# THE APPLICATION OF SUFFIXES TO NORTHERN SOTHO WORDS: A MORPHOLOGICAL AND SEMANTIC STUDY

by

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**MARCH  2004**

I, the undersigned, declare that this work is my own original work and has not previously been submitted in any form whatsoever, to the university or to any other educational institution for any degree or examination purpose.

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# DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to DIALE family, my father Lazarus, my mother Andretha, my aunt Cathrine, my brothers and sisters as well as my wonderful children.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to take time to whole-heartedly thank the following people for the important roles they played during my studies.

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# ABSTRACT

**Chapter 1** serves as an introductory section of the study. Main issues dealt with in this chapter include the statement of the problem, aim of the study, rationale of the study, significance of the study, method of the study, literature review and definition of terms.

**Chapter 2** is about finding out how theta theory apply to Northern Sotho. The theory itself is explained and the various theta roles applied to Northern Sotho.

**Chapter 3** studies the derivation of argument structures. The various suffixes are examined to try and find out how they contribute towards the derivation of argument structures.

**Chapter 4** deals with the semantic significance of suffixes. The various meanings of the suffixes are studied in order to find out if there are no meanings which are still unknown. The chapter also tackles transposition.

**Chapter 5** gives the conclusion of the study.

(v)

# KAKARETŠO

**Tema ya pele** ke matsenyagae a m ošomo wɔ. Tabakgolo ye e tšwelelago temeng ye e akaretša tlhagišo ya bothata. maikemišetšo a mošomo wo bohlokwa le mohola wa mošomo wo ga e šita le mekgwa ya dinyakišišo ye e ilego go latelwa. le tsitsinkelo ya dipuku tše di šetšego di le gona malebana le thuto ye.

**Tema ya bobedi** yona e mabapi le 'theta theory' le ka moo e ka tšwelelago ka gona polelong ya Sesotho sa Leboa. "Theta theory' ye e a hlalošwa gwa ba gwa lekwa gore e kgonagala go fihla kae ka leleme la Sesotho sa Leboa.

**Tema ya boraro** yona e lekola ka moo mosela ya mantšu e ka kgonago go tšweletša mantšu a mangwe (go lebeletšwe maina) mo mafokong go ya ka 'theta theory'.

**Tema ya bone** yona e lekola dihlalošo tša mesela ye e fapanego le ka moo e kgathago tema polelong. Mesela e a tsitsinkelwa mne gwa elwa šedi ge e le gore go na le ditlhalošo tše difsa tša mesela ye. tše di segɔ tša hlwa di tsebja.

Ge e le **tema ya bohlano** yona ke kakaretšo ya mošomo wo ka moka.

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Like Lombard et al., most authors such as Ziervogel and Mokgokong, etc., do not mention the use of the applied suffix to indicate purpose, for example:

3.      Re šomela tšhelete.
        (We work for money).

This needs to be added to the existing knowledge. Perhaps, the best way to do this will be to revisit the whole theta-theory and cover it in this work so as to make other learners of this language aware of it.

Nokaneng (1976:89) acknowledges that some facts are not fully accounted for in his book as far as the significance of suffixes is concerned. He has the following to say:

Tiholego ya madiredi a mangwe ga a kgone go latišišwa le ge mosela wa **-ela** o bonala. Gantši madiredi a tšea mosela wo mongwe wa **-ela**.

        rapeia      >      rapelela
        otsela      >      otselela
        itumela     >      itumelela

(The origin of certain applied verbs cannot be traced although the suffix **-ela** can be observed. In most cases such verbs take another suffix **-ela**.

        rapela (pray)              >      rapelela (pray for)
        otsela (sleep)             >      otselela (sleep at)
        itumela (being satisfied)  >      itumelelela (being satisfied
                                                        with)).

Problems like this one also need thorough scrutiny to see if solutions cannot be found.

Nokaneng (1976:86) indicates that he also has problems with reciprocal verbs:

> Go na le madirani a mangwe ao a nago le sebopego sa madirani le ka mošomo e lego madirani fela tlholego ya ona ga e kgone go latišišwa.
>
> Re a lekana ka maatla.
> Motsomi le Tshepo ba a swana.
> Modipadi le Mologadi ba a omana.

(There are some reciprocal verbs which have the structure of reciprocal verbs and also function like reciprocal verbs but their origin cannot be traced):

> Re a lekana ka maatla. (We are equal in strength.)
> Motsomi le Tshepo ba a swana. (Motsomi and Tshepo look alike.)
> Modipadi le Mologadi ba a omana.(Modipadi and Mologadi insult each other.)

Although Nokaneng regards these verbs as having a reciprocal meaning, it would seem he is not totally correct. For example, if one uses the verbs **lekana** and **omana** in:

4.   a.   Diaparo di lek**ana** ngwana.

(The clothes fit the child.); and

   b.   Mokgekolo o a om**ana**.

(An old woman utters vulgar words).

the verbs. **lekana** (fits) and **omana** (utters vulgar words) have a totally different meaning from that of being reciprocal. Thus. the problem as raised by Nokaneng needs to be addressed.

There are many other questions which need to be answered in as far as suffixes are concerned. In this respect the following questions are pertinent:

For situations wherein a number of suffixes occur together in one word, one may ask the following questions: (i) does each suffix retain its function and meaning? and (ii) do the suffixes follow a particular order, i.e., will one suffix always come first and another always occur last?

If one were to answer the first question, one's answer would be, sometimes the suffixes retain their meaning and sometimes they do not. For example:

5.      goletša < gol + **el** + **iš** + a

         Mošemane o goletša borokgo (The boy pulls up a pair of trouser.)

The two suffixes seem to have lost their meanings. On the other hand, in

6.      Kitimišetša (rush to) as in

         Ba kitimišetša molwetši bookelong. (They rush the patient to hospital.)

the two suffixes. -iš- and -el- still retain their meaning of, 'cause to' and 'in the direction of', respectively. The question that still remains, however, is when do they retain their original meanings and when do they acquire new meanings.

As far as the order of suffixes is concerned, it would seem they don't follow a specific order:

7.      a        gola (grow) > gol + **iš** + **el**- a > godišetša (cause to grow on behalf of.)

        b.       boga > bog + **el** + **iš** + a > bogediša (cause to look at.)

In the first word. -iš- precedes -el- whereas in the second word -el- precedes -iš. However, the passive morpheme -w- seems to come last whenever it occurs with the other suffixes in the same word:

-   The positional (**-am-**)
-   The dispersive (**-alal-**)
-   The associative (**-agan-, -akan-**)
-   Reduplicated extensions (**-elel-, -išiš-,** etc.)

Lombard et al., (1988) do not account for words with the suffix **-an-** (reciprocal) that does not seem to have a reciprocal function and meaning. In as far as the applied **-el-** is concerned, they do not indicate the fact that the suffix also indicates purpose.

Ziervogel et al., (1977) have also made an endeavour to analyse Northern Sotho suffixes. Their focus was on the following:

-   The locative (**-ng**)
-   The perfect (**-ilê**)
-   The passive (**-iw-**)
-   The reciprocal (**-an-**)
-   The causative (**-iš-**)
-   The applied (**-el-**)
-   The associative (**-agan-, -akan-**)
-   The iterative (**-ak-**)
-   The neuter (**-eg-, -agal-, -al-**)
-   The completive (**-elel-**)
-   The intensive (**-išiš-**)
-   The intransitive reversive (**-olog-, -og-**)
-   The transitive reversive (**-oll-, -ol-**)
-   The denominative (**-f-, -fal-**)
-   The diminutive (**-ana**).

Like Lombard et al., Ziervogel et al., do not give an adequate account of the reciprocal. **-an-** and the applied **-el-**. Their discussion of the causative **-iš-** also seems to be inadequate because the causative may also mean, after, as in:

9.    a.    Re kitim**iš**a nako (We run after time.)

      b.    Re kitim**iš**a moruti (We run after the priest.)

Nokaneng (1976) also gives a good account of suffixes in Northern Sotho. Amongst others, he includes:

-    The passive (**-iw-**);
-    The reciprocal (**-an-**); and
-    The applied (**-el-**); and many others.

Nokaneng (1976) has a problem in accounting for the origin of certain words like **rapela** (pray) and **lekana** (being equal) which, according to him, are applied verb and reciprocal verb since they contain the applied suffix -**el**- and the reciprocal suffix -**an**-, respectively.

Grobler et al., (1990) included a number of suffixes which are not found in other books. For example:

-    The relative suffix (**-go** or **-ng**)
-    The suffixes of verbs derived from ideophones (**-la**, **-ga**, **-ma**, **-mela** and **-metša**) as in:

      nyare!      >      nyare**la** (emerge)
      bilo!       >      bilo**ga** (becoming muddy water)
      gadi!       >      gadi**ma** (fleshing - of lightning)
      khuru!      >      khuru**mela** (cover oneself with blanket)
      kidi!       >      kidi**metša** (make heavy sound).

The weakness of Grobler et al., (1990) is that their writing simply mentions the suffixes without discussing them. They neither give the meaning nor the usage of the suffixes.

Nokaneng and Louwrens (1996) give a good account of quite a number of suffixes with good examples like the following, which are in the reciprocal:

10.    Shwahlane o thušana le Malope.
       Nna le wena re a kwana.

In spite of their good account, they do not have a solution for the problem raised under paragraph 2 as illustrated by example number (4) above. Their explanation of the causative is also inadequate. They maintain that the causative -iš- indicates that there is a process of 'thušana' (helping each other/one another): an explanation which seems to be incorrect. In addition to 'thušana': they also indicate that -iš- may indicate force, an observation which is correct. But -iš- has got more functions than the only two they have given. For example, -iš- may also mean 'cause to'; as in:

(11)   Morutiši o kitimiša bana. (The teacher causes the children to run.)

Although all the works of scholars mentioned above have a great deal to offer in as far as suffixes are concerned, none of them has answered the questions asked in 2 above, namely:

-      When and why do suffixes retain their meaning when they occur together in the same
       word, and when and why do they have a meaning shift? and
-      Why does the passive always come last when occurring with other suffixes?

The origin of some words, which according to Nokaneng have reciprocal -an- and applied -el-, still needs to be traced, etc.

The aforegoing discussion indicates that although much research has already been done in as far as suffixes are concerned in Northern Sotho language, however, there is still more to be done. Therefore, a study of suffixes is still necessary in the Northern Sotho language.

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## 1.9    DEFINITION OF TERMS

The aim of this section of the work is to define the terms used in various sections of this work.  The following terms will receive attention, namely,  affix, prefix, suffix, verbal ending, agglutinate, agreement, argument structure, derivation, inflection, noun, object and subject.

### 1.9.1   Affix

Fowler (1979:18) defines an affix as an additional morpheme placed at the beginning or end of root, stem or word, or in the body of a word in order to modify its meaning.  An example of an affix is **-an-** in the word **bonana** (see each other/see one another), which comprises the root **-bon-** plus the affix **-an-** plus the ending **-a**.  When an affix comes before the root it is referred to as a prefix; when it comes after the root it is called a suffix.  In the word, **barutiši** (teachers), **ba-** is a prefix while **-is-** is a suffix.  The process of adding affixes in words is referred to as affixation.

### 1.9.2   Prefix

It has already been mentioned in 1.9.1 above that a prefix is any component of a  word which precedes the root of the word.  In **monna** (man), **serutegi** (a very educated person) and **ditelele** (tall or long ones), **mo-**, **se-** and **di-** are the prefixes of the words, in their respective order, because they precede the roots, **-nna**, **-rut-** and **-telele**.  It is possible for one word to have more than one prefix as is the case with **moithuti** (learner), wherein **mo-** and **-l-** are both prefixes because they come before the root, **-rut-**.

### 1.9.3   Suffix

A suffix is any part of a word  that  comes after the root of the word:

12. a. Mošomi.

(Worker)


b. Thabana

(A small mountain)


c. Boledišana

(Talk to each other/talk to one another).


The suffixes of the above-mentioned words are (a) -i: (b) -an- and (c) -iš-an-, respectively, because they all come after the roots of the words. As can be observed in 12(c) above, a word can have more than one suffix as -iš- and -an- are both suffixes of the word **boledišana**.


## 1.9.4 Verbal ending


A verbal ending is the final vowel of a verb, -a in -šoma (work), is a verbal ending. The verbal ending is often preceded by verbal extensions as it is the case in -šomela (work for), **bontšhana** (show each other/show one another), wherein the ending is preceded by -el- and -iš- + -an-, respectively. Other verbal endings are -e and ê depending on the mood and/or tense of the verb. as well as whether the verb is in the positive or negative.


## 1.9.5 Agglutinate


Agglutinate is defined by Fowler (1979:20) as to combine simple words without change of form to express compound ideas. The word **motho** (person) and **-golo** (big) can be combined to form a compound word. **mothomogolo** (a big person). Apart from words, various morphemes can be added to a word in order to bring about new ideas to it as in:


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13.    **-loma** (bite)  >    **i**toma (bite oneself)

**N**toma (bite me).


### 1.9.6 Agreement

Kersti and Kate (2001:88) indicate that there needs to be an agreement between a verb and a subject. This agreement is brought about by concord(s) in Northern Sotho:

14.    a.    Motho **o** a sepela (A person walks).

b.    *Motho **ba** a sepela (A person they walk).


The concord **o** in (14a) above. agrees with the singular subject, **motho** but the concord **ba** in (14b) does not agree with the noun, **motho,** as **ba** is a concord for a plural subject, **batho** (people), **bana** (children). **basadi** (women). etc. Every noun in Northern Sotho has a concord which agrees with it and which will bring about agreement between the subject and the verb. More examples of agreement follow:


15.    a.    Monna **o** a lema.    (A man ploughs).

b.    Mpša **e** a goba.    (A dog barks).

c.    Dinose **di** a fofa.    (Bees are flying).


The examples in (14 and 15) above reflect instances of subjectival agreement. Objectival agreement also applies as in:


16.    a.    Mpša e a **mo** loma mošemane.    (A dog is biting the boy).

b.    Re **di** bone dipudi. (We saw the goats).

c.    Mošemane o **le** fošitše letlapa. (The boy threw the stone).

18. a. Tlala (full, in present tense).

b. Tletše (full, in past tense).

Although the two words, **tlala** and **tletše** are different in as far as form is concerned, they are both verbs. i.e.. no category change has occurred.

The examples in (18) above illustrate only one category of inflection, namely, tense. There are other inflectional categories, namely, agreement, mood, aspect and negative or positive.

Agreement has already been discussed in (6) above, under the heading agreement. According to this, object concord must agree with the subject wheras the subject concord must agree with the subject:

19. a. Ba **e** bolaile noga. } objectival agreement
(They killed (it) the snake).

b. Monna **o** sepetše. } subjectival agreement
(The man is gone).

Another inflectional category is negative, which expresses an opposite meaning or idea:

20. a. Ke re **ga** ke je.
(I say that I am not eating).

b. Re hweditše ba **sa** lwe.
(We found them not fighting).

c. Mošemane ga se a kitima.
(The boy did not run).

In (20a-c) the following negative morphemes can be observed: **ga, sa,** and **se.**

Mood is another inflectional category. The following sentence is in the indicative mood:

21.     Tšhwene e a utswa.

        (A baboon steals).

More moods are discussed in Chapter 4 under verbal endings.

The last inflectional category is aspect, which is defined as a verb form that relates activity to the passage of time. Aspect morphemes may be included in various tense forms with the effect of changing or modifying the overall meaning of the verb. Some of the aspects found in Northern Sotho are:

22.     a.      **sa:**       Ba **sa** bolela.

                        (They are **still** talking).

        b.      **be:**       Ke **be** ke šoma.

                        (I **was** working).

        c.      **no:**       O **no** e kgoma.

                        (He **only** touched it).

**Sa** indicates continuity, **be** indicates that something is no longer happening while **no** means only.

Inflection can be summarised as follows in Northern Sotho:

Inflection

```
                          Inflection
                             /|\  \        \
                           / | \    \         \
                         /   |  \      \          \
                       /     |   \       \            \
                     /       |    \        \              \
                   /         |     \         \                \
   Agreement  Mood        Tense      Aspect           Negative
```
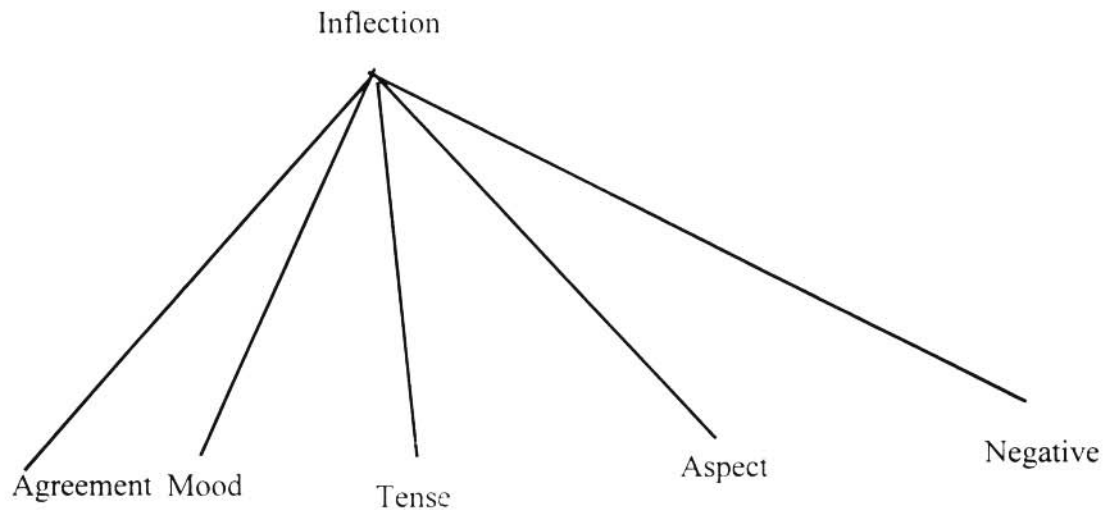
## 1.9.10 Noun

According to Kersti and Kate (2001:49), nouns typically refer to objects (both physical objects and abstractions) and people:

23.    a.    Noga (snake)

       b.    Lehu (death)

       c.    Mosadi (woman).

Kersti and Kate go on to indicate that nouns are associated with properties such as number, gender, etc. That is why we have a singular form of noun and a plural form of a noun in some cases:

24.    a.    Monna (man)         :    singular

       b.    Banna (men)         :    plural

       c.    Morutiši (teacher, probably and most commonly referring to male teacher).

       d.    Morutišigadi (female teacher).

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Nouns are classified according to their prefixes in Northern Sotho as is illustrated by the following table:

| Noun class | Prefix | Example |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | mo- | motho (person) |
| 2. | ba- | banna (men) |
| 3. | mo- | mohlare (trees) |
| 4. | me- | mešomo (works) |
| 5. | le- | lerole (dust) |
| 6. | ma- | mašata (noises) |
| 7. | se- | seipone (mirror) |
| 8. | di- | diatla (hands) |
| 9. | n- | nku (sheep) |
| 10. | di- | dimpša (dogs) |
| 14. | bo- | botho (kindness) |
| 15. | go- | go kitima (the running) |
| 16. | fa- | fase (ground) |
| 17. | go | godimo (on top) |
| 18. | mo- | morago (back) |
| `x` | ga- | gae (home) |

## 1.9.11 Object

Nokaneng (1976:140) calls an object **sedirwa** and defines it as something on which the action carried out by the subject (doer) falls. Kersti and Kate (2001:93), on the other hand, by way of agreeing with Nokaneng, maintain that an object is linked to the noun phrase that which is most affected by the action of the verb:

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25.    Monna o reka dijo.

       (A man buys food).

In the sentence in (25) above, dijo (food) is the object.

## 1.9.12  Subject

As already mentioned in (11) above, under object, Nokaneng (1976:140) calls the subject, sediri (doer), which means one who carries out an action/process. According to Kersti and Kate (2001:85), a subject is often the instigator of an action expressed in the verb:

26.    a.    Batho ba a sepela

             (People are walking).


       b.    Ngwana o utswa swikiri.

             (A child steals sugar).


       c.    Basotho ba nametše dipere

             (Sothos are riding horses).

In the above sentences, the nouns **batho** (people), **ngwana** (child) and **Basotho** (Sothos) are subjects of sentences (26)a-c, respectively.

## 1.9.13  Predicate

Kersti and Kate (2001:85) say that a predicate is what is left of a sentence when you have removed the subject. The following sentences illustrate what a predicate is:

27.   a.   Ngwana o **a lla**.

(A child is crying).

b.   Monna o **bolaya noga**.

(A man is killing a snake).

c.   Bašemane **ba nametše thaba ye ntsho**.

(The boys climbed a dark mountain).

The predicate of the above sentences are. a. **a lla** ( is crying); b. **bolaya noga** (killing a snake); and c. **nametše thaba ye ntsho** (climbed a dark mountain).

## 1.10   ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

**Chapter 1** is the introduction of the work. The problem is stated and terms are defined.

**Chapter 2** is about the application of theta theory on Northern Sotho. Theta theory is defined and the various theta roles are applied to Northern Sotho.

**Chapter 3** concerns the derivation of argument structures. The various suffixes are studied to see the role they play in as far as the derivation of argument structures is concerned.

**Chapter 4** is about the semantic significance of suffixes. The various suffixes are scrutinised in order to find out if all their meanings are known. The verbal endings also receive attention. The last aspect to be covered in this chapter is transposition.

**Chapter 5** serves as a summary of the whole work.

# CHAPTER 2

## THE APPLICATION OF THETA THEORY IN NORTHERN SOTHO

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to examine how theta theory applies to Northern Sotho. In order to do this, theta theory will first be defined, then the various theta roles will be discussed. An attempt will be made to apply each of the theta roles to Northern Sotho.

### 2.2 DEFINITION OF THETA THEORY

Theta theory deals with the assignment of theta roles (θ-roles) to arguments (Van Riensdijk and Williams, 1986:241). Horrocks (1987) also shares the same definition. It is very important because it accounts for the relation between verbs and their arguments. Rappaport and Levin (1989), as paraphrased by Du Plessis et. al., (1995:1), content that there are two distinct lexical representations within which the term thematic role is used ambiguously.

In the first place, linguistic expressions, especially noun phrases, that are assigned θ-roles are called arguments. These arguments should possess some sort of referential function, i.e., they have to refer to persons, things and places. In this regard, the term θ-role is thus synonymous to the term argument. Van Riemsdijk and Williams (1986:241) concur with this view because they state that the term θ-role and thematic relations are synonyms with argument. The lexical representation in this usage is a reflection only of a lexical syntactic representation. i.e., predicate argument structure (PAS) (Du Plessis et. al., 1995:1).

Secondly, the term thematic role may also indicate a particular semantic connection which an argument may bear to its predicate. Such a lexical representation refers to a lexical-semantic representation. Jackendoff's (1990) theory seems to be more relevant than all other

theories because it refers to the lexical-semantic representation as lexical conceptual structure (LCS). In the lexical-syntactic representation, the PAS of a verb determines the number of arguments it takes (Du Plessis et. al., 1995:1).

According to the number of arguments which a predicate may take, it will be described as a one-place, two-place or three-place predicate. Each argument will possess a specific variable corresponding to such an argument. Should variables not be preferred, semantic labels such as agent, theme, source, goal, etc., may be utilised.

## One-place predicate

1.  a.  **na**   x (a variable)

        theme (a semantic label)

    b.  Pula e a na.

        (Rain is falling).

As example **1** above shows, one-place predicates are common in intransitive verbs. **Na** in this instance is an intransitive verb.

## Two-place predicate

2.  a.  buna:  x (y) variables)

        (Harvest) agent (theme) (semantic labels).

Two-place predicates are common in transitive verbs like **buna** in (2a). In a fully-fledged sentence, **buna** will appear thus:

b.      Mosadi o buna mabele.  (A woman harvests mealies)

```
        |           |
        |           |
        X           Y
    (Agent)      (Theme) (Semantic labels)
```
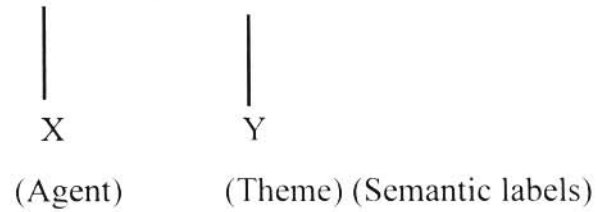
**Three-place predicate**

3.    a.      Botša  X (Y   Z) variables

             Agent (recipient, theme) semantic labels.

Three-place predicates like **botša** are traditionally regarded as ditransitive verbs and in a fully-fledged sentence, **botša** and its variables may be represented as follows:

b.      Kgarebe e botša   lesogana   ditaba   (A lady tells a gentleman news).

```
        |                    |       |
        |                    |       |
        X                    Y       Z
    (Agent)            (Recipient) (Theme) (Semantic labels)
                      (Adopted from Du Plessis et. al., 1995:1)
```
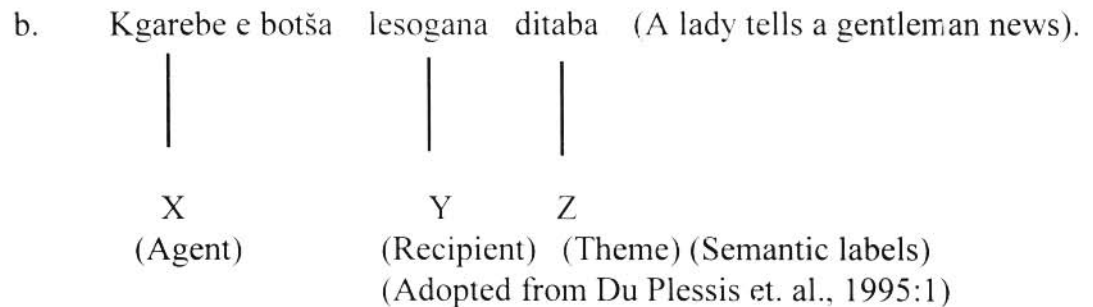
Two principles are used in the assignment of Θ-criterion.  The projection principle ensures that a verb can only subcategorise for complements that it  Θ-marks, whereas the Θ-criterion ensures that one argument should have one theta-role. As regards the latter view. Haegeman postulates that each argument is assigned one and only one theta-role.  Each theta-role is assigned to one and only one argument (1994:54).  Chomsky,  as quoted by Visser (1985:113) and Sells (1985:37). also gives the same Θ-criterion definition as mentioned above.  It is nevertheless important to give an example of a construction in order to show how Θ-criterion can be applied.

4.  Mošemane o fošetša ngwana namune.

(A boy throws to a child an orange).

a.  [ _____ NP          NP]

θ                θ                θ

Agent          Benefective      Patient

b.  V[ _____ NP          NP ]

θ                                θ Patient

c.  V [ _____ NP          NP   ]

θ                θ

Agent          Benefactive

θ                θ
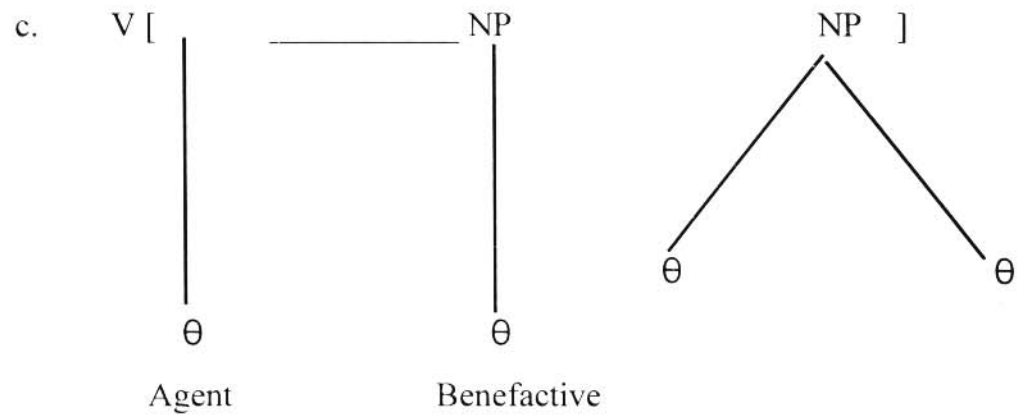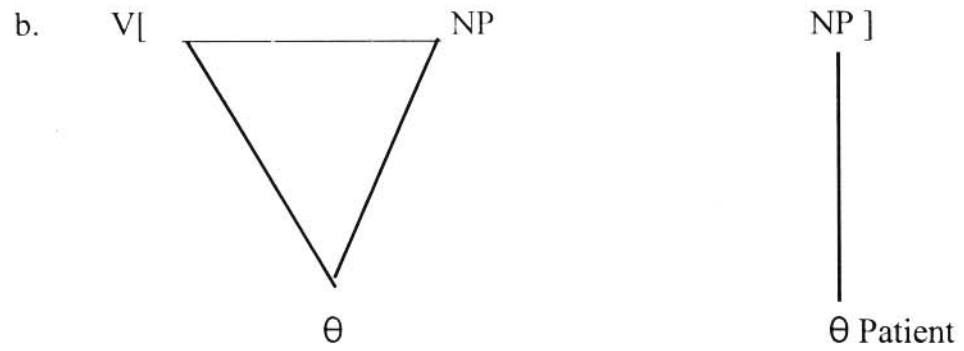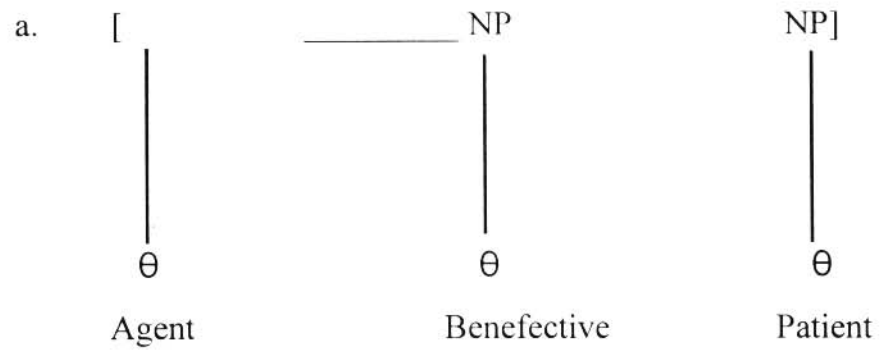
Example (4a) is correct because each argument bears one and only one θ-role and each θ-role is assigned to one and only one argument . Example (4e) is incorrect because an external argument and an internal argument should not be sharing one θ-role. According to the θ-criterion, example (4c) is also unacceptable because an argument NP, **ngwana**, cannot have two θ-roles.

According to Rappaport and Levin (1988:14), there are three modes of θ-role assignment, namely: by a verb, preposition and a VP via predication.

The NP argument which is assigned a θ-role by the VP via predication must be outside the maximal projection of the verb as determined by predication theory. The verb will end up assigning a theta-role to the NP argument in the subject position and this argument is called an external argument (Williams (1991), as paraphrased by Du Plessis et al., (1995:3)). The remaining arguments are internal to the maximal projection of the verb. The position subcategorised by a V, i.e., the position occupied by the complements of a V are called θ-positions (Visser, 1986:133). The argument that appears in the position subcategorised by a verb is called the internal argument. External and internal arguments may be illustrated as follows:

5.      Lesogana le fa      kgarebe          mpho. (A boy gives a girl a present).

        External argument   Internal argument   Internal argument
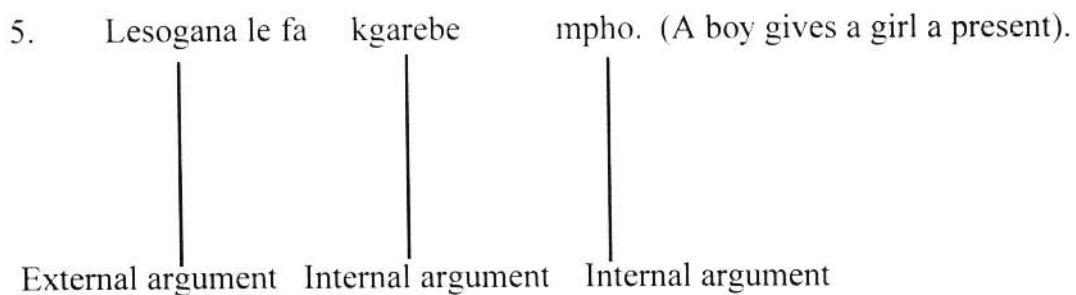
The internal arguments are assigned θ-roles by verbs in the syntax under government. This means that a V must be able to govern an internal argument for it to be assigned θ-role. It must be in a relation of mutual c-command with the maximal projection of the verb (Du Plessis et al., 1995:3).

Taking into account that semantic labels are still used in the literature to explain the argument structure of verbs, it is therefore necessary to discuss them. In the literature studied, there is however, no consensus as to the correct number of semantic labels ($\Theta$-roles) in existence. The following semantic labels seem to be more common.

## 2.3    SEMANTIC ROLES

### 2.3.1    Agent

There are several definitions of agent in the literature. Du Plessis et al., (1995:23) describe an agent as:

> The intender of the action denoted by the verb. Thus the subject argument in this instance is the willing agent of the action that participates intentionally in the action expressed by the predicate. As such, the property of will or intention is attributable to the agent.

Cowper (1992:48) agrees with Du Plessis et al.,'s description of an agent when he states that an agent is the initiator, doer of an action, and must be able to have control over this action. In the same vein, Cook and Newson (1996:161) describe an agent as the perpetrator of an action.

The above explanation means that an agent is an argument which the meaning of the verb specifies as doing or causing something, possibly intentionally. It follows that in most cases, an agent will be a human being. It is, however, possible for animals endowed with some form of intelligence to become agents (e.g., dogs, horses, etc.).

Since an agent is someone who has control over his action, it means that an agent usually occupies the subject position:

6.    a.      Ngwana o a kitima.

               (The child runs).

      b.      Morutwana o bala puku.

               (A learner reads a book).

      c.      Mošemane o ja bogobe.

               (A boy eats porridge).

The NPs **ngwana**, **morutwana** and **mošemane** in (6a-c), respectively, are external arguments with a thematic role of agent.

### 2.3.2 Patient

A patient is defined as an argument which is affected by the action. This description is in agreement with Cowper's (1992), Haegeman's (1994), Du Plessis, et al.'s (1995) and Cook and Newson's (1996) definitions of a patient. All these scholars concur that a patient is an entity which undergoes an action expressed by the predicate. Unlike an agent, a patient may occupy a subject position or object position:

7.    a.      Mohlare o ponne.

               (A tree has wilted).

      b.      Letsogo la gagwe le gobetše.

               (His arm is injured).

      c.      Leoto la gagwe le thinyegile.

               (His leg is dislocated).

28

The NPs **pula** and **ngwana** have a thematic role of theme. In this case, they appear with weather and stative verbs respectviely.

**Source**

Source is an argument from which motion proceeds. Haegeman (1994:50) puts it aptly when she describes source as "the entity from which something is moved as a result of the activity expressed by the predicate".

12.  a.  Re hwetša thuto dipukung.
         (We get education from books).

     b.  Meetse a tšwa nokeng.
         (Water comes from a river).

The NPs **dipukung** and **nokeng** do not only denote location but also the source from which something. namely, **thuto** and **meetse,** are obtained.

**Goal**

It is an argument to which motion proceeds. Cook and Newson (1996:161) add on this when they state that goal is the intended end-point of an action.

13.  a.  Kgwele e lebile dinong.
         (The ball approaches the goals).

     b.  Bašomi ba boela gae.
         (Workers are going back home).

31

The NP **dinong** and the NP **gae** have a thematic role of goal.

## Recipient

This is an argument which is characterised by the meaning of the verb as receiving something.

14.  a.  Motswadi o fa ngwana tšhelete.

        (A parent gives a child money).

     b.  Monna o fa mosadi mpho.

        (A man gives a woman a present).

The NPs **ngwana** and **mosadi** in (14a-b) have a thematic role of recipient.

## Benefactive (Beneficiary)

Benefactive is an argument characterised by the meaning of a verb as benefiting (or being placed in an advantageous position) in someway or from something. Haegeman (1984:50) describes it as 'the entity that benefits from the action expressed by the predicate'.

15.  a.  O rekela bana malekere.

        (He buys sweets for the children).

     b.  Banna ba lemela basadi tšhemo.

        (Men plough the fields for women).

The object NPs **bana** and **basadi** in (15a-b) have a thematic role of benefactive (seeing that both of them are benefiting by being given help).

## Location

Haegeman (1994:50) defines a semantic role of location as the place in which the action or state expressed by the predicate is situated. Arguments with this type of semantic role denote location.

16.   a.      Tšhwene e dula leweng.

                (A baboon stays in a cave).

       b.        Re bapala lepatlelong.

                (We play in the playground).

The NPloc.. **leweng** and **lepatlelong** as used in (16a-b) have a thematic role of location.

## The role of suffixes in theta theory

In certain instances, suffixes are used in order to make the assignment of theta roles possible. To illustrate this issue, the applicatives **-el-** and the causative **-iš-** will be used.

The applicative. **-el-** and the causative **-iš-** play a crucial role in Northern Sotho. They do not only change word structure but also bring about different shades of meaning to words, in the process adding extra arguments in sentences. If the two suffixes can be added to the verb, **-šoma** (work or to work), new verbs will be formed which will have meanings which are no longer the same as **šoma**. The newly formed verbs will be **-šomela** (work for/work on behalf of) and **šomiša** (make use of/cause to work), respectively.

## The applicative -el-

17.    Monna o lema tšhemo.

        (The man ploughs the field).

In the above sentence, we have one external argument, **monna** and one internal argument, **tšhemo**. **Monna** has the thematic role of agent while **tšhemo** has the thematic role of patient.

If the suffix -el- is added to the verb **lema**, the sentence will read as follows:

18.    Monna o lemela tšhemo.
       (The man ploughs the field for).

This sentence sounds incomplete, and even semantically the sentence does not make complete sense. To make the sentence complete, another argument needs to be introduced (another internal argument).

19.    Monna o lemela mosadi tšhemo.
       (The man ploughs the field for/on behalf of the woman).

The new internal argument, **mosadi** has been introduced to the sentence to make it complete. This new argument is assigned a benefactive theta-role by the verb **lemela**.

The applicative, -el- plays a crucial role in the assignment of benefactive theta roles as can be seen in the following examples:

20.    a.    Mma o ape**ela** bana dijo.
             (Mother cooks food for children).

       b.    Monna o rek**ela** bana malekere.
             (A man buys sweets for children).

c.      Tate o rem**ela** bašemane mohla**r**e.

(Father chops a tree for the boys).

The arguments **bana**, **ngwana** and **bašemane** have a benefactive theta role and they are assigned this role by the verbs **apeela**, **rekela** and **remela**, respectively, all of which have the applicative, -**el**- affixed to them.

**The causative -iš-**

21.     Motho o bala puku.

(A person reads a book).

By adding -**iš**- (causative suffix) to the verb in this sentence, the sentence will change to:

22.     Motho o bad**iš**a puku.

(A person causes to read a book/a person assists to read a book).

This creates a question as to who/what is caused or assisted to read the book. To answer the question and at the same time make the sentence to have a complete thought, an extra argument is added:

23.     Motho o badiša bana puku.

(A person assists children to read a book).

A new internal argument has been introduced, namely, **bana**. This argument is assigned a benefactive theta role by the verb **badiša** to which the suffix -**iš**- was added to change it from **bala** to **badiša**.

The affixation of the suffix -iš- to the verb -bala- (read), has made it possible for the sentence to have another argument, namely, **morutiši** (teacher) who in this case has the Θ-role of agent.

The applicative -el- plays an important role in the assignment of Θ-roles. The affixation of the applicative to a verb, can introduce a new argument to a sentence as in:

Monna o lema tšhemo        >        Monna o lemela mosadi tšhemo.
(The man ploughs the field)        (The man ploughs the field on behalf of a woman).

**Mosadi** (woman) is the new argument which resulted from the affixation of -el- to the verb, **lema** (plough). The argument, **mosadi** (woman) is assigned a benefactive theta role by the verb **lemela** (plough on behalf of).

# CHAPTER 3

## DERIVATION OF ARGUMENT STRUCTURES

### 3.1    INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the derivation of argument structures in Northern Sotho. In order to achieve this aim, the following affixes will receive attention: **-iš-, -w-, -el-, -eg-,** and **-an-**.

### 3.2    DEFINITION OF ARGUMENT STRUCTURE

Before delving into this topic, we should first know what an argument is. An argument is an expression which bears reference. It must refer either to a person, thing or place. If an expression does not refer to any of these, it is obviously not an argument. In other words, an argument must bear a thematic role (Horrocks, 1987:101). Selkirk is also in agreement with this explanation as she says that an argument is an element that bears a thematic relation such as agent, theme, goal, source, instrument, etc., to the head (1982:23).

When dealing with argument structure of words, we take into account external argument and internal argument. The external argument is the head of the whole argument structure while the rest are internal arguments (Williams, 1987:29). For example:

1.    bona   (monna) o bona (pudi))

       (A (man) sees a (goat)).
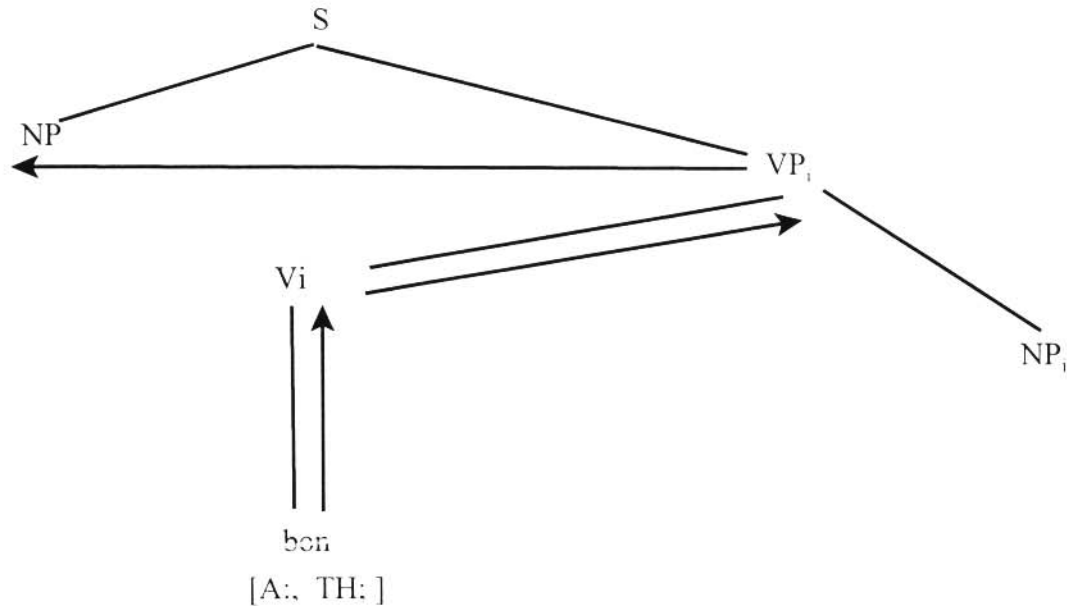
The verb **bona** can take two arguments, namely, external argument and internal argument. In this case, the external argument is the agent appearing in a subject position. The agent as an external argument, becomes the head of the whole argument structure. That is why it has been bolded. The internal argument is the theme which in this example, is appearing in an object position.

External arguments are so called because they are not part of the verb while internal arguments are called thus because they form part of the verb.

## 3.3    DERIVATION OF ARGUMENT STRUCTURES GENERATED BY SUFFIXES

### 3.3.1  Causative suffix -iš-

2.    godiša.

```
                              V
                            /   \
                          /       \
                        /           \
                      V               AF
                      |               |
                      |               |
                    god            -is- (functor)
                      |               |
                      |               |
                      |               |
                 [A¹·  TH²]           A³
                                      X
```

Under V, there are two arguments because **-god-** is a transitive verb. **-iš-** as the causative element supplies an external argument (A). This means **-iš-** becomes the head of the whole argument structure because it supplies an external argument. The arguments of the non-head verbal stem, i.e., agent and theme, become the internal arguments of the whole structure. Again, because **-iš** is a functor, **A, TH** of nonhead verb and **A** of **iš** will compose. Agent of the nonhead argument will end up composed with agent of head to become one.

In Northern Sotho (and other African languages like Venda, Xhosa, etc.) **-iš-** (causative) is the only derived affix that generates its own **agent**. For example:

```
3.    Mosadi   o   lemiša   bana   tšhemo.
         |                    |      |
         |                    |      |
         |                    |      |
         A                    A      TH
```
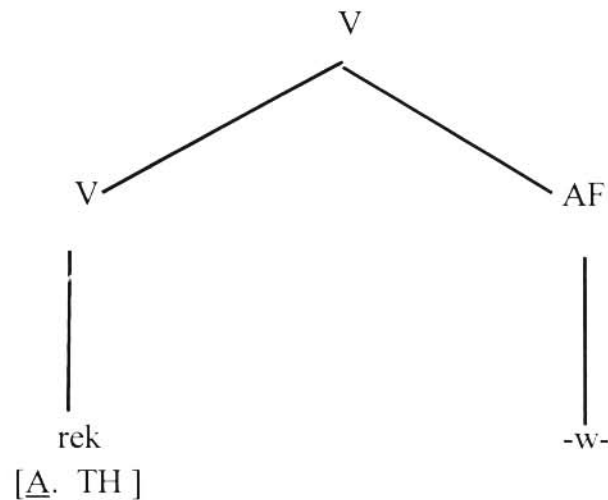
40

**Mosadi** is the external argument that is generated by **-iš-**. Nevertheless, the arguments agent (nonhead) and theme do not disappear.

### 3.3.2  Passive -w-

4.　　rekwa

```
                              V
                             / \
                            /   \
                           /     \
                          V       AF
                          |       |
                          |       |
                          |       |
                         rek     -w-
                       [A. TH ]
```

According to the principle: **The head of a word is the rightmost element of a word.** **-w-** is the head of the above structure because the head, **-w-** must supply the external argument. However, since **-w-** is passive, it does not bear any Θ-role, and therefore, it does not possess an external argument. In fact, it does not have an argument at all. If an external argument is not present in a structure, then it should be found in some other way. This can be achieved by using the notion of **functor**. This functor can be anything. It is associated with heads of structures only. For example:

5.

```
                              V
                             / \
                            /   \
                           V      AF
                           |       |
                          rek     W (F)
                        [A. TH]    |
                                   |
                                   X
```

41
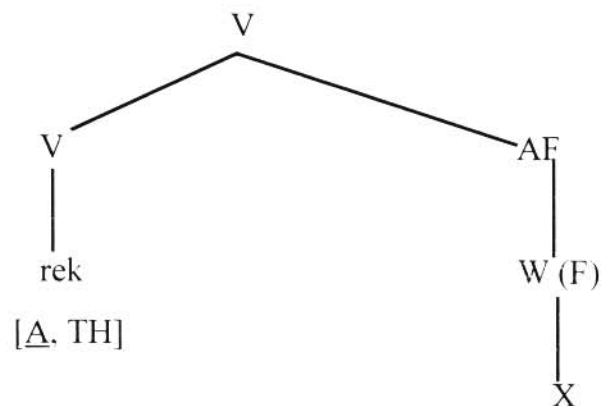
In every argument structure, there must be a head. But -w-, as a passive, cannot be the head due to the lack of external argument. Nevertheless, -w- is a functor and thus the head of the derived word. -W- as a functor ends up controlling the external argument of the nonhead stem. To explain this, let us use another example:

6.      Mošemane o longwa ke mpša.
        (The boy is bitten by a dog).

<div align="center">

-W

|

X

|

PP

</div>
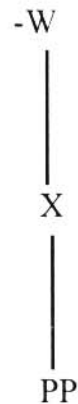
X stands for anything that can be written. And the external argument **mpša** is controlled by -w-. This means that passive morphology controls agent. This X therefore, ends up controlling the agent. Since -w- is a functor, the argument of the nonhead (i.e., agent and theme) will be taken over as arguments of the whole predicate argument structure.

### 3.3.3 The applied -el-

To illustrate the predicate argument structure of applicatives, let us use the following example:

7.      lemela
        (To plough for)

```
                              V
                          ___/ \___
                         /          \
                        V            AF
                        |            |
                        |            |
                        |         el (functor)
                        |            |
                        |            |
                       lem           X
                                     |
                      [A, TH]        |
                                  Accusative
```
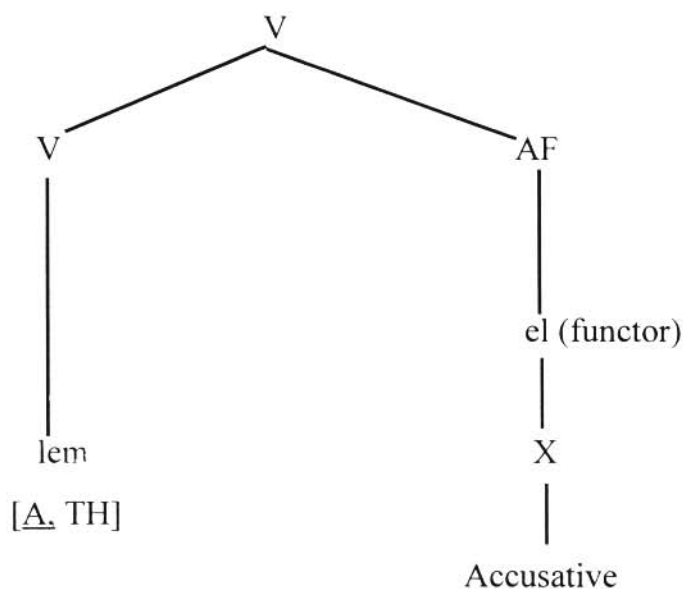
Unlike -iš-, -el- cannot supply an agent at all. Nevertheless, -el- is the head, and as a functor, has accusative role. V as a transitive, has two arguments, agent and theme. Although -el- is the head, it does not supply external argument. Hence we have to look for external argument elsewhere. The external argument will be supplied by agent of nonhead argument **lem**. The external argument of **lema** will become the external argument of **lemela** as a whole. Another example:

8.      Monna o  lemela  mosadi  tšhemo.
             |       |         |
             |       |         |
             A    Accusative  Theme

Even if -el- causes arguments to compose, from the above it is evident that the arguments, agent and theme, do not disappear.

The applicative -el- is problematic as regards its proper meaning. That is, -el- can be interpreted in various ways:

(i)    Lešole le **šomela** setšhaba        >        Benefactive

      (The soldier works for the nation)

(ii)    Lešole le **šomela** tšhelete.        >        Purpose

      (The soldier works for money)

(iii)    Lešole le **šomela** gae.        >        Direction

      (The soldier works towards home)

The meaning of **-el-** is dependent on context. We cannot really say that this is its correct meaning. To solve this problem, we use abstraction rule by giving it the characteristic **accusative**. Accusative embraces all meanings of **-el-**.

### 3.3.4 **The neuter -eg**

9.    balega (legible)
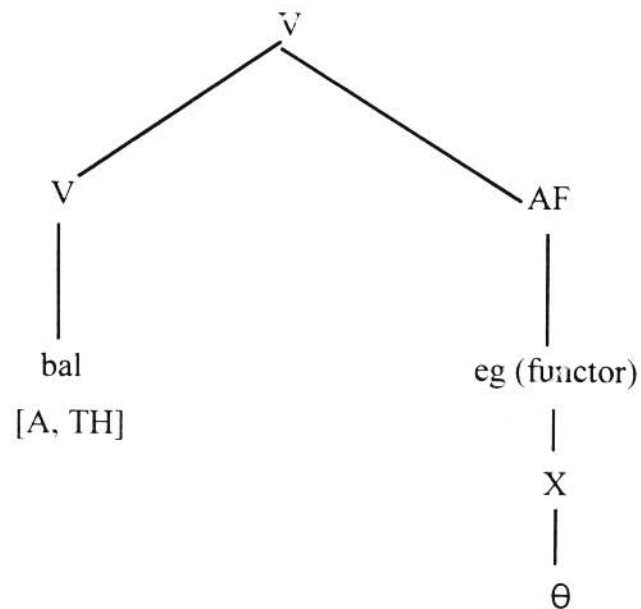


**-eg-** as functor is the head. In the given example, **-eg-** by being a functor makes A and TH to compose. **-eg-** serves just like passive **-v̱-**. Nevertheless, there is a difference. **-eg-** can have an argument in some instances while **-e-** cannot have any argument. In example 9

above, however, there is no argument under **-eg**. Therefore, **-eg-** does not control agent of nonhead structure because it has no Θ-role. In the end, the argument of the nonhead **bal-** (A) will become the external head of the whole argument structure.

### 3.3.5 Argument binding

Argument binding deals with the binding of one argument by the other in the argument structure of verbs. The first argument is bound by the second (Di Sciullo and Williams, 1987:59).

In Northern Sotho, like most African languages, argument binding takes place when we use the reflexive and reciprocal suffixes: **i-** and **-an-**.

10.    Dimpša di a lomana (reciprocal).

(The dogs are biting each other).

In the above example there is no NP object because all the elements are inside the predicate structure itself.

```
                          V
                         /\
                        /   \
                       /      \
                      V         AF
                      |          |
                      |          |
                      |       an (Functor)
                     lom         ¦
                                 ¦
                                 X
                                 |
                                 |
                             Reciprocal
```

45
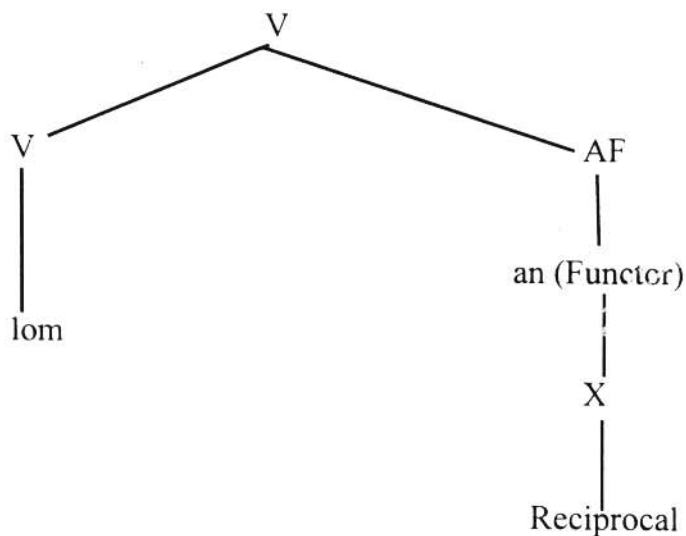
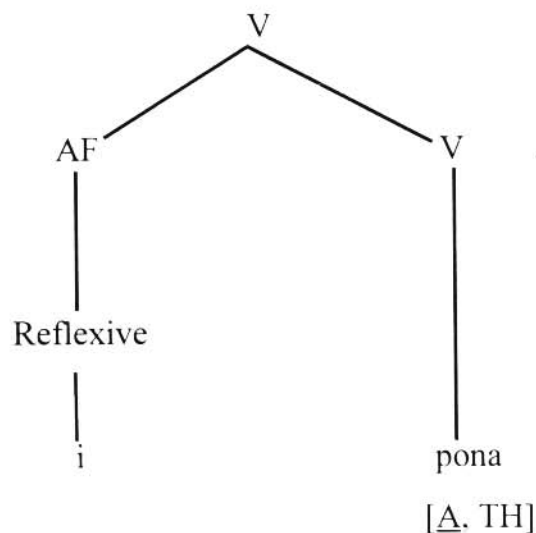If we take into account the rule: **the rightmost member of a word is the head of that word,** then -an- in example 10 above is the head.    But this -an- does not supply an external argument.  What -an- does is to introduce binding.   -an- serves as a vehicle to cause agent and theme of nonhead to be bound together.   That is, -an- as a functor, has the element X which allows binding to take place between agent and theme.

Owing to the presence of  -an-, NP object disappears.  But argument structure of Θ-roles such as agent and theme of nonhead structure do not disappear.

Reflexives have a different structure from that of  reciprocals:

11.    ipona (see oneself)

```
                    V
                  /   \
               /        \
            AF            V
            |             |
            |             |
         Reflexive        |
            |             |
            |             |
            i           pona
                       [A, TH]
```

Owing to the influence of -i- (reflexive), agent,  which in example 11 above serves as an external argument of the whole argument structure, and theme bind together.  On this, Di Sciullo and Williams (1987:60) state that the reflexive affix adds the feature 'refl' to the specification of the accusative argument of verbs, and binds the theme argument to the subject argument.

13.

```
                          V
                    ┌─────┴─────┐
                    V           AF
               ┌────┴────┐      │
               V         AF     an
               │         │      │
               │        (F)     │
               │         │      │
             emel        el     X
              [A]        │      │
                         X     REC
                         │
                    accusative
```
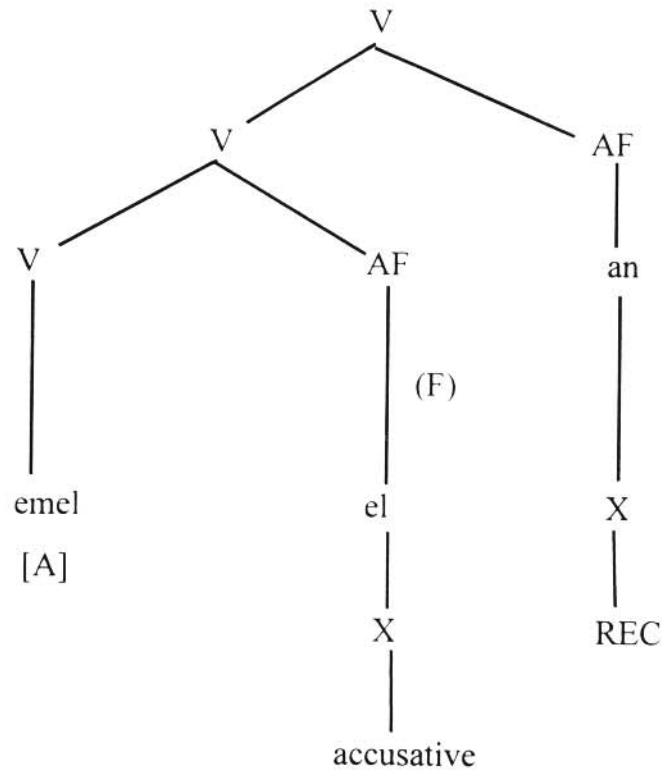
In example 13 above. **-el** is the head of **emela**. However, **el** does not have an external argument of **emelana**. It should get its external argument from elsewhere. It gets it from V. **em-** wherein A supplies the external argument.

The reciprocal affix **-an**, will in turn become the head of **emelana**. Though there are two heads. they are heads of different structures. **-el** is the head of **emela** while **-an** is the head of **emelana**. If REC (**-an**) yields X. X ends up binding two arguments, namely: agent and accusative. In the end, we shall have the following structure:

14.

```
                    V [A (accusative)] (REC)
                   /                    \
                  V                      AF
                 / \                      |
                V    AF                   an
                |     |                    |
               V -    el                   X
                |      |                    |
               em   accusative            REC
              [A]
```

**Emela** and **emelana** have two meanigns. **Emela** means "to wait for someone/something", whereas **emelana** means "to wait for each other". **-el-** and **-an-** are thus derivational affixes.

(ii)  *-el-an- ('Transitive)*

15.    Rekelana

```
                    V
                   /  \
                  V    AF
                 / \     |
                |   AF (F)  an (F)
                |    |       |
               rek   el      X
              [A. TH] |       |
                  accusative REC
```

In the above-mentioned example, **el** is the head of **rekela** while **-an** is the head of **rekelana**. As a transitive, we find two arguments under V, these are agent and theme. -el- does not have an external argument. The external argument is found in nonhead V, and this is the agent.

REC yields X, and X binds two arguments. These are agent and accusative. In this case, theme will not be bound. Using the given sentence, it means that **reka** will also be left out.

### 3.3.6.2 (I) -iš- -el- (Intransitive)

16. tlišetša

Mošemane o tlišetša monna pudi.
(A boy brings the goat for the man).
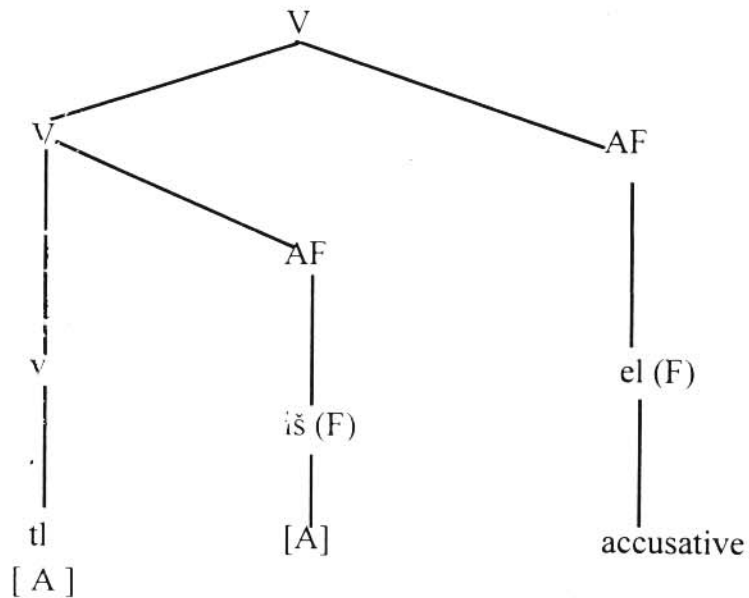


In the example 16 above, we have two heads as we have two functors. But these heads are not heads of the same structure -iš- is head of the structure **tliša** whereas -el- is head of the structure **tlišetša**. -iš- as a causative affix, must have an agent. Because agent of -iš- is the agent of the whole, it becomes the external argument of the whole; while agent under **tl-** becomes the internal argument.
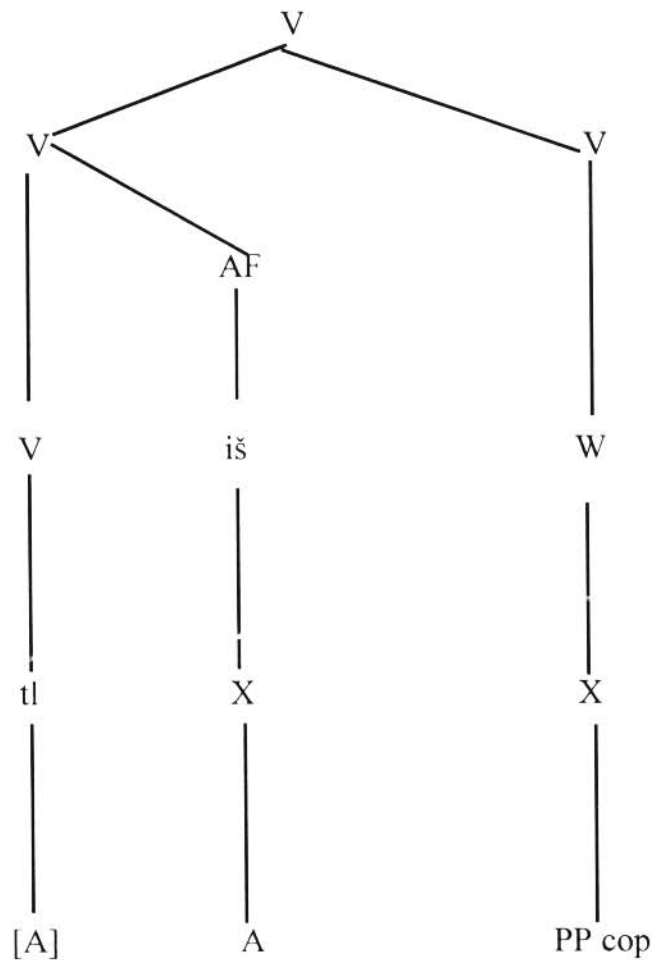
50

### 3.3.6.4   -iš- -an- (Transitive)

20.     Badišana
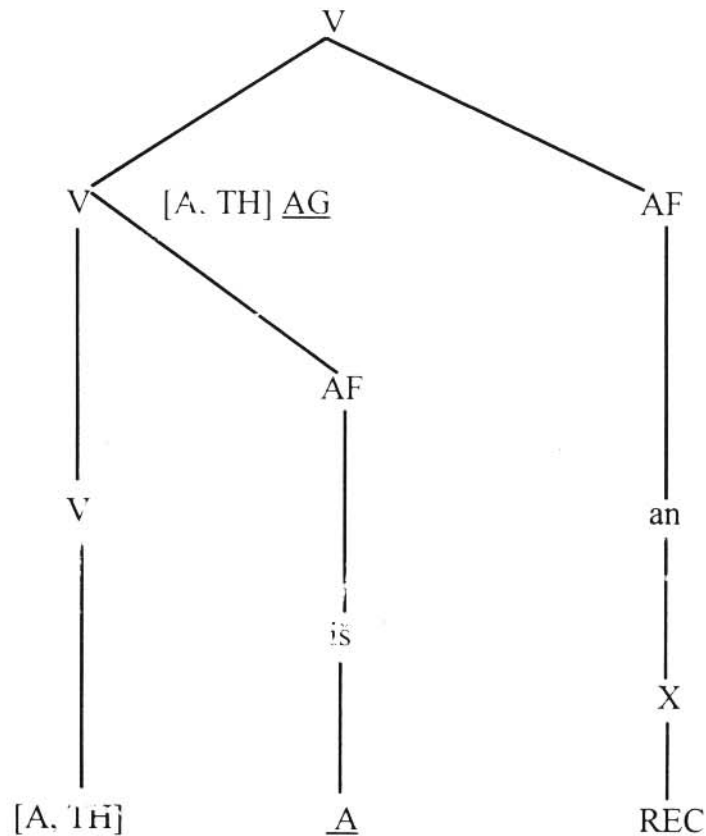


The structure in example 20 above, reflects -iš- as the head of **badiša** and **an** as the head of **badišana**.  -iš-  possesses the external argument which becomes the head of the whole argument. i.e., **badiwa**. **Badišana** has, as its head, **-an**.  Because it is a REC, X ends up binding external argument and internal argument.  Internal argument (A) belongs to **bal-** and thus is not bolded.

### 3.3.6 5   -iš- -w- (Intransitive)

2.1     tla     >     tlišwa

Bana ba a tlišwa.
(Children are brought).

```
                              V
                             /\
                            /  \
                           /    \
                          V      V
                         /|      |
                        / |      |
                       /  AF     |
                      /   |      |
                     V    iš     W
                     |    |      |
                     |    |      |
                     tl   X      X
                     |    |      |
                     |    |      |
                    [A]   A      PP cop
```

-iš- is the head of **tliša**. Since it possesses an external argument, its argument ends up being the external argument of the whole. Agent under **tl-** becomes the internal argument.
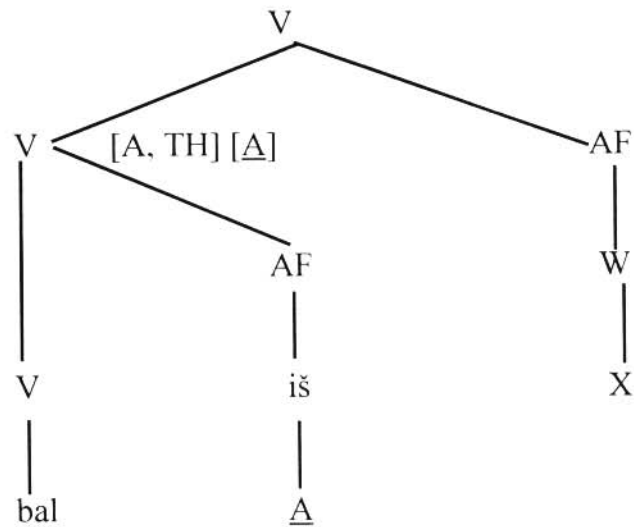
-w- is head of **tlišwa**. It does not have any argument because of its passive morphology. Nevertheless, -w- controls the external argument which is an agent generated by -iš-.

(ii)  *-iš- -w- (Transitive)*

22.     badišwa

        Bana ba badišwa puku.
        (Children are caused to read a book).

```
                              V
                           /     \
                          /       \
                    V  [A, TH] [A]          AF
                  / \                        |
                 /   \                       |
                V     AF                     W
                |      |                      |
                V      iš                     X
                |      |
               bal     A
```

The heads in this example are still -iš- and -w-.   -iš- is head of **badiša,** which means "to cause to read" whereas -**w**- is the head of **badišwa**, which is in the passive.

Agent of **-iš-** becomes the external argument of the whole while agent of **bal-** is an internal argument.

-**w**- controls the arguments; i.e., agent and agent.  In other words, it controls the external argument and internal argument.
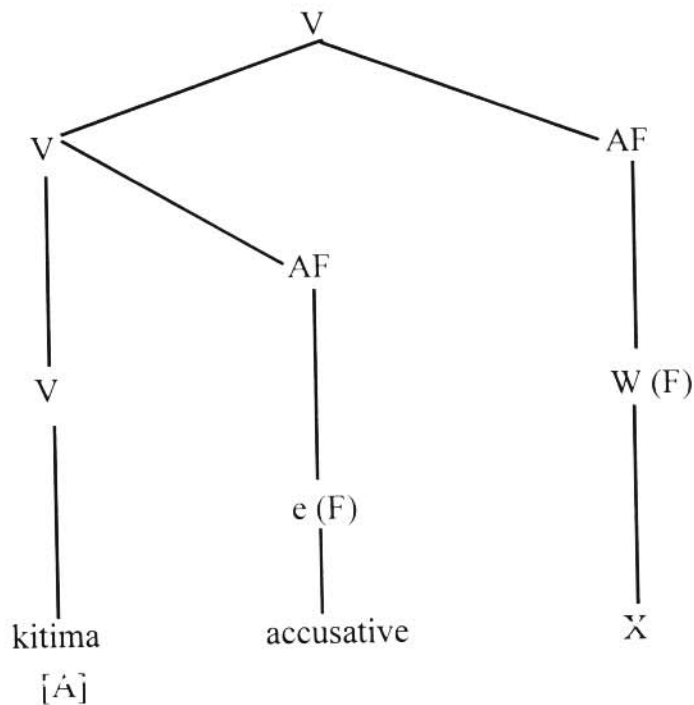
3.3.6.6

(i)      *-el- w- (Intransitive)*

23.    kitima        >        kitimelwa.

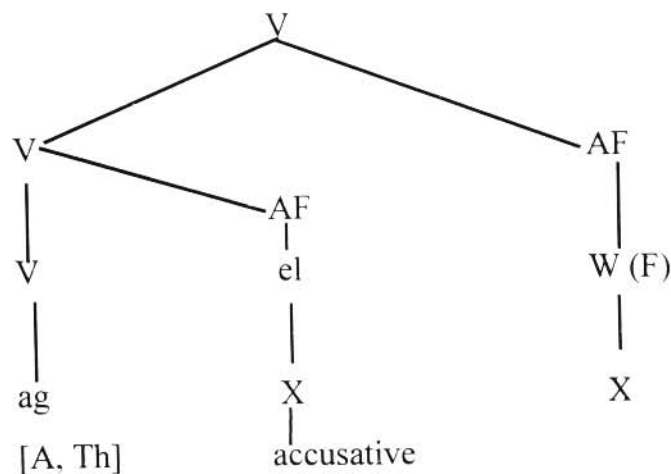        Monna o kitimelwa ke bana.
        (The children ran towards a man).

```
              V
           /     \
          V        AF
        /   \        |
       V     AF    W (F)
       |      |      |
     kitima  e (F)   X
      [A]     |
          accusative
```

In this structure. there are two heads of different verbs.   -el- is the head of **kitimela** while -w- is the head of **kitimelwa**. Although -el- is in a head position of **kitimela**, it does not supply any external argument.   The Agent generated by **kitim** supplies the external argument.

-w- as a passive morphology does not bear any θ-role.  What it does is to control the agent.

(ii)  *-el-w- (Transitive)*

24.    agelwa

```
              V
           /     \
          V        AF
        /   \        |
       V     AF    W (F)
       |      |      |
       ag    el      X
     [A, Th]  |
              X
          accusative
```

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In example 24 above, -el- is the head of **agela**. It does not supply an external argument however. The external argument is supplied by **ag-** (nonhead). And it is bolded to show that it is the external argument. Theme will become the internal argument. As a result of the influence of -el-, **A, TH** and Acc. will compose. However, A, TH and Acc do not disappear.

-e- heads the argument structure of **agelwa**. It possesses no θ-role at all. Its function is to control. It ends up controlling **A**, which is the external argument.

### 3.3.6.7  *-iš-el-an-*

These affixes can be added to verbs. Let us add them to a transitive verb like **bala** (read).

25.     bala   >      badiša     >     badišetša     >     badišetšana



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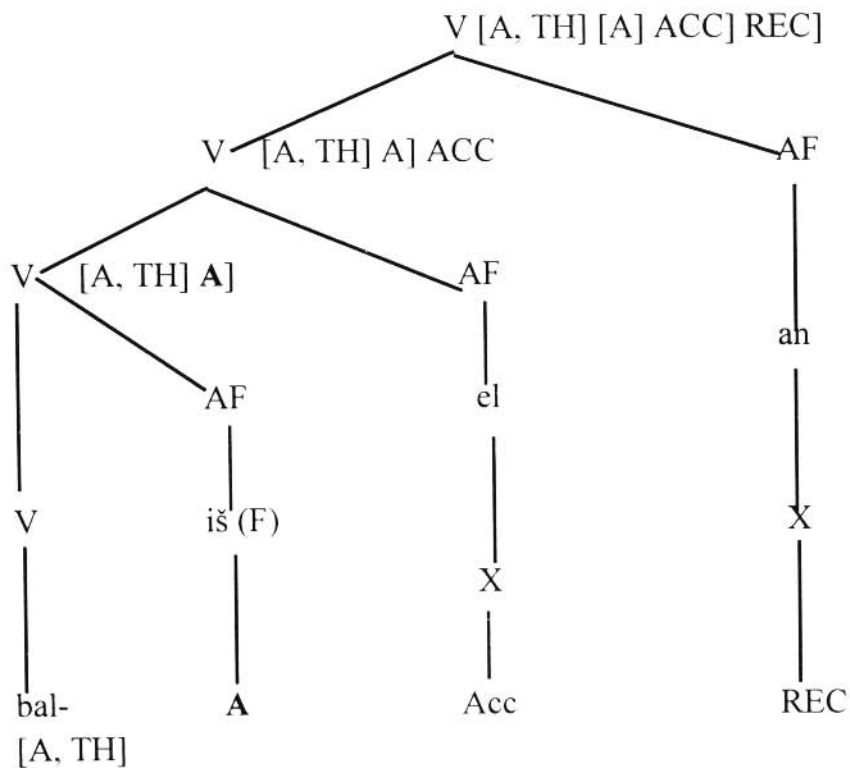
In the above example, we have three heads of different argument structures. They are heads because, as functors, they can be given that little, as long as they are heads of different structures.

-iš- as a causative always generates an agent. This -iš- becomes the head of **badiša** due to the fact that its agent becomes the external argument of the whole.

The head of badišetša is -el-. It has no external argument. Its function is to make (A, TH) A and accusative to compose. They do not, however, disappear.

Reciprocal -an- has **X** which binds two agents. In this example we have the external argument and the internal argument which are bound by REC. The internal argument, which is agent of **bal-** will disappear.

The argument of this combination of affixes can also be shown as follows:

26. **bala**        **badiša**        **badišetša**        **badišetšwa**

    (A. TH)    (A, TH) A))    (A, TH) A) Acc)    (A, TH) A) Acc) REC)

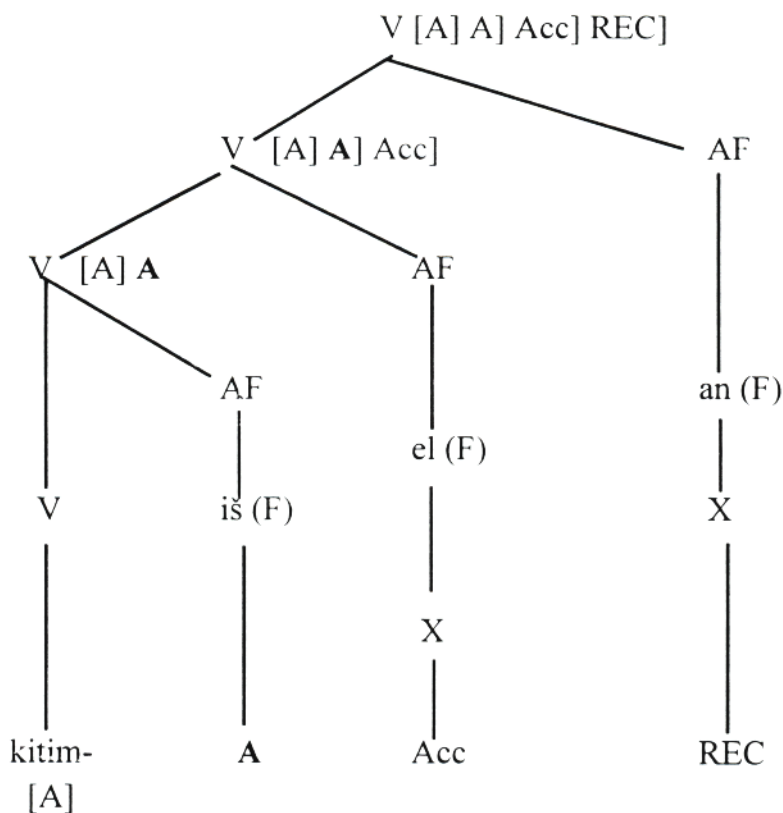With an intransitive verb such as **kitima**, the following structure will obtain:

27. **kitima**        **kitimiša**        **kitimišetša**        **kitimišetšana**

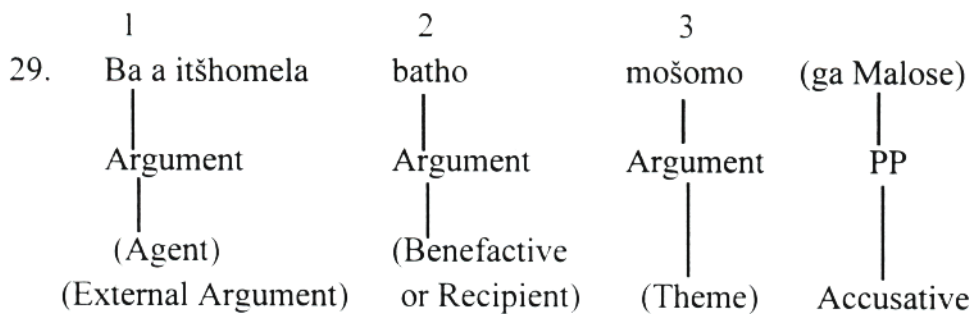    (A)        (A) A)        (A) A) Acc)        (A) A) Acc) REC)

This means that in each example of **kitima** there is one argument less when compared to each example of **bala**.

In a tree-diagram all the structures of kitima as indicated above, will look as follows:

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28.



Tree diagram:

```
                          V [A] A] Acc] REC]
                         /                    \
              V [A] A] Acc]                    AF
             /           \                      |
      V [A] A            AF                    an (F)
      /      \            |                     |
     V       AF          el (F)                 X
     |        |           |                      |
     V      iš (F)        X                     REC
     |        |           |
   kitim-     A          Acc
    [A]
```

### 3.3.6.8 *Ditransitive -el-*

```
         1                  2                  3
29.   Ba a itšhomela      batho            mošomo      (ga Malose)
         |                  |                |             |
      Argument          Argument         Argument         PP
         |                  |                |             |
      (Agent)          (Benefactive                        |
  (External Argument)   or Recipient)     (Theme)      Accusative
```
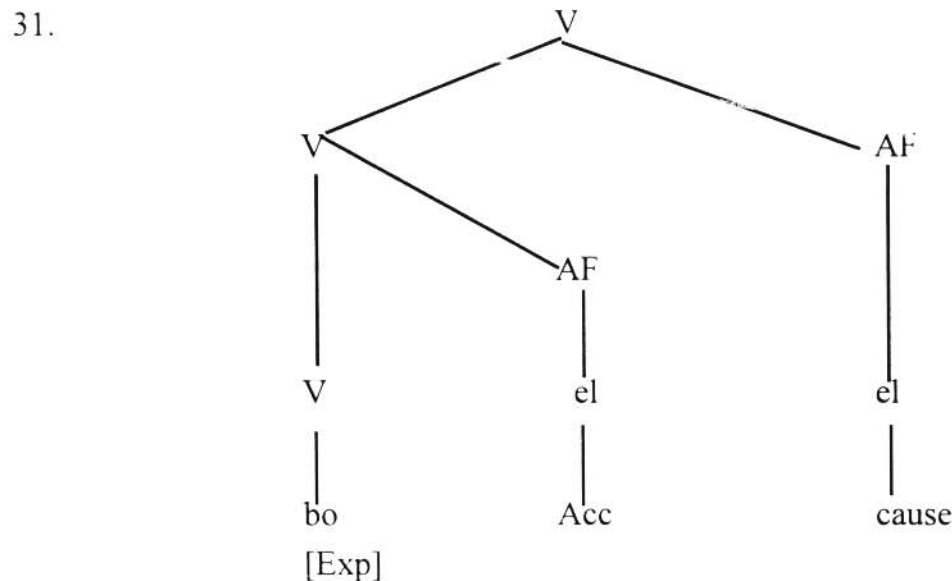
If one adds -el- to a verb, it must always add a new internal argument to the structure. Although -el- in this example is the head, it does not have an external argument. It gets its external argument from the nonhead -adima-.

If -el- is added to transitive verbs, three arguments will result as in example 29 above.

### 3.3.6.9 *Intransitive -el + el-*

30.  a.  boa  >  boela  > boelela.

boa (come back).

O tlo boa neng?  (When will you come back?)


b.  O boela eng?  (What do you come back for?)


c.  O se boelele.  (Do not go back again).


Although **-el-** is problematic as regards its proper meaning, from the above examples, it is evident that **-el-el-** adds new meaning to the original word, **boa**.  This shows that **-el-el-** is a derivational affix.

31.

```
                              V
                          /        \
                    V                 AF
                 /     \              |
                V       AF            |
                |        |            |
                V       el           el
                |        |            |
               bo       Acc         cause
              [Exp]
```

**-el-** (accusative) is head of **boela**.  It does not have, however, an external argument.  The external argument is supplied by non-head, **bo-**.  This external argument has a θ-role of experiencer.

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The other -el- is head of **boelela** (go back again). It is characterised by the feature, cause, which indicates the reason or purpose for undertaking a particular action.

## 3.4   SUMMARY

In this chapter, the derivation of argument structures in Northern Sotho was studied. The concept argument structure was defined. The two types of argument structures were covered, namely, external argument and internal argument.

To examine the role played by suffixes in the derivation of an argument structure, the suffixes -iš-, -el-, -w- and -e were studied.

It was concluded that -iš- is capable of generating an external argument. Therefore, -iš- can be regarded as the head of an argument structure such as **Monna o godiša ngwana** (A man makes the child to grow). The argument generated by -iš- is an external argument and is usually assigned the agent theta role.

Although -w- can be the head of a word such as **rekwa** (being bought), -w- does not possess any external argument. In such a situation, the external argument is achieved by using the notion of a functor.

Unlike -iš-, -el- cannot supply an external argument, thus it cannot supply an agent. To obtain an external argument, the external argument of the non-head argument such as **-lem-** in **Monna o lemela mosadi tšhemo** (The man ploughs the field on behalf of a woman), is made to supply the external argument.

The meanings of the applicative, -el- were also given as, benefactive meaning, expression of purpose and the meaning of direction. These meanings are controlled or determined by context.

The concept of argument binding was also discussed. This is caused by the reflexive morpheme as well as the reciprocal **-an**, which cause the agent and the theme to be bound, as in:

Monna o a ikgobatša.
(A man hurts himself) and

Dimpša di a lomana.
(Dogs are biting each other).

**Monna** (man) and **dimpša** (dogs) are both agent and theme in the above sentences.

Another interesting aspect which has been discussed is the fact that morphemes are recognised by their form, rather than meaning. That is why -iš- is just referred to as the causative suffix even if it does not carry any causative meaning in certain instances. This is according to the traditional approach.

In as far as a combination of extensions is concerned, it has been pointed out that the combination of extensions results in lesser arguments.

Whether a verb is transitive or intransitive it is of importance in as far as the derivation of arguments are concerned.

# CHAPTER 4

## THE SEMANTIC SIGNIFICANCE OF SUFFIXES

### 4.1  INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to study the meanings of the various suffixes which occur in Northern Sotho.

Apparently, most suffixes have more than one meaning. Nokaneng (1976:58) distinguishes three nominal suffices in accordance with their meanings, namely, those that denote diminutives, those indicating gender and those indicating place. The three types of suffixes can be illustrated as follows, in their respective order.

1.    a.    noka    > noka   + ana   >    nok**ana**:   diminutive

               (river    > small river or revulet)

      b.    morutiši  > morutiši + gadi  >    morutiši**gadi**: gender

               (teacher  > female teacher)

      c.    ntlo    > ntlo    + ng    >    ntlo**ng**:   place

               (house   > in/on the house)

Apart from nominal suffixes, there are other types of suffixes such as verbal suffixes, like: **-el-**, **-eg-**, etc.

The meaning of each of the suffixes will be discussed briefly in this section of the work. Due to the scope of this work, the sound changes accompanying the suffixes will not receive much attention.

The suffix **-ana/-nyana** also denotes youth.

Lombard et al., (1988:82) indicates that the suffix:

> ... may also be used to imply youth, i.e., 'children' of something or somebody. This is evident in the Northern Sotho word for child, viz., ngwana, also in mošemane and mosetsana. Naturally, there are children who are taller than their parents, but because they are still young, a diminutive is used to describe them.

Below are more examples wherein **-ana/nyana** indicates youth:

3.  a.  pudi        >  putš**ana**.

        (goat       >  young goat/kid).

    b.  tau         >  taw**ana**.

        (lion       >  young lion/cub).

    c.  noga        >  nog**ana**.

        (snake      >  young snake).

Nokaneng (1976:59) also referred to youth when he said that the diminutive also indicates the young ones of an animal.

The suffix **-ana/-nyana** may also reflect emotive value.

Nokaneng (1976), Lombard et al., (1988) and Grobler et al., (2003) agree on the fact that the suffix **-ana/-nyana** may be used to express love or appreciation.

4. a. **Mogweranyana** yo wa ka o bohlale.

(My friend is wise/intelligent).

b. **Ntlonyana** ye ke ye botse.

(This house is beautiful).

c. Ke hlologetšwe bana**nyana** ba ka.

(I am longing for my children).

In the above examples (4a-c), the suffix **-nyana** does not refer to size but reflects the feelings of the speaker; the speaker loves/appreciates what he/she is talking about.

The suffix **-ana/-nyana** also indicates derogation:

5. a. Ke monna**nyana** wa selo mang?

(What kind of a man is he?)

b. Tšea dilo**nyana** tše tša gago o sepele.

(Take your lousy things and go).

c. Ditaba**nyana** tša gago di a ntena.

(Your news makes me cross).

In all the above given examples (5a-c), the suffix **-nyana** has been used to refer to things that are regarded as useless or unimportant.

The suffix, **-ana/-nyana** may also be used with other word categories which are not nouns. In such cases, it seems to mean 'a little bit or not so much, etc.'.

**Verbs**

6.    a.      ema **nyana**.

             (wait a little bit).


    b.      batamela **nyana**.

             (come a little closer).


    c.      bofa **nyana**.

             (tighten a little more).

In all the given examples in 6(a-c) above, the word **nyana** does not seem to be the same -**nyana**; i.e., the suffix which denotes diminutive in nouns. It seems to be a separate word functioning as an adverb. However, in all three examples, the word seems to express 'little bit or not much'.


**Adjectives**

7.    a.    telele   +   ana     >  tele**tšana**.

          (tall/long         >  a little bit tall/long).

    b.    kgolo   +   nyana  >  kgolo**nyana**.

          (large            >  a little bit large).

    c.    šweu   +   nyana  >  šweu**nyana**.

          (A little bit white).

The diminutive sense is still embedded in the suffix as it is used in the examples in 7(a-c). In 7(a) the thing referred to is not actually tall; it is not far from being short. In other words, the tallness is very little or negligible. That is why the word **little** is persistently appearing in the English translations.

**Adverbs**

8.  a.     kgole          >     kgo**jana**.

           (far           >     A little bit far).


    b.     kudu           >     kut**šwana**

           (too much      >     slightly too much).


    c.     ka pela        >     ka pe**jana**.

           (quickly       >     a little bit quicker).


Again in the examples in 8, the diminutive meaning is evident.  As can be observed in 8(a) **kgojana** is not actually far, it is somewhere between far and near.


**-ana** can also denote gender.


When used with the colour of animals, the suffix, **-ana** can denote feminine gender. Nokaneng (1976:59) indicates this when he says:


> Ge mesela ya -ana le -nyana e hlomesetšwa go mahlaodi a mmala mo diphoofolong, nyenyefatšo e šupa botshadi.
>
> (When the suffixes -ana and -nyana are affixed to adjectives of colour in animals, the diminutive indicates feminine gender).


9.  a.     Kgomo ye tšhweu + ana.

           Kgomo ye tšhwa**ana**.

           (A white cow).


    b.     Pudi ye ntsho + ana.

           Pudi ye sw**ana**.

           (A black she-goat)

c.      Namane ye tshehla -ana.

         Namane ye tshehl**ana**.

         (A grey female calf).

The examples in 7(a-c) and 9(a-c) are in agreement with what Du Plessis and Madadzhe (1991:119) say about **-ana/-nyana** when they mention the fact that the suffix also indicates:

-     diminutive of adjectives (examples 7(a-c) above; and
-     female sex of animals with adjectives denoting colour (examples 9(a-c) above.

## 4.2.2  **The suffix -gadi**

This suffix, as Nokaneng (1976:66) says, indicates feminine gender. In addition to gender, Nokaneng (1976:66) goes on to show that the suffix also indicates largeness. Lombard et al., (1988:83) call nouns with this suffix augmentative/feminine nouns. They say the following about the nouns:

> The term 'augmentative' refers to the 'enlargement, increasing'
> of an object. Not only does the augmentative/feminine in
> Northern Sotho indicate 'largeness' it also indicates female
> largeness.

Although Nokaneng and Lombard et al., seem to agree on the meaning of the suffix **-gadi**; there seems to be a slight difference between them. According to Nokaneng, the main meaning of the suffix is to indicate feminine gender whereas in Lombard et al.,'s view, the main meaning of the suffixes is to indicate largeness.

Du Plessis and Madadzhe (1999:119) also give two functions of the suffix **-gadi**; namely to show feminine gender and to show largeness (augmentative meaning).

Cases wherein the suffix indicate gender:

10.   a.    morutiši    >    morutiši**gadi**.

            (Teacher     =    female teacher).

      b.    mohlolo    >    mohlolo**gadi**.

            (widower    >    widow).

      c.    kgoši    >    kgoši**gadi**.

            (king    >    female king).

The suffix in 10(a-c) indicates feminine gender.

Cases wherein the suffix indicates largeness/greatness:

11.   a.    tau    >    tau**gadi**.

            (lion    >    very big lion - not necessarily female)

      b.    naga    >    naga**gadi**.

            (country    >    big or great country).

      c.    tona    >    tona**gadi.**

            (male    >    very big male).

The suffix, **-gadi** in 11(a-c) does not indicate gender, it indicates the size or quality of the things it is referring to.

It can also be used to indicate feminine in praise poems. Words which are commonly used to praise men can be used to praise females by adding the suffix **-gadi** (sometimes **-adi** in praise poems or praise words).

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12. a. Mogale > mogale**adi**.

    (Hero > female hero).

    b. Nape > nape + adi > nap**šadi**.

    (No English translation).

    c. Mphela > mphela + adi > phel**adi**.

    (No English translation).

Some of the praise words are so old that they are just used without the users actually knowing the meaning of the words. That is why it is not possible to give translations of such words. They are just like proper nouns such a Matome, the meaning of which is no longer known.

The suffix, -**gadi** seems to be used more to indicate feminine gender than to indicate size/largeness.

### 4.2.3 The suffix -ng

The suffix, -**ng** is sometimes called the locative suffix because it is added to nouns in order to make the nouns to be used to indicate locality/place. Lombard et al., (1988:73) say the following:

> The group of nouns which are termed 'locative nouns', are nothing but basic nouns (which do not indicate locality), which are locativised by the suffixation (addition) of the locative suffix -**ng**.

Nokaneng, like Du Plessis and Madadzhe, also agrees that place/locality is recognised by the suffixation of -**ng** to nouns:

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13.  a.  motho  +  ng  >  mothong.

(person                     >  on/in the person)

b.  ntlo  +  ng  >  ntlong.

(house                     >  in/on the house).

c.  pula  +  ng  >  puleng

(rain                      >  in the rain).

The nouns, **motho** (person), **ntlo** (house) and **pula** (rain) are made to refer to place/locality by the addition of the suffix **-ng/-eng**.

Sometimes words with the suffix **-ng** are used figuratively to indicate quality/status or quantity.

14.  a.  Re tšwa bathong.

(We come from good/honourable people)

b.  Felo fao ke nageng.

(That place is too far/too remote).

c.  Moo gona ke dikgomong.

(That is the place where there are many/good quality cattle).

The words with the suffix **-ng** do not simply indicate place, but have something to do with quality, quantity or status. **Nageng** in 14(b) indicates that the place referred to is not near, but it is rather too far or even away from any village or any form of settlement.

## 4.3    VERBAL SUFFIXES

These suffixes are called 'verbal extensions' by Lombard et al., (1988) who describe them as extensions which occur between the verbal root and the ending. Grobler et al., (2003:39) agree with Lombard et al., that these extensions occur to the right of the root before the verbal ending:

15.    a.    bona    >    bon + an +    a    >    bon**ana**.
            (See    >    See each other/one another).

       b.    reta    >    ret + iš +    a    >    retiša.
            (praise    >    cause/assist to praise).

       c.    lema    >    lem + el +    a    >    lem**ela**.
            (plough >    plough on behalf of).

Each of the various verbal suffixes (extensions) will be discussed briefly in this section of the work.

### 4.3.1  The applicative -el-

According to Lombard et al.. (1988:110):

> Verbs with an applied extension indicate that the process or action takes place:
>
> (i)      for/on behalf of something or someone, ...
> (ii)     to the disadvantage of something or someone, ...
> (iii)    in a direction (to or from) when the verb is used with locatives ...

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Nokaneng and Louwrens (1996:195) agree with Lombard et al., in as far as (i) and (iii) are concerned. However, they go further to indicate that the suffix can be used in questions.

In as far as (i) is concerned, the following can serve as examples:

16.    a.       Ke lem**ela** mma.

                (I plough on behalf of my mother).

        b.       O ag**ela** mosadi wa gagwe.

                (He is building for his wife).

        c.       Re šom**ela** kgoši.

                (We work for the king).

The suffix, **-el-** in 16(a-c) indicates that something is done on behalf of someone.

The following are examples for meaning (ii) according to Lombard et al., as already mentioned above:

17.    a.       Sekebekwa se tše**ela** mosadi tšhelete.

                (A criminal takes money from a woman).

        b.       Monna o seny**etša** ngwana bokamoso.

                (A man destroys the child's future).

        c.       Ngwana o ob**ela** motswadi molato.

                (A child causes his parent trouble).

In the examples in 17(a-c) something is done to the disadvantage of **mosadi** (woman), **ngwana** (child) and **motswadi** (parent), respectively.

The following are examples for meaning (iii) above:

18. a. Barutwana ba kitim**el**a sekolong.

(Learners are running to (in the direction of the) school).

b. Re sepel**el**a gona.

(We are moving in that direction).

c. O tlog**el**a bana a ya go nwa bjala.

(She moves away from children and go to drink liquor).

The meaning of the suffix, **-el** in 18(a-c) is that of direction.

What Nokaneng (1976:89) says shows that he agrees with Lombard et al., in all respects. The issue raised by Nokaneng and Louwrens (1996:195), however, brings to light another meaning of the suffix, **-el-**; that is, the meaning of purpose. They do not mention this meaning explicitly, though. They only indicate that the suffix **-el** can be used in questions. An answer to every question involving **-el** will give a purpose for which a particular action/process takes place:

19. a. O šom**el**ang?          Ke šom**el**a dijo.

(What are you working for?)    (I work for food)

b. Ba bapal**el**ang?          Ba bapal**el**a tšhelete.

(What are they playing for?)   (They play for money).

03 |~~~~~

c.       Batho bao ba lwelang?            Ba lwela naga.

(What are those people fighting for?)    They are fighting for land).

The questions in 19(a-c) above seek the purpose for which a particular action/process is taking place while the corresponding answers give those purposes for which the actions/processes take place.

There seems to be another meaning of the suffix, **-el** which has not been mentioned before. If the following sentences may be scrutinised, a conclusion may be drawn that the suffix **-el-** seems to have the meaning of prepositions such as on, in and at in the English language:

20.   a.    Ba j**el**a tafoleng.

(They eat on the table).

b.    Ba bap**el**ela lepatlelong.

(They play in the play ground).

c.    Re ithut**el**a sekolong.

(We learn at school).

Although this meaning is not there in the grammar books, it is commonly used by the speakers of Northern Sotho. Like in meaning (iii) above, (that of 'in the direction to/from') in this meaning of **-el**, the verb with the suffix **-el** is always followed by an adverb of place (the adverbs are derived from nouns by affixation of the locative suffix, **-ng**).

Nokaneng (1976:89) raises a problem that the origin of certain applied verbs cannot be traced although the suffix **-ela** can be observed. He sights sexamples such as **rapela** (pray) and **otsela** (sleep).

To try and resolve this problem, it should be determined whether -el- in these verbs is the applied suffix or is part of the original verbs, **rapela** and **otsela**. It seems as if the -el is not a suffix but part of the original verbs, **rapela** (pray) and **otsela** (sleep). Thus, there seems to be no need to worry about the suffix, -el in these verbs.

There should not be an impression that every -el which is observed in a verb is the applied suffix, -el. There is a verb, **mela** (grow/germinate) for example. The **el** in this verb is part of the root of the verb which is **mel-**. In the same way, **rapel-** and **otsel-** seem to be the roots of the verbs **rapela** and **otsela**, respectively.

### 4.3.2 The causative, -iš

According to Nokaneng (1976:91) and Nokaneng and Louwrens (1996:196), the suffix -**iš** indicates force or help. Lombard et al. (1978:113) concur with them by saying:

> In the case of causative verbs, the grammatical subject is of assistance in the performing of the action or process by the grammatical object, therefore the causative verbs are mostly translated with 'cause ...' or 'help ...'.

The following examples will illustrate the above meanings of the suffix -iš:

21.　a.　Morutiši o badiša bana puku.

　　　　(The teacher causes/forces/helps the children to read a book).

　　b.　Dimpša di kitimiša mmutla.

　　　　(The dogs cause/force a hare to run).

　　c.　Re tlo rwadiša mma merwalo.

　　　　(We will help mother to carry the luggage).

Apparently, in example 21(a) all the three meanings are possible. In 21(b) it does not seem possible for dogs to help the hare to run, thus it is only possible for the dogs to either cause or force the hare to run. In example 21(c) the only possibility is that the children will help rather than force their mother to carry the luggage.

There are certain instances wherein the suffix -iš is used wherein the meaning does not seem to be that of help, cause or force:

22.    a.    Re tlo thoma ka go gatiša menwana.

             (We will firstly make/take finger prints).

       b.    Maphodisa a tlo kgonthiša gore o a swarwa.

             (The police will make sure that he is arrested).

       c.    Matome o kgona go laodiša taba.

             (Matome is capable of telling/narrating a story).

In all the examples in 22(a-c) the meaning of the suffix -iš in the verbs **gatiša** (take finger prints), **kgonthiša** (make sure) and **laodiša** (tell/narrate) respectively, does not seem to be related to the meanings of cause, help or force. However, it is not easy to say what the meaning of the suffix -iš is in the three sentences. Moreover, the meaning of the suffix in each sentence does not seem to be related to that found in the other sentences. What makes the problem even more complicated is that the -iš in these words cannot be regarded as part of the verbal root because the roots of the three words are **gat** (tread), **kgonthe** (truth) and **laol** (take control), respectively.

The least one can suggest about the usage of the suffix, -iš in 22(a-c), is that the meaning is that of 'making something possible'. This meaning is different from that of 'cause' becasue in the case of this meaning of 'making something possible' one does not cause the person to do something as is the case in the meaning of 'cause to'.

### 4.3.3 The reciprocal, -an

Nokaneng (1976:87), Lombard et al., (1988:113-114), Nokaneng and Louwrens (1996:209-210) and Grobler et al., (2003:39), all give only one meaning of the reciprocal suffix. They define the reciprocal suffix, **-an** as the suffix indicating a mutual process or action. They, in the exception of Grobler, go further to indicate that the verbs with the reciprocal suffix have compound subjects:

23. a.    Ba a rat**an**a.

         (They love each other/one another).


    b.    Matome le Mašilo ba a thuš**an**a.

         (Matome and Mašilo are helping each other).


    c.    Batho ba swanetše go rut**an**a.

         (People must educate one another).


In agreement with the definition above, the verbs with the reciprocal suffix **-an** all indicate a reciprocal (mutual) action or process and have compound subjects.

The other meaning of the suffix **-an,** which is not mentioned in the grammar books, is that of expressing that something is done extensively. The meaning has absolutely nothing to do with reciprocal action or process.

In most cases, this meaning goes with negative or undesirable actions:

24. a.    Mokgekolo yola o a loy**an**a

         (That old woman is bewitching).

b.      Mmago Malose o a rogana.

        (Malose's mother utters vulgar words).


c.      Ngwana yo o a rumulana.

        (This child is provacative).


In the examples in 24(a-c), **mokgekolo** (old woman) in (a), **mmago Malose** (Malose's mother) in (b), and **ngwana** (child) in (c), are all singular subjects. As a result, the verbs **loyana** (bewitching), **rogana** (utters vulgar words) and **rumulana** (provocative), respectively, cannot be regarded as indicating reciprocal actions or processes. Thus, the meaning of the suffix **-an** in 24(a-c) is rather one of indicating negative things or even the fact that the thing is done extensively. This meaning may to a certain extent, solve the problem raised by Nokaneng (1976:87).


However, the question can still be asked as to how does one account for the word **lekana** (being equal or fitting) because this word/verb does not express any negative thing.


The answer can be that the root of the verb **lekana** is **lekan-**, thus, the actual word, **lekana** does not have the suffix, **-an-**. That is why we have sentences such as:


25.     a.      Palamonwana e a mo lekana.

                (The ring fits him).


        b.      Diaparo di lekana ngwana.

                (The clothes fit the child).


        c.      Ntlo ye e mo lekane.

                (This house fits him).

In the three examples in 25 above, the verb **lekana/lekane** (fit), does not express a reciprocal action or process. Thus, one can safely assume that there is no reciprocal suffix, **-an** in the verb, **lekana**. However, for the mere fact that the verb **lekana** ends in **-ana**, the verb is used to express reciprocal in some instances without the addition of the reciprocal, **-an** or without uttering the reciprocal **-an** in what should have been **lekanana**:

26.  a.  Nna le Matome re a lekana.
          (Matome and I are equal).

Should have been

     b.  Nna le Matome re a lekanana.
          (Matome and I are equal).

Apparently, the second **-an** (reciprocal suffix) is avoided or elided or even another possibility could be that the two **-an** have coalesced into one **-an** in instances where the verb **lekana** is used with a reciprocal meaning.

One can also argue that the word **lekana** comes from **leka** (try) which will then mean that in

27.  a.  Nna le Matome re a lekana.
          (Matome and I are equal).

the original meaning could have been.

     b.  Nna ke leka Matome, Matome le yena o leka nna.
          (I try Matome while Matome also tries me).

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It is difficult to accept this interpretation of **-an** because in instances wherein the verb involves things which are not animate this meaning will pose a problem. One cannot say:

28.    a.      Ngwana o leka diaparo, mme le diaparo di a mo leka.

               (The child tries the clothes while the clothes are also trying the child).

in order to arrive at

    b.      Diaparo di lekana ngwana.

             (The clothes fit the child).

This makes one to conclude that the argument immediately before and after the examples in 25 is the most acceptable solution to the problem about the verb **lekana** (fit or being equal).

## 4.3.4   The passive, -iw-/-w-

The use of the word **sediri** (doer) to indicate subject, makes Nokaneng's (1976:86) definition of the passive a bit complicated. He says:

> Tirwa e laetša gore sediri se dirwa se sengwe ke selo se sengwe
> goba motho yo mongwe.

> (The passive indicates that something is done on the subject by
> something or someone).

Lombard et al., (1988:116) put it clearly that the passive indicates that the grammatical subject is the logical object of the action. This means that the action falls on the grammatical subject:

### 4.3.5 The prefect, -ile

Two different meanings of the perfect suffix are distinguished. Lombard et al., (1988:122) distinguish between (i) aspect of completion and (ii) aspect of state.

### (i) Aspect of completion

This indicates action/process that has been completed:

31.    a.     Banna ba ag**ile** ntlo.

            (The men have built a house).

     b.      Noga e lom**ile** kgogo.

            (A snake has bitten a fowl).

     c.      Morutwana o palet**šwe** ke tlhahlobo.

            (A learner has failed an examination).

The actions/processes, **agile** (built), **lomile** (bitten) and **paletšwe** (failed) in the examples in 31 above, have already taken place and are no longer going on, i.e., they have been completed.

### (ii) The aspect of state

In trying to explain this meaning. Lombard et al.. (1988:122) indicate that with some actions/processes there is a state which continues after the action/process has been completed or conducted.

32. a. Tate o robet**še**.

(Father is asleep).

b. Mošomi o khudit**še**.

(A worker has rested).

c. Mosadi o nyam**ile**.

(A woman is disappointed).

The processes **robetše** (asleep), **khuditše** (rested) and **nyamile** (disappointed), indicate a state in which **tate** (father) in (a), **mošomi** (worker) in (b), and **mosadi** (woman) in (c), find themselves - the processes are still going on although the perfect suffix, **-ile** is used.

Context plays an important role in determining whether **-ile** indicates a completed process or a state as in:

33. Ke rw**ele** boima.

(I am carrying a heavy load/I carried a heavy load (in the past)).

As it can be observed, the two English translations of the sentence in 33 above mean two different things. The first one is that the speaker is experiencing the heavy load at the moment (he is in that state) whereas in the second meaning the process happened in the past and is no longer going on.

### 4.3.6 The neutral extensions -al, -eg, -apal

Lombard et al., (1988:123) say that **-al** indicates a state which is such that it presents itself to the observer. Nokaneng and Lauwrens (1996:213) seem to say the same thing when they say that the extensions denote a state which is clear and well exposed to be seen/observed:

34.    a.     Nonyana e a bonala.

            (A bird is visible/A bird can be seen).


       b.     Lešata la bona le a kwala.

            (Their noise can be heard).


       c.     Bohloko bo kwala ka mpeng.

            (The pain in felt in the stomach).


This extension **-al** seems to always go with the verbs that express the senses of seeing, hearing, feeling, etc.


About **-eg.** Lombard et al. (1988:123) say that it expresses a state which is such that the observation or experience thereof is optional or voluntary.


35.    a.     Morwalo wo monnyane o a rwalega.

            (A small luggage is easy to carry).


       b.     Sefatanaga se se a lokišega.

            (This car is fixable/repairable).


       c.     Dijo tše bose di a jega.

            (Tasty food is edible).


The taste expressed by **-agal** is such that the observer cannot help but observe it as it presents itself clearly and unavoidably.


36.    a.     Go kwagala gore ba sepetše mmogo.

            (It is clearly heard that they left together).

b.    Go bon**agal**a banna ba babedi.

     (Two men can be clearly seen).


c.    Sello sa ngwana se a kw**agal**a.

     (The cry of a chid is clearly audible).


In all the examples in 36. the observer does not need to take any pains to make the observation as the situation is such that the state presents itself to the observer.


## 4.3.7  The reversive extensions, -olol, -olog

In as far as these extensions are concerned the process or action may be transitive or intransitive. In transitive action/process. the action or process is transferred on to the object whereas in intransitive process or action. the process/action is not transferred onto the object. This is according to Lombard et al.. (1988:125).


**Transitive process/action**

37.    a.    Monna o bof**olla** pudi.

     (A man unties a goat).


b.    Mosadi o tšh**olla** meetse.

     (A woman spills water).


c.    Lesiba o tlem**olla** lehuto.

     (Lesiba unties the knot).


In all the three sentences in 37. the reversive process/action is being  transferred onto the objects. **pudi** (goat) in (a). **meetse** (water) in (b) and **lehuto** (knot) in (c) by the subjects **monna** (man), **mosadi** (woman) and **Lesiba,** respectively.

In the sentences in 39(a-c), the processes/actions **bofologa** (becomes untied), **tšhologa** (spilling), and **tlemologa** (become loose), are not transferred onto the nouns, **pudi** (goat), **meetse** (water) and lehuto (knot), by anyone/anything. The reversive actions/processes just take place on their own.

### 4.3.8   The iterative, -aka-

Lombard et al., (1988:126) say that this extension indicates that an action/process takes place repeatedly. Nokaneng (1976:92) adds that the extension indicates that the action/process is vigorous, destructive and harmful.

40    a.    Ga se a mo itia o dio mo gat**ak**a.
            (He did not beat him but he treaded on him).


      b.    Mokgekolo o dula a rog**ak**a ngwana yo.
            (The old woman always insults this child severely).


      c.    Mošemane o bof**ak**a borokgo bja gagwe.
            (The boy fastens his pair of trousers repeatedly).

Example 40(c) proves beyond any doubt that although Nokaneng's definition is correct, the iterative extension, **-ak** does not always imply destructiveness and/or harmfulness.

### 4.3.9   The contactive -ar

This extension, as Lombard et al., (1988:126) say, indicates that contact takes place between objects during a process/action. However, this explanation seems to be insufficient because there are many instances wherein the extension is used with reference to only one object, which means there cannot be contact between objects since there is only one object.

41.    a.    Motsomi o šik**er**e phala.

              (The hunter is carrying a buck).


        b.    O tlo šik**ar**a letlapa leo go fihla neng?

              (How long are you going to carry that rock?)


        c.    O ka šik**ar**a morwalo o sa tsebe mong wa wona?

              (Can you carry a luggage whose owner you do not know?)


The examples in 41(a-c) illustrate that the extension -**ar** can be used with reference to only one object wherein there is no contact between objects.

The meaning of this extension seems to be that of carrying with difficulty, either because the thing being carried is too big to carry or too heavy. Hence the following figurative use of the extension:

42.    a.    Matome o tlo šik**ar**a molato ka ge a thomile.

              (Matome will be found guilty because he started it).


        b.    O šik**ar**a maikarabelo a diphošo tša gago.

              (You carry the responsibility of your mistakes.)


        c.    O ka šik**ar**a lapa la monna yo mongwe?

              (Can you shoulder the responsibility of another man's family?)


In the three sentences in 42 above, the word **šikara** (carry) is used figuratively to show the carrying of responsibilities that one may not wish to carry.

The extension also seems to suggest "to cover", "to embrace" or " to wrap", as can be observed in the following sentences:

43.   a.   ap**ara** (wear/dress/put on clothes).

Ngwana o ap**ara** dikobo.

(A child wears/puts on clothes).

b.   hup**ara** (hold in fist).

Hup**ara** tšhelete yeo.

(Hold that money in closed hand/fist).

c.   gok**ara** (embrace/carrying a thing by wraping hands around it).

Matome o ile a mo gok**ara**.

(Matome embraced him).

The word **apara** (wear), in 43(a) above has the connotation of covering  **Hupara** (hold in fist) in (b) means that the money should be held in such a way that it cannot be seen or easily lost.  The word **gokara** (embrace), in 43(c), means to put hands around someone.

## 4.4   VERBAL ENDING

A verbal ending is the sound that occurs at the end of a verb. Unfortunately, most books only discuss verbal endings without making any attempt to define a verbal ending.

Three verbal endings are distinguished by Lombard et al., (1988:131) namely, **-a**, **-ê** and **-e**. Lombard et al., go further to point out that the endings help to indicate the mood in which the verb is as well as to show whether the verb is in the positive (affirmative) or in the negative form. Nokaneng (1976:98) agrees with Lombard et al., on this.

### 4.4.1  The ending -a

Nokaneng and Louwrens (1996:191) say that this ending  appears in verbs which are in the present, positive form of:

44.  a.  *Indicative mood*

      (i)    Re bona bana.

            (We see children).

      (ii)   O ja bogobe.

            (He eats porridge).

      (iii)  Bana ba a bapala.

            (Children are playing).

   b.  *The situative mood*

      (i)    Le ge re ekwa mabarebare.

            (Even though we hear the rumours).

      (ii)   Le ge ba ka mmolaya.

            (Even though they can kill him).

      (iii)  Le ge a ka ntlhoya.

            (Even though he can hate me).

   c.  *The relative mood*

      (i)    Monna yo a lemago tšhemo.

            (The man who ploughs the field).

      (ii)   Mosadi yo a lwalago.

            (The woman who is ill).

(iii)    Mohlašana wo o gola**go**.

       (The little tree which is growing).


d.    *The imperative (without object concord or reflexive morpheme)*


    (i)    E**ja** dijo.

         (Eat the food).


    (ii)    Kiti**ma**.

         (Run).


    (iii)    Roba**la**.

         (Sleep).


e.    *The infinitive*


    (i)    Go ba**la** dipuku.

         (To read books).


    (ii)    Go rape**la.**

         (To pray).


    (iii)    Go itha**ta** kudu.

         (To love oneself too much).


f.    *The consecutive mood*


    (i)    ... ka hla**pa** diatla.

         (... and then I wash my hands).

(ii)     ... ba ya kerekeng.

(... and then they go to Church).

(iii)     ... ra ope**la**.

(... and then we sing).

g.     *The participial mood*

(i)     O sepela a lla.

(He walks while crying).

(ii)     E robala e sepela.

(It sleeps while walking).

(iii)     Ba šoma ba ope**la**.

(They work while singing).

h.     *The habitual mood*

(i)     O fela a re thuša.

(He usually helps us).

(ii)     Ba dula ba elwa.

(They always fight).

(iii)     Re fela re ba etela.

(We usually pay them a visit).

All the verbs in the moods specified above end in -a. The examples in 44(c) should not pose a problem. Although there is -go after the ending -a in those verbs in 44(c), the -a is still the verbal ending. The -go is the verbal relative suffix.

Nokaneng and Louwrens (1996:192) indicate that the ending -a also occurs in the negative forms of verbs. Lombard et al., specify various moods in the negative forms of which it occurs.

    i.       *The indicative, perfect tense*

        (i)       Ga se ra bona bana.

                    (We did not see the children)

        (ii)      Ga se ba mpotša.

                    (They did not tell me).

        (iii)     Ga se ya robala.

                    (It did not sleep).

    j.       *The situative, perfect tense*

        (i)       Le ge re sa kwa mabarebare.

                    (Although we did not hear rumours).

        (ii)      Le ge ba sa sepela mmogo.

                    (Although they did not go together).

        (iii)     Le ge ba sa mo hwetša.

                    (Although they did not find him).

k.     *The relative, perfect tense*

(i)     Monna yo a sa lemago tšhemo.

        (The man who did not plough the field).

(ii)    Kgomo ye e sa fulago.

        (The cow which did not graze).

(iii)   Baeng bao ba sa fihlago.

        (The visitors who did not arrive).

The verbs in the specified moods in (i-j) all end in **-a**.

## 4.4.2 **The ending -ê**

This ending occurs in the positive form of:

45.   a.     *The subjunctive mood*

(i)     ... gore a lemê tšhemo.

        (... so that he should plough the field).

(ii)    ... gore ba rekê dijo.

        (... so that they could buy food).

(iii)   ... gore re sepelê.

        (... so that we could leave).

b.    *The imperative with an object concord or the reflexive morpheme*

(i)    e busê *ka* pela.

    (Bring it back quickly).


(ii)    ba botšê.

    (tell them).


(iii)    inaganê gabotse monna.

    (reconsider your thinking).


(iv)    ikarabê.

    (answer yourself).


The verbs in 45(a & b) end in -ê. The examples in (a) are in the subjunctive mood whereas those in (b) are in the imperative mood. Examples (b)(i & ii) illustrate where an object concord is involved whereas in (iii) and (iv) is the reflexive morpheme.


The ending ê, also occurs in the negative form of


c.    *The subjunctive mood*

(i)    ... gore a se lemê tšhemo.

    (... so that he should not plough the field).


(ii)    ... gore re se e gobatšê.

    (... so that we should not hurt it).


(iii)    ... gore dikgomo di se hwê.

    (... so that the cattle should not die).

d. *The imperative mood*

    (i)    Se bolelê.

            (Don't talk).

    (ii)    Se kitimê.

            (Don't run).

    (iii)    Se mmolayê.

            (Don't kill him).

e. *The consecutive mood*

    (i)    ... ka se bolelê.

            (... and then I did not talk).

    (ii)    ... ba se rapelê.

            (... and then they did not pray).

    (iii)    ... tša se fulê.

            (... and then they did not graze).

f. *The infinitive*

    (i)    go se rapelê.

            (not to pray).

    (ii)    go se tshabê.

            (not to run away).

(ii)     Ga re je.

         (We do not eat).

(iii)    Ga a lwale.

         (She is not ill).

c.     *The indicative perfect tense*

(i)      Ga se a bone papadi.

         (He did not see the game).

(ii)     Ga se re mmotše.

         (We did not tell him).

(iii)    Ga se ba fihle ka pela.

         (They did not arrive early).

d.     *The relative, imperfect tense*

(i)      Kgarebe ye e sa opelego.

         (The lady who does not sing).

(ii)     Nonyana ye e sa fofego.

         (A bird which does not fly).

(iii)    Kgomo ye e sa fulego.

         (A cow which does not graze).

e. *The infinitive*

  (i)    Go se leme tšhemo.

         (Not to plough the field).

  (ii)   Go se bolele kudu.

         (Not to talk too much).

  (iii)  Go se hlalefe.

         (Not to be wise).

f. *The situative, imperfect tense*

  (i)    Le ge ke sa bale puku.

         (Although I do not read a book).

  (ii)   Le ge ba sa tle.

         (Although they do not cry).

  (iii)  Le ge dipudi di sa fule.

         (Although the goats do not graze).

The examples in 46(b-f) illustrate verbs in the negative form of various moods which end in -**e.**

Although the relative suffix **-go** and the morpheme **-ng** do come at the end of verbs, they are not regarded as verbal endings. That is why Nokaneng (1976:98) says that the verb **sepelang** ends in -**a** but still takes **-ng**. This supports that **-ng** is not regarded as the ending. It should be noted that this **-ng** occurs in the imperative wherein the command is given to

second person, plural. Grobler et al., (2003:40) say that **-ng** is the suffix of the imperative mood. Nokaneng and Louwrens (1996:194) indicate that the suffix **-go** does not take the place of the verbal ending, it comes after the verbal ending in verbs used in verbal relative clauses.

## 4.5  HOW SUFFIXES BRING ABOUT TRANSPOSITION

By transposition it is meant the process wherein words change from one category to another for example (verb to noun, etc.), as a result of affixation and/or any other phenomenon.

Kurylowiez (1936), as cited by Du Plessis (1997:133) indicates that there are different word formation rules, amongst which affixation is one. He further indicates that words can change class like V → N (which means that a verb may change to a noun: **šoma** (to work) → **mošomi** (worker).

Du Plessis (1997:135) lists the following possibilities of transposition:

| a. | N | → | V | c. N | → | A | e. | V | → | N |
|----|---|---|---|------|---|---|----|---|---|---|
| b. | A | → | V | d. V | → | A | f. | A | → | N |

For the purpose of this work, an attempt will be made to see how suffixes may bring about transposition starting with the suffix **-fal-** which is given by Du Plessis (1997:135) under 'derivational data of the African languages'.

### 4.5.1  -f- and -fal-

Lombard et al. (1988:129) call these denominative extensions. The denominative extensions can be added to nominal roots to form verbs:

47.  a.   -gale   >   galefa   (be sharp)

Thipa e a galefa.
(The knife is sharp).

b.   -hlale   >   hlalefa   (become wise).

Ngwana ge a tsena sekolo o a hlalefa.
(When a child attends school he becomes wise).

c.   -nate   >   natefa   (be tasty).

Dijo ge di apeegile di a natefa.
(If food is well cooked it is nice).

d.   -boi   >   boifa (be afraid).

(Ge e le bošego re a boifa).
(If it is in the night we become afraid).

e.   -tšwa   >   tšwafa   (be lazy)

Ngwana yo o a tšwafa.
(This child is lazy).

f.   -natla   >   natlafala   (be heroic)

Ge o itšhidulla kudu o tlo natlafala.
(If you train a lot, you will be heroic).

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g.     -ntšhi   >    ntšhi**fal**a   (increase in number/quantity)

Bagolegwa ba nama ba ntšhi**fal**a.

(The prisoners are busy increasing in number).

h.     -maatla >    maatla**fal**a   (become strong)

Molwetši ge a fola o a matla**fal**a.

(When a sick person recovers he becomes strong).

i.     -gole    >    golo**fal**a   (become cripple)

Mašilo o ile a golo**fal**a kotsing ya sefatanaga.

(Mašilo became crippled in a car accident).

j.     -tau     >    tau**fal**a    (become a lion/lionlike)

Monna o rile go kwa tšeo a nama a tau**fal**a.

(Upon hearing that, the man became a lion/lionlike).

All the above examples (a-j) illustrate how nouns/nominal roots can be changed to verbs by affixation of either **-f-** or **-fal-**. **Taufala** (become a lion) in (j) is a figurative way of speaking, meaning 'to become too angry or dangerous'.

Verbs can also be derived from adjectives by affixing **-fal-**.

48.    a.     -telele   >    tele**fal**a   (become long/tall).

Mošemane yo o a tele**fal**a.

(This boy is becoming tall).

b.    -koto   >   koto**fal**a   (become thick)

Ge kota e koto**fal**a e ba bothata.

(When wood becomes thick it becomes hard too).

c.    -thata   >   thata**fal**a   (become hard)

Ge meetse a kgahla a a thata**fal**a.

(When water freezes it becomes hard).

d.    -šweu   >   šweu**fal**a   (become white)

Kapoko e ríie go wa, naga ka moka ya šweu**fal**a.

(After the snow has fallen, the whole land became white).

e.    -sehla   >   sehle**fal**a   (become grey).

Marega ge a tsene, naga e a sehle**fal**a.

(When it is winter, the land becomes grey).

The examples in 47(a-j) and 48(a-e) illustrate how **-f-** and **-fal-** can be affixed to nominal roots and adjectives in order to derive verbs from them.

## 4.5.2  **-ng**

Adverbs can be derived from nouns by affixing **-ng** at the end of the noun as Nokaneng (1976:124) and Grobler et al.. (2003:64) indicate. This process results in the formation of adverbs of place:

49.　a.　　thaba　>　thabe**ng**　(on/at the mountain)

　　　　Dikgomo di fula thabe**ng**.
　　　　(The cattle graze on the mountain).

　　b.　　noka　>　noke**ng**　(at the river)

　　　　Re tlo kopana noke**ng**.
　　　　(We will meet at the river).

　　c.　　ntlo　>　ntlo**ng**/on the house)

　　　　Tšhwene e dutše ntlong.
　　　　(A baboon sits on the house).

　　d.　　leswika >　leswike**ng** (on the rock)

　　　　Mosadi o anegile lepai leswike**ng**.
　　　　(A woman dried the blanket on the rock).

　　e.　　pula　>　pule**ng**　(in the rain)

　　　　Bana ba bapalela pule**ng**.
　　　　(The children are playing in the rain).

The examples in 49(a-e) illustrate the derivation of adverbs from nouns by the suffixation of **-ng**. As already mentioned, all the adverbs formed are adverbs of place.

There are a number of suffixes which may be added to ideophones in order to change them to verbs. It is, however, not easy to give the rule(s) governing the formation of such verbs from the ideophones. Grobler et al.. (2003:40) mention the following suffixes:

### 4.5.3 **-la**, **-ga**, **-ma**, **-mela** and **-metša**

50.    a.      -nyare!   >   nyare**la**     (appear)

              Re e bone e sa nyare**la** kua dithabeng.
              (We saw it when it appeared from the mountains).

      b.    (i)     bilo!      >   bilo**ga**    (become muddy)

              Meetse a ile a bilo**ga** ka pela.
              (The water quickly became muddy).

           (ii)    ruthu!    >   ruthu**ga**    (break)

              Thapo ye e tlo ruthu**ga**.
              (This rope will break).

      c.    (i)     gadi!      >   gadi**ma**    (flash)

              Go na le se se ilego sa gadi**ma** go tšwa kgojana.
              (Something flashed from a distance)

           (ii)    bura!     >   bura**ma**    (collapse)

              Kgomo e ile ya bura**ma** ka baka la tlala.
              (The cow collapsed because of hunger).

d.   khuru!  >  khuru**mela**  (cover)

**Khurumela** pitša yeo ka sekhurumelo.
(Cover that pot with a lid).

e.   kidi!  >  kidi**metša**  (make heavy sound)

Go re pula e tlo na re kwele ka go kidi**metša** legodimong.
(That it would rain, we heard heavy sounds in the sky).

All the verbs in 50(a-c) were derived from ideophones by affixing the suffixes, **-la, -ga, -ma,**
**-mela** and **-metša**. There are other suffixes which Grobler et al., did not mention such as,
**-nya** and **-lala**:

51.   a.   beke!  >  beke**nya**  (shine)

Dinaledi di beke**nya** legodimong.
(The stars shine in the sky).

b.   tšapaa!  >  tšapa**lala**  (lie flat)

Ba mo iteile go fihla a tšapa**lala**.
(They beat him until he lied flat).

An interesting thing about verbs and ideophones is that there are verbs which are formed
from ideophones as illustrated by examples in (50) and (51), as well as ideophones which
are formed from verbs. Below follows examples of ideophones formed from verbs:

52.    a.    inama (bend down)        >    inami!

O rile inami, mme leswika la mo foša.
(He bent down and then the stone missed him).

b.    emelela (stand up)        >    emeledi!

O rile ka pejana emeledi!
(He stood up quickly).

c.    phamola (take forcefully)    >    phamo!

Ngwana o rile puku phamo, diatleng tša mmagwe.
(The child took the book forcefully from his mother's hands).

d.    tomola (open eyes wide)    >    tomo!

O maketše a ba a re mahlo tomo!
(He was surprised to the extend o ' opening his eyes wide).

e.    felela (go in completely)    >    felele!

Barutwana ba rile ka diphaphušing felele!
(The learners got completely into the classrooms)

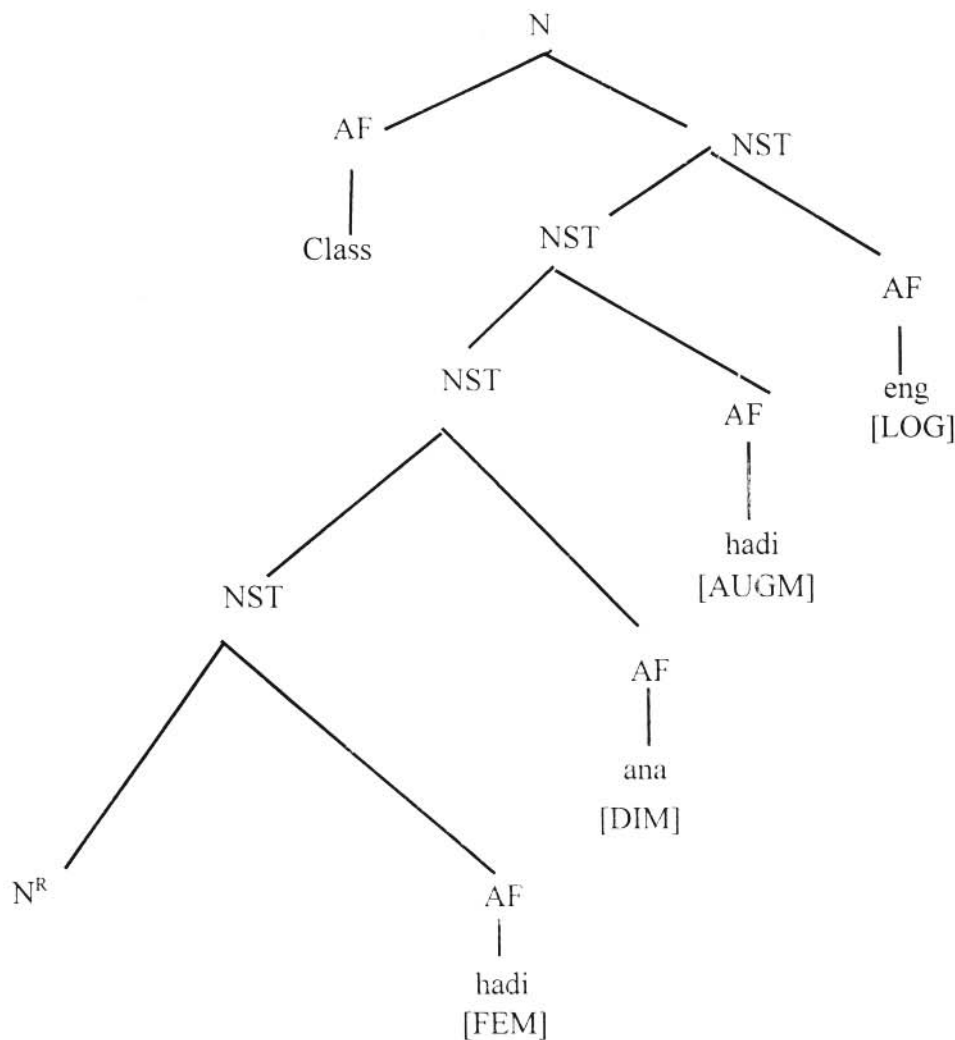f.    sobela (disappear)        >    sobe!

Noga e rile ka moleteng sobe!
(The snake disappeared into a hole).

In the examples above, 52(a-f), ideophones were formed from verbs. The verbal ending, **-a** is replaced by another vowel when ideophones are formed from verbs. In certain instances it is not only the ending **-a** which is replaced, but a number of speech sounds as is the case in c, d and f, whereby **-ola**, **-ola** and **-ela** are replaced by **-o**, **-o** and **-e**, respectively. Although a rule cannot be formulated, it appears as if in verbs which have **-i-** in their final syllable, the whole syllable containing **-i-** is replaced if the ideophone does not end in **-i-**.

## 4.6   SUMMARY

A lot of things have been examined in this chpater in as far as suffixes are concerned. The first group of suffixes to be scrutinised were the nominal suffixes which can be summed up by the following structure taken from Du Plessis and Madadzhe (1999:119):

```
                                  N
                         AF              NST
                          |        NST          AF
                        Class   NST        AF    |
                             NST      AF   |    eng
                        N^R    AF    ana  hadi  [LOG]
                              |     [DIM] [AUGM]
                            hadi
                            [FEM]
```

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The four suffixes in the structure above are -**eng/-ng**, which is a locative suffix, -**hadi/-gadi**, which is the suffix for augmentative nouns, the suffix -**ana**, which is generally referred to as the diminutive suffix, and lastly, the suffix -**hadi/-gadi** which indicates feminine gender.

The second thing to be examined was verbal suffixes/extensions, wherein the suffixes -**el**- (applicative), -**iš**- (causative), -**an**- (reciprocal), -**iw**- (passive), -**ile** (perfect), -**al**, -**eg**, -**agal** (neutral), -**olol**, -**olog** (reversive), -**ak** (iterative) and -**ar** (contactive) were studied. From the study, it was discovered that some meanings of the suffixes are still unknown or have not as yet been recorded. For instance, the suffix -**an** is sometimes used without any reference to a reciprocal process, for example:

53.     Mokgekolo o a rog**ana**.

        (An old woman is uttering vulgar words).

The third thing to be tackled was the verbal endings whereby the endings -**a** -**ê**, and -**e** were discussed. The various moods in which these endings occur were also given.

Lastly, transposition was studied. The study was based on the transposition which is mainly caused by suffixes. Various ways of transposition were studied, such as nouns changing to verbs, adjectives changing to verbs, ideophones changing to verbs and visa versa, etc.

# CHAPTER 5

## 5.1 CONCLUSION

**Chapter 1** of this work is mainly concerned with the statement of the problem. The problem was to find out how suffixes are applied in Northern Sotho. Attempts were made to find out what has already been covered by the existing literature in as far as suffixes are concerned. It was discovered that a lot had already been done but there is a lot still to be done in as far as suffixes are concerned. There are a number of cases wherein a suffix is observed in a word, without any clear explanation of how it happened to be there and what it actually means in the context in which it is used. A good example of this is the applicative suffix, **-el-** in **rapela** (pray).

Part two of Chapter 1 is concerned with definition of terms. The following terms were defined, namely: affix, prefix, suffix, verbal ending, agglutinate, agreement, argument structure, derivation, inflection, noun, object, subject and predicate.

**Chapter 2** deals with the application of theta theory to Northern Sotho.

First it was indicated that theta theory is about the assignment of theta roles ($\theta$-roles) to arguments. An argument (argument structure) was defined as an expression which bears reference. As this study focuses more on suffixes, the main focus was placed on how suffixes play a role in theta theory.

To answer the statement above, the suffixes, **-iš-**, **-el-**, etc., were studied to see how they contribute to theta theory in Northern Sotho. It was established that **-iš-** has the ability to generate an argument structure which plays the role of agent:

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Batho (people) in the above example stands for both the agent and the theme.

It was also mentioned that the combination of suffixes (extensions) results in the reduction of the number of arguments.

**Chapter 4** concentrated on the semantic significance of suffixes. The suffixes were divided into: nominal suffixes, verbal suffixes and verbal extensions. As far as nominal suffixes were concerned, the following suffixes were discussed, **-ana/-nyana**, **-gadi** and **-ng**.

**-ana/-nyana** has a number of meanings such as diminutive, expression of appreciation/love as well as derogation. It also denotes gender.

**-gadi** expresses largeness as well as feminine gender.

**-ng** mainly denotes place or locality, as in toropo (town) = toropong (in the town).

In as far as verbal suffixes were concerned, the following were given attention: **-el-**, **-iš-**, **-an-**, **-w-**, **-ile-**, **-al-**, **-olol-**, **-ak-** and **-ar-**.

It has been pointed out that most of these suffixes have meanings that are not as yet known or recorded in the grammar books. To give but a few examples:

The suffix, **-el-** also expresses purpose, but this does not come out clear in the grammar books:

Ba šomela tšhelete.
(They work for money).

The suffix, **-an-** does not always express a reciprocal process:

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Mosadi o a rogana.

(A woman utters vulgar words).

**Mosadi** (woman) is not a compound subject, thus the action /process expressed by the verb **rogana** cannot be regarded as reciprocal although the suffix, **-an-** is used.

In as far as the verbal endings are concerned, the three endings, **-a, -ê,** and **-e** were discussed and the moods in which they occur were also given.

Lastly, transposition was discussed. Different ways in which transposition could take place were discussed and illustrated with suitable examples.

**Chapter 5** is the summary of the whole work.

## 5.2    RECOMMENDATIONS

5.2.1   Words should as much as possible be studied in context, because meanings of words are more precise in context than in isolation.

5.2.2   Avoid a word if you doubt its meaning for you might hurt someone  when you actually intended to amuse.

5.2.3   Like an organism or a nation which always undergo changes and development, a language also develops and undergoes changes. Thus, the study of language should never stop.

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