above we have used the most commonly used item, especially in urban areas. We come across *lehlafi* 'door', every now and again in rural areas, particularly when speakers refer to the older types of doors. The set up in most rural homes in Lesotho is to have two or more separate houses, namely, *mokgôrô* and *rôntabolê* or *hêisi*. Both *mokgôrô* and *rôntabolê* are round huts, while *hêisi* is a rectangular house. *Mokgôrô* 'hut', normally functions as a kitchen and children's bedroom, its door is normally *lehlafi*, and generally it can't be locked, while *rôntabolê/hêisi* are a lounge and adults' bedroom and would usually have proper modern doors, *mamati* 'doors'.

We examine further examples:

[100] Batho ba a *tsola* pele ba tōla.

People *undress* before bathing.

The lexical item *tsola* used above is not as polite as its counterpart, *hlobola* 'undress'. *Tsola* 'undress' is used mostly by male and rural speakers, while *hlobola* is common among female and urban speakers.

Variation is also observable in the following example:

[101] Re tla *tena* marikgwē a malélélè ka Söntaha.

We will wear long pants on Sunday.

In [101] *tena* 'wear', is used but sometimes *apara* 'wear', occurs. Our research indicates that generally the occurrence of either item is controlled by the sex of the speaker and the item which is referred to. The following charts illustrate our point. *Tena* is represented by T, while A represents *apara*, on the charts:

[102] *bolause* 'blouse'

	BB	LR	BR	MS	MF	MH	QT
M	T	T	T	T	T	T	T
W	A	T	A	A	A	T	T

[103] *borikgwé* 'ladies pants'

	BB	LR	BR	MS	MF	MH	QT
M	T	T	T	T	T	T	T
W	T	T	T	A	A	T	T

[104] *borikgwë* 'men's pants'

	BB	LR	BR	MS	MF	MH	QT
M	T	T	T	T	T	T	T
W	T	T	T	A	T	T	T

[105] *hêmpê* 'shirt'

	BB	LR	BR	MS	MH	MF	QT
M	T	T	T	T	T	T	T
W	A	A	A	A	A	A	A

The charts indicate that generally men use *tena* in all cases, while women prefer *apara*. However, with female Sothos the general trend seems to be that when a top is referred to *apara* is used, while for bottoms they shift to *tena*. There seems to be no reasonable explanation why more females use *apara* when referring to men's shirts than when talking about blouses.

In the following example variation exists between an impolite and polite item:

[106] Bana ba *rota* haholo mariha.Children *urinate* much in winter.

The lexical item *rota* 'urinate', is impolite to urban and educated speakers. In rural areas, however, it is the prevailing item. Nevertheless, we observe that urban males normally use it among themselves, but will shift to *ntsha mëtsi* when children and women are present. On the other hand, women either use *ntsha mëtsi* or *sesa*, with the latter being used mostly in the presence of children.

Similarly in the following example one word is considered crude while the other is polite:

[107] Sellô o tIwaëtse ho *nyêla* bosiu.

Sello normally *shits* at night.

In [107] we have yet another crude item. The polite forms are *ya ntlwanëng* 'go to the toilet', and *ithoma* 'defecate', with the latter lexeme being used when referring to little children. In this case, urban males also refrain from using the crude term, while it is unheard of for a town woman to use it. However, *nyêla* 'shit' is so normal in most rural households that sentences such as the following are condoned in such homes. Not only do children speak like that among themselves, but parents also communicate to them and among themselves in a similar fashion:

[108] Motho a ka *nyêla*.

One can *shit*.

Manyabolô 'water', is a well known item among all speakers. However, it is only a small number of the older speakers who still use it. Most of the youth said it is a synonym for *mëtsi* 'water', but never use it for communication. This item is perhaps well known because it is one of the terms which appear in prescribed Sotho texts.

Lastly, there is variation between *diaparô* and *diphahlô* 'clothes'. The former is popular with the urban youth, while the latter is mainly heard among other speakers. They occur in sentences such as the following:

[109] Mmê o nthëkëtse *diaparô* tsë ntlê.

Mother has bought me beautiful *clothes*.

[110] Ke rata *diphahlô* tsë thêkô ë boima.

I like expensive *clothes*.

Diaparô is heard among the urban youth, while *diphahlô* is used by other Sothos.

In Sotho a widow is *mohlôlôhadi*, while a widower is *mohlôlô*. However, *mohlôlô* is disappearing, while *mohlôlôhadi* is taking precedence. Most Sothos now use *mohlôlôhadi* to refer to both a widow and a widower:

[111] Mmathabô ke *mohlôlôhadi* ë monyenyane.

Mmathabo is a young *widow*.

[112] Rantsho e sê e le *mohlôlôhadi* hobane mosadi o qêta ho hlôkahala.

Rantsho is now a *widower* because his wife has just died.

Generally, rural and uneducated speakers are associated with crude language while urban and educated speakers are recognised by their preference for politer forms as we have shown above. As we indicated earlier, variation involving two Sotho items is not as widespread as the other types of lexical variation which are examined below.

4.2 Variation between Sotho items and adoptives

Contact with foreign languages and cultures has resulted in change in both cultural and language aspects among the Sothos. In some cases, Sotho has been altered to suit the new blend, while in others it has not. Some Sotho lexical items had to live side by side with new ones, often competing. In some cases this competition has resulted in Sotho items becoming less popular, or being replaced by new and adopted items. In this chapter we use the term 'Sotho items' to refer to both the core vocabulary and standard coinages, while we use adoptives to refer to borrowed items which have now been adapted into Sotho.

4.2.1 Sotho and Afrikaans adoptives

Afrikaans is one of the languages from which Sotho has borrowed extensively. Some of this borrowed lexicon now forms part of standard Sotho, while there is still much which is not acceptable to prescriptive linguists. Adoptives from Afrikaans occur mainly where a particular object was introduced by the Afrikaners. Today we have a social group which seems to be bringing into Sotho more items borrowed from Afrikaans. This group is that of women who work on Afrikaner farms in the Free State. With the asparagus harvests now popular, many Sotho-speakers, especially women, get an opportunity to work in these farms, clearly carrying current influences of Afrikaans to Lesotho.

We now examine a few examples involving this type of variation:

[113] Dijô di *туру* matsatsing ana.

Food is *expensive* these days.

Turu 'expensive', has taken over the Sotho way of saying that something is expensive. In Sotho the phrase *thêkô ë boima* is used instead of the single borrowed lexical item. The phrase is now very seldom heard as most old and young speakers have shifted to *туру*. We assume that this shift has been encouraged by the shortness of the single item in comparison with the initial Sotho phrase.

[114] Ke mang ya tla *konomaka* ntlo hosane?

Who will *clean* the house tomorrow?

In the above sentence *konomaka* 'clean', is used instead of the Sotho item, *hlwëkisa* 'clean'. The borrowed item occurs mainly among semi-illiterate females, while their educated counterparts use the Sothoised English item *tlelina*. Men and completely unschooled women speakers use *hlwëkisa*. We

surmise that *konomaka* is common among semi-illiterate women as it this group which normally serves as domestic workers, often to Afrikaans-speaking families. We assume that it is when these women work for Afrikaans speaking families, or socialise with women with Afrikaans influences that they come across this item and eventually shift to it. On the other hand educated Sotho-speakers very frequently, codeswitch from Sotho to English and vice versa.

By contrast, we assume that men have not shifted from the Sotho item as cleaning is generally out of their domain. Therefore, they are not really exposed to current terminology in this aspect.

[115] O tshêlê *telepele* tsë pëdi tsa tswekere.

Add two *teaspoons* of sugar.

In the sentence above we have used an item which is frequently heard among women in the lowlands and foothills of Lesotho, and not in the mountain areas. We suppose that this is a result of the influence of the South African media as *telepele* 'teaspoon' is common in South African Sotho. Speakers from the mountain areas do not use this item because of lack of exposure to the South African media. It is even difficult for them to receive any South African radio station. Sesotho Stereo, formerly Radio Sesotho, has for a long time broadcast a popular women's programme, 'Mmokëng wa Mafumahadi'. Among many other things, this programme gives recipes of different things weekly, with *telepele* occurring every now and then. A teaspoon is a new object to the Sotho just as the concept of tea-making and tea-drinking is, so originally there was no Sotho item for 'teaspoon'. To compensate for this speakers suffix the diminutive morpheme *-ana* to the Sotho word for spoon, *kgaba*, resulting in *kgabana* 'small spoon'. But *kgabana* is used by an insignificant number of

speakers, while its borrowed varieties *telepele* and *thispune* are very popular.

[116] Ke na le *rôntabolê* ë kgolo.

I have a big rondavel.

[117] Baëti ba tla phomola ka *hëising*.

Guest will rest in the [main] house.

In older varieties of Sotho, *mokgôrô* 'house/round hut' was used in place of the adoptives *hëisi* 'house' and *rôntabolê* 'round hut'. Traditionally Sothos lived in round houses, so there was no need to specify the shape of the house. But when rectangular houses were introduced to Sothos a new word was used to refer to them. *Hëisi* from Afrikaans *huis* 'house' is used to refer to a rectangular house, which is normally the main house, while *rôntabolê*, refers to what was initially known as *mokgôrô*, so that a distinction is made.

Another item borrowed from Afrikaans is 'so lank as'. Uneducated Sotho-speakers have Sothoised it into *solanka* 'as long as'. Sotho has *ha fêêla* conveying this meaning. *Solanka* appears in sentences such as the following:

[118] Ba tla dula *solanka* ho ena le pôm-pô.

They will stay *as long as* there is a tap.

Educated Sothos use the standard variety, *ha fêêla*, and not the one in the above example.

Mine-workers and other uneducated males show a preference for the borrowed item *ëntlêkê*, from *eintlik* 'actually', over the Sotho variety, *hantlê-ntlê*. Their variety appears in examples such as that below:

[119] *Entlêkê* wêna o ratang?

What do you *really* like?

The Sotho term for both towns and cities is *motse-moholo*. This term is not as commonly used as its borrowed counterpart. Speakers seem to associate the borrowed variety with the development which is typical of towns and cities all of which are relatively new, while they think of the Sotho variety as referring to any big place without the glamour of town and city life.

[120] Batho ba thabêla bophelô ba *tôrôpô* ho ena le ba mahaë.

People prefer *town* to rural life.

Among farmers the term *dihalofote* 'sharecropping' is frequently used:

[121] Ke batla motho ëo ke tla lema *dihalofote* le yêna.

I want somebody to *sharecrop* with me.

Although the Sotho term *seahlolô* 'sharecropping', exists, in rural areas in the north the borrowed item is more common than its counterpart. However, in southern rural areas the Sotho item *seahlolô* is used.

The native Sotho term for a road is *tsela*. However, another term now exists to refer to this object, this is the adoptive *pata*. They occur in sentences such as the following:

[122] *Tsela* ë yang Leribê e dirêtsê.

The *road* to Leribe is muddy.

[123] *Pata* ë yang Leribê e dirêtsê.

The *road* to Leribe is muddy.

Tsela 'road' is used by speakers from Berea to the southern part of Lesotho, while *pata* 'road' is common from Leribe to the northern part. However, *pata* is more associated with Leribe than with the other northern districts as speakers from this district hardly ever use the native Sotho term.

In schools these speakers are forced to use *tse/a*, but outside the classroom the adoptive is still the most commonly used form.

Similarly, for 'razor-blade' we have the Sotho item *lehare* and the adoptive *senëimêšê*. The Afrikaans adoptive is used in the northern part of Lesotho, especially in Leribe, while the Sotho item is used in the rest of the country. When we tested these items on high school pupils in Lesotho, those from Leribe used the adoptive. This included those who were studying in districts other than Leribe. Even in Quthing, pupils from Leribe still used *senëimêšê* in their speech.

The Sothos did not originally work in the employ of other people, almost everybody had a field of their own to work on. When the economy changed and Sothos needed to get paid jobs for raising the hut tax that they had to pay to the British colonialists, an item referring to the new concept of working for somebody was borrowed. The Sotho word for 'work' is *sëbêtsa*, and as we have indicated this means working for oneself or working but not for payment. As Sothos worked for white people a new item was born — *bêrêka* from Afrikaans *werk* 'work'. However, not every Sotho-speaker uses the adoptive. But to those who do the following significances exist:

[124] Thabô o *sëbêtsa* ka thata masimong a ntatae.

Thabo *works* hard in his father's field.

[125] Thabô ke *sebêrêkane* Makgowëng kwana.

Thabo is a *hard worker* in the mines.

The distinction between working, or not working for payment is made by rural speakers, while urban speakers use *sëbêtsa* to refer to both types of work. This means that the adoptive does not form part of urban language. To most

rural Sothos *bêrêka* is particularly associated with working in the mines as a significant number of uneducated rural men work in the mines. The urban uneducated on the other hand do not necessarily go to the mines. They prefer to work in the urban areas in Lesotho, mostly as taxi/bus drivers and conductors. Whatever work they do is called *ho sêbêtsa*.

An Afrikaans adoptive that has succeeded in being standardised is the item *borôthô*, from *brood* 'bread'. It is not clear how prescriptive linguists accepted *borôthô* as standard Sotho, since there has always been a Sotho item for 'bread'. However, *bohôbê* may also be used to refer to stiff porridge. Although *borôthô* falls under the list of standardised adoptives we could hardly find it in classrooms as practically it is not acceptable. Teachers still emphasise that the Sotho word for bread is *bohôbê* and not *borôthô*. Many teenage speakers use *borôthô* every now and then in informal conversations, but quickly switch to *bohôbê* in formal situations, including when talking to adults. We assume that this is so as the older speakers associate the adoptive mainly with South African Sotho. In most cases the criticism is that when Sothos visit South Africa they bring with them aspects of South African Sotho that 'dilute' Sotho spoken in Lesotho.

The Sotho term for 'ram' is *phêléu*. The Sotho have long had rams, but when rams which were not indigenous to Lesotho were introduced to them these retained their Afrikaans term in Sothoised form, *ramo*. There seems to have been a shift from specifying that a certain ram is indigenous to Lesotho or not, as now every ram is *ramo*. The Sotho term is almost obsolete now, even old and rural speakers use *ramo* which is still considered non-standard by language purists. Sentences such as the following are common today:

[126] *Ramo e manganga haholo.*

A ram is very stubborn.

We observed that generally, uneducated Sotho-speakers use Afrikaans adoptives more often than their educated counterparts do.

4.2.2 English adoptives

The impact of the contact between Sotho- and English- speakers is observable in Sotho. In some instances this contact has resulted in a shift from the core vocabulary to English adoptives, on the other hand, Sotho-speakers shift from one English adoptive to another. This section also includes codeswitching. Because English is associated with prestige in Lesotho, even uneducated Sothos try to codeswitch as much as they can so as to gain the respect given to educated Sothos who speak English. This type of variation is harshly criticised by prescriptive linguists. The argument is that codeswitching pollutes and dilutes Sotho. However, this variation is not to be ignored as it is characteristic of current Sotho, especially that spoken by urban, educated Sothos. Codeswitching is not just about being able to speak a prestigious language, we maintain that it is also about flexibility of language communication as is also stated by Myers-Scotton [1993:1]:

From a sociolinguistic point of view, codeswitching of languages offers bilinguals a way to increase their flexibility of expression, going beyond the style-switching of monolinguals.

Lexical variation between Sotho items and codeswitching is twofold. First, a foreign item may be translated into Sotho, replacing an existing Sotho item. On the other hand, this variation may involve the replacement of Sotho items with foreign items themselves. Foreign items may, or may not be Sothoised. We consider that the second type of codeswitching is part of lexical variation in Sotho as the foreign items now form part of the Sotho lexicon of some speakers. In some cases speakers fail to give the prescribed items as they use the non-standard ones everyday.

[127] *Diteraefara* ha di hlömphe ditaasô.

Drivers do not respect pedestrians.

In the above example the adoptive *diteraefara* 'drivers' is used. This term has two Sotho varieties, namely, *moqhobi* and *mokganni*. The adoptive is popular in urban areas, while the other items are peculiar to their rural counterparts. The Sotho terms initially referred to one who urges animals on, but rural speakers have extended this meaning to cater for the new concept of driving cars as well.

[128] Bana ba rata *rëdiô* ë lerata.

Children like a noisy *radio*.

Rëdiô is a Sotho adoptive for 'radio'. This term is non-standard, with the standard item being the coinage *seyalemôya* 'radio'. *Rëdiô* is used by urban Sothos, while *seyalemôya* is popular with rural speakers.

[129] *Mmisi* o fana ka mosëbëtsi ö mongata.

The *female teacher* gives much work.

[130] *Titjhêrê* e thabilë kajëno.

The *teacher* is happy today.

The Sotho term for teacher is *mosuwë*, and this refers to female and male teachers. However, the adoptive *mmisi* only refers to a female teacher. We assume that female teachers became known as *bömmisi* because the missionaries who ran the schools used the title 'Miss' when referring to them. Although the first female teachers were missionary wives, we surmise that the first Sotho female teachers were unmarried as early married women were confined to the home. Today *mmisi* refers to both single and married female teachers. This item is used by older or uneducated Sothos throughout Lesotho.

Titjhêré 'teacher', which refers to male and female teachers is popular among other speakers. Both these items are non-standard, but they are much more popular than the standard item, *mosuwě*, which is seldom ever used.

Lexical variation is also observable in the following examples:

[131] *Nêsé* e tlamêha ho sêbêtsa ka thata.

A *nurse* should work hard.

Nêsé is an adoptive for 'nurse'. The Sotho item is *moōki*. The adoptive is more popular than the Sotho item when referring to a professional nurse, but when speakers talk about home-nursing they shift to *moōki*.

[132] Thatô ke *nêsé* empa ha a öke ntatae, mmae ke yêna *moōki* wa hae.

Thato is a *nurse* but she does not nurse her father, her mother is his *nurse*.

We surmise that *nêsé* 'nurse' is more common than *moōki* 'nurse', the standard term, because the former is precise, it refers to a professional nurse, while the latter may refer to anyone who takes care of any sick person without having the proper nursing skills.

[133] *Kölöi* ë kgolo e thêkô ë boima.

A big *car* is expensive.

Kölöi which is a general term for 'car' has for a long time been the accepted item. However, lately, there has been an attempt by language purists to impose *sepalangwang* 'vehicle' on Sothos. This attempt has failed as most speakers still prefer the former item.

[134] Bana ba rata *fönö*.

Children like the *telephone*.

Fönö is an adoptive from 'phone'. The Sotho item is *mohala*. Initially, *mohala* meant a cord or rope, later extending the meaning to include the telephone and telegram, with the introduction of telephones in Lesotho. This meaning was extended because of the telephone wires which are called *mehala*, singular *mohala*. Although *fönö* is non-standard, it is more popular than the standard item. Only an insignificant number of either rural or uneducated Sothos use *mohala*, while other speakers use *fönö*. We assume that this preference of *fönö* over *mohala* is due to the fact that the standard item may refer to many objects, while the non-standard one is precise, referring specifically to a telephone. Also, many speakers associate the new object, telephone, with the new item, *fönö*, and not with items which already exist in Sotho.

[135] Banna ba bangata ba shwella *mmaeneng*.

Many men die in the *mines*.

Mmaene is an adoptive from 'mine'. This is the most common item among Sotho-speakers. However, some rural speakers use *morafô* 'digging place', or *moköti* 'pit' or 'hole'. The extended meanings of these items do not seem to be used by many speakers. Mine-workers have a negative attitude towards *mmaene*. They say that educated speakers use it to undermine them and their occupation, as a result they prefer the Sotho items.

Sotho has always had the terms *fêtoha* (v.i.) and *fêtola* (v.t.) for the English verb 'change'. These verbs are now used by a few old speakers while the adoptive *tjhentjha* 'change' is gaining popularity. The adoptive is so popular

that even in Sotho sayings which have existed for a long time, it is taking over while the standard form is slowly disappearing:

<i>Initial</i>	<i>Current</i>
[136] Nthô di a fêtoha. Things change.	Nthô di a tjhentjha.
[137] Ngwana o di fêtotse. Somebody has changed.	Ngwana o di tjhentjhilë.
[138] Sellô o fêtotse fane.	Sellô o tjhentjhilë fane.

The standard term for *spaese* 'spice', is *senokô*. This item is used by old or rural speakers, while everybody else uses the adoptive, *spaese*. Many teenagers on whom we tried the standard item did not know that it could also refer to a spice. Older speakers are familiar with both items although those in rural areas use *senokô* while in urban areas *spaese* is common. We assume that this variation exists because urban Sotho seems to be more influenced by external factors than rural Sotho which seems relatively slow to change. The example below is commonly heard among urban or educated Sothos:

[139] Nama ya kgoho e monate ha e tshêtswe <i>spaese</i> . Chicken is tasty when <i>spiced</i> .

Initially, Sothos did not have the soft drinks that we see today, with the only soft drink being *motôhô* 'soft porridge'. Hence they did not need a Sotho term for soft drinks. With the introduction of these drinks to Sothos, a word was coined — *senô-maphödi* 'cool drink'. However, most speakers do not use this item as they prefer the adoptive *terinki* 'drink' instead. Although *terinki* is non-standard it is more commonly used than its standard counterpart, *senô-maphödi*. We surmise that the standard item is not so common because speakers find it easier to use the single item *terinki* than to use the compound word *senô-maphödi*.

[140] Re tla rêka *diterinki* tsê ngata.

We will buy many *drinks*.

We also observe lexical variation in the following examples:

[141] Ekaba ba tla *laeta* ntlo neng?

When will they *light* the house?

The Sotho terms for light are *kganya* and *lesëdi*, and the verb is *kgantsha*. Our research showed that today the noun *kganya* is associated with natural light, while artificial light is *laete* as our examples illustrate:

[142] Ke rata *kganya* ya letsatsi.

I like sunlight.

[143] Bosiu re hlôka *kganya* ya dinalëdi.

At night we need the *light* from the stars.

ct. [144] *Laete* ya kôlöi e bënya haholo.

A car *light* is very bright.

[145] *Laete* ya seteratëng e bohlôkwa bosiu.

A street *light* is helpful at night.

The verb *laeta* is more popular than *kgantsha* 'light', the standard form.

A similar case exists in Xhosa as Thipa [1989:102] observes:

the Xhosa word for 'to light' is **ukukhanyisa**, that word seems to be gradually giving way to the borrowed **ukulayita**.

In Sotho *kgantsha* 'light' may be used when talking about lighting the home without electricity, while lighting with electricity is *ho laeta*:

[146] Ke tla *kgantsha* lebônê mantsiboya.

I will *light* the lamp in the evening.

[147] Thatô o *laeta* ka motlakase.

Thato *lights* with electricity.

It therefore follows that rural speakers use *kgantsha* as many rural areas in Lesotho do not have electricity. On the other hand, urban speakers use *laeta*, even those who do not necessarily have electricity in their homes.

To prove the point we made earlier in this chapter, that when new concepts are referred to, adoptives or coinages are used we give further examples.

A fridge is a relatively new object to Sothos. For this object, two terms exist, *foriji* and *sehatsëtsi*:

[148] Ke tlô rêka *foriji* hlabulëng lëna.

I am going to buy a *fridge* this summer.

The coinage *sehatsëtsi* 'fridge' which is the standard form, is less popular than the adoptive *foriji*. Many high school pupils on whom we tried the coinage were not familiar with it, while older speakers know both items.

Similarly, the following adoptives are more common than the coinages:

[149] Na *jëli* e têng möo?

Do you have *jelly* here?

[150] *Diswitsi* di thêkô ë boima.

Dessert is expensive.

The item *mafatshe-a-a-thothomëla* has been coined to refer to 'jelly'. Literally the compound noun means 'worlds are shaking', and this has been coined because of the nature of set jelly. Rural speakers use this item either to

refer to jelly alone, or to dessert in general. There are no Sotho words for custard and pudding, so rural speakers use the coinage. On the other hand urban speakers make a distinction between *jēli* 'jelly', and *diswitsi* 'dessert'. *Diswitsi* is an adoptive from 'sweets'.

Sotho men seem to use one term to refer to a pot. This is the Sotho item *pitsa*. On the other hand women have varieties, *pitsa* and the adoptive *pôtô*⁶, from English 'pot'. Urban women use *pitsa*, while their rural counterparts use *pôtô*. This may be surprising as earlier examples illustrate that it is urban speakers who usually use English adoptives while rural speakers generally use Sotho items. We surmise that this difference is brought about by the experiences of these two groups of women. The Sothos made clay pots, *dipitsa*. But later three-legged iron pots were introduced, and these retained their Sothoised English term *dipôtô*. When, later, aluminium and other pots without legs were introduced these looked more like the indigenous Sotho pots, so they became known as *dipitsa*. We assume that the three-legged iron pots have retained the coinage *dipôtô* to differentiate between them and the other types of pots we have mentioned. Because three-legged pots are peculiar to rural areas, it follows that women who use them should use an item used to refer to them. On the other hand urban women do not use three-legged pots, *dipôtô*, therefore, they do not use the item used to refer to them.

The following sentences demonstrate variation between *lesale* 'ring' or 'earring', and *rēng* 'ring':

[151] Palesa o lahlēhētswē ke *lesale* lē letjha maobane.

Palesa lost her new *earring* yesterday.

⁶ It is also possible that this item is borrowed from Afrikaans.

[152] Thabô o r  k  la Pul  ng *lesale* l   leng.

Thabo is buying Puleng another *ring*.

[153] Sell   o fil   Din  r  ng    kgolo.

Sello has given Dineo a big *ring*.

In the first sentence above, *lesale* means an earring, while in 164 it means a ring. Urban speakers use *r  ng* an adoptive from 'ring' to refer to a ring, while rural speakers use *lesale*. Churches in Lesotho, when they marry couples, also use *lesale* to refer to a ring. This means that for rural-dwellers and church authorities *lesale* may be used to refer to an earring or to a ring. On the other hand urban speakers use the Sotho item *lesale* to refer to an earring, and the adoptive *r  ng* to refer to a ring.

Another example is that of the new word *  skwafa*, meaning iced guava juice. It is true that one may argue that this is not Sotho as it would be best translated as *kwafa-  leqhw  * or *kwafa-  hwamm  ng*, but the fact is nobody ever uses the "correct" Sotho version when referring to either the iced guava juice or any other juice sold mostly in the bus and taxi ranks of most towns in Lesotho. To the Sotho who sells and buys this commodity, both young and old, it is *  skwafa*, and, therefore, *  skwafa* is Sotho to them. To realise that *  skwafa* is a general term for all frozen fruit juices in plastic packs, one must observe that *  s* is Sothoised 'iced', while *kwafa* is 'guava'. But because not every Sotho is aware of the origin of this new Sotho word those who are not educated enough to see this, will be noticed the minute they say *  skwafa* while in fact they mean *  s  r  nje* 'iced orange juice'. These are also the speakers who normally say sentences such as the following:

[154] O batla *  skwafa*    kgub  du kapa    tsh  hla?

Do you want red or orange *orange juice*?

In this question 'orange orange juice' is orange juice, while 'red orange juice' is guava juice. Instead of criticising people who use *êskwafa* instead of the "correct" forms it should be remembered that this is a genuine attempt by speakers of Sotho to Sothoise a foreign term, and no matter how many "correct" Sotho translations are coined by purists, who are obviously fewer in number, *êskwafa* will be used daily by a large number of Sotho-speakers.

The contexts of the above examples justify the spreading of *êskwafa* and not *kwafa-ë-leqhwa* or *kwafa-ë-hwammeng*. If two hawkers are at a busy bus or taxi rank standing beside a full bus offering their iced juice the one with a relatively short sentence is more likely to attract more customers than those who prefer the longer and standard ones:

- [155] a. *Kwafa-ë-leqhwa* ke ëna, baëti.
 b. *Kwafa-ë-hwammeng* ke ëna baëti.
 c. *Eskwafa* ke ëna baëti.

Here is *frozen juice*, travellers.

[155c] is commonly used because it is shorter than the (a) and (b) forms. So it is clear that for business purposes the non-standard item is more convenient than the standard one. This also means that buyers are more likely to use what hawkers use than what might be dictated in a certain book which some speakers will never read or see. This does not only apply to new lexical items, but it seems to be the case with existing Sotho terms and systems.

The generalisation discussed above is also observed in the following examples:

Speakers' Meaning

[156]	<i>bifstôkô</i>	'beef stock'	
	<i>bifstôkô-ya-kgoho</i>	'chicken beef stock'	'chicken stock'
	<i>lakse</i>	'Lux'	'toilet soap'
	<i>kôlkéiti</i>	'Colgate'	'toothpaste'
	<i>sta sôfte</i>	'Sta-soft'	'fabric softener'

The term *frastrëita* 'frustrate' seems to be familiar to most Sothos, even those who have never been to school. *Frastrëita* has been assimilated into Sotho. The sounds have been Sothoised, except for the fact that the consonant clusters *fr* and *str* are not broken up and the appropriate conjugational suffix is added. It is used in sentences such as the following:

[157] Dithutô di *frastrëita* Seipati lemöng sëna.

Studies are *frustrating* Seipati this year.

Although there is no Sotho word whose meaning is similar to that of 'frustrate', some Sothos do not use this item in their speech. Instead they use *kgathatsa*, *tshwënya*, or *duba*, all of which mean 'worry, bother' in this manner:

[158] a. Dithutô di *kgathatsa* Seipati lemöng sëna.

b. Dithutô di *tshwënya* Seipati lemöng sëna.

c. Dithutô di *duba* Seipati lemöng sëna.

Studies *frustrate* Seipati this year.

We assume that *frastrëita* 'frustrate' is made popular by the absence of a similar term in Sotho, so speakers who know the English item believe that the above Sotho ones are not really sufficient to say what speakers intend; hence the sentence in [157].

Another popular current item is *misa* from 'miss'. Sotho-speakers have adapted the English item by adding a conjugational suffix as is prescribed by Sotho rules. This item is not only peculiar to urban and educated Sothos, but we also find it among many taxi and bus drivers and conductors around Maseru. This item is used in sentences such as the following:

[159] Ke *misa* mmê haholo.

I *miss* mother very much.

[160] Sellô o *misa* dihlahlobô kamehla.

Sello always *misses* tests.

For [159] the standard varieties are *hopola* and *hlolohêlwa*, while for [160] it is *fetwa*. Unlike *misa*, *fetwa* is followed by the agentive adverb marker *ke* in Sotho:

[161] Sellô o *fetwa ke* dihlahlobô kamehla.

Sello always *misses* tests.

Tjhanse, an adoptive from 'chance', is popular among most Sothos, both rural and urban. It is used in three ways, replacing three different Sotho items as in the following sentences:

[162] Thabô o na le *ditjhanse* tsê pëdi.

Thabo has two *chances*.

[163] Bana ha ba na *tjhanse* ya ho tla.

Children have no *way* of coming.

[164] Dinêô o pasitsê ka *tjhanse* fêêla.

It is only *luck* that Dineo passed.

The standard versions of the above sentences would have *makgêtlô*, *mokgwa* and *lehlôhônôlô*, respectively, as follows:

[165] Thabô o na le *makgêtlô* a mabëdi.

Thabo has two *chances*.

[166] Bana ha ba na *mokgwa* wa ho tla.

Children have no *way* of coming.

[167] Dinêô o pasitsë ka *lehlôhônôlô* fêêla.

It is only *luck* that Dineo passed.

Mohlankana and *kgarebê* are Sotho items for 'boyfriend' and 'girlfriend', respectively. These items are disappearing in the repertoire of many Sothos, especially the youth, urban-dwellers and educated people. The popular items are now the English items. Sothos codeswitch as in the sentences below:

[168] Rethabilë ke *girlfriend* ya Setjhaba.

Rethabile is Setjhaba's *girlfriend*.

[169] Ngwanana o tshwanëtse ho ba le *boyfriend* tsë ngata.

A girl should have many *boyfriends*.

In the above examples it is mostly the products of English medium schools who use the English items as they are. Other Sothos who use them, do not end these items with a *d* but with *te*, resulting in *girlfrie*nte and *boyfrie*nte, respectively, that is a hybrid adoptive which has partially, but not completely undergone Sothoisation.

Some Sothos use one English item where their language has several. The term *spênda* 'spend', is used in sentences such as the following:

[170] Banana ba *spênda* nakô ya bôna sekölöng.

Girls *spend* most of their time at school.

[171] Mmê o *spênda* tjhêlêtê ya lelapa hantlê.

Mother *spends* the family income well.

For the standard varieties of the above examples, *qêta* and *sêbêdisa* 'spend', should replace *spênda*. The standard sentences are :

[172] Banana ba *qêta* nakô ya bôna sekölöng.

Girls *spend* their time at school.

[173] Mmê o *sêbêdisa* tjhêlêtê ya lelapa hantlê.

Mother *spends* the family income well.

Except for rural and uneducated Sothos the non-standard varieties are now more popular than the prescribed ones.

Urban Sothos use *intröjusa* 'introduce' instead of the Sotho item *tsebisa* 'introduce'. The former item is used by almost all social classes in urban areas, with the exception of the older speakers. In urban areas it is considered bad manners for one not to introduce whoever they are with. But this is not necessarily the case with rural Sothos. Sentences such as the following are heard quite often in urban areas:

[174] O tla *intröjusa* batho baa neng?

When will she *introduce* these people?

[175] Ke ba *intröjusitsë* maobane.

I *introduced* them yesterday.

'Introduce' has been completely assimilated into Sotho. In [174] *intröjus-* which is now treated as a Sotho radical follows *t/a* 'will', and the conjugational suffix *-a* is added to indicate the Future tense. In [175] the conjugational suffix *-itsë* is added to indicate the Perfective. These are the Sotho ways of forming the Future and Perfect Tenses, respectively.

Bothata, *qaka* and *tsiëtsi* are Sotho items for 'problem'. However, many educated Sothos do not use any of the standard varieties, instead, they use *problem* in the following manner:

[176] Ha ho motho ya ka balêhang *diproblem*.

Nobody can run away from *problems*.

Diproblem is the Sothoised version of 'problems'. Among the educated Sothos this item is now taking over the three acceptable items mentioned earlier.

When most speakers who can speak English describe qualities of other people the practice is to codeswitch, making sentences such as the following:

[177] a. Mmê wa hae o *nice*.

Her mother is *nice*.

b. Titjhêrê tsë ding di *impossible*.

Some teachers are *impossible*.

c. Banana bano ba *successful*.

Those girls are *successful*.

Illiterate Sothos use the standard items. For the above sentences the prescribed items are *lokilë* 'nice', *dikgathatsô* 'impossible', and *atlêhilë* 'successful', respectively.

In sentences involving numbers the practice is to say those numbers in English while the rest of the sentence is in Sotho. This shift is observable among most Sotho-speakers, with the exception being the rural old speakers. In this case even the uneducated use the English items instead of the standard Sotho varieties. We give examples of various contexts involving numbers, giving first the non-standard variety, and then the standard one:

(A) Counting

[178] **NS:** Quthing e na le metse ë *eighty five*, empa ë *sixteen* ha e lefe lekgêthô.

S: Quthing e na le metse ë mashomê-a-röbëdi-a-metso-ë-mehlano, empa ë leshomê-lë-metso-ë-tshelëtseng ha e lefe lekgêthô.

Quthing has eighty five villages but sixteen of them do not pay tax.

(B) Time

[179] **NS:** Re tla tloha hantlê ka *ten* hosëng, eseng ka *eleven*.

S: Re tla tloha ka hôra-ya-leshomê, eseng ka hôra-ya-leshomê-lë-motso-ö-mong.

We will leave at 10.00 a.m. and not at 11.00.

We will leave at ten a.m. and not at eleven.

(C) Dates

[180] **NS:** Hana Boipusô bo ka *difour* kapa ka *difife* kgwëding ëe?

S: Hana Boipusô bo ka la bonê kapa ka la bohano kgwëding ëe?

Is Independence Day on the *fourth* or *fifth* of this month?

In Sotho numbers more than ten are in compound nouns which are generally longer than their English counterparts. These long Sotho forms are unpopular among many speakers. There is a serious concern by the purists that coming generations might not know how to use Sotho numbers as they are already not used by a vast majority of Sothos. Even those who sometimes use the standard varieties do so only for 1 to 10, and shift immediately after 10, when the long numbers begin. Hence one speaker may count as follows:

- [181] a. nngwe 'one'
 b. leshomê 'ten'
 c. *eleven* 'eleven'
 d. *twenty-two* 'twenty two'

Language purists have for a long time tried to discourage Sotho-speakers from shifting from the Sotho items referring to the months of the year to their English counterparts. However, this effort does not seem to be succeeding as the vast majority of Sothos use the Sothoised varieties of these items. Actually, it is only a small number of speakers who ever attempt to use the Sotho items. These speakers are the Sothos who are almost completely illiterate as even the semi-literate Sotho uses the English adoptives. The following are the varieties:

<i>Month</i>	<i>Prescribed</i>	<i>Common</i>
January	Phêrêkgöng	Janewari
February	Hlakola	Fêbêruari
March	Hlakubêlê	Mmatjhe
April	Mmësa	Eiprêle
May	Motshêanöng	Mmëi
June	Phupu	June
July	Phuptjane	Julae
August	Phatô	Aköste/Okaste
September	Lwëtse	Sêpthêmpa
October	Mphalane	Okthöuba
November	Pudungwana	Nôfêmpa
December	Tshitwê	Disêmpa

The Sotho item for 'friend' is gradually disappearing in urban areas. There is a shift from *motswallê* 'friend', and *metswallê* 'friends', to *friente* and *difrients*, respectively. As we indicated earlier, products of English medium schools use *d* at the end of adoptives while other Sothos use *t* or *te*. In this case the former group uses *friend* and *difrients*, respectively. *Friente* and *difrients* are used in sentences such as the following:

[182] Ke na le *difrients* tsë ngata, ha Thabô yêna a na le *friente* e le
nngwe

I have many *friends*, while Thabo has one *friend*.

In Sotho *kamorê* refers to either a 'room' or 'bedroom'. To differentiate between a 'bedroom' and other rooms the following compound nouns were formed by the prescriptive linguists:

kamorê-ya-ho-phêhêla	'kitchen'
kamorê-ya-ho-jêla	'dining/sitting room'
kamorê-ya-ho-balla	'study'
bateng	'bathroom'

However, urban Sothos use *kamorê* to refer specifically to a room, and instead of using the compound nouns, they switch to English when referring to the different rooms in a house, thus:

[183] Sellô o ahilê ntlo ë *kamorê* di rōbēdi. Ke *kitjhini*, *bedroom* tsë
tharo, *sitting room*, *study* le *bathroom* tsë pēdi.

Sello has a house with eight *rooms*. It has a kitchen, three bedrooms, a sitting-room, a study and two bathrooms.

Educated rural speakers also use the non-standard varieties while unschooled rural Sothos use the standard terms.

When rural Sothos talk about food, they do not necessarily specify the type. On the other hand, urban Sothos do, and they use English items to refer to this. A rural Sotho may talk about a meal they had in the following manner:

[184] a. Mmathabô o nê a re phêhêtse. Thatô o ilê a ja *nama ya kgômo* le *dítapolé*, Palesa yêna a kgêtha *nku*, nna ka ja *kgoho* le *merôhô*.

Urban Sothos will relate the same experience thus:

[184] b. Mmathabo o ne a re phehetse. Thato o ile a ja *steak* le *baked potatoes*, Palesa yena a ja *dichops*, nna ka ja *chicken* le *difêjethëbole*.

Mmathabo had prepared a beautiful meal for us. Thato had *steak* and *baked potatoes*, Palesa had *chops* and I had *chicken* and *vegetables*.

As far as meat is concerned, rural Sothos do not ordinarily specify the kind they are referring to, since in rural butcheries, where they exist, specification is almost impossible. Without modern butchery equipment, it is difficult for rural butchers to cut meat in the way their urban counterparts do. Instead, in rural butcheries, meat is just chopped to the butcher's convenience. Urban Sothos have the advantage of buying from butcheries which label the different kinds of meat, making it easy for them to realise that the different kinds of meat have specific names, such as steak and chops.

In rural areas meals are referred to in Sotho, while in towns the English items are used. The following is the standard way of referring to these meals:

dijô-tsa-hosëng	'breakfast'
dijô-tsa-motsheare	'lunch'
dijô-tsa-mantsiboya	'supper'

Urban Sothos codeswitch as in the following sentences:

[185] Lapeng re ja *breakfast* ka 6.00, *lunch* ka 1.00 ha *supper* yôna re e ja ka 8.00.

At home we have breakfast at 6.00, lunch at 1.00, and supper at 8.00.

Sometimes speakers form sentences with items which are initially foreign, translated into Sotho. This results in a sentence in which all items are Sotho, yet there is one which has been translated from a foreign language. We examine examples below to illustrate our point.

In Sotho the verb *nka* means 'take'. The Sotho verb cannot be used with certain objects which may be used with its English counterpart. However, Sothos who are aware of how the English verb behaves, use the Sotho verb in a similar manner, resulting in unacceptable sentences.

[186] Mmê o *nka* ngwana.

Mother *takes* the baby.

[187] Mookamëdi o *nka* teê ka 10.00.

The manager *takes* tea at 10.00.

[188] Barutuwa ba *nka* phomolô kamor'a tinare.

Pupils *take* a break after lunch.

[189] Re tla *nka* bese ya hoseng.

We will *take* the morning bus.

In [186] *nka* 'take' has been used in the normal Sotho way, but in all the other sentences, codeswitching has occurred. The English versions of examples [187-189] are acceptable, while the Sotho sentences are not according to language purists. To be acceptable *nka* 'take' needs to be replaced by *nwa*,

'drink', *ya* 'go' and *palama* 'ride', respectively, thus:

[190] Mookamēdi o *nwa* teê ka 10.00.

The manager *takes* tea at 10.00.

[191] Barutuwa ba *ya* phomolōng kamor'a tinare.

Pupils *take* a break after lunch.

[192] Re tla *palama* bese ya hosēng.

We will *take* the morning bus.

As stated above, sentences such as [187-189] are used by the urban and educated Sothos, while the prescribed sentences in [190-192] are used by rural and uneducated speakers.

The verb *bapala* 'play', is used by urban and educated Sothos where it is not acceptable in more traditional Sotho, and rural and uneducated Sothos do not use it in the new ways.

[193] Diphakwē di *bapala* bōlō ē ntlē.

Diphakwe *play* good soccer.

[194] Thabo o *bapala* karolō ya motswadi.

Thabo *plays* the part of a parent.

[195] Batho ba Masēru ba *bapala* mminō ö monate.

People from Maseru *play* beautiful music.

Sentence [193] is acceptable according to the standard, but [194] and [195] are not: one does *play* soccer in Sotho, but one does not *play* a part or music. Rural and uneducated Sothos use other items to in place of *bapala*:

[196] Thabō o *nka* karolō ya motswadi.

Thabo *takes* the part of a parent.

[197] Batho ba Masëru ba *lets*a mminô ö monate.

People from Maseru *play* beautiful music.

We observed that most children who grow up in urban areas or with educated parents also use the non-standard variety. This, we assume, is due to the fact that such children become exposed to the non-standard varieties too early in their lives to be affected by the views of language purists.

In most high schools in the urban areas, at the National University of Lesotho, and at other urban tertiary institutions, the verb *ratana* 'be in love' seems to be almost non-existent. Rather *tswa* 'go out' is used:

[198] Pulëng o *tswa* le Lerata.

Puleng *goes out* with Lerata.

Rural youth still use *ratana/utlwana*. The new significance of the verb *tswa* 'go out' is characteristic of most relationships involving urban youths who are in high schools or tertiary institutions. These Sothos have 'going out' as part of a love affair. Such couples may go to movies, picnics, parties or many other things. On the other hand, rural couples use *ratana/utlwana* quite understandably. In traditional culture, romantic relationships are not known. Therefore, it is a disgrace to see the youth strolling together in the rural areas, let alone for them to go somewhere together. Rural youths do not only keep their relationships as secrets, but they also have nowhere to go as in rural areas in Lesotho cinemas and sports clubs and other entertainment centres do not exist.

4.2.3 Sotho and Nguni Languages

Sotho and Nguni languages, being Bantu languages, have observable similarities. However, there are instances where there is evidence that Sotho has borrowed aspects of the Nguni languages which initially did not exist in Sotho. Below we examine variation between native Sotho words and Nguni adoptives.

[199] *Nêtha* ya lemô sêna e ngata ho feta ya sê fetilêng.

This year's *rain* is more than last year's.

In the above example, we had to substitute the lexical item *nêtha* 'rain' with a more familiar one as we failed to communicate to the younger speakers. *Nêtha* is used by old rural women, while *pula* is the most commonly used item. *Nêtha* is peculiar to Quthing and Mohale's Hoek. Mabile [1985] says *nêtha* may be either a noun or a verb and defines it thus, "to make wet, to wet", giving it qualities of a verb. Although Sotho-speakers use it as a noun, we surmise that it has been borrowed from the Xhosa verb *ukunetha*, to rain, as used in the following example:

[200] *Kuyanetha* namhlanje.

It is raining today.

It is understandable that speakers in Mohale's Hoek and Quthing show influences of Xhosa while other speakers do not as the Southern part of Lesotho is populated by Thembus who still speak their mother-tongue, Xhosa.

Lenyalô is the Sotho word for 'marriage' or 'wedding'. However, the Xhosa adoptive *letjhatô*, is now commonly used to refer to weddings, making a distinction between a marriage and a marriage ceremony.

[201] *Letjhatô* la Nthabiseng le nē le le letlê, empa *lenyalô* la hae ha le monate.

Nthabiseng's *wedding* was beautiful, but her *marriage* is not happy.

Another example is that of the word ***aikhona*** 'do not' as used in Fanagalo⁷, a lingua franca in the South African mines.

[202] Mina ***aikhona*** sebenza.

I do **not** work.

The Sothoised version of the above Nguni word is *haekhôna/aekhôna* 'do/will not'. However, in Sotho, this adoptive may occur only at the beginning or end of a sentence thus:

[203] *Haekhôna*, ba kë kë ba tsamaya kajëno.

They will *not* go today.

Ba kë kë ba tsamaya kajëno, *haekhôna*.

The will *not* go today.

The above word came to Lesotho through migrant labourers, but it has spread to a majority of young Sotho-speakers today.

The Sotho term for 'boys' is *bashanyana*. However, the adoptive *bafana* 'boys' from Nguni *bafana* 'boys', is popular among young Sotho males.

[204] *Bafana* ba Ha Hôôhlô ba bapala bôlô ë ntlê.

Hooхло's *boys* play good soccer.

Note that the singular form *mofana* 'boy' is not as commonly used as its plural. In the singular, speakers shift to the standard word *moshanyana* 'boy'.

⁷ Fanagalo is a *lingua franca*, used on the mines.

4.2.4 Variation between adoptives

Earlier we studied variation between Sotho and adopted items. In this section we concentrate on examining variation between adoptives that now form part of the Sotho lexicon, standard and non-standard. This variation may be between English and Afrikaans adoptives, but it may also be between English or competing Afrikaans adoptives. The latter case exists where Sothos became familiar with both English and Afrikaans items, especially those new to them, and the speakers keep the adoptives from both languages. We examine examples to illustrate this point.

Pencils were only introduced to Sothos with the teaching of reading and writing. Prior to that they did not know anything about pencils. When pencils became part of the lives of Sothos an item had to emerge to refer to these objects. This is when *pêntshêlê* and *pitlilôtô / pôtlôlôtô*, adoptives from English 'pencil' and Afrikaans 'potlood', respectively, came into use. These appear in sentences such as the following:

[205] Ke tla rêka *pitlilôtô* Masêru.

I will buy a *pencil* in Maseru.

Pêntshêlê e sêbêdiswa ke bana ba kôlô tsa mathômô.

A *pencil* is used by primary school pupils.

When an urban or educated Sotho hears the term *pitlilôtô* above they immediately associate the speaker with either the rural areas or a lack of education, or even both. Similarly, the use of *pêntshêlê* tells an observant Sotho that the speaker is either urban or educated, or both.

Lexical variation also exists in the following example:

[206] Mmê o tshêitse diaparô tsa hae ka *tjhêkaseng*.

Mother has put her clothes in a *plastic bag*.

Tjhékase 'plastic bag', is used by speakers in the north and mountain parts of Lesotho. However, this item is much more popular in Leribe than in any other district. On the other hand, the central and southern parts use *polasetiki*. The former item is an adoptive from 'Checkers⁸', while the latter is from 'plastic'. That *tjhékase* is popular in the north, especially in Leribe, can perhaps be related to the history of the introduction of plastic bags to the Sotho in this area. We surmise that this is derived from the supermarket which might have been the first one to put groceries in plastic bags. It is common for people in Leribe to do their shopping in Ficksburg, and Checkers in Ficksburg is a supermarket that these people have used for a long time, especially because Ficksburg is not far from Maputsoe, a town in Leribe. This makes it possible and usual for shoppers to walk from the Maputsoe border post to Ficksburg. We assume that people say a plastic bag is *tjhékase*, because they have Sothoised 'Checkers'. We should realise that even a plastic bag with some other store name such as *Edgars* and *OK*, is called *tjhékase*. People living in districts which do not have a Checkers supermarket next to them generally do not use *tjhékase*, and even the few speakers who have now adopted this form can be said to have done so because they have been influenced by speakers from the north.

A number of varieties are used by Sothos to refer to 'spectacles', they are:

[207] mahlô-a-sekgowa	'English eyes'
dikgalase	'glasses'
diforaese	'four eyes'
dikôkôlôse	'goggles'
dispêkese	'spectacles'
diborële	< Afr. <i>bril</i> 'spectacles'

⁸ The name of a supermarket.

Our study shows that (a), the standard form, is the least popular of the listed varieties. Items (b) to (e) are from English, while (f) is from Afrikaans. (b) is the most popular variety in all districts with the exception of Maseru which has both (b) and (e) as the most popular items. (c) and (d) occur among the older speakers and are not as popular as the other items. They are also used by rural speakers. The speakers in Maseru who use (f) are the either old, or uneducated, or teenagers with parents who fall under these categories.

Two adoptives are used for 'sign'. They are *saena*, from English 'sign' and *tekena* from Afrikaans *teken* 'sign'. These items occur in sentences such as the following:

[208] Ntatë o *saennë* maobane.

Father *signed* yesterday.

O tla *tekena* neng?

When will she *sign*?

Tekena 'sign' is the standard form, while *saena* 'sign' is not. However, the non-standard item seems to be taking over as *tekena* is slowly disappearing. *Tekena* is now used by the older speakers, who we assume are holding on to it because they have known this variety before *saena* emerged. Other Sothos use the English adoptive. In a number of Sotho wedding songs *saena* is used, helping in the spreading of this item versus the standard form.

The Afrikaans item *onderrok* 'petticoat', and the English 'petticoat' have been adopted into Sotho as *ônnôrôkô* and *pitiköte*, respectively. These items may be used in sentences such the following:

[209] Basadi ba apara *diônnôrôkô* ha ho bata.

Women wear *petticoats* when it is cold.

For a long time *ônnôrôkô* 'petticoat' has been the widely used item. But there seems to be an observable shift by young educated urban women from the Afrikaans adoptive to *pitikôte* 'petticoat'. This is quite understandable as these women are exposed to English and can use this language, or its Sothoised versions in their speech. Men, rural women and the uneducated rural females still use the Afrikaans adoptive.

A photograph is referred to as *senêpê*, *fôtô* 'photograph', *setshwantshô* 'picture', used to refer to in Sotho. The first two items are adoptives from English, while the third is Sotho but with an extended meaning. Speakers may use the above words thus:

[210] Thabang o nka *dinêpê* tsë ntlê.

Thabang takes good *photographs*.

Senêpê was the normal way of referring to 'photograph' for a long time. However, urban speakers seem to be shifting to *fôtô*, while language purists on the other hand now prescribe *setshwantshô*. The latter item may refer to three objects, resulting in ambiguous sentences such as:

[211] Batho ba ditöröpöng ba thabêla *ditshwantshô* haholo.

This could mean any of the following:

- [212] a. Urban people like *photographs*.
 b. Urban people like *pictures*.
 c. Urban people like *movies*.

The ambiguity in the above sentence is the result of the extended meaning of *ditshwantshô* 'pictures'. When urban speakers use *ditshwantshô*, it only means 'pictures', since for photographs they use *difôtô*, while for movies they use *difilimi*. The ambiguity may result when rural speakers are part of a

conversation because if they hear the above sentence they may interpret it as shown in [212a] above. On the other hand, rural speakers may use the above sentence aware that it has three meanings, but expecting urban Sothos to tell the meaning in the context of their conversation.

Towns and cities are relatively new to the Sothos. To define two items which are now used to refer to 'town' Mabile and Dieterlen [1985] say that *kampô* is "a camp, village of a magistrate". *Tôrôpô* is defined as "a white people's town, dorp". The second part of these definitions are related as the first magistrates in Lesotho were white, therefore their village would be the white people's town. These are the towns where rural people first experienced development. *Kampô* is an adoptive from the English item 'camp', while *tôrôpô* is from the Afrikaans item *dorp*'. *Kampô* is used by older or rural Sothos, while *tôrôpô* is an urban item. We surmise that urban and young speakers do not use the English adoptive because it fails to depict the size and development characteristic of towns and cities today. We also surmise that it makes sense for rural and old Sothos to use *kampô* as the rural and, or early towns they know do not match, in size and civilization, with the big towns in Lesotho today.

The following chart illustrates the spread of the above words:

	BB	LR	BR	MS	MF	MH	QT
K	X	X				X	X
T			X	X	X		

Speakers from villages in the above districts refer to the main village or town as *kampô* or *tôrôpô*, but when young rural speakers refer to Maseru, the capital of Lesotho, they shift from *kampô* to *tôrôpô*. Urban speakers, on the other hand, refer to all the main towns in Lesotho as *ditôrôpô*. When they

believe that a particular town is too small to be called *tôrôpô* they use the diminutive *tôrôtswana* 'small town'.

The last items we examine are *lebênkêlê*, *shôpô*, and *khêfi*, all used to refer to a shop. *Lebênkêlê* is an adoptive from the Afrikaans *winkel* 'shop'. *Shôpô* is from 'shop', while *khêfi* is from 'café'. *Lebênkêlê* is the standard and most popularly used variety. However, there seems to be an observable shift from this item to *shôpô* by urban and educated Sothos. *Khêfi* is used by rural Sothos to refer to a small shop. The following examples, typical of rural speakers demonstrate our point:

[213] Edgars ke *lebênkêlê* lè leholo.

Edgars is a big *shop*.

Khêfi e rëkisa dipömpöng tsë ngata.

The *shop* sells a variety of sweets.

However, urban Sothos use *shôpô* thus:

[214] Woolworths ke *shôpô* ë phahlô di ntlê.

Woolworths is a shop which sells beautiful clothes.

Shôpô tsa motseng ha di na palöne.

Village *shops* do not have polony.

Khêfi and *shôpô ya motseng* are used to refer to village shops, as the idea is that such shops as are generally much smaller than the big town supermarkets and chain stores. The above examples indicate that among urban and educated speakers one item is used to refer to both small and big shops, while rural and speakers differentiate between the two.

4.3 Conclusion

We have observed that most Sothos seem to prefer adoptives to the standard coinages. This is why we indicated that *foriji* 'fridge' is more popular than *sehatsëtsi* 'fridge'. Compound nouns seem to be the least popular of coinages, hence *terinki* becomes more commonly used than *senô-maphödi* 'drink', its standard counterpart.

The general picture is that variation involving Afrikaans is associated with rural and uneducated Sothos. On the other hand, urban and educated Sothos have shifted from standard Sotho to current Sotho which has influences of English.

We surmise that in order to make sure that "correct" Sotho is spoken, linguists would have to gather all speakers of Sotho in big classrooms and dictate to them correct language usage, have regular follow-ups and come up with drastic changes to the media, including Radio Lesotho, which is not particularly popular to them for suitable language usage.

CHAPTER FIVE: SYNTACTIC VARIATION

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter we examine syntactic variation in Sotho. Variation is observable in Sotho sentence structure, with prescriptive rules being altered to suit speakers.

Sotho has two main kinds of sentences, namely interjective and predicative sentences. Our focus is on the predicative sentence as it is in it that variation is observable. We examine these predicative sentences under the sections below.

5.1 Noun Prefixes: Classes 6 and 10

Sotho displays the characteristic Bantu noun class system with each singular class typically being associated with a specific plural class. The following are Sotho noun classes and prefixes:

Sg. Classes	Pl. Classes
1. mo-	2. ba-
1a. Ø-	2b. bö-
3. mo-	4. me-
5. le-	6. ma-
7. se-	8. di-
9. Ø-	10. di-
14. bo-	6. ma-
15. ho-	

Class 1a, has a zero prefix for all stems, while Cl. 9 has Ø- for polysyllabic stems, and the homorganic nasal, *N-*, for monosyllabic stems.

Classes 6 and 10, respectively, are plural Classes for singular Classes 5 and 9, respectively. Variation is observable in the formation of plurals for nouns in Classes 5, and 9. The variation is as in the following examples:

[215]	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plurals</i>		
	<i>Cl. 5</i>	<i>Cl. 6</i>	<i>Cl. 10⁹</i>	
a.	lenala	manala	dinala	'nail'
b.	lenaka	manaka	dinaka	'horn'
c.	lepheô	mapheô	dipheô	'wing'
d.	lesiba	masiba	ditshiba	'feather'
e.	lerakô	marakô	dithakô	'wall'
f.	lehlaka	mahlaka	ditlhaka	'reed'

In the above examples, the Cl. 6 plurals are the most commonly used, with Cl. 10 plural being preferred by the older speakers and language purists, while younger speakers use Cl. 6 plurals. The youth do not recognize the difference between the meaning two sets of plurals. However, prescriptive grammarians and older speakers argue that there is a difference in meaning between the two sets of plurals. According to this group there is the following distinction between the two plurals:

- (a) Cl. 6 is an ordinary numerical plural
- (b) Cl. 10 indicates plurality, but at the same time indicates that the objects are uprooted, plucked out, discarded, partially destroyed or non-functional.

⁹ Note that the Lekhotla la Lesotho incorrectly gives the Class 10 plural as Class 8. That they belong to Class 10 and not Class 8 can be seen in examples (d), (e) and (f), where the stem-initial consonant has undergone a morphophonemic change, a change not found in Class 8.

The following examples illustrate the contrast between the two plurals.

- [216] Maobane Pulëng o kutilë **dinala** tsë tëlëlë empa kajëno o së a na le **manala** a malëlëlë hapê.

Yesterday Puleng cut her long nails but today she has long nails again.

- [217] Bana ba tshaba **dinaka** tsa kgömo ë shwelëng hobane ba a tseba hore kgömo e hlaba ka **manaka** a yôna.

Children are scared of a dead cow's horns because they know that cattle spear with horns.

- [218] Phakwë e ilë ya lëlëkisa tsuönyana hoo **masiba** a yôna a ilëng a hlanya. Ha banana ba di lëlëkisa ba böna **ditshiba** tsa phakwë di sëtse fatshe.

A hawk chased a chick so much that its feathers bristled up. When the little girls chased them, they saw the hawk's feathers on the ground.

- [219] Kgohe e na le **mapheô** a mabëdi. Nna ke ja **dipheô** tsë tharo ka tinare.

A chicken has two wings. I have three wings for lunch.

- [220] Pööne e na le **mahlaka** a thata. Empa re rata ho rwalla **ditlhaka** tsa mabêlê haholo.

Maize has tough stalks. But we prefer gathering sorghum stalks.

- [221] Ntlo ya ka e na le **marakô** a matla, empa **dithakô** tsëna di së di se na marakôo a matla.

My house has strong walls, but these ruins do not have strong walls.

Another argument involving Classes 6 and 10 plurals, relates to number.

[222]	Singular	Plurals		
	<i>Cl. 9</i>	<i>Cl. 10</i>	<i>Cl. 6</i>	
a.	kgömo	dikgömo	makgömo	'cow'
b.	nku	dinku	manku	'sheep'
c.	podì	dipodì	mapodì	'goat'

It is traditionally said that Cl. 10 plurals mean small numbers, for example, anything between two to around a few tens of whatever is referred to, while the Cl. 6 plurals would mean much bigger numbers. This is the argument encapsulated in Guma's [1975:51] examples:

manku	'a very large number of sheep'
mapholo	'a very large number of oxen'
mapêrê	'a very large number of horses'

Another argument is that when talking about herds belonging to one person, Cl. 10 is used, while for herds belonging to several people or different villages, Cl. 6 is prefixed, as in the following examples:

[223] Thabô o na le dikgömo tsë ngata.

Thabo has many cattle.

[224] Banna bana ba na le makgömo a mangata.

These men have many cattle.

[225] Badisana ba tla isa dikgömo tsa motse öna di ilö kôpana le makgömo a metse yane.

The herdboys will take this village's cattle to cattle of those villages.

Also when referring to different types of breeds of an animal Cl. 6, plural is used:

[226] Thabô o na le *makgômo* a mangata, ho tsë pilô, ho tsë kgubëdu.

Thabo has many cattle, there are black ones and red ones.

It is, however, clear that both notions are still not clear as how many is too many or few to be referred to with either plural prefix. As stated above, most speakers do not use Cl. 10 as a plural to Cl. 5 nouns, nor Cl. 6 as a plural for Cl. 9 nouns. This group makes no distinction between a small or a large number, all nouns in Cl. 5 have their plurals in Cl. 6 only, and not in both Classes 6 and 10. This shows that this group, which comprises the youth mostly, has regularised the whole noun class system. This makes sense as the semantics of the plural classes in Sotho does not cater for specific numbers, and the distinction supported by purists is no longer generally recognised.

5.2 The Adjective and Relative

The Adjective in Sotho comprises an Adjectival concord and stem. The Adjectival concord has two parts. The first part is similar to the Relative concord, with the exception of Cl. 1 nouns which have *ya* as Relative concord, but *ë* as first half of the Adjective concord. Note that the vowels in Relative concords are longer than those of the first half of the Adjective concords. The second part is a noun prefix. On the other hand, the Relative is made up of a Relative concord and stem. Except for a few stems which may be used with both Adjectival and Relative concords, both the Adjective and Relative have specific stems with which they may be used. For example, *-tenya* 'stout', is an Adjectival stem, and therefore should be used with Adjectival concords. On the other hand, *-kgôpô* 'crooked', is a Relative stem and therefore should be used with Relative concords. However, variation is observable as speakers use Adjectival stems and concords with Relatives, and vice versa.

Following are examples of Adjectival and Relative concords and stems:

Concords

Cl.	Adjective	Relative
1	ë mo-	ya- ¹⁰
2	ba ba-	ba-
3	ö mo-	ö-
4	ë me-	ë-
5	lë le-	lë-

Stems

Adjective		Relative
-tenya	'stout'	thata 'hard'
-tlê	'beautiful'	tala 'raw'
-sôôthô	'brown'	böi 'shy'

With Cl. 1 the first part of this concord is replaced with the Relative concord thus:

[227] NS: Motho ya motenya o motlê.

S: Motho ë motenya o motle.

A well-rounded person is beautiful.

NS: Monna ya molëlêlê o tsamaya kapele.

S: Monna ë molëlêlê o tsamaya kapele.

A tall man walks fast.

Similarly, the stems *-kaalö* 'so great' *-kaalë*, 'so big', and *-kaakang(?)*, 'how big?, how much?, so big, so much', may be used with either Adjectival or Relative concords. However, young speakers seem to prefer the Adjectival

¹⁰ Note that the Relative concords all have long vowels.

concorde to Relative ones. Variation is observable in sentences such as the following:

[228] *Relative and Adjective*

Motho ya mokaalö o tsejwa haholo.

Such a great person is well known.

[229] *Adjective*

Motho ë mokaalö o tsejwa haholo.

Such a great person is well known.

[230] *Relative*

Motho ya kaalö o tsejwa haholo.

Such a great person is well known.

[231] *Adjective*

Motse ö mokaalë o na le dinokwane tsë ngata.

Such a big village has many crooks.

[232] *Relative*

Motse ö kaalë o na le dinokwane tsë ngata.

Such a big village has many crooks.

[233] *Adjective*

Thabô o na le lesaka lë lekaakang.

Thabo has such a big kraal.

[234] *Relative*

Thabô o na le lesaka lë kaakang.

Thabo has such a big kraal.

The examples above indicate a preference for the use of Adjectival concords with the above Relative stems. As we indicated earlier, an Adjectival concord comprises two parts, a Relative concord and a noun prefix, with the exception of Cl. 1 whose first part of the concord is not a Relative concord.

Sothos replace this *ē* with *ya*, the Relative concord. This means that the first part of the Adjectival concord is now a Relative concord for all noun classes.

All of the above Relative stems are seldom ever used with Relative concords, since young speakers treat them as Adjectival stems. Old Sothos are the only ones who still use these stems with Relative concords, but even they appear to be in the process of shifting these stems to the Adjectival form class.

5.3 Concordance with co-ordinated noun phrases

A Sotho sentence may have one or more subjects and/or objects. When two or more co-ordinated subjects or objects, appear in a sentence especially, variation is observable as Sothos use different concords. The following examples illustrate our point:

[235] Thabô o lëlëkisitsë *lesôlê* le *ntja la* ba la balêha.

Thabo chased a *soldier* and a *dog* and *he* ran away.

[236] Thabô o lëlëkisitsë *lesôlê* le *ntja tsa* ba tsa balêha.

Thabo chased a *soldier* and a *dog* and *they* [here the agreement is with Cl. 10, the class that would agree with *dogs*, or with *things* or *animals* in general] ran away.

[237] Thabô o lëlëkisitsë *lesôlê* le *ntja ba* ba ba balêha.

Thabo chased a *soldier* and a *dog* and *they* [here the agreement is with the personal class, Cl. 2] ran away.

In [235] *la* 'he', refers to one object only, while in [236] a concord referring to animals has been used. Although sentence [237] is standard, it is not the most acceptable to many speakers, because of the position of the second subject *ntja* 'dog', and the personal concord *ba* 'they', which comes immediately after this subject as if it refers to it specifically.

When two or more plural, personal subjects belonging to different noun classes occur in a sentence, variation is observable:

[238] a. Matitjhêrê le bahlahlobi **ba** tla kôpana ka Mmantaha.

Teachers and inspectors will meet on Monday.

b. Matitjhêrê le bahlahlobi **a** tla kôpana ka Mmantaha.

Teachers and inspectors will meet on Monday.

[239] a. Marêna le bafô **ba** tsamaya mmôhò kajëno.

Chiefs and their subjects are travelling together today.

b. Marêna le bafô **a** tsamaya mmôhò kajëno.

Chiefs and their subjects are travelling together today.

In the (a) examples above, the subject concord agrees with the second of the two subjects, while in the (b) examples, the subject concord agrees with the first of the two subjects. When two singular, personal subjects or objects from different Classes appear in a sentence the rule is to use the Cl. 2 concord *ba* 'they', as follows:

[240] a. *Ngaka* le *semathi* **ba** tla kôpana.

Cl. 9 Cl. 7 Cl. 2

The *doctor* and the *athlete* will meet.

b. *Sebohodi* le *mmuêlli* wa sôna **ba** qabane.

Cl. 7 Cl. 1 Cl. 2

The *announcer* and his *lawyer* have quarrelled.

Similarly, there is variation in Absolute Pronouns referring to coordinated noun phrases as different speakers use different pronouns agreeing with the different subjects or objects. The following examples illustrate our point:

[241] a. Mmê o tlêtse *lepôlesa* le *sebohodi* diêta tsa **bôna**.

b. Mmê o tlêtse *lepôlesa* le *sebohodi* diêta tsa **lôna**.

- c. Mme o tlétse *lepōlesa* le *sebohodi* diêta tsa **sōna**.

Mother brought a *policeman* and a *presenter* **their** shoes.

- [242] a. *Baōki* le *dingaka* ba bilë le kōpanō ya **bōna**.

- b. *Baōki* le *dingaka* ba bilë le kōpanō ya **tsōna**.

Nurses and doctors had their meeting.

When a common pronoun does not exist between two personal nouns the Cl. 2 pronoun is used, as in [241a] and [242a]. The pronouns in [241b] and [241c] belong to Classes 5 and 7, respectively. This is because one of the two nouns in these sentences belongs to one or other of these classes. Because the noun classes have different pronouns, some speakers use the pronoun of the first noun in the sentence, while others choose to use the pronoun of the second noun, both breaking the rule.

This type of variation is popular as sentences with two or more subjects or objects occur frequently. In most cases, even speakers who seem to have internalised the rules carefully shift from a standard to a non-standard sentence depending on the nature of the sentence. Sothos seem to have problems with sentences with two impersonal subjects or objects from different Classes.

- [243] a. *Mmutla* le *ntja* ha *di* rate madinyane a **tsōna**.

- b. *Mmutla* le *ntja* ha *di* rate madinyane a **yōna**.

Hares and *dogs* do not like **their** young.

[Lit. A hare and a dog do not like its young.]

The practice is that when animals are subjects or objects in a sentence the plural pronoun *tsōna* 'their', is used. However, this is not always the case as the above example indicates. Note that in (b), above, the Subject Concord is Cl. 2, whereas the Absolute Pronoun, is of Cl. 9, although both have the same

referent. Deciding which Absolute Pronoun to use becomes even more difficult as more subjects or objects occur in a sentence:

- [244] a. Mohölödi [Cl. 3], leeba [Cl. 5], seinodi [Cl. 7] le phakwë [Cl. 9]
di ka bolaya motho maheng a *tsôna* [Cl. 10].
- b. Mohölödi, leeba, seinodi le phakwë di ka bolaya motho
maheng a *yôna* [Cl. 9].
- c. Moholodi, leeba, seinodi le phakwë di ka bolaya motho maheng
a *ôna* [Cl. 6].

The blue crane, dove, kingfisher and hawk could kill a person
(found) at their eggs.

Although some speakers do use variant (a), they are not aware that *tsôna* 'their' occurs because the rule is that for animals or birds it should be used. Some seem to think that it is the "correct" pronoun because it refers to the last subject in the above sentence, and they believe they are supposed to concentrate on the last subject or object. Actually, we observed as general pattern, that using the pronoun corresponding with the first or the last subjects or objects is more popular than using the pronoun of any other subject or object in a particular sentence.

5.4 The diminutive and Verb Stems

There seems to be a shift from the original observation that verb diminutives are not formed as noun diminutives are. As stated previously, the diminutive in Sotho indicates a general idea of something being smaller or lesser in quantity than another. This is, in a way, similar to what the new form of verbal diminutives indicates as we will demonstrate later. Originally, verbal diminutives were formed by reduplication as Doke & Mofokeng [1957:171] show:

Polysyllabic verbs (most of which are recognizable derivatives) form the diminutive by a reduplication of the first two syllables:

fumana (find) > *fuma-fumana* (find somewhat)
balêha (run away) > *balê-balêha* (run away a little)

The current trend is to replace the reduplicative form, with one in which the diminutive suffix *-nyana* is added at the end of the verb stem:

[245]

Stem	Prescribed Form	New Form
a. ja 'eat'	ja-eja 'eat a little' 'chase a little'	janyana
b. rata 'like'	rata-rata 'like a little'	ratanyana
c. bua 'speak'	bua-bua 'speak a little'	buanyana
d. lla 'cry'	lla-lla 'cry a little'	llanyana
e. hatsêla 'get cold'	hatsê-hatsêla 'get a little cold'	hatsêlanyana
c. lëlêkisa 'chase'	lëlê-lëlêkisa 'chase half-heartedly'	lëlêkisanyana

For all the verbs we experimented with, there was a group of speakers who gave the new form of the verbal diminutive. As much as speakers try to restrict the unacceptable variety to speech, some failed as the non-standard variety appears in the questionnaires as well, but at a much decreased level.

Although there are several rules for the formation of noun diminutives, there is one basic rule in the current, non-standard way of forming verbal diminutives as the examples have shown: *-nyana*, is suffixed to the verb, and there is no exception to this rule. Note that this pattern is found among both rural and urban areas.

As the above discussion shows there are quite a number of rules used in the formation of noun diminutives, resulting in confusion and mixing of some of the rules by some speakers. However, the generalised rule that nouns suffix *-nyana*, to form diminutives is popular, perhaps because of its simplicity as when suffixed to nouns to phonetic changes are undergone. But as we have said, this suffix is also becoming increasingly common with verbal diminutives, with the end result being non-standard varieties.

5.5 The Interrogative marker *na*?

The interrogative marker *na* has three positions in a Sotho sentence, at the beginning, at the end, or at both the beginning and end of an interrogative sentence. The following are examples illustrating the different positions:

[246] *Na o tseba Masëru?*

O tseba Masëru na?

Na o tseba Masëru na?

Do you know Maseru?

Putting *na* at the beginning of an interrogative sentence is the most popular position. Perhaps this is because putting *na* at the end seems like an afterthought, while having the marker at both the beginning and end may be used to indicate emphasis. The third example above could be interpreted as asking if one is really sure of what they are talking about. Hence:

[247] *Na o ja nama ya pêrê?*

Do you eat horse meat?

Na o ja nama ya pêrê na?

Do you really eat horse meat?

The use of *na* at the beginning *and* end of an interrogative sentence is very common in church functions. When priests bless marriages, they normally use this form. Thus:

[248] *Pulë, na o nka Palesa e le mosadi wa hao na?*

Pule, **do** you take Palesa as your lawful wife?

In this context the emphasis is understandable. We surmise that priests want clarity in their question, but also they want the couple to really understand what marriage is all about.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has indicated that syntactic variation in Sotho is not as common as the other types of variation. However, as with other types of variation, it is mainly the youth who are changing irregular rules for easier ones.

CHAPTER SIX : SEMANTIC VARIATION

6.0 Introduction

Contrasting the language of the old and the young, urban and rural-dwellers indicates that there are cases where semantic shifts have occurred with resultant sociolectal varieties. More often than not variation seems to have occurred as speakers cater for new objects and concepts with the already existing language instead of forming new lexemes and phrases. On the other hand, the meaning of Sotho has been either altered or changed completely to communicate ideas which have always existed. Below are different types of semantic variation in Sotho.

6.1 The Applied

Traditionally, the Applied extension *-ê/- ~ -/- ~ -êts-*, communicates the meaning of 'doing something for, or on behalf of some object'. However, today the Applied extension has an extra meaning, denoting acceptance, or admiration as the following examples illustrate:

[249] Thabô o a re *phêhêla*.

Initial: Thabo cooks for us.

Current: We are impressed with Thabo's cooking skills.

[250] Titjhêrê o *aparêla* bana ba hae.

Initial: The teachers dresses up for her pupils.

Current: Pupils admire their teacher's style.

[251] Thabang o *bapalla* bashanyana bôlô.

Initial: Thabang plays soccer for the boys.

Current: The boys are impressed with Thabang's soccer skills.

Although the Applied extension is still used to communicate its traditional meaning, among the youth the primary meaning is that of admiration or being impressed by something as indicated in the above examples. A similar trend is observable in Xhosa, where the Applied extension *-ê/-* may be used as its Sotho counterpart:

[252] Umama *uyasiphekela*.

Initial: Mother is cooking for us.

Current: We like the way mother cooks.

[253] Indoda *ihambela* abantwana.

Initial: The man walks for the young boys.

Current: The young boys are impressed with the way the man walks.

6.2 Individual Lexemes and Phrases

In this section we intend to study different Sotho words and phrases which show semantic shifts.

For a long time the Sotho term *kwatsi* meant the deadly animal disease 'anthrax'. But with the emergence of the deadly human disease AIDS in Lesotho, *kwatsi* has acquired a new meaning. In the beginning AIDS was known as *kwatsi-ya-bosolla-hlapi*, a word which was later criticised as offensive to the White community in Lesotho as it literally means 'the deadly disease from the lands of Whites'. This resulted in AIDS getting the politically correct word, *kwatsi*. Today *kwatsi* does not refer to an animal disease but to AIDS, perhaps this is because the animal disease has been exterminated. On hearing the following sentences Sothos automatically understand that it is AIDS that is referred to:

[254] a. Na *kwatsi* e sa tla fêla?

Will AIDS ever be eradicated?

b. *Kwatsi* ke lefu lë sehloho.

AIDS is a cruel disease.

Most Sotho-speakers are familiar with *kwatsi* 'AIDS', although it is more common in rural areas as urban-dwellers prefer to use the English term 'AIDS'.

Related to the AIDS epidemic is another semantic shift, that involving the word *kgôhlôpô*. Initially, this Sotho word used to refer to 'gum boots', but today this lexeme means 'condom'. We assume that *kgôhlôpô* 'gum boot', has been used to refer to a condom because of its cylindrical shape which is similar to that of a condom. Condoms are also made of rubber, just like gum boots. *Kgôhlôpô* is used to refer to a condom in the lowlands and foothills of Lesotho, while in the mountains it has its initial meaning.

With the recognition of a homosexual culture in Lesotho, a new meaning for the term *leqêlê* 'left-handed' was born. To the urban Sotho this term now means gay. When a left-handed person is referred to, the traditional phrase *leqêlê* 'he/she is left-handed' is either avoided, or altered to avoid ambiguity, thus:

[255] a. Thabisô o sêbêdisa tsôhô la *leqêlê*.

b. Thabisô o sêbêdisa tsôhô lë letshehadi.

Thabiso is left-handed [lit. 'uses' the left hand']

[256] Thabisô o *leqêlê*.

Thabiso is gay.

We assume that the relationship between being left-handed and being gay is that both are considered "abnormal" by society. Another phrase used to refer to homosexuality is *ho ja maotwana* 'to eat feet'. Traditionally the phrase *ho ja maotwana* was used in the context of eating chicken feet, but this

meaning has shifted in urban areas, so that the examples below are associated with being gay and not with eating chicken feet:

[257] a. Masëru e tlëtse batho ba **jang maotwana**.

Maseru is full of gays.

b. Esale a **eja maotwana**, o në a ikgakantse fêêla.

He/she has always been gay, he/she has just been pretending.

Both these phrases are common in urban areas. This is perhaps because it is in urban areas that homosexuality is common. Those who are, or have been in prison, and the mines in South Africa, are also aware of these phrases as these places are notorious for homosexuality. However, because in most cases it is men who fill the prisons in Lesotho, and who also go to the mines, they normally pretend not to be involved in gay practices at any stage in their lives, as they believe that both women and men will despise them. All the same, homosexuality and the above phrases are familiar to all Sothos, except that the rural community associates the practice with urban influences and therefore say very little about it.

The animosity between bus and taxi drivers and conductors, and the police in Lesotho is quite serious. In an attempt to protect themselves from traffic officers, these drivers and conductors have developed different languages for warning one another. These include several physical signs and names pertaining to the police. This is the reason for the semantic shift of the word *folaga* 'flag'. Although initially it was only these drivers and conductors who knew the new meaning, today most Sothos are familiar with the new meaning. *Folaga* is now used to refer to 'police officers'. When we asked them why they refer to police officers as *difolaga* 'flags', they indicated that a flag represents the state and its laws. Similarly, they believe that the police also represent the state and its laws.

Qêphê-la-pele 'first page', is common among Sotho miners and those interested in going to the mines in South Africa. These men indicate that the above word has a different meaning when said by officers at mine recruiting bureaux, it means 'bribery' as our examples illustrate:

[258] Monna, o nahana hore o tla jöena jwang ho se na *qêphê-la-pele* pasëng ëe ya hao?

- a. Man, how do you expect to get a job in the mines when the *first page* of your passport is missing?
- b. How do you expect to get a job in the mines when there is no *bribe* in your passport?

[259] Pasa ya hao ha e na *qêphê-la-pele*.

- a. Your passport does not have the *first page*.
- b. Your passport does not have a *bribe* in it.

The first page in a passport is of importance. With Lesotho passports this is the page with the bearer's photograph. Likewise, a bribe is important for getting a job on the mines. The men we talked to indicated that it was common knowledge to them that they can get a job in the South African mines only if they bribe the officials. To make this process smooth, those who are looking for jobs normally put the bribe in their passports before handing them to the officers, so that nobody can claim they gave money to a certain officer.

The word *ntatë* means '(my) father'. As a vocative, *ntatë*, may be used as a formal term of address to a respected male. However, this word has gone beyond the traditional implication of respect, deference, social distance, etc. Young males now use it among themselves to refer casually to a friend or acquaintance, thus:

[260] O ntjhakêlê ka Moqebêlô, *ntatê*.

Visit me on Saturday, *friend*.

[261] O na le êta tsê ntlê, *ntatê*.

You have beautiful shoes, *friend*.

As an interjective, it may be used as follows by the youth:

[262] Ntatê!

Hi, friend!

Hëla, ntatê!

Hi, friend!

Traditionally, *ngaka* meant a 'doctor' only in Sotho. However, lately another meaning is associated with *ngaka* in urban areas. It now means that one is good at doing something:

[263] a. Palesa ke *ngaka* ya jaefe.

Palesa dances *very well*.

b. Thabô ke *ngaka* ya banana.

Thabo is a *womaniser*.

Related to the above meaning is *tshabêha* 'be dreadful'. *Tshabêha* 'dreadful', may now be used to mean almost anything, so it is difficult for us to give it any specific meaning. However, be it a good or a bad quality that is referred to, *tshabêha* 'be dreadful' implies that the quality, skill, et cetera, is present in more than the usual degree.

[264] a. Mokhōtlōng e a *tshabêha* ka bodutu.

Mokhotlong is *unbelievably* boring.

b. Thandi o a *tshabêha* ka Sesotho.

Thandi is *very good* in Sotho.

c. Thutô ê phahameng e a *tshabêha* ka boima.

Tertiary education is *fearfully* expensive.

d. Thabô o a *tshabêha* ka bohlaswa.

Thabo is *very* untidy.

e. Mariha ho a *tshabêha* ka seramê, empa le hlabula ho ntsê
ho *tshabêha* ka motjhesô.

Winter is *extremely* cold, but summer is also *extremely* hot.

The list of qualities that may be described by *tshabêha* is open-ended.

The Sotho word *leshala* 'coal' has acquired other meanings, particularly in urban areas. It now means any of the following:

- (a) stolen goods — especially vehicles
- (b) mistress, lover of a married woman, secret lover
- (c) young girls in relationships with old men
- (d) a beautiful thing

These meanings are exemplified in the following sentences:

[265] Thabô a kē kē a ya Lēiborane ka kōlōi ya hae, kaha ke *leshala*.

Thabo cannot go to Ladybrand with his car, because *it is stolen*.

[266] Mmadiëpëtsana o ipatëtse rona hoba o tsamaya le *leshala* la hae
la Mafetëng.

Mmadiepetsana is hiding from us because she is with her *secret
lover* from Mafeteng.

[267] Thabisô ha a na lethô ke *mashala*.

Thabiso is broke because of his affairs with young women.

[268] Thabang o nyëtse *leshala* la mosadi.

Thabang has married a *beautiful* woman.

We assume that the relationship between coal and examples [265-268] is that all of them have a sense of danger. People would not want to hold a hot coal in their hands. Similarly, one who has a stolen car wants to get rid of it as

soon as they can so that they do not land in trouble. [267] and [268], have similar implications, the relationships are as dangerous as hot coals, and similarly, they are risky as they are not supposed to happen, hence they are kept secret. On the other hand, we assume that beauty is associated with coal, as a burning coal may be said to be shiny, a quality which may easily be attributed to beauty, versus its opposite, gloom.

The noun *mollô* 'fire' now has the general meaning of anybody who poses a threat to others. The list of threats includes:

- (a) the law — normally policemen and soldiers
- (b) parents
- (c) creditors
- (d) husbands / wives
- (e) priests

On seeing a policeman thieves may say:

[269] *Mollô* ke wane, banna, ha re baléhëng.

There is our *threat / enemy*, let us run away.

A teenager may refer to their parents thus:

[270] Ke sitwa ho tsamaya bosiu ha *mellô* e le têng lapëng.

I cannot go anywhere at night when my *parents* are home.

Talking to his mistress, a man may indicate:

[271] Nkëkë ka o isa kërëkëng hobane *mollô* wa rona le ôna o kêna têng.

I cannot take you to church because *my wife / our threat* goes to the same church.

As the above examples illustrate, anything that is referred to as *mollô* 'fire' is something that the subject has some secret agenda against.

The verbs *pôta* 'go round', and *boya* 'return', have both acquired a new meaning, catering for the fast life peculiar to urban areas and tertiary institutions in Lesotho today. Both words are used to indicate that people have a good time in a function, especially one involving music and alcohol. Urban youth may describe a function they attended as follows:

[272] Di nē di *pôta*.

We had *fun*.

[273] Di nē di *boya*.

We had *fun*.

Speakers could not tell us why the verbs *pôta* 'go round' and *boya* 'return', are used with the SP *di*. However, we assume that the underlying meaning is that, 'things went well'. In which case 'things', can be replaced by the SP *di*, representing *ditaba* 'news' or *dinthô* 'things'.

Culturally, Sotho women are considered children. This is why a woman may not be sued, traditionally, no matter what she may do; instead her husband is answerable for her. The word *ngwana* 'child' may therefore be used to refer to both a man's child and wife. It is common for a man with one child to say to his friends:

[274] Ke a tsamaya, banna; ke a kgolwa *bana* ba ka kgalê ba lla.

I am going home, guys, I think that my *children* are complaining.

Apart from any children he may have, the man who utters the above sentence is also, and perhaps particularly, referring to his wife. From this meaning of *ngwana* another meaning has been born — that of males affectionately referring to women they are attracted to as *bana*:

- [275] a. Ebë ke hobaneng *bana* ba sa nthate, banna
I wonder why *ladies* do not like me.
- b. *Bana* ba Mangaung ba batlê ho feta ba Kapa.
Bloemfontein *girls* are more beautiful than Cape Town ones.

This new meaning seems acceptable to young women as those we interviewed indicated that they actually like it.

Lerata 'noise' has acquired a meaning among urban youths, it now means 'an offensive smell':

- [276] a. Diêta tsë sa rwalweng ka dikausi di *lerata*.
Shoes worn without socks have an *offensive smell*.
- b. O tsebahala ka diêta tsë *lerata*.
He is known for his *stinking* shoes.

Lerata 'noise', when used as in the above context is more polite than the term *monkgô* 'smell, odour' the standard term. Mine workers have what they call *bônase* 'bonus', which is their leave from work. When a miner overstays away from work, an expression, *o jelë bônase* 'he has gone beyond his bonus', is normally used.

Ho ja bônase 'to go beyond one's bonus', is unpopular among migrant labourers because their wives use it to hurt them when they have been retrenched. Normally these women use it to indicate that a man has been retrenched because of his irresponsibility, thus:

- [277] a. Pulë o haë hobane o *jelë bônase*.
Pule is home because he *has been fired*.
- b. Thabisô o në a sa tsebe hore a tla *ja bônase*.
Thabiso had no idea that one day he would *be fired*.

When women are sympathetic with their retrenched husbands they normally use the expression, *o senyéhêtswe ke mosébëtsi* 'he has lost his job'. This expression has another meaning, though. It is used to indicate that one has not worn their shoes properly. It is common to hear children say:

[278] a. Thabô o ntsa *ja bônase* a le mokaalë!

Thabo still *can't wear his shoes properly!*

b. Ntatë Paki o na nwelë hoo a nëng a *jelë bônase*.

Mr Paki was so drunk that he even did not have his *shoes on properly*

6.3 Conclusion

We have indicated how speakers are shifting the meanings of native Sotho words and phrases. It is mainly young, urban or educated speakers who seem to be using the new meanings, while older speakers, rural or uneducated Sothos generally use the initial meanings.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

In this dissertation we examine variation in Sotho, concentrating on synchronic sociolects and dialects. Our study indicates that Sotho is not as homogeneous as language purists maintain, but that it is as heterogeneous as are its speakers.

Language differences have been observed between the following social groups:

- [a] urban and rural-dwellers
- [b] educated and uneducated speakers
- [c] women and men
- [d] young and old speakers

Generally, rural Sotho is slow to change, while urban Sotho is rapidly affected by both endogenous and exogenous changes. Although other differences are seen between these types of Sotho, the most obvious one is lexical. Rural Sotho leans more towards the standard terms, while urban-dwellers show a shift to new, and in most cases, non-standard terms. We indicate in Chapter Four, for example, that the Sotho term *kgabana* 'teaspoon' is common in rural areas while urban-dwellers use the adoptives *thispune* and *telepele*.

Another observable difference between urban and rural Sotho is that rural Sotho is labelled crude by urban-dwellers who show a preference for politer forms. The term *nyéla* 'shit' has been given as an example of a word which is normal to rural speakers, but would make urban speakers frown. The politer forms *kaka* or *ya ntlwanéng* are typical of urban Sotho.

Lesotho has two official languages--Sotho and English. However, English enjoys more prestige than Sotho. Among many other purposes, English is used as the primary criterion for judging a speaker's educational capabilities. This results in those who are competent in English being respected and envied by those who are not. Educated Sothos speak a Sotho which is greatly influenced by English. They codeswitch more often than their uneducated counterparts, though even uneducated Sothos try to codeswitch as much as they can, mainly to prove that they too can speak the prestige language.

Another major difference between educated and uneducated Sothos is that the uneducated speakers tend to show influences of Afrikaans more than their educated counterparts do. Uneducated Sothos would use the Afrikaans adoptive *tērēka* 'iron' while their educated counterparts would normally use the English adoptive *aena* 'iron'.

There are two main types of educated Sothos:

- (a) the majority — educated in church or government schools
- (b) the minority — educated in private schools

With regard to phonological variation, the first group tends to Sothoise their adoptives, while products of private schools tend towards the adoption of new phonological inventories and strategies. Examples given in Chapter Two include the existence of the consonant /v/ among products of private schools, while other Sothos normally have /f/, the native Sotho fricative, or the voiced stop, /b/.

The difference between the language of men and women is mainly lexical. As with rural speakers, men show a preference for crude Sotho, while women use politer forms. The term *morotō* 'urine' is commonly used among men, but women on the other hand normally use *mosese* 'urine'. However, unlike rural-dwellers, whose

language is closer to the standard variety, men use varieties which are mainly non-standard.

Older Sothos generally use a stable variety, and prefer the standard form. On the other hand, younger speakers are shifting to a new blend of Sotho, which is mainly non-standard. This shift in Sotho is a result of urbanization and exposure to foreign languages and cultures. New lexical items are adapted as new material objects are introduced. For example, younger speakers prefer the non-standard term *örēnj juse* 'orange juice' to the standard *lerô la lamunu*, which is common among older speakers. Similarly, for new cultural behaviour, younger speakers tend to use new terms instead of old Sotho words and standardised coinages. The youth use the phrase *nka ôkô* 'take a walk', while older speakers use *ötlolla / thapolla maoto*, the standardised form.

We have shown that young speakers are shifting from the traditional phonological and morphological rules. This process is indicative of the effort to regularise Sotho by eliminating exceptions. The replacement of irregular plurals with the "usual" plurals mentioned in Chapter Three is an example of such regularisation. As we indicated earlier, the youth have moved from the older speakers' way of forming plurals of certain nouns in Classes 5 and 9. Where older speakers have Classes 6 and 10 as plural Classes for Class 5 nouns, the youth have Class 6 only. Similarly, where older speakers have Class 9 nouns with plurals in both Classes 10 and 6, the youth have Class 10 only.

Another significant characteristic of the language of young Sotho-speakers is its simplicity. In forming nominal and verbal diminutives, young speakers suffix *-nyana* in place of *-ana*, thus avoiding complicated morphophonemic alterations. For example, for the noun *séfê* 'sieve' young speakers would have the diminutive

sêfênyana 'small sieve', while older Sothos would have *sêfjwana*. Similarly, for the verb *rata* 'like' young speakers would have the diminutive *ratanyana* 'like a little', while older speakers would use *rata-rata*. For young speakers, the pattern is easy, all diminutives, be they nominal or verbal, are formed by suffixing *-nyana*; on the other hand, older speakers apply several different rules for nominal diminutives and different ones for verbal diminutives.

Younger speakers similarly avoid the morphophonemic processes associated with the RP or OP. In Chapter Two we show that young Sothos would have non-standard forms such as *irata* 'like oneself' (< *rata*) and *mbôna* 'see me' (*bôna*), instead of *ithata* and *mpôna* 'see me'.

Morphological rules for the Demonstrative are regularised by young and rural speakers. For example, we have indicated that the second set of the first position Demonstrative is made similar to the second sets of the second and third position Demonstrative by reduplication of the last syllable.

Generally, form-class-assignment is similar among the studied groups. However, we indicate that there seems to be a shift among younger speakers towards relativising Adjectival phrases, thus:

Old: O na le mosadi ë *molëlëlë*.

Young: O na le mosadi *ya molëlëlë*.

He has a *tall* wife.

Although language purists in Lesotho deny the existence of dialects and sociolects of Sotho, our study shows that they have not succeeded in stopping change in Sotho. With both the cultural and material world of the Sothos changing, we assume that Sotho will also keep on changing to keep pace with all the changes among its speakers.

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