THE INFLUENCE OF THE DIALECT SEPULANA ON THE LEARNING OF SEPEDI AT SABIE CIRCUIT, MPUMALANGA PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

by

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DECLARATION

I, MATSHELANE ANNA KHWEYANE, hereby declare that the dissertation, "**THE INFLUENCE OF THE DIALECT SEPULANA ON THE LEARNING OF SEPEDI AT SABIE CIRCUIT, MPUMALANGA PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**" is my own work and that all the sources I have used have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

....
SIGNATURE   **DATE**

DEDICATION

This mini-dissertation is dedicated to my children Paul (Dipheta tša Mankwana), Elina Matema and Ruth-Belle. *Ke a leboga bana baka*, you were always there for me, encouraging and supporting me from the beginning to the end. May the favour of God our LORD JESUS CHRIST be with you. My husband Landross Diboneng Khweyane who never complained of my many trips to University of Limpopo, thank you and I LOVE YOU ALL.

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ABSTRACT

The study was intended to investigate the influence and the impact which Sepulana as a dialect has on the learning of Sepedi as the standard language. The findings included among others: Sepulana has a negative impact on the learning of Sepedi as a standard language in Sabie circuit, Bohlabela district of Mpumalanga Province. Secondly, most Sepedi educators who speak Sepulana use the dialect to offer Sepedi in the formal classroom situation, and as such, learners become confused on whether to use Sepedi or Sepulana words. The study recommends that teachers of Sepedi be encouraged to teach Sepedi and not Sepulana in class, and also that teachers should upgrade their Sepedi qualifications to enable them to have in-depth knowledge of the language.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1   INTRODUCTION

In The SAB Community Trust (1982:62), Language is defined as "a human speech either spoken or written. It makes it possible for people to talk to each other and to write their thoughts and ideas". From this definition, one deduces that language is meant for communication. Dialect is the way people talk in a certain district of a country or in a social class.

This study is going to examine the impact of Sepulana on the standard Sepedi. Sepedi is a dialect that is regarded as standard for a language which is also known as Sesotho sa Leboa. The Language Sepedi is spoken by 4,206,980 and is one of the 11 official languages in South Africa. It is spoken in Mpumalanga Province, Gauteng, and Limpopo Provinces. Sepedi has many dialects where Sepulana is one of them. Sepulana, spoken by Mapulana who occupy the area known as Mapulaneng, is a language that forms part of Northern Sotho. Sepulana has its own unique words thus differentiating it from other languages. The language is so different that others call it " Eastern Sotho". Sepulana is classified as a dialect of Sepedi.

1.2   BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

All languages in the world have dialects, where one dialect is standardised. This also pertains to Northern Sotho which has many dialects, for example, Khelobedu, Sepulana, Kopa, Hananwa and Sepedi, where Sepedi is regarded as a standard dialect. Cheshire (1989:31) defines a dialect as "a combination of specific features i.e. phonological, morphological, syntactical or lexical". Most of these features do not correspond directly with the standard dialect. Similarly, Halliday (1978:38) explains dialect as "what you speak (habitually) determined by who you are (socio-region of origin or adoption) and expressing diversity of social structure". In principle he implies that dialects are different ways of saying the same thing and tend to differ in phonetics, phonology, and lexicogrammar.

On the other hand, a standard language is a language variety used by a group of people in their public discourse. Varieties become standard by undergoing a process of standardization and as such end up being used in grammar books, schools, dictionaries and reference works. Standard language is most often seen as the only good and correct variety of language while all other varieties are considered to be incorrect or bad. In most extreme cases, their use is even equalled with bad behaviour. In this regard, Webb and Sure (2000:18) define standardization as the process by which the authoritative language body (such as government-appointed body) prescribes how a language should be written and the terminology that is acceptable in formal situations and what the appropriate grammatical constructions of the language are. In Pilgrims' Rest learners speaking Sepulana find themselves interacting with those speaking SiSwati. In most cases their speech is influenced by that of SiSwati. The *Constitution* (1996:4) emphasizes that "the National government and the Provincial government may use any particular official language for the purpose of government taking into account usage, practicality, expense, regional circumstances and the balance of the needs and preferences of the population as a whole in the Province concerned, but the National government must use at least two official languages". Therefore, apart from English in Sabie Circuit, Sepedi is used as one of the official languages.

The study concentrates on the influence of Sepulana on the learning of Standard Sepedi**.**

1.3   RESEARCH PROBLEM

When learning Sepedi as a standard language in Sabie Circuit at Mapulaneng, Bohlabela District (Mpumalanga Province, South Africa) learners often speak and write Sepulana instead. As Sepulana shows a lot of SiSwati influence, learners are marked wrong in their tasks and this affects their pass rate in a negative manner. They often get low marks especially in oral tasks as they speak Sepulana in the classroom instead of the standard Sepedi. In speech one of the aspects of assessment in the rubric is language usage and tone. From these aspects most learners forfeit marks as they do

not use acceptable language and tone. In grammar, the marking grid is as follows (Department of Basic Education Guideline for setting, 2009:8):

- Spelling
  - One word answer must be marked wrong if the spelling is incorrect
  - In full sentence answers, incorrect spelling should be penalized if the error is in the language structure being tested.
  - Where an abbreviation is tested, the answer should be correctly punctuated.
- Sentence structures must be grammatically correct and given in full sentences as per instruction.

The challenges that educators encounter from learners are usually found mainly in the following:

Semantics

The SABC Community Trust (1982: 235) defines Semantics as "the study of the conditions under which signs and symbols, including words, may be said to be meaningful. It is also the study of how human behaviour is affected by words, whether spoken by others or to oneself in thoughts. Semantics is the science of meaning",

The dialect Sepulana has a serious impact on the learning of Sepedi as the following examples indicate:

The answer for a question like: *Where is Mr X?*

SiSwati	:	Angimuati	(I do not know where he is)
Sepulana	:	A ke mo tšibi	(I do not know where he is)
Sepedi	:	Ga ke tsebe	(I do not know where he is)

The interpretation in Sepulana will be deemed to be wrong and therefore the learners will be marked wrong and thereby end up getting low marks. This shows that the dialect Sepulana has a serious impact on the learning of Sepedi.

Spelling

Spelling is the way people combine letters to write words. Learning to spell correctly is part of learning a language. Spelling also goes hand in hand with a dialect. This is why Trudgill (1989:2) emphasizes that in a dialect we are referring to something more than accent, not only to pronunciation but also the words and grammar that people use as illustrated below:

(2) Sepulana   - *Ba tlile pelong ga rune*   (They came before us)

Beside the pronunciation, as far as standard Sepedi is concerned, the words in (2) are spelled wrongly and this makes the meaning of the sentence and the grammar to be incorrect as well. The sentence in (2) above if interpreted in Sepedi means that they **came into our hearts**. The sentence in standard Sepedi should be ***ba tlile peleng ga rena.*** The comparison of the two dialects as reflected below shows the difference clearly:

(3) Sepulana   :   *Ba tlile **pelo** ga **rune***

    Sepedi   :   *Ba tlile **pele** ga **rena***

Due to the usage of supposedly wrong vowel **o** instead of **e** in ***pelo***, and **u** and **e** instead of **e** and **a** in ***rena***, learners would be marked wrong as the teachers would not understand what the sentence means.

Other examples of this nature may be listed as follows:

(4) a. Sepulana   :   *O ba kgweditse*   (He found them)
        Sepedi   :   *O ba hweditše*   (He found them)
    b. Sepulana   :   *O a rekisa*   (She is selling)
        Sepedi   :   *O a rekiša*   (She is selling)

c.	Sepulana	:	*Hlapisa*	(Help to bath)
	Sepedi	:	*Hlapiša*	(Help to bath)

The above examples are lexical items that developed from the same proto-form but which differ phonetically. The causative suffix -**š**- is not used in Sepulana. Learners also use words in Sepulana which are totally not there in Sepedi. Krige (1937:356) calls them lexical terms that differ radically. For example:

(5) a.	Sepulana	:	*O a mo kekeisa*	He is mocking him.
	Sepedi	:	*O a mo gegea*	He is mocking him.
b.	Sepulana	:	*O lahliye puku*	He misplaced his book.
	Sepedi	:	*O timeditše puku*	He misplaced his book.

Many Sepedi teachers do not know what **kekeisa** means and therefore mark the learners wrong. Regarding example (5b) above, the word **lahla** in Sepulana means that the book is lost but to a Sepedi speaking person **lahla** means to throw away.

This brief overview shows that there are several challenges pertaining to the learning of standard Sepedi by learners whose home dialect is Sepulana.

1.4   AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to examine the influence of Sepulana dialect on the learning of Sepedi as a standard language. In order to achieve this aim, the study will endeavour to answer the following questions.

- How does Sepulana as a dialect influence the learning of Sepedi?
- How can   learners be assisted to differentiate Sepulana from Sepedi?
- Are there any measures that can be introduced to narrow the orthography gaps between Sepulana and Sepedi?

1.5   OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To determine the way in which Sepulana influences the learning of Sepedi.
- To identify ways of assisting learners to differentiate Sepulana from Sepedi.
- To find measures that can be introduced to narrow the orthography gaps between Sepulana and Sepedi.
- To determine the influence of SiSwati on Sepulana.

1.6   METHODOLOGY

The qualitative research method will be used in this study because it will enable the researcher to understand the impact that Sepulana has on the learning of Sepedi. In the same vein, Leedy and Ormond (2001:101) intimate that qualitative research is typically used to ask questions about the complex nature of the phenomena, often with the purpose of describing and understanding the phenomena from participants' point of view.

1.7   COLLECTION OF DATA

1.7.1 Primary research methods

A maximum of 60 learners of Grade 11 and 12 from 3 schools (that is, 10 learners as indicated per grade) will be given an essay to write e.g. "*Bohlokwa bja meetse.*" The researcher will be able to observe the impact of Sepulana on the learning of Sepedi from the essays that the learners will write. Information will also be obtained through interviews from the following people: 2 teachers from each of the selected school, two Senior Education Specialists (CA) and two National Examiners of Sepedi Exam papers.

Although there would be no usage of a structured questionnaire, the researcher will use questions such as the ones below:

- Is it correct that learners should be marked wrong when they write Sepulana?
- Which language should learners use between Sepulana and Sepedi? Substantiate your answer.

- What is the importance of a standard language at school?
- How can learners be helped in speaking and writing Sepedi?

1.7.2 Secondary research method

The purpose of using this method is to establish as accurately as possible the significance and relevance of the information already documented by scholars. Secondary data is important as it could be utilised to augment primary data. Information will be collected from library books, magazines, newspapers, journals and dissertations.

1.8 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The study will achieve reliability and validity by utilising variety of research methods alluded to in the above paragraphs. Again, the researcher will conduct interviews with experts regarding the teaching of Sepedi. Saturation will also become useful to determine reliability and validity.

1.9 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis will rely largely on the comparative method as the researcher will compare Sepulana to standard Sepedi on regular basis.

1.10 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study would be of great significance because it will help people to realise how Sepulana influences the learning of Sepedi and how educators must assist learners in speaking and writing Sepedi as a standard language. The study will also show how this impact will be minimized.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of this chapter is an overview of the literature with specific reference to dialects, language, language policy and planning, language policy in the Constitution (1996), language policy in Mpumalanga Province, national language policy and orthography.

2.2 DIALECTS

Most scholars regard a dialect as a variety of a language. Language variety is used to refer to any system of linguistic expression where it is used in situational variables. Hudson (1980:21) says:

> If one thinks of a language as a phenomenon including all the languages of the world, the term variety of a language (or just language variety for short) can be used to refer to different manifestation of a language. What make one variety different from another is the linguistic items which it includes, so we can define variety of languages as a set of linguistic items with similar distribution.

There is a distinction between a dialect and a language. A language is larger than a dialect. People regard a dialect as an incorrect language. Dialects are also regarded as a deviation from the norm, an aberration of a correct or standard form of language. To emphasis this, Harold (1986:18) defines a dialect as a language which does not have a written form, and which has not yet been alphabetized.

Adrian Richards and Robert (1984:287) define a dialect as a form of a language that is regarded as substandard, "incorrect or corrupt" as opposed to the standard, correct or pure form of a language.

These scholars point out that in popular terms; to speak a dialect is to be uneducated and ignorant. Haugen (1996:68) points out that language and dialect are ambiguous forms. "Ordinary people use these terms quite freely in speech, for them a dialect is no more than a local non-prestigious variety of a language". For example, linguists refer to the so-called Standard English as a dialect of English, which from a linguistic point of view is no more correct than any other form of English.

From the above definitions by different scholars one deduces that a dialect is a language which is mostly used by the uneducated and has no written form.

Crystal (1997:253) defines mutual intelligibility as a criterion used in linguistics referring to the ability of people to understand one another. If two varieties of a speech are mutually intelligible, they are regarded strictly as dialects of the same language. Petty (1980:13) adds that dialects are different but mutually intelligible forms of speech. So we can say that people speak the same language if they understand one another, if they do not understand one another they must be speaking different languages.

Brook (1963:19) states that if the difference between two dialects is so great that the speaker of the other dialects cannot understand each other the two dialects are well on the way of developing into separate languages. Some linguists define a dialect as a form of a language used by a speech community. This means that the difference between the abstract or the general, and the concrete and the particular.

From what we have read, no one speaks a language. Everyone speaks a dialect of a language. According to Petyt (1980:11) a dialect is "a form of speech with no corresponding written form". In other words, a dialect is usually contrasted with the languages of the literate and educated. Harold, Allen and Michael (1986:216) supports Petty's view by defining a dialect as a language for which there exists no written form, a language which has not yet been alphabetized and is for the reason intrinsically inferior, not a real language but a mere dialect. This applies to Sepulana dialect because it does not correspond with the written form and is also regarded as a non-standard form of speech which is used in daily communication at home. Coupland (1988:342) says that every dialect is a language but not every language is a dialect. Dialect is a term that

suggests informal or lower- class or rural speech. A dialect is thought of as standing outside the language.

Hilladay (1978:38) explains a dialect as "what you speak (habitually), determined by who you are (socio-region of origin or adoption) and expressing diversity of social structure". Here Hillady emphasizes that people can say the same thing in different ways and differ in phonetics, phonology and lexicogrammar. In this regard, Fromkin et al. (2007:452) add that dialects are mutually forms of language that differ in systematic ways, every speaker, whether rich or poor, regardless of region or racial origin, speaks at least one dialect as each individual speaks an idiolect.

From a dialect, people are able to know one's origin. People are able to know one's place of birth. Similarly, Chamber and Trudgill (1998:03) define the term dialect as:

> A term that is often applied to forms of language particularly those spoken in more isolated parts of the world which have no written form. A dialect is distinguished by its vocabulary, grammar and its pronunciation. Where a distinction can be made only in terms of pronunciation the term accent is appropriate, not dialect.

Gregory and Caroll (1978) distinguished them in this manner:

> Accent normally refers to articulatory and acoustic features of language, while dialect refers to the totality of lexical, grammatical and phonological features. Dialect thereof incorporate accent but remains distinct from it. It can be thought of as the user's macro-linguistic identity defining him in terms of birth place, class education and age, while a person' s accent may initially be the most striking aspect of his language, that of which we are consciously and immediately, aware, it comprises only a part of the variation possible.

Accent is the way people pronounce words. Dialects refer to varieties that are grammatically as well as phonologically different from other varieties.

A speech community is a group of people who share a set of norms and expectation regarding the use of language. Lyons (1970:326) defines speech community as "all the people who use a given language or dialect". From this definition one observes that speech communities may overlap and need not have any social or cultural unity.

Gumperz (1962:28-40) defines linguistic community as:

> A social group which may either be monolingual or multilingual held together by frequency of social interaction patterns and set off from the surrounding areas by weaknesses in the lines of communication. Within any recognizable speech community, variations are normally found on all levels of linguistic structure, phonological, grammatical, and lexical.

Some of these variations are correlated with geographical locations. There is systematic difference. A type of variation which is familiar in most societies is correlated with the different formal and informal situations. The use of *rurubal*a and *homo*la is used in Mapulaneng which means to keep quite. *Rurubala* is used in an informal situation and *homola* is used in formal situations and is an acceptable standardised word.

Any speech community reveals different languages which are functionally differentiated from each other. The varieties contain vocabulary or pronunciation which is not known throughout the broader speech community. Other speakers may not use them.

In some occasions, interlocutors who can speak a particular specialised variety to one another nevertheless do not do so, but instead switch to a different variety of language which is either in wider use or which is indicative of quite a different set of interest and relationships than is associated with their specialised variety.

The above definitions of speech community lead to sociolinguistics which is the study of relationship between language and society. Every society has its own dialect. Most dialects have different accents. Other accents are noticeable while others are not noticeable. Accent identifies where an individual speaker is from regionally or socially. Dialects describe features of grammar and vocabulary as well as aspects of pronunciation.

There is a general impression of mutual intelligibility among many speakers of different dialects. Each dialect is equally worthy of analysis. It is important to note that no dialect is better than the other. They just differ. The difference is that some varieties are more of high quality than the others. That variety develops as standard language.

2.2.1 How dialects differ?

Dialects differ in pronunciation, vocabulary and in grammar. Dialects are regarded as variations from a 'standard' educated form of language. Dialects differ in terms of how they are used by their speakers. They differ slightly from each other. They differ from village to village.

Regional Dialects

The existence of different regional dialects is widely recognised and often the source of some humour for those living in different regions. Some regional dialects clearly have stereotyped pronunciations associated with them. Those involved in serious investigation of regional dialects have denoted a lot of survey research to the identification of consistent features of speech found in one geographical area compared to another. The dialect survey often involves painstaking criteria in identifying acceptable informants.

Social Dialects

Whereas the regional dialects concentrate on the speech of rural areas, social dialects is concerned with speakers in towns and cities. There are two main sources of extra complexity. There is geographical mobility. These are people who move from one place to another, taking their dialects with them even if they modify them in the course of time to fit their new surroundings. Yule (2007:206) says that in the study of dialects, two main groups are identified: middle class perform manual work and working class speech is a social dialect. Examples of language use that are characteristics of a social dialect are that class is treated as **social variables** and the pronunciation or word as **linguistic**

variable. Investigations should be made to see to what extent speakers use each version of the linguistic variable (Yule, 2007:207).

2.2.2 Northern Sotho Dialects

Northern Sotho dialects are classified among others by Ziervogel (1975:21) according to geographical areas as follows:

   (a) South Central

      Sekopa, Ndebele, Sotho, Molepo, Mothiba, Mothapo and Makgoba.

   (b) Central

      Sepedi, Sekone, Setau, Seroka and Moletlane

   (C) North West

  Sehananwa, Sephalaborwa and Sekgopo.

   (c) Eastern

      Sepulana and Sekutswe

Any language with a reasonably large number of speakers will develop dialects, especially if there are geographical barriers separating groups of people from each other, or if there are divisions of social class (Louwrens, (1994:54). As indicated earlier on, Northern Sotho is a home language of around 4 208 980 people (htt://www.google.com/search (2005:2) Ziervogel's classification agrees with the definition by Louwrens as he divides the dialects in separate geographical areas.

2.3   LANGUAGE

As far as Brown (1994:4) in Mawela is concerned, defining a language is an extremely difficult thing to do:

> To presume to define language adequately would be folly. Linguist philologists have been trying for centuries to define the term. A definition is really a condensed version of a theory, and a theory is simple and not so simply an extended definition.

Contrary to what Brown has stated, some authors have come out with different definitions of language. Finochiaro (1964:8) defines language as "a system of arbitrary, vocal symbols which permit all people in a given culture or other people who have learned the system of that culture, to communicate or to interact". *Random House Dictionary of English Language* (1966:806) regards language as "any set or system of linguistic symbols as used in a more or less uniform fashion by a number of people who are thus enable you to communicate intelligibly with one another". For Ferdinand de Saussures (1916) in Gumpez's book, language represents shared pattern which is distinct from what is actually said in somewhat the same way.

Pei, in Mawela (1910:8) views language as "a system of communication by sound, operating through the organs of speech and hearing, among members of a given community, and using vocal symbols possessing arbitrary conventional meaning ". In the same vein, *Webster's New International Dictionary of English Language* (1934:1390) regards language as "any means, vocal or other, of expressing or communicating feeling or thought, a system of conventionalised sings, especially words or gestures having fixed meaning.

A language is the medium of communication between speakers of different dialects. The only variety which will count as a "proper language" is a standard language. Standard languages are the result of a direct and deliberate intervention by society. This intervention called standardisation produces a standard language where before there

were just 'dialects'. According to Garvin and Mathiot (1959), the following process needs to be passed for a language to be one standard.

(1) Selection

The dialect must be selected as the one to be developed into a standard language.

(2) Codification

Some agencies such as an academy must have written dictionaries and grammar books to 'fix' the variety so that everyone agrees on what is correct. Once codification has taken place, it becomes necessary for any ambitious citizen to learn the correct forms and to use in writing any incorrect forms that may exist in their native variety.

(3) Elaboration of function

It must be possible to use the selected variety in all the functions associated with central government and with writing for example, parliament and law courts to be added to the variety.

(4) Acceptance

The variety has to be accepted by the relevant population as the variety of the community usually, in fact, as the national language. Once this has happened, the standard language serves as a strong unifying force for the state, as a symbol of its independent of other states.

It is important to recognise from linguistic point of view, that none of the varieties of language is inherently "better" than any other. They are just different, and some varieties do become more prestigious.

Language is a social phenomenon whose form is in large measure determined by biological factors. It is hardly controversial that man's anatomical and neuron physiological structure constraints the nature of human language.

Here Langacker (1973:3-4) emphasises that language will not employ sounds that are physically impossible to articulate. The language which a child learns to speak depends entirely on his models, those from whom he learns to speak. By the time a child reaches the age of five or six he has mastered the fundamentals of his native language. The linguistic system he masters is virtually identical with the one used around him. The child assimilates with the language his models use. At home he speaks the language of those he is around and at school he meets other people with their language. Given the vast amount of detail that a language comprises, minor discrepancies will inevitably arise. The speech of a prominent or admired person is often adopted as standard or model, although there is no reason to think that any dialect of a language has intrinsic merit over the others. Sometimes the dialect of a certain region or social class takes on special prestige for the community or nation as a whole.

Language is a tool for thought and communication. It is also a cultural and aesthetical commonly shared among people to make better sense of the world they live in. Learning to use language effectively enables learners to acquire knowledge, to express their identity, feelings and ideas and to interact with others.

 All languages tend to change through time and if a language changes in form faster in one community than another, or if some changes occur in one place and not another, then linguistic differences will rise.

Sapir (1921:7) defines language as "the purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntary produced symbols". From his definition Sapir emphasises that language is a means of individuals communicating with each other. Language is related to the speaker's culture.

Shohamy (2000:5) argues that language is a unique phenomenon as it is personal and varies drastically from one user to another. Webb (2002:48) emphasizes that "indeed there are no speakers who speak exactly the same".

2.3.1 Language Policy

Bugarski (1992:8) defines language policy as "the policy of a society in the area of linguistic communication. That is the set of positions, principles and decisions reflecting that community's relationship to its verbal repertoire and communication potential. Language policy can be analysed as the outcome of a struggle as well as components in it".   According to Shohamy (2000:45):

> Language policy is the primary mechanism for organising and managing, manipulating language use in society. It is through language policy that decisions are made about language that should be legitimized, used, learned and taught.

Language policy acts as the manipulating tool in the continuous battle between different ideologies. Language policy embraces laws and regulations that specify how and where language should be used.

Status planning means that official language is given functions and acquisition planning i.e., to have more speakers and new words. Webb (2002:43) says "the state is the major player in the language policy. It regulates which language and form of literary are official realms". Language policy is an issue of considerable ethical, political and legal importance in Jurisdictions around the world. However, the language policy must be effective providing guidance on how to use all the official languages within a country or area.

2.3.2 Language Policy and Language Planning

Language planning means the institutionalisation of language as a basis for distinction among social groups. Language policy is one mechanism by which dominant groups establish hegemony in language use. This conception of language policy implies that there is a dynamic relationship between social relations and language policy.

2.3.3 Language Policy in the South African Constitution

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act no. 108 of 1996), gives a clear language policy. In terms of section 6 (5b), South Africa has 11 official languages which have status nationally and provincially. These languages are as follows: Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, SiSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, IsiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu. *The Constitution of South Africa* (1996) declares that all citizens shall be able to enjoy and exercise their fundamental rights and freedoms.

2.3.4 Language Policy in Education

Of all the domains for language policy, one of the most important is the school. Cooper (1983:33) adds acquisition planning alongside status planning and corpus planning as third focus of language policy. Language acquisition policy is more commonly known as language education policy.

The languages spoken at home are usually unwritten and schools almost universally aim to develop literacy in a written form of language which is standardised. Spoky (2004:46) states that "the language spoken at home is likely to be a local variety, while the language of school will commonly be regional or national." The language of learning and teaching is a fundamental factor that is indispensable and pivotal as learning can hardly take place without it. The South African School's Act (1996: B - 32) states that "The language of learning and teaching in a public school must be an official language".

Section 29(2) provided that a person had the right to receive an education in the official language of their choice.

In 2007 the committee had received a submission challenging the designation of Sepedi as an official language in terms of section 6(1) of the Constitution. According to the submissions Sesotho sa Leboa was the correct designation of the official language as was the case in the Interim Constitution. Under the Constitution the official languages were at odds with the Interim Constitution, the difference being that Sepedi was then designated an official language instead of Sesotho sa Leboa. The understanding was that there was intention to change what was designated in the Interim Constitution, but there was an error in translation in that the word was changed but it was not the intention to change the meaning. The committee considered several options, and it was agreed to call in people involved in the drawing up of the constitution to explain the reason for the discrepancy in the different translations.

2.3.5 Mpumalanga Province Language Policy

Mpumalanga Province is one of the nine provinces of South Africa. The other provinces are Limpopo, Gauteng, North West, Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Free State and Kwazulu Natal. Amongst the dialects of Mpumalanga Province, there is Sepulana. Mapulana speaks Sepulana, a language that forms part of the Northern Sotho. Sepulana though very rich and robust, is neither written nor taught at schools. Like all South African languages there is a smattering of words from other languages in Sepulana, mainly Xitsonga and SiSwati. Sepulana is classified as a belonging to the South eastern and subgroup Sotho in the family of Bantu languages which all the indigenous languages of Southern Africa fall. The language is so divergent that some call it Eastern Sotho. Other classifies it as a dialect of Northern Sotho.

Within Mpumalanga Province, there are sub-groups of Sepulana namely: Bakutswe and Mamba/Mambaye. It is said that the sub-groups are descendant from the same family tree. The language or dialect of Hipaye is becoming extinct in South Africa. Bakutswe speaks a dialect of Sepulana influenced by Sekone. Sekone is a subdialect of

Sepulana. Haas (1982:59) indicates that the orthography can ignore the problems of dialectics and leaves speakers of the other dialects to fend for themselves.

2.3.6 Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) Act of 1995

PanSALB replaced all the language Boards which existed during the Bantustan period (Mojela, 2005:4). The PanSALB's duty is to promote and create conditions for the development and use of all the official languages which amongst them is Sepedi. The mission of the Board is to promote multilingualism in South Arica by:

- Creating the conditions for the development of and the equal use of all official languages.
- Fostering respect of and encouraging the use of other languages in the country and
- Encouraging the best use of the country's linguistic resources.

The responsibility of PanSALB is to empower agencies both within state structures and civil society to contribute towards the development and use of all the official languages. This includes the promotion of interlinguistic skills and development of the official languages as well as other languages used in South Africa.

2.3.7 National Language Policy Framework

The National Language Policy Framework (2003) emphasizes that South Africa is a multilingual country where 11 languages has been granted official status in terms of section 6 of the constitution of South Africa of 1996. The 11 official languages are Xitsonga Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, isiXhosa, isiZulu, and isiNdebele, SiSwati, Tshivenda, English and Afrikaans. The aim of the National Language Policy Framework is to give all 11 official languages equal status and also to protect them. In communicating with the members of the public, the language of the citizen's choice can

be used and all oral communication must take place in the preferred official language of the target audience.

2.4   ORTHOGRAPHY

> Orthography is a standardized system for using a particular writing system. It includes rules of spelling and other elements of writing language that may be considered to be part of orthography. (htt://en.m.Wikipedia.org/wiki/orthography).

This includes hyphenation, capitalisation, word breaks, emphasis and punctuation. According to Haas (1993:37) "the problem of orthography emerges clearly confronted with the difference between spoken utterances and their written counterpart." He continues saying that orthography is a kind of bridge between the spoken and written form.

In 1929 the Northern Sotho orthography was agreed upon by the Transvaal Sotho District Committee of the Transvaal Education Department, *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4*   (1932:5). The orthography was adopted and published in 1930.

Orthography of Northern Sotho is mainly based on the Sepedi dialect. Originally the Berlin missionaries used an orthography based on that of Sesotho and Tswana which were both written before Northern Sotho was. Northern Sotho gradually changed and developed its own character. Originally the Berlin Missionaries worked among speakers of Eastern Transvaal dialects of Northern Sotho, with the result that all their earliest publications were in Sepedi or a related dialect.

The activities of the Berlin Missionary Society were expanded to include speakers of Northern Transvaal, Northern Sotho dialects, as well as speakers of Northern East Sotho. The missionaries took the writing traditions that had already developed around Sepedi and applied them to the Northern Transvaal dialects.

The result of this development is that Sepedi today serves a written language for the speakers or a variety of dialects. The speakers of other dialects have a defective conception of Sepedi, with the result that they write a language based on the Sepedi orthography, but lexically, grammatically and idiomatically it is still in their own dialects. For example, in Sepulana there are vowels that are affected by the spelling mistakes because of the spoken utterances, in words such as:

Sepedi	**Sepulana**
pel<u>e</u>	*pel<u>o</u>*
(front)	(front)

Besides some differences in the usage of vowels in different dialects, all the Northern Sotho dialects maintain the eleven vowels and two semi-vowels in their daily spoken and written language forms. In an article entitled *Standardization and Development of Orthography in Sesotho sa Leboa*: *A Historical Overview,* Mojela (2005:2) indicates that the written Northern Sotho that was limited to the dialect around Bapedi and also called Sepedi during the missionary period was characterised by the following:

(a) It was not a formal standardisation in the real sense as there was no centralised authority controlling and standardising the so called written "Sepedi language".

(b) The orthography was purely in Sepedi as the missionaries worked in Bopedi and regarded Sepedi to be a language on its own since they did not know other dialects or even a language that has resemblances to Sepedi.

(c) There were no developed orthography and spelling rules.

(d) The written language represented the dialects spoken by a small fraction of the Northern Communities, while the majority of the dialects of Sesotho sa Leboa were not written since there were little or no missionary activities in their areas.

(e)   There was neither clear distinction nor clear defined relationship between Sepedi and other N. Sotho dialects in its neigbourhood.

The missionaries' role was not to research the language "Sepedi" as they would have had contact with other dialects or language similar to Sepedi but to teach Christian religion to the people.

2.5   CONCLUSION

From this discussion we have deduced that a dialect should pass through a specific process to be a standard language. There should be a language policy to embrace laws and regulations of that language.

CHAPTER THREE

A COMPARISON OF SEPULANA AND SEPEDI

3.1   INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to compare the dialect Sepulana with Sepedi as a standard language. A comparison will be made on the following categories of language: Nouns, Pronouns, Verbs, Adjectives, Idiophones, Interjectives and Proverbs.

3.2   NOUNS

Russell (1999:61) states that "a noun is a word that is used to name any person, animal, thing, idea, state or quality". There are four kinds of nouns, namely, common, proper, collective and abstract. Payne (2006) describes nouns as words that refer to highly bounded or individuated entities. These are concepts that tend not to change very much over time and which can be referred to repeatedly in discourse as the same thing. From the definition we deduce that every person, place, or thing is identified with a name, without which we would not be able to communicate or understand one another. The main purpose, however, is to compare the differences and similarities that occur in Sepulana and standard Sepedi nouns.

People

Sepedi	Sepulana	English
Ngwanenyana	*Ngwannyana*	Girl
Mma /Mme	*Mmane*	Mother
Leloko	*Leshaga*	Relative
Mogatšamalome	*Anti*	Aunt
Koko	*Kokwane*	Granny

From the above list, one deduces that Sepedi and Sepulana use different terms to refer to an entity. In one instance, there is no similarity at all, as in the case of relative where Sepedi uses *leloko* while Sepulana has *leshaga* as an equivalent.

Animals

Sepedi	Sepulana	English
Segwegwe	*Sekwele*	Frog
Ntšhi	*Thokwane*	Fly
Lephene	*Lefelo*	Cockroach
Tšhwene	*Chwena*	Baboon

In this case as well, the vocabulary that Sepedi and Sepulana use hardly any relationship, except in *tšhwene* and *chwena* in Sepedi and Sepulana respectively.

Plants

Sepedi	Sepulana	English
Dikgong	*Mahlare*	Fire woods
Lešaša	*Moshai*	Stick
Lefela	*Selokwane*	Maize

The abovementioned terms clearly indicate the vast difference that occurs in Sepedi and Sepulana vocabulary.

Natural things

Sepedi	Sepulana	English
Tee/Fofo	*Tiya*	Tea
Dikgobe	*Dihlaku*	Samp
Motse	*Mutji*	House
Ditedu	*Makgakga*	Bears
Meokgo/Megokgo	*Monepedi*	Tears
Tšhelete	*Cheleta*	Money
Leoto	*Leto*	Foot
Masantase	*Matllepisi*	Sneackers
Kilana	*Sekwekwe*	Gizzard

From this list, one realize that the only similarity between Sepedi and Sepulana occurs in adoptive, that is *tšhelete* and *cheleta* (from the Afrikaans word *geld*).

3.3   PRONOUNS

Pronouns takes the place of a noun, they perform the same function as a noun. Pronouns are used to avoid repetition. Grammarians classify pronouns into several types including the absolute pronoun, the interrogative, the demonstrative and so on. Richard and Teschner (1993:6) add by saying "pro"+ "noun" means 'in place of', 'instead of' a noun. Pronoun replaces a noun, but can also refer back to nouns.

3.3.1 Absolute Pronouns

Absolute pronouns are primarily emphatic in significance and are often used for purposes of contrast. They stand alone as subject or object in a sentence or in opposition to, and usually following, but sometimes preceding a noun or other pronouns.

Sepedi	Sepulana	English
Yena	Yeni	Him
Wena	*Weni*	You
Lena	*Lune*	You
Rena	*Rune*	Us
Tšona	*Tsona*	Them

In the abovementioned examples, one observes that there is some relationship, between Sepulana and Sepedi and mutual intelligibility is possible.

3.3.2 Demonstrative Pronouns

As the name denotes, the Demonstrative Pronoun indicates the various positions occupied by persons, animals, objects or things relative to the speakers. Demonstrative Pronoun identifies or specifies a noun. They point out a specific thing.

Sepedi			Sepulana			English		
yo	*yoo*	*yola*	*ye*	*yene*	*yela*	this	that	that
wo	*woo*	*wola*	*wo*	*wone*	*wela*	this	that	that
le	*leo*	*lela*	*lo*	*lone*	*lone*	this	that	that
se	*seo*	*sela*	*so*	*sone*	*sela*	this	that	that
mo	*moo*	*mola*	*ho*	*hone*	*hala*	there	there	there
ba	*bao*	*bale*	*bowa*	*bone*	*bala*	these	those	those
a	*ao*	*ale*	*a*	*one*	*ala*	these	those	those
tše	*tšeo*	*tšela*	*tso*	*tsone*	*tsela*	these	those	those
ye	*yeo*	*yela*	*ye*	*yowa*	*yene*	this	that	that

In many instances regarding these examples, mutual intelligibility will not be possible as in *ba*, *bao*, *bale* (Sepedi)

3.3.3   Possessive Pronouns

They indicate ownership.

Sepedi	Sepulana	English
*Puku ye ke **ya ka***	*Puku yo ke **ya ga**ka*	This book is mine
*Ntlo **ya gagwe***	*Ntlo **ya gage***	His house
*Dikobo **tša rena***	*Dikobo **tsa rune***	Our clothes
*Dikgomo **tša lena***	***Dikgomo tsa lune***	Your cattle
*Dipudi **tša bona***	*Dipudi **tsa bona***	Their goats
*Dijo **tša tšona***	*Tsa goja **tsa tsona***	Their food
*Boloko **bja yona***	*Boraga **bja yona***	Its dung

3.4   VERBS

Richard (1993:6) states that verbs serve several purposes. According to him they equate x with y, they indicate state or condition and the performance of an action. Verbs represent the process in meaning and function s. Shirley (1999:60) emphasizes also that a verb is a word that indicates an action or a mental or physical state. From the given definitions one understands that a verb tells us what is being done.

Here verbs are discussed in different categories:

3.4.1   Break Verbs

Sepedi	Sepulana	English
*O **roba** mohlare*	*O **thokga** sehlare*	He is breaking a tree
*O **ngwatha** lefela*	*O **kona** selokwana*	He is breaking the maize
*O **pšhatla** galase*	*O **pshaya** glase*	He is breaking the glass

Regarding the first two verbs provided above, mutual intelligibility is not possible between Sepedi and Sepulana.

3.4.2   Cook Verbs

Sepedi	Sepulana	English
Apea bogobe	*Apega* boušwa	Cook porridge
Gadika nama	*Braya* nama	Fry meat
Apea bjala	*Teba* bjala	Brew beer
Dira tee	*Trekisa* tiya	Make tea
Beša nama	*Besa* nama	Make a braai

3.4.3   Verbs of communication

Sepedi	Sepulana	English
Ngwadile	*Ngwadiye*	Written
Boletše	*Bolabodiye*	Talked
Opetše	*Epelele*	Sung
Retile	*Retiye*	Recited
Rogile	*Rogelele*	Sweared

3.5   ADJECTIVES

Payne (2006:43) defines adjective as "a word that can be used in a noun phrase to specify some property of the head noun of the phrase, for example, its colour, size and shape". Richard (1993:6) adds that "adjectives modify, distinguish, or otherwise characterise the noun they refer to". Shirley (1999:63) in her definition also emphasizes that "an adjective is a word that describes or qualifies a noun or a pronoun". Different kinds of adjectives will be discussed.

From the above definition we detect that adjectives qualify or describe nouns and pronouns. They add interest and colour to sentences by describing or giving more information. Sepedi has the following categories of adjectives:

3.5.1 Descriptive/Adjectives

Sepedi	Sepulana	English
Banna **ba bakopana**	Banna **ba dikopa**	Short men
Lentšu **le lebose**	Lentsu **la bosana**	Nice voice
Sekolo **se sebotse**	Sekolo **se sebutji**	Nice school

3.5.2 Colour

Sepedi	Sepulana	English
Seaparo **se seso**	Seaparo **se phifadu**	Black cloth
Mosetsan**a yo mošweu**	Ngwannyana **ye mochwewu**	White girl
Gempe **ye serolwana**	Hempe **ye kheri**	Yellow shirt
Seeta **se se khubedu**	Seeta **se khubedu**	Red shoe

3.5.3 Number

Sepedi	Sepulana	English
Dikgomo **tše pedi**	Dikgomo **ka pedi**	Two cows
Basadi **ba babedi**	Basadi **ka babedi**	Two women

3.6 INTERJECTIVES

Ameka (1994:1712-1715) states that interjections are words that conventionally constitute utterances by themselves and express a speakers 'current mental state or reaction towards an element in the linguistic or extra linguistic context..

Expressive interjections are vocal gestures that are indicative of the speaker's mental state. They may be derived into two groups: the emotive and the cognitive. The emotive ones are those that express the speaker's state with respect to the emotions and sensations they have at the times. Cognitive interjections are those expressions that are directed at an audience. They are aimed at getting someone's attention.

Interjectives are words used to express emotions or sentiment on the part of the speaker. *www.youtube. Beryl and Pincus com,* explains that "interjectives are words or phrases used to exclaim or protest or command. They sometimes stand by themselves". *Www Writing Center.uottawa.ca* defines interjection as a word added to a sentence to convey emotion.

Beryl and Pincus say interjections are used to accentuate and strengthen the tone of a statement. They are often introduced by the verbs yelled, shouted, exclaimed and commanded. They are used after sentences, phrases or words containing emotions such as anger, fear, happiness, anxiety, shock and misery. However, in this case, the aim is to find out whether Sepedi and Sepulana interjectives are the same or not:

Sepedi	Sepulana
Ruri! O tla di bona	*Nyanese! O ko diboneng*
E! E! tšeo tšona di a swabiša	*Yi!Yi Tsone tsona diya tjebisa*
Šatee! Ra tla ra khutša	*Welewele! Ra tla ra khutsa*
Agaa! O šomile Hlabirw	*Agaa! O berekiye gabotji*
Eya! Re tla ka ra bona.	*Ehe! Re ko ka ra bona.*
Afaeye! Le re ba tla kgona?	*Eehe! Le re bako kgoneng?*
Nxa! O ntapišitše go lekane.	*Nxa! O ntinisiye go lekanne.*
Akga! Nke o tloge mo kgauswi le nna.	*Ai! Nko tloge ho thina gaka.*
Itšhuu! O a nthonkga.	*Eša! O wa nkwaletsa.*
Itšhii! E bohloko ntho ye.	*Iš! E a baba ntho yo.*
Joo! Ke tla bona ke rileng?	*Ijoo! nko bona ke makiye ying.*

The lists of interjectives given above show that most of them are not similar in both Sepulana and Sepedi.

3.7   IDIOPHONES

Doke (1935:118) explained idiophones according to their function in Bantu Languages as "vivid" representation of an idea in sound, a word often onomatopoeic, which describes a predicate, qualificative, or adverb in respect manner, colour, sound, smell, action state or intensity. The communicative purpose of idiophones is to actualise the event which it describes.

3.7.1 Sepedi and Sepulana ideophones

What now follows is a comparison of idiophones in Sepedi and Sepulana.

Sepedi	Sepulana
*Naga e re **sehlee!***	*Naga e re **sehlaa!***
*O rile madi **hwibii!***	*O itseri madi **kgubaa!***

3.7.2   Sound

Sepedi	Sepulana
*O tswaletše mojako a re **po!***	*O kwadiye sekwalo a re **bjatla!***

3.7.3   Smell

Sepedi	Sepulana
*Go a nkga go re **fong!***	*Go a nkga gore **shang!** E*

3.8 PROVEBS

According to *BBC English Dictionary* (1992:924), proverbs are short sentences that people often quote to give advice or make general comments about life. A proverb is therefore a short well known expression that states a general truth and gives advice. Whiting (1932:302) says that a proverb is usually true, but need not be. Some proverbs have both a literal and figurative meaning, either of which makes perfect sense but more often they have but one of the two.

A proverb must be venerable, it must be the sign of antiquity, and since such signs may be counterfeited by a clever literal human being it should be affected in different places at different times.

Sepedi	Sepulana
Bana ba motho ba ngwathelana hlogo ya tšie	*Bana ba motho ba ngathelana lekota la tjiya*
Kgomo ka mogobe e wetšwa ke namane	*Kgomo ka mogofe e wediwa ke Mamane*
Tšhila ga e bolaye	*Thila ga e bolaye*
Tšhwene ge e re hoo! e tshepile lewa	*Chwena ho e re hoo! e tshepiye lewa*

3.9 GREETINGS

A greeting is something friendly that one says or does on meeting someone. A greeting is another way of welcoming someone when they meet in the case of discourse or communicative event, the mode should be exceptionally accepted by the two parties. According to Concise Oxford Dictionary, to greet is to give a word or sign of welcome when meeting someone, to receive or acknowledge in a specified way.

Sepedi	Sepulana	English
Thobela/ Re a lotšha	*Tama/tamaneng*	*Greetings*
Le kae?	*Le tsogiye?*	*How are you doing?*
Le sobetše	*Le dikele*	*Good evening*

3.10   CONCLUSION

From the above examples, it is clear that Sepedi is different in many instances from Sepulana. People apply nouns, verbs, pronouns, interjectives and proverbs when they communicate with their friends, families and children. Learners using dialects such as Sepulana at their homes find it difficult to adhere to grammatical rules of standard language such as Sepedi.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE WRITING AND LEARNING OF SEPULANA AND SEPEDI

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to conduct an in-depth analysis of how Sepulana is impacting the writing and learning of Sepedi as a standard language. The collected data will be analysed and present the initial findings of research data. The researcher is using the qualitative research approach because it is field focused. The qualitative methodology considers the self as an instrument that engages a situation and makes sense of it. The researcher used the qualitative approach to collect data in the form of written essays and interviews. The collection of data in this chapter is in accordance with Manthata in Manaka (2005: 81) who states:

> Data described in this chapter were collected personally by the researcher and so was their scientific organization and systematization. This was done in order to ensure maximum reliability of data collected, maximum observation of scientific procedures relating to collecting language data for study purposes, elimination of whatever problems the target research audience might experience with any of the instruments used in collecting data and to save on time which would have been   almost impossible if postage was used.

As far as this study is concerned, this was done by briefly viewing the responses of learners in their essay writings. A topic titled "***Bohlokwa bja meetse***" (the importance of water) was given to learners to write their essays on. A review of an interview questionnaire will also be provided from different stakeholders such as educators, curriculum advisors and Sepedi national examiner for Grade 12.

4.2 DATA COLLECTION

Given the complexity and sensitivity of the issues of language and dialect, it was necessary to gather views from learners in essays from different schools. Jacobs and Razaview (1990:178) say that there are no rules that can determine the sample size. However, they point out that the larger the sample size, the more likely that the data

collected will be more accurate and generalizable. The researcher used 60 learners of grade 11 and 12 from different schools, thus 30 learners from grade 11 and 30 learners from grade 12. This was further subdivided where 10 samples of grade 11 and 12 essays were marked from each school (3 schools in total). The samples enabled the researcher to find the challenges that learners are encountering when writing Sepedi as a standard language.

4.2.1 Data collected from interviews

The following table indicates the schools and numbers of learners who wrote the essay:

Table 1

Name of school	Grade	Number of learners
LM KGANANE SEC SCHOOL	11	10
	12	10
HLONG SEC. SCHOOL	11	10
	12	10
PILGRIMSREST CITY	11	10
	12	10
TOTAL	**6 classes** **(3 each for grade 11 and 12)**	**60**

From the essays written by learners, the researcher was expected to check the impact of Sepulana spelling, specially the words used in Sepulana which are not allowed in Sepedi. The researcher used the following rubric in order to mark the essays, it must be born in mind that the rubric was designed by the Department of Education and is currently being used as an assessment tool throughout the country.

	Code7 Outstanding 80 -100%	Code 6 Meritorious 70-79%	Code 5 Substantial 60-69%	Code 4 Adequate 50-59%	Code 3 Moderate 40-49%	Code 2 Elementary 30-39%	Code 1 Not achieved 0-29%
	<u>24-30</u>	<u>21-13½</u>	<u>18-20½</u>	<u>15-17½</u>	<u>12-14½</u>	<u>9-11½</u>	<u>0-8½</u>
Content and planning 30 marks	Content outstanding Ideas thought provoking planning and drafting has produced a flawless essay.	Content meritorious ideas imaginative Planning and drafting has produced a well-crafted essay.	Content sound reasonably coherent ideas interesting convincing planning drafting has produced good essay.	Content appropriate – ideas interesting planning has produced a satisfactory essay.	Content mediocre. Gaps in coherence ideas relevant Planning and drafting produced moderate essay.	Content not always clear Few ideas often repetitive Inadequate for home language Planning and drafting not well presented.	Content likely irrelevant Ideas tedious Inadequate planning and drafting and poorly presented essay.

	12-15	10½-11½	9-10	7½-8½	6-7	4½-5½	0-4
Language, Style and Editing 15 marks	Critical awareness of impact of language Language punctuation effectively used Uses highly appropriate figurative language Choice of words exceptional mature Style tone register highly suited to topic Virtually error-free following proof-reading and editing .	Language punctuation correct able to use figurative language Choice of words varied and creative Style tone, and register suited to topic Error-free following proofreading and editing.	Language and punctuation mostly correct Choice of words suited to text Style tone register suited to topic Mostly error free following proof-reading editing	Some awareness of impact of language -Language simplistic punctuation adequate Choice of words adequate Style tone register consistent with topic requirements Still contains a few errors following proofreading and editing.	Limited critical language awareness Language mediocre punctuation often inaccurately used Choice of words basic Style tone register lacking in coherence Contains several errors following proof-reading and editing.	Language and punctuation flawed Choice of words limited Style tone register inappropriate Error- ridden despite proof reading editing.	Language and punctuation seriously flawed Choice of words inappropriate Style tone register flawed in all aspects Error- ridden and confused following proof-reading editing.

	4-5	3½	3	2½	2	1½	0-1
Structure 5 marks	Coherent development of topic Vivid exceptional detail Sentences paragraphs brilliantly constructed length in accordance with requirement of topic.	Logical development of details coherent Sentences paragraphs logical varied length correct.	Several relevant details Sentences paragraph well-constructed Length correct.	Some points necessary details developed sentences paragraphing mighty be faulty in places but essay still makes sense Length almost correct.	Most necessary points evident Sentences paragraphs faulty but essay still makes sense Length too long or too short	Sometimes off topic but general line of thought can be followed Sentences paragraph constructed at an elementary level Length too long or too short.	Off topic Sentences paragraph muddled inconsistent Length far too long or far too short.

According to the marking rubric, allocation of marks for languages is 15 and most learners suffer or fail as they write Sepulana words. The following table shows the percentages according to their performance in grades:

Table2

Grade	Level1 0-29%	Level 2 30-39%	Level 3 40-49%	Level 4 50-59%	Level 5 60-69%	Level 6 70-79%	Level 7 80-89%	No. wrote	No. passed	% passed	No. failed	% failed
11	2	6	10	6	4	2		30	22	73	8	
12	1	3	8	9	6	3		30	26	87	4	

From the above table, one can realize that in Grade 11, most learners 'performance range under level 3 which is between 40 and 49%. From the 30 learners who wrote, only 2 learners managed to obtain 70-79% which is level 6. 8 learners failed as they obtained between 0-29% and 30-39%. In all 22 learners for Grade 11 passed and 8 failed. In Grade 12 most learners obtained marks between 50 and 59%. Only 3 learners managed to obtain between 70-79%. Only 4 learners failed and 26 learners passed. In both Grade 11 and 12 there is no learner who was able to score between 80-89% or more which is level 7. This is an unsatisfactory situation because even if 73% of Grade 11 and 87% of Grade 12 passed, their performance is not impressive especially that this is home language and learners were supposed to excel and pass with flying colours.

The following words were deduced from learner's essays. Words are written in different categories:

(a)   Nouns

Sepulana	Sepedi	English
Sekhwama	Mokotla	Bag
Dokotela	Ngaka	Doctor
Meetše	Meetse	Water
Ditša	Dibjana	Dishes
Tšhukela	Swikiri	Sugar
Mahlare	Dikgong	Woods
Lenyoro	Lenyora	Thirst

Some nouns that learners use differ completely with those of Sepedi while others differ only in spelling and pronunciation. One finds it difficult to understand a sentence where a person talks about *ditša*. It is only if you have been with Mapulana that you become familiar with other words. Most of their words are also influenced by Afrikaans words. Mapulana people refer to *ngaka* as *dokodela* meaning a medical doctor and *ngaka* as a traditional doctor.

(b) Verbs

Sepulana	Sepedi	English
Tšeba	*Swaba*	Disappointed
Maka	*Dira*	Do
Ediye	*Hlwekile*	Clean
Nabela	*Duma*	Crave
Teiša dihlong	*Swariša dihlong*	Embarrass
Hodiye	*Hotše*	Helped
Tloletša	*Sobetša*	Do until sunset
Nyarela	*Tšwelela*	Appear
Rotoga	*Yagodimo*	Going up
Šogela	*Hlatswa*	Wash clothes
Keka	*Nka*	I can
Kgwditše	*Hweditše*	Found
Kekeisa	*Gegea*	Sarcasm
Ngangarela	*Swarelela*	Hold on to
Hlophega	*Tshwenyega*	Suffer
Fifala	*Ntshofala*	Blackened
Kreya	*Hwetša*	Find
Go tlala	*A mantis*	Enough or more
Šota	*Hloka*	Lack

The analysis above clearly indicates the different terminology used by Mapulana and how one can be lost on what the leaner is trying to explain. The word *nabela* (crave) can be confused with the Sepedi word of *nanabela* which means to walk softly without making noise. Verbs in a sentence have an important message but one word can distort the meaning of the sentence and for that learners lose marks as it affects the content and language. The word *tšeba* is a totally different word from standard Sepedi word *swaba* which means to be disappointed.

Some verbs appear as if they are wrongly spelled but that is how Mapulana speak, for example,

Sepulana	Sepedi	English
Fonwa	*Go nwa*	Drink
Fetsiye	*Feditše*	Finished
Mašomiša	*A šomiša*	Using
Maroga	*Rogana*	Mock

(c) Demonstrative pronouns

A demonstrative pronoun preferred by Sepulana speaking person sounds like that of an object in Sepedi. The following are examples of demonstrative pronouns found in learners' essays:

*Mosadi **ye*** instead of *mosadi **yo***   (this woman)

*Dikgomo **tsone*** instead of *dikgomo **tšeo***   (these cattle)

*Batho **bawa*** instead of *batho **ba***   (these people)

Yene instead of **yena**   (him)

(d) Adjectives

Regarding adjectives, some learners use variants whereas others use wrongly spelled words as illustrated below:

- **Variants**

Sepulana	Sepedi	English
Hleng	*Kgauswi*	Near
Taong	*Ka ntle*	Outside
Mo o kwele	*Ae o kwele*	After you have heard

- **Wrongly spelled words**

Sepulana	Sepedi	English
te tshwere	*Itshwere*	Good behavior

(e) Idioms

Learners use idioms like,

Ba mo fepele matsogong (A child is spoiled)

There are also some words which are used by both Sepulana and Sepedi that mean different things. The following are some examples:

Sepulana	Sepedi
Mahlare (wood)	*Mahlare* (tea (bags)
Hlapela (swim)	*Hlapela* (wash yourself)
Mokolo (tin)	*Mokolo* (spinal cord)
Ela (be clean)	*Ela* (flow)
Kgakala (up)	*Kgakala* (far)
Ka maabane (in the evening)	Maabane (yesterday)
Mmaka (you cause more)	*Mmaka* (fight for)
Šinyalala (close eyes)	Šinyalala (expression of dislike)

When educators read essays with this kind of words, they get the wrong information as they think only of the Sepedi words, and they then mark the learner wrong.

There are some common errors that are found in the essays of learners, the following are some:

Sepulana learners tend to commit errors because they choose to use the speech sounds that are peculiar to their dialect, rather than use those which are recommended in the standard language.

/d / for /j/ *dya* for *ja*

/*tš*/ for /ts/ *meetše* for *meetse*

/s/ for /š/ *rekisa* for *rekiša*

/t/ for /l/ *tepona* for *ipona*

/kg/ for /h/ *kgwetša* for *hwetša*

The influence of Sepulana also affects the Sepedi matric results. The following table shows three (3) consecutive years of different schools on the performance of Sepedi. These schools are found in Mapulaneng, Graskop Sabie Circuit.

TABLE 3

2010

Name of school	No. wrote	Level 1 0-29%	Level 2 30-39%	Level 3 40-49%	Level 4 50-59%	Level 5 60-69%	Level 6 70-79%	Level 7 80-89%	No. P	% P	No. failed	% failed
LM Kganane	98		1	2	12	38	35	10	97	99	1	1
Pilgrims Rest City	27			1	5	10	10	1	27	100	00	00
Hlong	99		2	3	26	38	21	7	97	98	2	2

Table 4

2011

Name of school	No. Wrote	Level 1 0-29%	Level 2 30-39%	Level 3 40-49%	Level 4 50-59%	Level 5 60-69%	Level 6 70-79%	Level 7 80-89%	No. p	% P	No. F	% F
LM Kganane	92		1	1	10	42	33	5	91	99	1	1
Pilgrimes Rest City	21					8	11	2	21	100	00	00
Hlong Sec. School	138			3	44	52	34	5	138	100	00	00

Table 5

2012

Name of School	No. wrote	Level 1 0-29%	Level 2 30-39%	Level 3 40-49%	Level 4 50-59%	Level 5 60-69%	Level 6 70-79%	Level 7 80-89%	No. P	% P	No. F	% F
LM Kganane	80				8	36	26	10	80	100	00	00
Pilgrims Rest City	19			2	3	8	5	1	19	100	00	00
Hlong				02	23	47	37	03	112	100	00	00

The analysis of the Grade 12 results of the above three Schools for the past three (3) years shows that most learners in Sepedi at Sabie Circuit score at level 5 which is between 60 and 69%. In 2010 38 learners of LM Kganane which has the biggest number in the Grade 12 of that year obtained level 5. The same thing happened in Pilgrims Rest City where 10 learners fall under level 5 and in Hlong Secondary School 38 learners fall under level 5. In 2011, 42 and 52 learners of LM Kganane and Hlong Secondary schools respectively also fell under level 5. Learners of Pilgrims Rest City showed a slight difference where the majority of learners obtained level 7 which is between 70 and 79%. In 2012 the graph went down again where most learners were in level 5. From the tables one can see that most learners are unable to score at the top level which is level 7.

In a nutshell the matric results for Sepedi are not satisfying. There are many reasons that affect the matric results and the following are some:

Many Sepedi educators are born and bred in Mapulaneng. They enjoy communicating in Sepulana; even if they try to communicate in Sepedi they cannot complete a sentence without mixing it with Sepulana. From that point learners just assume that they are correct when they also communicate in Sepulana. During their oral tasks they use mostly Sepulana. At Sabie Circuit most educators have not qualified in Sepedi at Tertiary level. Some only have primary qualifications, yet they are employed to teach at secondary schools. Most educators have Matric and Diploma qualifications; they do not have a junior degree in which they took Sepedi as a major, instead they have Honours in Education Management. The unfortunate part is that 50% of educators did not specialise in Sepedi but are teaching Sepedi in Grade 12.

Learners are not encouraged to read Sepedi, as such, books are not available especially in lower grades, grade 8 and grade 9. Learners in these grades do not have Sepedi novels or drama books. Such learners are not successful in stimulating self- motivated literacy activities because of the relative lack of suitable reading materials in Sepedi. Parents should also be encouraged to play some role in this area. The lack of awaress amongst parents that literacy activities are important for maintenance of Sepedi, and the fact that the focus is on the form of Sepedi rather than communication, is a problem.

Programmes

Learners must also be encouraged to listen to Thobela FM where standard Sepedi is spoken. There are also learning programs in Thobela FM where learners receive guiding in various subjects including Sepedi. These should help learners to improve their vocabulary in Sepedi. Learners are also encouraged to watch SABC 2 where news is read in Sepedi. Most parents and learners listen to Ligwalagwala FM where the medium of communication is SiSwati and in that case they lose Sepedi vocabulary. Minutes of Learners Representative Council can also be encouraged to be written in Sepedi. Debates and symposium can also be held in Sepedi. The Region also does not support Sepedi as their letterheads are not in is Sepedi but SiSwati is included. This is why when compared to the grade 12 SiSwati results at a school called Memezile in Sabie, the Sepedi learners did not perform well as illustrated by the results of Sepedi and SiSwati in 2011:

Table 6

Subject	No. wrote	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	No. P	% P	No. F	% F
SiSwati	59			8	22	21	7	1	59	100	00	0
Sepedi	18		2	1	1	9	5			94.4		5.6

From the table we observe that learners of SiSwati got 100% pass. No learner in Sepedi received level 7 and most of them are in level 5. It just indicates that if learners could get more books and all stakeholders take Sepedi seriously learners were going to do extremely well.

Another challenge is that there is lack of support from the Circuit Office. The Circuit does not support the teaching of Sepedi during Winter Schools whereas other subjects are catered for. This in a way demotivating the educators of Sepedi and makes other educators to undermine Sepedi. In addition, on the Exam Time-Table, Sepedi is always written in the second session when learners are tired. This gives the impression that Sepedi is a subject of less importance. The following is a 2013 Preparatory Time-Table for Sabie Circuit in Bohlabela District:

Table 7

Week 1	First Session 08:00	Second Session 11:30
Monday 02/09	Life Sciences P1 (2hrs)	Sepedi Home Language P1 (3hrs)
Tuesday 03/09	English First Additional P3 (2hrs)	Sepedi Home Language P3 (3hrs)
Wednesday 04/09	Life Orientation (3h)	Economics (3hrs)
Thursday 06/09	Agricultural Science P1 (2hrs)	
Friday 06/09	Physical Sciences P1 (3hrs)	Sepedi Home Language P2 (3hrs)

4.2.2 Data collected in interviews

An interview is a conversation of a journalist and a person of public interest. When choosing to interview as a method for conducting qualitative research, it is important to be tactful and sensitive. One of the techniques is listening. The listening skills required in an interview call for more focus and attention. An interviewer must be wary of leading questions. Leading questions imply an answer.

The researcher interviewed various respondents who are as follows:

> 6 Sepedi Educators

> 2 Sepedi Curriculum Advisors

> 2 Sepedi National Examiners

Unstructured interviews of 1 hour were conducted with the abovementioned participants. The following questioned were asked:

- Is it correct that learners should be marked wrong when they write Sepulana?
- Which language should learners use between Sepulana and Sepedi?
- What is the importance of a standard language at a school?
- How can learners be helped in speaking and writing Sepedi?

Response by Educators

(a) 60% of educators interviewed agreed that learners should be marked wrong when writing in Sepulana. They all emphasized that if a learner is marked wrong, it will make them take Sepedi seriously as a standard language. 40% of educators said that it depends on what the learners are writing to be marked wrong. It was emphasized that it must be brought to their attention that Sepulana is a dialect and learners should be encouraged to write in a standard language. Marks must be deducted for the use of non-standard language and marks must be allocated to content and other aspects.

(b) On the second question, all the interviewees agreed that Sepedi as a standard language should be used. The interviewees were adamant that Sepulana is not an official language and thus learners should be encouraged to use a standard language to be able to communicate with other learners.

(c) On the third question, educators responded that a standard language at a school is there for a common means of communication. The argument here is that earners and educators are from different dialects, for example people in Matibidi speak Seroka as a dialect as they are from Shakoaneng and they are mixed with Mapulana. If everybody is allowed to use his or her own dialect, there will be confusion. Therefore, as far as educators are concerned it is advisable to use a standard language for the smooth running of teaching and learning. Dialects are different ways of saying the same thing and they differ in phonetics, phonology and lexicogrammar. In such a case, a standard language should be used because all will use the same terminology on the same word. The standard language should be used as it is also the approved language. There are also books, dictionaries and other materials for a

standard language. Learners should not be condoned in speaking or using any dialect other than a standard language.

(d) Responding on the fourth question, educators highlighted the following aspect that can help learners:

The use of four skills

Educators encouraged each other to use all four skills in every lesson. The following skills are to be taken into consideration:

(i)   Listening and speaking

This skill helps learners to listen attentively on how words are pronounced in Sepedi, their meaning and tone. The learners are also able to speak for various purposes. Learners understand that speaking and listening are social activities that take place in particular contexts and for various purposes. They recognize and use appropriate and oral genres in formal and informal contexts. Critical listening skills enable learners to recognize values and attitudes embedded in texts and to challenge biased and manipulative language.(National curriculum statement 2003: 12)

(ii)   Reading and viewing

In this skill leaners are able to read and view for understanding. A learner who is well developed in reading will be able to participate in society. Learners will be taught different reading strategies depending on their purpose for reading and nature of text. Through reading, learners also reflect on their interrelationship with others. Reading provides learners with models for their own writing.

(iii)   Writing and presentation

From this skill the learner is able to write and present for different purposes. Writing is a powerful instrument of communication that allows learners to construct and communicate thoughts and ideas.

(iv)   Language

The learner is able to use language structures and conventions effectively. Through interacting with a variety of texts, learners extend their use of vocabulary and correctly apply their understanding of language structure.

Response by Curriculum Advisors

(a) To the first question, Curriculum advisors stated that learners must be marked wrong and be given the correct form of the word in an acceptable language, which is Sepedi. This is done to conscientise the learners about the correct way of writing, and to learn the standard language. Sepulana is but one dialect of Sepedi which has a number of words that are the same as in other dialects. There are other words spoken only by Mapulana which other speakers might not understand, for instance **taong** which means **outside**. However, there are other words that Sepulana as a language has that are used by other dialects, and as such have become gradually acceptable in the formal writing of Sepedi. Words such as **boušwa** "porridge" are spoken by Mapulana and also other dialects of Sepedi, such as Bakone and Baroka, therefore as Curriculum Advisors, it is one of the duties attached to this position to ensure that a purified and standardized language is spoken and written. To maintain standard Sepedi learners must always be conditional because like any other language, there are words that are not acceptable in formal language coming from other dialects of the same language.

(b) In this case, Curriculum advisors indicated that this is a matter of constitutional authority. The language that has been declared constitutional and official is Sepedi. The argument here is that Sepedi is one of the eleven South African languages and therefore, it is not a matter of choice whether to use it or any other dialect. The other point is that Sepulana has not been written in formal documents. Differently stated, Sepulana does not have its own unique orthography which has been through the Pan South African Language Board. It should be explicated and accepted that language cannot be promoted because it is not a language, but a dialect of a language.

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(c) It makes teachers to work more easily because they are always in agreement about what needs to be taught to learners. It is a measure to alleviate conflicts about the learning and teaching of a particular language. It makes it easy for learners and teachers to choose books to be used hence all are written in the same language.

(d) Engage learners in reading extensively materials written in Sepedi. Ensure that there is sufficient time for them to communicate in Sepedi without code switching to English words. Learners must be encouraged to take part in formal discussions that are conducted in Sepedi, for example payment of *lobola*, attending traditional courts, etc. They can also be encouraged to attend symposia in which Sepedi the vehicle delivery of the information. It is imperative to stage competitions on essay writing, creative writing (poetry, novels, drama and short stories). Establish speech reading clubs and debates and forum discussions.

Response by Examiners

(a) In contrast to the other respondents, the examiners advanced a different perspective. To the examiners, learners should not be marked wrong if they use Sepulana. This is the case because learners learn what the teacher teaches them, and they are the real reflection of a teacher. They must not be punished for these teachers' faults. Learners should have been taught about the correct words that are accepted in a standardized language before they could sit for assessment, and teachers should have corrected them in advance. If during assessment the teacher discovers that learners are writing Sepulana, the teacher should shoulder the responsibility, not the learners
.

(b) The use of Sepulana can cause confusion in the examination papers since it is a dialect that is used by speakers located in a specific geographical area exclusive to other areas. It would, therefore, require that learners that are speakers of each dialect be afforded the opportunity to be examined, and that would have a negative human resource and financial impact in that it would require the appointment of examiners for each dialect and the printing of each dialect papers. It is therefore advantageous and also dignifying to use Sepedi

as a constitutionally officialised language. The use of Sepedi unifies speakers of all different dialects inclusive of Sepulana into a prone group of speakers of the same language of diverse dialects.

(c) Standard language brings unity amongst speakers of different dialects. They become united in learning to speak and write a common language that is understandable to all of them. Standard language brings commonality and enables people to get their identity of whom they are and where they come from. It makes easy communication possible amongst people from different geographical points with different dialects of the same root language.

(d) It is evident from common spelling and grammatical errors observed during marking that learners are not sufficiently exposed to writing. A mind that is used to telling a hand to write a correct spelling of a word would refuse to let the same hand write wrong spelling at a given time. Writing improves the language and therefore learners who are subjected to regular written work are more likely to write correctly. It is, therefore, fundamental that educators should give learners an opportunity to write creatively and also read documents such as journals newsletters, reports and others.

The following table will give an overall picture of the responses to question 1.

Table 8

			No.	YES	NO	% YES	5 NO
Question 1	Is it correct that learners should be marked wrong when they write Sepulana?	**Educators**	6	4	2	60%	40%
		Curriculum Advisors	2	2	0	100%	0%
		Examiners	2	0	2		100%

In response to the second question, all Stakeholders (Educators, Curriculum Advisors and Examiners) agreed that must be used as it is a standard language according to the Constitution of South Africa (1996).

4.3   **CONCLUSION**

This chapter attempted to highlight how Sepulana is impacting the learning of Sepedi as a standard language. It has been shown that most learners do not differentiate Sepedi and Sepulana. All the respondents indicated that learners are to be told that Sepedi is the standard language and Sepulana is a dialect. From all the views presented, the conclusion is that learners must not be given marks as the language they will be using is not a standard language (Sepulana). Full marks must be given for content and structure.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as a conclusion of the study. A conclusion has been made in a form of different chapters and it also gives the findings and recommendations.

5.2   SHORT BRIEF ABOUT DIFFERENT CHAPTERS

In chapter one, the researcher explains how the dialect Sepulana has an impact on the writing and speaking of Sepedi as a standard language. Learners at Mpumalanga Province Sabie   Circuit score low marks as they are used to the dialect than a standard language.

Chapter Two

In this chapter, different scholars define and explain the term dialect.

Chapter Three

It provides the comparison of Sepulana words with that of a standard Sepedi. The comparison was made in different word categories for example, nouns, verbs, pronouns, adjectives and idioms.

Chapter Four

Provides the data as to how Sepulana impact the learning of Sepedi as a standard language which is found in learners' essays and in a form of interviews conducted to educators, curriculum advisors and national examiners.

Chapter Five

It gives the conclusion of the study.

5.3 FINDINGS

The following are the findings of the study:

- Sepulana as a dialect has a negative impact on the learning of Sepedi as a standard language in Sabie circuit at Mpumalanga Province.
- Sepulana differs from Sepedi.
- Most Sepedi educators speak Sepulana and as such learners are confused on whether to use Sepedi or Sepulana.
- Sepedi as a home language is not taken seriously by parents and the department of education.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher recommends that teachers be:

- Encouraged to upgrade their qualifications in Sepedi.
- Encouraged to teach in Sepedi and not Sepulana.
- The Department of Education begin to take Sepedi serious to inculcate the love of the subject to both teachers and learners.
- Department of Education makes available material written in Sepedi.
- Appropriate corrective measures be implemented by educators to learners who speak and write Sepulana during the formal situations.

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