

**COPULATIVE VERBS IN NORTHERN SOTHO: A  
MORPHOSEMANTIC STUDY**

By

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**APRIL 2005**

(i)

**DECLARATION**

I, **JULIA REFILWE MASEKO**, declare that **COPULATIVE VERBS IN NORTHERN SOTHO: A MORPHOSEMANTIC STUDY** submitted to the University of Limpopo, has not been previously submitted for a degree purpose at any other university by me, that it is my own work in design and execution, and that all material contained therein has been duly acknowledged.



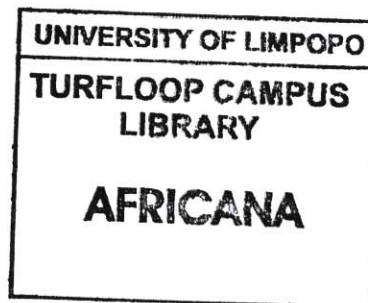
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**J.R. MASEKO**

28-04-2005

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**DATE**



## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents, Julias Aroganang Selala, Lindiwe Gladys Maseko, and their children:

- My daughters: Excellent Ditapiso and Temoso Brilliant; and
- My son : Bonginkosi Bright;
- My brothers : Victor and Kenneth; and
- My sisters : Kgomotso and Meisie

(iii)

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study aims at finding out the categorical status of copulatives in Northern Sotho. This will be achieved by examining the morphosemantic features of various copulatives. From a morphological perspective, the study focuses on the following types of copulative verbs: **ke, se, ba, le, na, and COP**. The study argues that the foresaid copulatives are not particles but are fully-fledged verbs. As far as the semantic nature of the copulatives is concerned, the study discovered a variety of meanings associated with copulatives, such as the following: the identifying, descriptive, locational and associative.

Lastly, the study contends that any research on the copulative in Northern Sotho should be a morphosemantic one, as previous studies focused on one and neglected the other.

**ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT**

A	=	Adjective
AgrSP	=	Subjectival Agreement Phrase
AP	=	Adjectival Phrase
Asp	=	Aspect
AspP	=	Aspect Phrase
CMP	=	Concordial Morpheme Prefix
CP	=	Complementizer Phrase
CV	=	Copulative Verb
1ps	=	First person singular
1pp	=	First person plural
IND	=	Indicative
INFL	=	Inflection
i	=	coindexing
M	=	Mood
MP	=	Mood Phrase
N	=	Noun
NP	=	Noun Phrase
NPloc	=	Noun Phrase Locative
O	=	Object
P	=	Preposition
PP	=	Prepositional Phrase
PRES	=	Present Tense
2ps	=	Second person singular
2pp	=	Second person plural
SIT	=	Situative
S	=	Subject

SC	=	Subject Concord
T	=	Tense
TP	=	Tense Phrase
3ps	=	Third person singular
3pp	=	Third person plural
V	=	Verb
VP	=	Verb Phrase



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# CHAPTER 1

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Morphosemantics, as a study field, refers to the impact that morphology and semantics have on each other when words are analysed. In other words, the morphology of a word has a bearing on its meaning and, in turn, the meaning of a word influences how the word is structured. In a nutshell, morphology and semantics are interwoven, and a study of one without the other may lead to unsatisfactory results. It is for this reason that one feels that the study of the copulative in Northern Sotho should be a morphosemantic one, as previously studies focused on one and neglected the other (Lidz, 2003; and Benavides, 2003).

## 1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

There is no universal consensus with regard to the categorical status of the copulative in Northern Sotho. Some scholars, like Lombard (1985) and Poulos (1990) say a copulative is not a fully-fledged verb. Others, like Madadzhe (2000) and Louwrens (1991), say it is a fully-fledged verb.

Lombard (1983:192) says:

... the copula, is a predicative, it doesn't mean that it must necessarily be a verb. Because all copulas are not verbs, an exposition of copulatives does not fit in the chapter on the verb.

Louwrens (1991:17) says that:

Main verbs are verbs which function independently, i.e., they need not be complemented by another verb in the sentence. Two types of main verbs can be distinguished in Northern Sotho, proper main verbs and copulative verbs.

The above-mentioned description belongs to the traditional view of the copulative verbs. The view emphasizes the fact that there is a relationship between a subject and its predicate.

According to this view, there are three different types of relations in African languages, of which the Northern Sotho language is one of them. This relation is between the subject and its complement, namely, identification, description and association. In an identifying relation, the subject and the predicate are regarded as equal. 'This means that they can exchange position without altering the meaning of the original sentence' (Madadzhe, 2000:116).

- (1) Mpša ye ke Tilo.  
(This dog is Tilo.)

In the sentence given above, **mpša** and **Tilo** are equal or identical and they can exchange positions without altering the sentence semantically. In the following sentence:

- (2) Monna ke kgoši.  
(The man is a king.)

**monna** and **kgoši** will change the meaning of the original sentence should they exchange positions. **Ke kgoši** (is a king) is, hence, called a predicative copulative not identifying copulative.

The second relation is descriptive as in the following example:

- (3) Monna o bogale.  
(The man is strong.)

The complement '**o bogale**' describes the subject '**monna**'.

The third relation is associative. In Northern Sotho, this relation may be possessive or associative in nature. For example:

- (4) Mosadi o na le monna.  
(The woman has a husband (or is with a man.))

The former means that a woman has a husband, but not necessarily that she is accompanied by him. The latter means that they are in the presence of one another. Du Plessis (1995), as quoted by Madadzhe (2000:17), maintains that a relational view will not work successfully as there are many possible relations. For instance, what earlier views regard as the associative relation, as evidenced in (4) above, denotes several relations in such a manner that one may end up being confused as to which one should the associative copulative be identified with. Sentence (4) above is ambiguous as it expresses the following meanings: **associative, possessive, descriptive, and existence.**

It behoves upon this study, therefore, to come up with a clear semantic strategy of identifying the copulative in Northern Sotho.

Based on Madadzhe's (2000:118-119) study, where he posits the view that Tshivenda has five basic copulative verbs (i.e., **li, ndi, si, COP** and **vha**), one could therefore argue that Northern Sotho as well utilizes five basic copulative verbs, namely, **le, ke, se, na** and **ba**. The Tshivenda copulative verb **COP** is replaced by **na** in Northern Sotho. This view, however, does not totally concur with Louwrens' (1991) view where he postulates that Northern Sotho has four basic copulative verbs, namely, **le, se, na** and **ba**. Louwrens does not regard **ke** as a copulative verb in Northern Sotho but he regards it as a copulative particle. This study will have to grapple with this disagreement and ultimately suggest a viable strategy of determining the correct number of copulative verbs in Northern Sotho.



From this brief exposition, it is clear that scholars do not concur on two fronts as far as the copulative is concerned. Firstly, they semantically interpret the copulative in an ambiguous manner. Secondly, they are not sure as to whether or not elements such as **le**, **ke**, **se**, **na** and **ba** are verbs, and how many should they be. A study to clarify these issues is, therefore, necessary in Northern Sotho.

### 1.3 **AIM OF THE STUDY**

The present study aims at finding out the categorical status of copulatives in Northern Sotho. It also aims at examining and giving an exposition of the copulative verbs in Northern Sotho.

### 1.4 **RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

The study will help Northern Sotho speaking people, and those who are interested in the language, to know the proper categorical usage status of the copulatives. It will also help readers to understand the structure and meaning of copulatives in Northern Sotho.

### 1.5 **METHODOLOGY**

#### 1.5.1 **Data collection**

This research utilizes primary and secondary sources to obtain the necessary information on the topic under investigation.

##### 1.5.1.1 **Primary sources**

To obtain first-hand information, interviews were conducted with those individuals with expertise in Northern Sotho, such as teachers, lecturers and linguists. Unstructured questions such as the following were utilized:

- (a) What is a copulative?
- (b) Is a copulative a verb or not? Motivate your answer.
- (c) In your opinion, what do you think could be the categorical status of a copulative?
- (d) How many subdivisions do you think copulatives in Northern Sotho have? Name them.

#### 1.5.1.2 Secondary research method

The researcher obtained relevant information from library books, articles, journals, dissertations and the Internet.

### 1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

There are several scholars who wrote on copulatives in Northern Sotho and at least one on Tshivenda. However, most of them concentrated more on morphological features rather than on semantic features. Their works are summarised as follows:

#### 1.6.1 Louwrens (1991)

Louwrens (1991) indicates that there are copulative particles and copulative verbs that may further be divided into variable and invariable. Variable particles resemble noun classes, whereas invariables are '**ke**' and '**ga se**'. Examples of variable particles are '**le**' in 'Lenaka **le** bogale' and '**ba**' in 'Banna **ba** bogale'.

Louwrens distinguishes four copulative verbs, namely, **-le**, **-se**, **-na** and **ba**, and their alternative forms which are, namely, **-be**, **bê** and **bile**, depending on the moods. The only variable copulative verb is '**-na**', whereas **-le**, **-se** and **ba**, with their variants, may either be variable or invariable, depending on the copulative relationship. He further gives three semantic relationships. He indicates the static and dynamic characteristics of copulas in different moods, namely, indicative,

situative, consecutive and subjunctive. Although his assertion is relevant, there are, however, other moods like infinitive, imperative, potential and habitual that should be added. Both tenses, and positive and negative forms should also be clearly indicated.

### 1.6.2 Poulos and Louwrens (1994)

Poulos and Louwrens (1994) distinguish four copulatives according to the information that copulative gives, namely, identifying, descriptive, associative and locational copulatives. Under both the identifying and associative copulatives, indicative, potential, subjunctive, consecutive, habitual, infinitive, imperative moods, and compound tenses, are discussed. Present, past, and future tenses are discussed under indicative and potential moods, thus indicating the principal and participial clauses.

For descriptive and locational copulatives, present, future and past tenses are discussed under the indicative mood, followed by potential, subjunctive, consecutive, habitual, infinitive, imperical and compound tenses. Although these ones tried their best, however, they did not show that auxillary and conjunctions can bring about copulatives in different moods.

### 1.6.3 Lombard, *et. al.*, (1985)

According to Lombard *et. al.*, (1985), copulative word groups are named on semantic grounds and form. They subdivide them into identifying, descriptive, and associative copulatives.

These scholars say the positive copula for both identifying and descriptive copulatives are particles **ke**, **o**, **re**, and **le**, for first and second persons, the indicative mood, imperfect tense. The negative copula of the indicative mood is formed by a negative morpheme **ga-** and the subject concord. Examples are,

namely, **ga ke**, **ga o**, **ga re**, and **ga le**. For all the classes, the positive copula in the indicative mood for both identifying and descriptive copulatives is a particle **ke**, and the negative copula is the particle **ga se**. The complement for both may either be a non-verbal word or non-predicative word group.

The positive copula in the indicative mood, imperfect tense in the associative copulative, is a subject concord followed by a defective verb stem **-na**. The negative takes the negative morpheme **ga-** followed by a subject concord. The complement in the positive is always an associative particle followed by a non-verbal complement. Lombard *et. al.*, ignores the other moods and tenses that the present research will include.

#### 1.6.4 **Makena et. al., (1994)**

Scholars such as Makena et.al., (1994) identified three copulatives. The positive copulas in the indicative mood are, namely, **ke**, **o**, **re**, and **le** for first and second persons, for identifying, and descriptive copulatives. The negative copula is formed by the negative morpheme **ga-** and the subject concords. For all the classes, the positive copula is **ke** and the negative copula is **ga se**. The identifying copulative is shown in positive and negative forms in both the situative and subjunctive moods. Imperative mood is shown in positive form only. For descriptive, the positive and negative forms are shown only in indicative mood. Situative imperical moods appear in the positive form.

The associative copulative '**na le**' can be in both positive and negative forms for the indicative mood. The imperative, situative moods are given in the positive form. These authors did not do justice to moods and tenses, and discussed less on associative copulative.

### 1.6.5 Nokaneng and Louwrens (1999)

Nokaneng and Louwrens (1999) distinguish three copulatives. They discuss the positive and associative identifying, descriptive, and associative copulatives in the indicative mood in the present, past and future tenses. The imperative mood is discussed in both the positive and negative forms of the identifying descriptive and associative copulatives. The situative mood is discussed in the positive and negative forms of the three tenses. The subjunctive, consecutive, and infinitive moods are given in the positive and negative forms. They also do not do justice to tenses and moods.

### 1.6.6 Madadzhe (2000)

Madadzhe (2000) identified six copulative verbs in Tshivenda, namely, **li**, **COP**, **ndi**, **re**, **si** and **vha**. He concentrated much on the syntactic point of view with regard to copulative verbs. However, he does not say anything about moods or tenses.

## 1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study will help primary and secondary Northern Sotho language speakers to understand the morphological and semantical structure of copulatives. This research will make a contribution in the body of knowledge in the field of linguistics.

## 1.8 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

It is important for the researcher to define some terms since they will be used throughout the text. This will help the reader to have a meaningful understanding of what is being discussed.

## 1. A copulative

According to Louwrens (1991:63), a copulative is an umbrella term or a word-group consisting of three structures that are, namely, the subject, copula and complement. The subject may be deleted at times.

### 1.8.1 The subject

Louwrens (1991:63) says the subject is always a non-predicative word or a non-predicative word-group. In other words, a subject is a word or a group of words of which information is given about in a sentence. The word may be a noun, pronoun or deverbative, as shown below:

- (5) a. **Basadi** (noun) ke baloi.  
(Women are witches.)
- b. **Bona** (pronoun) ba na le bana.  
(They have children.)
- c. **Merwalo** (deverbative) e boima.  
(The luggage is heavy.)

The word-group may be a relative group, adjectival group or possessive group, according to Louwrens (1991:63).

Examples are:

- (6) a. **Yo a llago** (relative group) ke ngwana.  
(The one who cries, is a child.)

- b. **Ba bangwe** (adjectival) ba na le mathata.  
(Some have problems.)
- c. **Tša gabo** (possessive group) di maatla.  
(Theirs are strong.)

The subject is followed by a copula in a copulative word-group.

### 1.8.2 The copula

The copula is defined by Louwrens (1991:64) as that element that links the subject with the complement in a copulative word group. He further explains that copulas are divided into two categories, namely, copulative particle and copulative verb. A particle will be defined later in paragraph 1.8.11 and a verb in paragraph 1.8.5. The following examples illustrate copulative particles:

- (7) a. Monna yo **ke** kgoši.  
(This man is a king.)
- b. Makgowa a **a** bohlale.  
(These Whites are clever.)

Copulas may also be variable or invariable. Louwrens (1991:65) says:

The distinction between the variable and invariable copulas is based on the formal features of the copula. The term variable simply implies that the form of the copula changes ... whereas the term invariable implies that the form of the copula remains unchanged...

In other words, the variable copulative verb takes the subject concord, which is, of course, determined by the noun class of the subject. The following are the examples of variable copulative particles:

- (8) a. Monwana **o** bohloko.  
(The finger is painful.)
- b. Menwana **e** bohloko.  
(The fingers are painful.)
- c. Seledu **se** bohloko.  
(The chin is painful.)
- d. Diatla **di** bohloko.  
(The hands are painful.)
- e. Maoto **a** bohloko.  
(The legs are painful.)

Examples of variable copulative verbs are darkened below:

- f. Monna **o** na le tšhelete.  
(The man has money.)
- g. Banna **ba** na le tšhelete.  
(Men have money.)
- h. Dikgarebe **di** na le tšhelete.  
(Young women have money.)
- i. Lesogana **le** na le tšhelete.  
(The young man has money.)
- j. Masogana **a** na le tšhelete.  
(Young men have money.)



Examples of invariable copulative particles are:

- (9) a. Monna yo **ke** kgoši.  
(This man is a king.)
- b. Banna ba **ke** dikgoši.  
(These men are kings.)
- c. Lesogana le **ke** kgoši.  
(This young man is a king.)

Invariable copulative verbs are as follows:

- (10) a. Ge mosadi **e** le mpša, mo tlogele.  
(If the woman is a dog, leave her.)
- b. Basetsana **e** tla ba basadi.  
(Girls will be women.)
- c. Nono **e** bile morutiši.  
(Nono was a teacher.)
- d. Ge Busi **e** se wena, sepela.  
(If Busi is not you, go.)

The invariable copulative verb takes the invariable subject concord **e** as darkened above, not the subject concord resembling noun classes. After the copula, the complement follows.

### 1.8.3 The complement

Richards, Platt and Platt (1992:69) define a complement as that part of a sentence that follows the verb and also completes the sentence. Louwrens (1991:64) states that:

The complement within a copulative is that word or word group which appears to the right of the copula. Like the subject ... the complement is always a non-predicative word or non-predicative word-group.

The above view suggests that a subject differs from a complement in that it appears to the left of the copula in a copulative word-group. Except for position, a subject and a complement are the same in that a complement, just like a subject, may be a word or a group of words. The word may be a noun, pronoun or a deverbative. The word-group may be a relative group, an adjectival group or a possessive group. Examples are, of course, the same with those of a subject given in paragraph 1.8.1 above. The difference is position as has already been said. The copula, together with the complement, form a predicate.

### 1.8.4 A predicate

*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (1987:810) regards a predicate as the part of a sentence that makes a statement about the subject. Example:

- (11) Monna o bohlale.  
(The man is clever.)

**O bohlale** (he/she is clever) is a predicate in the copulative sentence in (11) above. It gives information or makes a statement about the subject **monna** (the man) in example (11) above. A predicate may consist of a verbal element and other elements like a complement that the researcher mentioned in paragraph 1.8.3.

### 1.8.5 A verb

According to Richards *et al.* (1992:398):

A verb is a word which occurs as part of predicate of a sentence which carries markers of grammatical categories such as tense, aspect, person, number and mood and which refers to action or state.

Louwrens (1991:17) says that the verbal element may either be a main verb or auxillary word-group. He further explains that main verbs in Northern Sotho are both proper main verbs and copulative verbs. Examples of copulative verbs are found in paragraph 1.8.2 above. The researcher is not focusing on the proper main verbs. Auxillary verbs are, however, part of the discussion

### 1.8.6 Auxillary verbs

“An auxillary verb is a verb that is used with another verb to show differences such as tense, person and voice” (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, 1987:59). This means that auxillary verbs are there to help proper main verbs and copulative verbs as in the following examples:

- (12) a. Ngwana e **šetše** e le kgoši.  
(The child has already become a king.)
- b. Lesogana le **kile** la ba kgoši.  
(The young man has been a king before.)
- c. Mokgaetši o **fo** bolela.  
(Mokgaetši is just talking.)

- d. Refilwe o **hlwa** a palelwa.  
(Refilwe usually fails.)

The auxillary verbs **šetše** and **kile**, respectively, help the copulative verbs **le** and **ba** to perform their function in (12a-d). The auxillary verbs **fo** and **hlwa**, respectively, help the proper main verbs **bolela** and **palelwa** in (12c-d) to perform their function.

### 1.8.7 Mood

According to Richards *et. al.*, (1992:235), a mood is a set of contrasts that are often shown by the form of the verb and that express a speaker's or writer's attitude to what is said or written. The verb may command (imperative mood), express a fact (indicative mood) or indicate a possibility (potential mood). Moods will be discussed in detail in the following chapters. Verbs may also indicate tense.

### 1.8.8 Tense

“Tense is the relationship between the form of the verb and the time of the action or state it describes” (Richards *et. al.*, 1992:376). Verbs may be in the present, past or future tenses.

- |      |    |   |   |                                |
|------|----|---|---|--------------------------------|
| (13) | a. | Monna o na le maatla.<br>(The man has power.)           | → | Present tense<br>Positive form |
|      | b. | Monna ga a na maatla.<br>(The man does not have power.) | → | Present tense<br>Negative form |
|      | c. | Monna o bile le bana.<br>(The man had children.)        | → | Past tense<br>Positive form    |

- d. Monna o tla ba le bana. → Future tense  
(The man will have children.) Positive form.

Examples (13a-d) above, show that tense and (positive and negative) forms go together. This will be done in detailed in the following chapters. Position of elements is important in a sentence.

### 1.8.9 Position

Fowler and Fowler (199:929) define position as: “the way in which a thing or its parts are placed or arranged.”

This is important in this regard because the way elements in a copulative word-group are placed or arranged determines their naming. A subject is the first element, followed by a copula and, finally, a complement of a subject, and if a complement can exchange positions, the meaning of the whole sentence gets affected.

- (14) a. Banna ba na le bana.  
(Men have children.)
- b. Bana ba na le banna.  
(Children have men.)

The first copulative word-group (14a) may mean that men bear children or they are with the children. The children in this regard may be girls or boys. The second copulative word-group (14b) means the children have boyfriends or they are with men. If they have boyfriends then the children are girls. This will also be detailed later. Giving two meanings for each of the sentences shows ambiguity.

### 1.8.10 **Ambiguity**

According to Richards *et. al.*, (1992:265), ambiguity is a term used for a word, phrase or sentence that has more than one meaning. Paragraph 1.8.9 above in examples (14a-b) shows ambiguity when dealing with position. Much on this will be discussed later. The particle is the last term to be looked upon.

### 1.8.11 **A particle**

A particle is defined by Fowler and Fowler (1990:868) as a minor part of speech, especially a short undeclinable one, or a common prefix or suffix. The particle is not readily identified with any of the main parts of speech. With regard to copulative particles, some scholars like Louwrens (1991:18-19), believe that, historically, they developed from structures that occurred as copulative verbs. The examples of copulative particles are given in paragraph 1.8.2 above.

## 1.9 **ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY**

**Chapter One** gives the background to the problem, definition of terms and methodology.

**Chapter Two** examines the morphological and syntactic structures of the copulative verbs in Northern Sotho.

**Chapter Three** discusses the morpho-semantics of the identifying and the descriptive copulatives in Northern Sotho.

**Chapter Four** focuses on the morphology and semantics of the locational and associative copulatives in Northern Sotho.

**Chapter Five** deals with the conclusion of the study.

## CHAPTER TWO

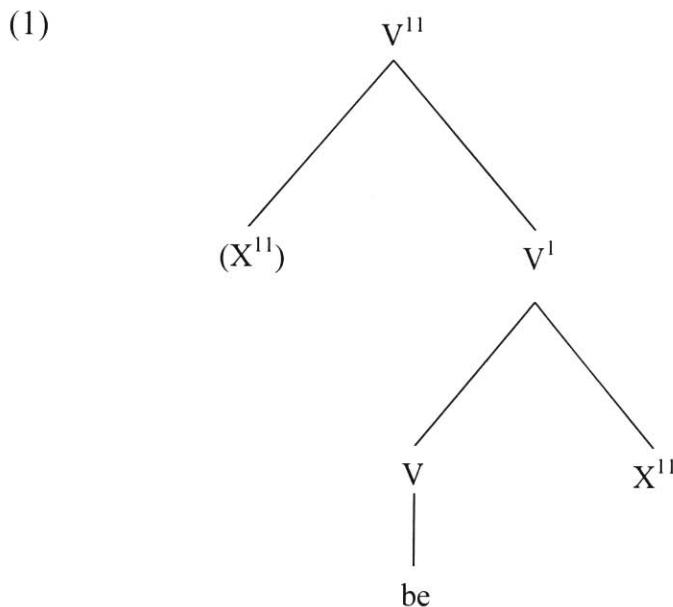
### 2. THE CATEGORIAL STATUS OF THE COPULATIVE

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present a morphological and syntactic analysis of the copulative verbs in Northern Sotho. The chapter will utilize Government and Binding; and Minimalist theories, especially in the depiction of tree-diagrams and analysis. The copulative elements that will receive scrutiny are, namely: **ke**, **se**, **ba**, **le**, **na**, and **COP**.

#### 2.2 ARE THE COPULATIVE ELEMENTS VERBS?

The question that arises is, are these elements (i.e., **ke**, **se**, **ba**, **le**, **na**, and **COP**) really verbs? According to Marshad and Suleiman (1991:22), the copulative elements should be regarded as verbs. To them, a copulative element is a linking verb with little independent meaning and shows relationship between the subject and its complement. Styan (1987) agrees with this view because she states that the copulative element **be** is a full verb that must take an obligatory complement of the category X or XP as shown below:



In this case, X of X or XP may be a noun (N) or any other major category such as preposition (P) or adjective (A), or even a verb (V):

- (2) a. Se ke **mpša**.  
(This is a dog.)
- b. Tshepo ke **yo motelele**.  
(Tshepo is tall.)
- c. Ke **mosegare**.  
(It is midday.)
- d. Ke ka **maabane**.  
(It is in the evening.)

The bolded words in (2a-d) are XPs, which are made up of a noun, adjective, adverb and preposition, respectively. They appear as complements of the copulative element **ke**. As a result of sub-categorisation as shown in (2) above, one may conclude that the copulative elements **ke**, **se**, **ba**, **le**, **na**, and **COP** are verbs. The reason is that it is only verbs that are able to subcategorise for their complements. This view is supported by Du Plessis (MS:34) when he argues that in the Standard Theory where subcategorisation rules apply, it is limited to the **VP**, and it specifies whether or not a **V** can appear together with one or more objects.

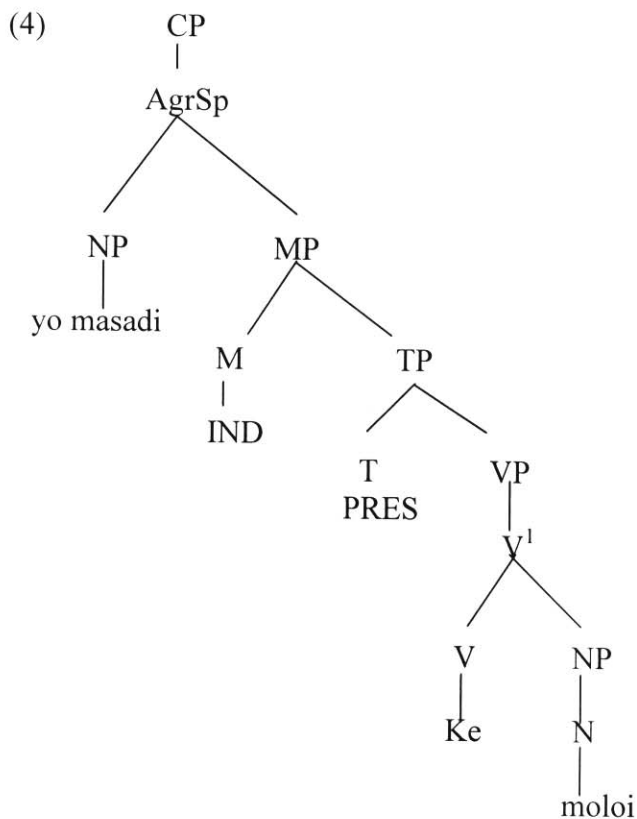
### 2.3 THE COPULATIVE VERB [**ke**]

The copulative verb **ke** is distinguished from others by utilizing the copula **ke**. In most cases, the copulative verb **ke** forms noun phrases (NPs) and Adjectival phrases (AP) as its complements:



- (3) a. Yo mosadi [**ke** [moloji.]  
(This woman is a witch.)
- b. Monna yo [**ke** [setlatla.]  
(This man is a fool.)
- c. Mosadi yo [**ke** [yo mokopana.]  
(This woman is short.)
- d. Yo ngwana [**ke** [yo motelele.]  
(This child is tall.)

In Sentences (3a-d) above, the copulative verb **ke** appears with the NPs **moloji** and **setlatla** and APs **yo mokopana** and **yo motelele** as its complements. Du Plessis (1995:353) is of the opinion that the copulative verb **ke** may never occur with any type of agreement in Inflection. Sentence (3a) will have the following structure as a result:



Where CP stands for Complementizer Phrase, AgrSP = Subjectival Agreement Phrase, MP = Mood Phrase, M = Mood, TP = Tense Phrase, T = Tense and PRES = Present tense.

#### 2.4 THE COPULATIVE VERB [se]

**Se** differs from other copulative verbs because it is a negative verb. It is the negative form of the copulative verb **le** found in paragraph 2.5 below. Notice examples below:

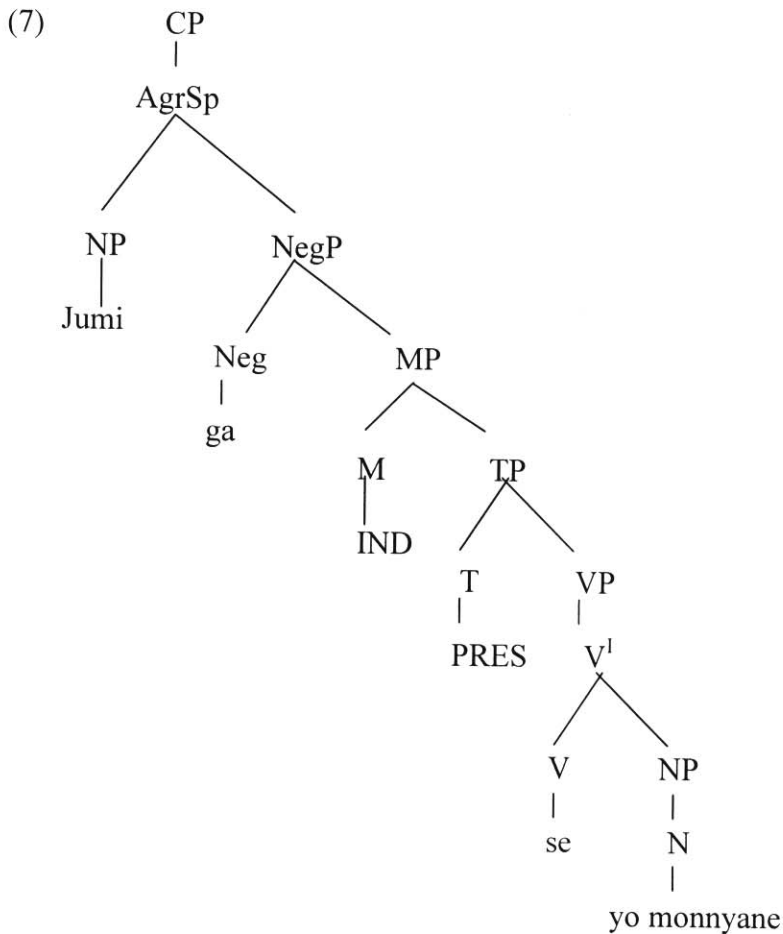
- (5) a. (i) Ge morutiši [a **le** [bohlale.]  
(If the teacher is wise.)
- (ii) Ge morutiši [a **se** [bohlale.]  
(If the teacher is not wise.)
- b. (i) Ge motho [a **le** [mahlatse.]  
(If a person is lucky.)
- (ii) Ge motho [a **se** [mahlatse.]  
(If a person is not lucky.)

The copulative verb **le** in (5a (i)) and b(i)) above, which is in the positive form, is replaced by **se** in (5a(ii) and b(ii)) above, which is its negative form. The negative verb **se** can also appear as the negative of the copulative verb **ke**.

- (6) a. (i) Jumi [**ke** [yo monnyane.]  
(Jumi is small.)
- (ii) Jumi [ga **se** [yo monnyane.]  
(Jumi is not small.)

- b. (i) Nthabiseng [**ke** [malome.]  
(Nthabiseng is my uncle.)
- (ii) Nthabiseng [ga **se** [malome.]  
(Nthabiseng is not my uncle.)

The sentence where **se** appears indicates the presence of agreement in Inflection, but this is not always the case. Sometimes, the negative verb **se** may be used without agreement (at all). This occurs when **se** replaces the copulative **ke** as in (6a(i) above, but the category negative (NEG) will be replaced as part of Inflection.



IND stands for indicative mood in (7) above.

## 2.5 THE COPULATIVE VERB [le]

The copulative verb **le** is stative in nature. It indicates the state in which the NP is at a given time. The view above is supported by Louwrens (1991:86) when he says **le** occurs in the postive of the static identifying in (8b) and static descriptive copulatives in (8d) below. **Le** does not show any visible motion. Louwrens (1991:71) defines static as a term referring to a state of rest that is characterised by the absence of motion or change. Trask (1993:259), on the other hand, contends that a stative verb is one expressing a state rather than an event.

The copulative verb **le** occurs in the situative mood where the agreement morpheme takes the vowel **e** or **a** as in the example below:

- (8) a. Kgoši [ke Tate.] INDICATIVE MOOD  
(The king is my father.)
- b. Ge kgoši [e [le Tate.] SITUATIVE MOOD  
(If the king is my father.)
- c. Moruti [o kaone.] INDICATIVE MOOD  
(The pastor is better.)
- d. Ge moruti [a [le kaone.] SITUATIVE MOOD  
(If the pastor is better.)
- e. Ngwana [o gona.] INDICATIVE MOOD  
(The child is present.)
- f. Ge ngwana [a [le gona.] SITUATIVE MOOD  
(If the child is present.)

Example (8f) indicates that the copulative verb **le** also occurs in the positive form of the static locational copulative.

The compulsory agreement morpheme **e** or **a** in (8b, 8d, and 8f), respectively, has been utilised to replace the copulative **ke** in (8a) and COP in (8c) and (8e).

The verb **le** also occurs in the copulative sentence where it shows the progressive element **sa** as illustrated hereunder:

- (9) a. Ngwana o **sa** le sekolong.  
(The child is still at school.)
- b. Momo o **sa** le Gauteng.  
(Momo is still in Gauteng.)

For Sentences (9a-b) to be grammatical, the presence of the copulative verb **le** is compulsory when **sa** appears. Let us remove the **le** from (9a-b) to show their ungrammaticality.

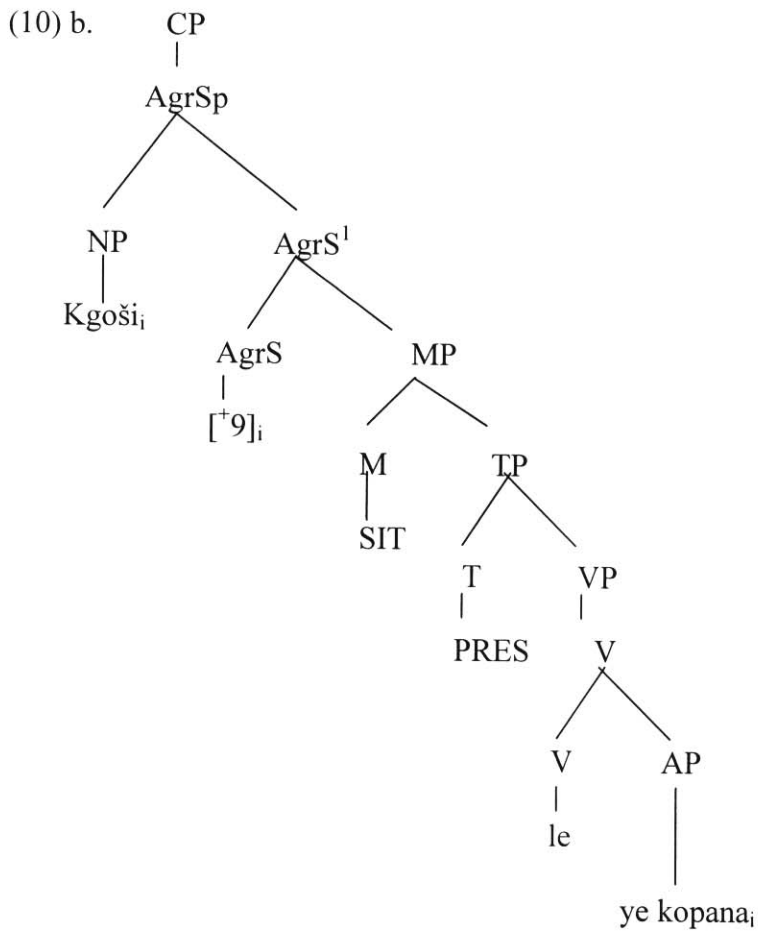
Ngwana o sa sekolong.

Momo o sa Gauteng.

Because the two sentences lost their meaning when **le** is removed, it means the copulative verb **le** and the progressive element co-occur.

The presence of the copulative verb **le** may be depicted in the structure below:

- (10) a. Ge kgoši e **le** ye kopana.  
(If the king is short.)



The coindexing of **kgoši**, AGR and **ye kopana** does not imply sameness and exchange of subject, and its complement is not possible. The coindexing indicates that the subject NP (**kgoši**) and the adjective (**ye kopana**) share the same agreement. Semantically, the sentence is predicational than copulative, because the adjective describes the subject.

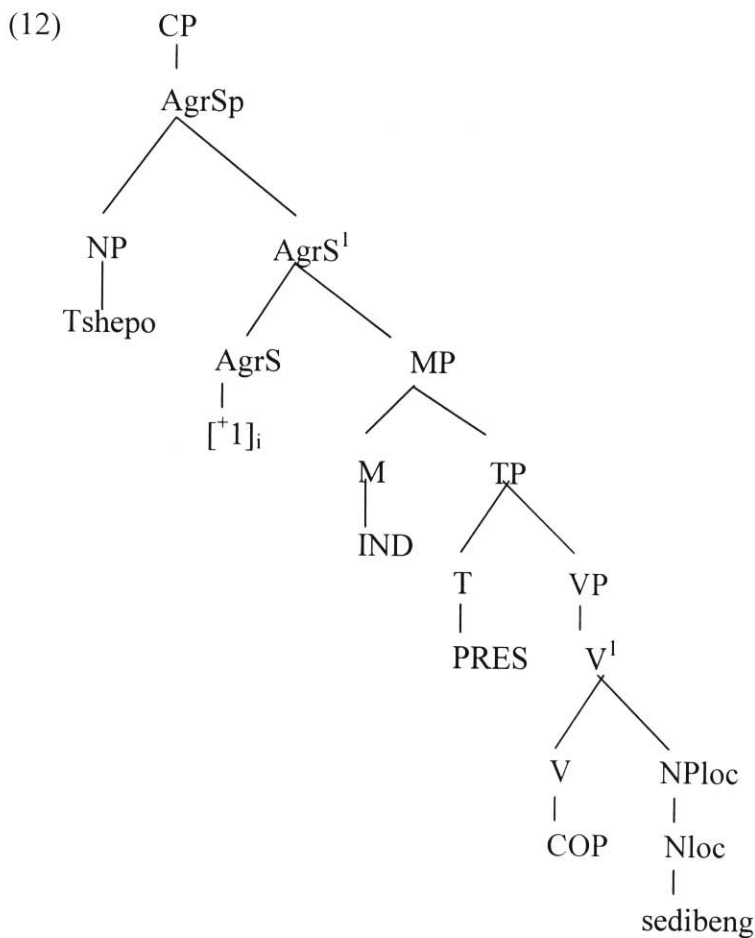
## 2.6 THE COPULATIVE VERB [COP]

The copulative verb COP is a static verb due to its lack of overt form in the surface structure of Northern Sotho sentences. It always appears with a locative complement as exemplified below:

- (11) a. Tshepo [o [sedibeng.]  
(Tshepo is at the fountain.)

- b. Nnono [**o** [mathateng.]  
(Nnono is in trouble.)
- c. Bana [**ba** [sekolong.]  
(Children are at school.)
- d. Digwagwa [**di** [nokeng.]  
(Frogs are in the river.)

The copulative verb COP appears with the NPsloc **sedibeng**, **mathateng**, **sekolong**, and **nokeng**, respectively. It always shows agreement in INFL with the subject. In (11a-d) above **o**, **ba** and **di** serve as AGR in INF with NPs **Tshepo**, **Nnono**, **bana** and **digwagwa**, respectively. Sentence (11a) shows the following structure due to this agreement:



## 2.7 THE COPULATIVE VERB [na]

The copulative verb **na** is a stative verb that occurs only in the associative copulative, in the indicative and situative forms; and in the positive and negative forms. It does appear in an overt form in the surface structure of sentences in Northern Sotho.

### (13) Indicative (positive)

- a. Ngwana o na le maaka.  
(The child is lying (has lies.))
- b. Baotledi ba na le mathata.  
(Drivers have problems.)

### Indicative (negative)

- a. Ngwana ga a na maaka.  
(The child does not lie.)
- b. Baotledi ga ba na mathata.  
(Drivers do not have problems.)

### Situative (positive)

- a. Ge sediba se na le meetse.  
(If the fountain has got water.)
- b. Ge dikgomo di na le dinamane.  
(If the cows have got calves.)

### Situative (negative)

- a. Ge sediba se se na (le) meetse.



(If this fountain has got no water.)

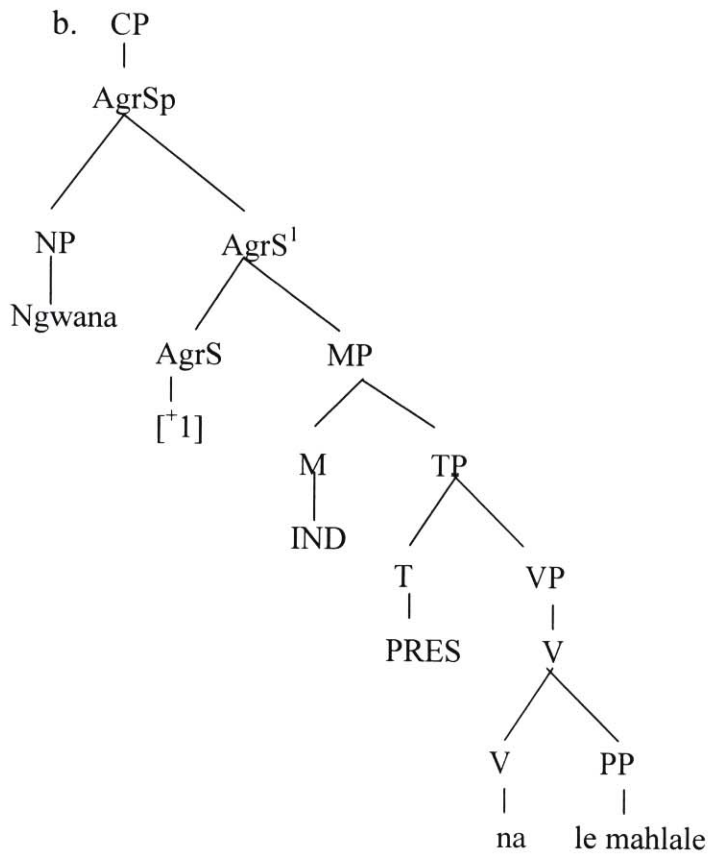
- b. Ge dikgomo di se na (le) dinamane.  
(If the cows have no calves.)

**Na** above always shows agreement in INFL with the subject. In Northern Sotho, the copulative verb **na** can fuse with the associative prefix **le** to form **ne** without changing the meaning of sentence (14) below:

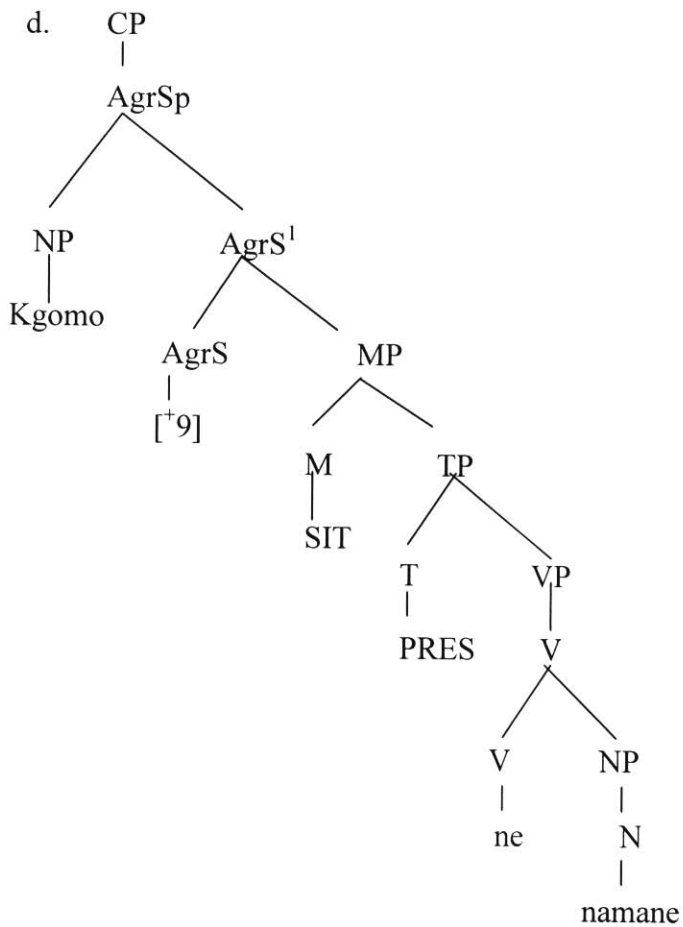
- (14) a. Mosadi o **na le** morwa.  
(A woman has a son.)
- c. Mosadi o **ne** morwa.

The tree diagrams that follow indicate **na** and **le** before they fuse and after fusion as **ne**.

- (15) a. Ngwana o na le mahlale.  
(The child is clever.)



- c. Ge kgomo e ne namane.  
(If the cow has a calf.)



According to Louwrens (1991:87), **na** is also used in both the positive and negative of the progressive form of the associative copulative as in (16) below:

- (16) a. (i) Bakgalabje ba sa **na** le maatla.  
(Old men are still active.)
- (ii) Bakgalabje ga ba sa **na** maatla.  
(Old men are no longer active.)
- b. (i) Ge bakgalabje ba sa na le maatla.  
(If old men are still active.)
- (ii) Ge bakgalabje ba se na maatla.  
(If old men are no longer active.)

The copulative verb **na** occurs in the indicative (16a) and situative (16b) forms.

## 2.8 THE COPULATIVE VERB [ba]

The copulative verb **ba** differs from other copulative verbs because it is inchoative. The reason is that it depicts a movement or entry into some state or condition. In English, it means to become or get. In support of this statement, Louwrens (1991:71) contends that **ba** is a dynamic verb, referring to a state in which things are in motion, therefore, changing. The verb may utilize NPs and APs as its complements.

- (17) a. Selepe e tlo [**ba** [ngaka.]  
(Selepe will become a doctor.)
- b. Malele o tla [**ba** [yo motelele.]  
(Malele will become tall.)
- c. Morwalo o [**ba** [boima.]  
(The luggage is becoming heavy.)
- d. Basadi ba [**ba** [le lehufa.]  
(Women are becoming jealous.)

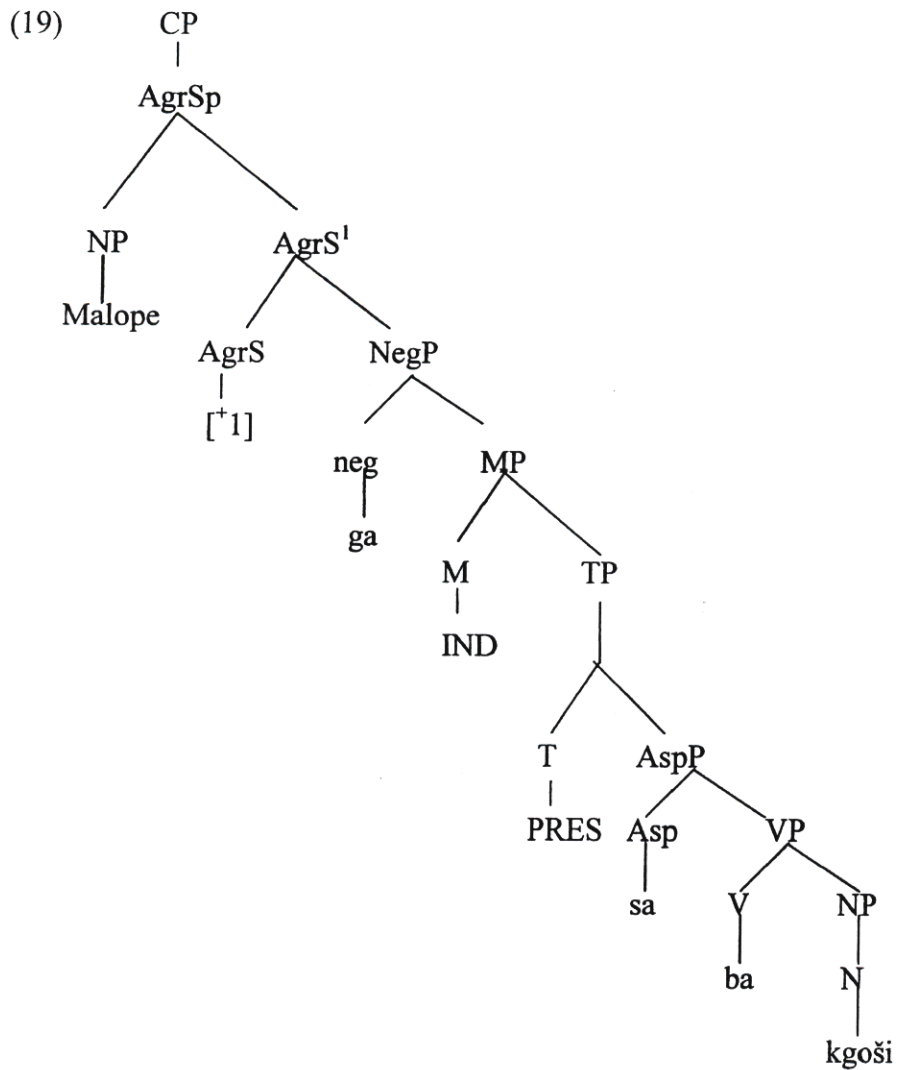
The verb **ba** appears with the NPs **ngaka**, **boima**, and **lehufa** and the AP **yo motelele** as its complements.

The copulative verb **ba**, just like other verbs, can be inflected to express moods, tenses, agreement, negation and aspect. Consider the following examples:

- (18) a. Moruti e ka se **bê** tsotsi.  
(A pastor could not be a thug.)

- b. Ge basadi ba ka se **bê** boleta.  
(If women could not be submissive.)
- c. Gore e **be** kgoši.  
(So that he can be king.)
- d. Gore e se **be** kgoši.  
(So that he cannot be king.)
- e. A se **be** le tšhelete.  
(Consequently, she did not have money.)
- f. Naledi ga se e **be** moruti.  
(Naledi was never a pastor.)
- g. Palesa e **bile** moimana.  
(Palesa was pregnant.)
- h. Malope ga e sa ba kgoši.  
(Malope is no longer becoming a king.)

In Sentence (18a) **ba** is inflected into **bê** to express the indicative mood, negative form and the future tense, whereas in (18b) **ba** is inflected into **bê** also to express the situative mood, potential mood, and future tense. Examples (18c-d) express the subjunctive mood, negative and positive forms. Sentence (18e) shows the consecutive mood, whereas (18f) indicates the indicative mood, negative form and past tense. The example in (18g) shows the past tense and the indicative mood; and lastly, Sentence (18h) expresses aspect, as is evidenced by the use of the aspect morpheme **sa**. This may be illustrated in a tree diagram as follows:



## 2.9 CONCLUSION

In order to understand the copulative in Northern Sotho, it is important that the copulative be examined from the syntactic point of view. Using the syntactic point of view, the copulative verbs **ke**, **se**, **ba**, **le**, **na** and **COP** have been identified and examined.

**Ke**, **le**, **se**, **COP** and **na** are static verbs whereas **ba** and its inflections **bê**, **be** and **bile** are dynamic verbs. **Na** can fuse with the prefix **le** to form **ne**. **Se** is a verb that expresses negation, whereas **le** is the positive form of **se**.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3. THE IDENTIFYING AND THE DESCRIPTIVE COPULATIVES

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The objective of this chapter is to analyse some copulatives from a morpho-semantic perspective. Although there are different views with regard to the suitability of names of copulatives, this chapter will concentrate on those copulatives that are generally regarded as identifying and descriptive. Since morphology and semantics are interwoven, it behoves upon this chapter to also put emphasis on those morphological elements that have a bearing on the identifying and descriptive copulatives. In this regard, the following morphological features will receive attention: moods, tenses and forms; position of elements; ambiguity; auxillary verbs; conjunctions; interrogatives; proverbs; and idioms.

#### 3.2 THE IDENTIFYING COPULATIVE

In a variety of literature, it has been mentioned that in the identifying copulative the subject and its complement are equal or identical (Louwrens, 1991; Madadzhe, 2000; and Grobler, *et al.*, 1998). The implication is that they can exchange positions without affecting the meaning of the copulative. In support of this statement, Madadzhe (2000:116) regards an identifying copulative sentence as one with two noun phrases that are reversible without bringing about any change in meaning.

- (1) a. Kgoši ya Mapulana ke Malele.  
(The king of Mapulana is Malele.)
- b. Malele ke kgoši ya Mapulana.  
(Malele is the king of Mapulana.)

- c. Mmolai wa ka ke Lesiba.  
(My killer is Lesiba.)
- d. Lesiba ke mmolai wa ka.  
(Lesiba is my killer.)

In example (1a-b) above, **Kgoši ya Mapulana** (subject) and **Malele** (complement) are two noun phrases that are reversible without shifting the meaning of the sentences. In (1c-d) likewise, the subject **mmolai wa ka** and the complement **Lesiba** exchange positions without shifting the meaning of the sentences.

The identifying copulative occurs in different moods, tenses and forms.

### 3.2.1 The identifying copulative and moods

Nine different moods are identified in Northern Sotho, which are, namely: indicative, imperative, potential, subjunctive, infinitive, consecutive, situative, hortative and habitual.

#### 3.2.1.1 The indicative mood

**Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English** (1987:533) defines an indicative mood as a verb form or a set of verb forms that describes an action or states a fact. Leech, Deuchar and Hoogenraad (1982:79-80) call the indicative mood declarative mood and say it is generally used to make statements. The indicative mood in Northern Sotho in the identifying copulative occurs in three tenses, namely: present, past and future, and in two forms, namely, positive and negative.



(a) **The identifying copulative in the present tense (indicative mood)**

The identifying copulative in the indicative mood in the present tense, consists of the copula and the complement. The subject is formed by the relevant subject concord for persons as illustrated in examples (2a-f) below. Where a fully-fledged noun appears as the subject, it would seem the copulative verb **ke** would invariably be utilized as illustrated in examples (2g-j) below.

- (2) a. Nna **ke** mosadi. (first person singular) 1ps  
(I am a woman.)
- b. Rena **re** basadi. (first person plural) 1pp  
(We are women.)
- c. Wena **o** mosadi. (second person singular) 2ps  
(You are a woman.)
- d. Lena **le** basadi. (second person plural) 2pp  
(You are women.)
- e. Yena **ke** mosadi. (third person plural) 2pp  
(She is a woman.)
- f. Bona **ke** basadi. (third person plural) 3pp  
(They are women.)
- g. Monna yo **ke** kolobe.  
(This man is a pig.)
- h. Lerato la gagwe **ke** mpho.  
(His/her love is a gift.)

- i. Digole tše **ke** bathobatho.  
(These disabled are good people.)
- j. Mologadi **ke** kgarebe ya ka.  
(Mologadi is my girlfriend.)

The subject and the complement are perceived to be equal and identical in (2a-j) above. The copula is the copulative verbs **ke** in (2a, e-j) and COP in (2b-d). When the subject and the complement exchange positions, the copula becomes **ke** in (2b-d). In other words, the copula **ke** will be applicable in (2a-j) when the noun phrases exchange positions. When one says **Wena o mosadi** (You are a woman) as in (2c) above, one does not only mean that the person referred to is a female, but that she has done a very good thing that was not expected of her. One is actually praising that woman.

A sarcastic meaning is brought when the noun phrases exchange position like **Mosadi ke wena** in (2c). The sentence **Mosadi ke wena** means one is the best woman while in reality the speaker does not mean one is the best woman but the converse.

The copula of the identifying copulative, in the indicative mood, present tense, negative form, is distinguished by the appearance of the negative morpheme **ga** and the relevant subject concord as evidenced in the examples (3a-d) below. For the noun classes, the copula is the negative morpheme **ga** and the copulative verb **se** as illustrated in examples (3e-j) below.

- (3) a. Nna **ga ke** monna. (1 ps)  
(I am not a man.)
- b. Rena **ga re** banna. (1pp)  
(We are not men.)

- c. Wena **ga o** monna. (2ps)  
(You are not a man.)
- d. Lena **ga le** banna. (2pp)  
(You are not men.)
- e. Yena **ga se** monna. (3ps)  
(He is not a man.)
- f. Bona **ga se** banna. (3pp)  
(They are not men.)
- g. Banna ba **ga se** dikolobe.  
(These men are not pigs.)
- h. Mephae **ga se** mehlare.  
(Pine trees are not good trees.)
- i. Matšoba ale **ga se** dibjalo.  
(Those flowers are not good plants.)
- j. Batho ba **ga se** batho.  
(These people are not good people.)

The meaning in Sentences (3a-j) above is that the subject and the complement are not one and the same thing. They are thus not equal and identical. The sentences can be interpreted figuratively. For instance, Sentence (3c) does not merely denote the fact that one is not a man, but shows that one is not behaving in a manner expected of men in general as far as his societal expectations are concerned. Such as that the man is not brave, not secretive, sexually weak and does not carry his family responsibilities.

(b) **The Identifying Copulative in the Past Tense (Indicative Mood)**

The identifying copulative in the past tense is characterized by the appearance of two positive forms as exemplified below:

- (4) a. (i) Ke **bile** moruti. (1ps)  
(ii) Ke **be** ke le moruti.  
(I was a priest.)
- b. (i) Le **bile** baruti. (2pp)  
(ii) Le **be** le le baruti.  
(You were priests.)
- c. (i) O **bile** moruti. (3ps)  
(ii) O **be** a le moruti.  
(He/she was a priest.)
- d. (i) Legare e **bile** setlatla.  
(ii) Legare e **be** e le setlatla.  
(Legare was a fool.)
- e. (i) Mokgadi e **bile** morutišigadi.  
(ii) Mokgadi e **be** e le morutišigadi.  
(Mokgadi was a teacher.)

From the above-mentioned examples, it is evident that **bile** and **be** originate from the copula **ba**:

Ke **ba** moruti.

(I become a priest.)

Ke **bile** moruti.

Ke **be** ke le moruti.

(I was a priest.)

The copulas **bile** and **be**, as used in (4a-e) above, refer to the fact that one was once a priest, a fool or a teacher but is currently no longer practising as one (a priest for example) or one was a good pastor (priest) but has now turned into a bad pastor.

The negative form of the copula in the past tense (indicative mood) of the identifying copulative is formed by three forms, that is, **ba** sometimes changes to **be** or **bê** for emphasis.

- (5) a. (i) Nna ga se ka **ba** setagwa. (1ps)  
(I was not a drunkard.)
- (ii) Nna ga se ke **be** setagwa.  
(iii) Nna ke **bê** ke se setagwa.  
(I was never a drunkard.)
- b. (i) Wena ga se wa **ba** moloi. (2ps)  
(You were not a wizard.)
- (ii) Wena ga se o **be** moloi.  
(iii) Wena o **bê** o se moloi.  
(You were never a wizard.)
- c. (i) Senwamoro ga se ya **ba** monna.  
(Senwamoro was not a man.)
- (ii) Senwamoro ga se e **be** monna.  
(iii) Senwamoro e **bê** e se monna.  
(Senwamoro was never a man.)

Sentences (5a(i), b(i) and c(i)) above, indicate that the subjects were not the persons being referred to. In contrast, examples (5a(ii)-(iii), b(ii)-(iii) and c(ii)-(iii)) put more emphasis on the fact that the subjects were never the persons being talked about.

The above-given sentences can also be interpreted figuratively. For instance, sentence (5a(i)) denotes that one was not a drunkard compared to his father for example, who was an alcoholic, meaning that one's father was worse in drinking beer. Likewise, sentence (5c(i)) may figuratively mean that Senwamoro was not a man as expected in his culture because he had two wives and ten children as compared to his father who had six wives and 39 children.

The identifying copulative in the future tense (indicative mood):

(i) The identifying copulative in the future tense is distinguished by auxiliary verb **tlo** or **tla** that precedes the copula **ba** as evidenced in the following examples:

- (6) a. Nna ke **tlo/tla ba** mohlomphegi. (1ps)  
(I shall be a respected person.)
- b. Wena o **tlo/tla ba** mohlomphegi. (2ps)  
(You will be a respected person.)
- c. Bona ba **tlo/tla ba** bahlomphegi. (3pp)  
(They will be the respected persons.)
- d. Ramaisela e **tlo/tla ba** mogatšaka.  
(Ramaisela will be my wife.)

- e. Balata e **tlo/tla ba** dikgoši.  
(The poor will be the rich.)

The meaning of the copula in (6a-e) above is that the subjects are in the dynamic process of becoming the complement. They are not yet in the required status, but they are still in the process of becoming or getting the status. For instance, Ramaisela in (6d) above is not yet one's darling (wife), but she will become one's darling in the future.

(ii) The negative forms of the identifying copula would look as follows:

- (7) a. (i) Rena re ka se be mahodu.  
(We shall not be thieves.)
- (ii) Rena re ka se ke ra ba mahodu.  
(We shall never be thieves.)
- b. (i) Lesiba e ka se be lehodu.  
(Lesiba will not be a thief.)
- (ii) Lesiba e ka se ke ya ba lehodu.  
(Lesiba will never be a thief.)
- c. (i) Mokgaetši e ka se be mogatša malome.  
(Mokgaetši will not be my uncle's wife.)
- (ii) Mokgaetši e ka se ke ya ba mogatša malome.  
(Mokgaetši will never be my uncle's wife.)
- d. (i) Popi e ka se be moimana.  
(Popi will not be a pregnant woman.)

- (ii) Popi e ka se ke ya ba moimana.  
(Popi will never be a pregnant woman.)

The morpheme that indicates negation in (7a-d) above is **se**. The negation may indicate different reasons of the subject not becoming the complement. For instance, for **Lesiba** not to become a thief it is due to the discipline and/or respect he has for other people's properties. For **Mokgaetši** not to become one's uncle's wife may be due to her marital status (married already) or one's uncle does not love or trust her to be his wife. **Popi** might not fall pregnant because she uses contraceptives, or she is barren or does not have a boyfriend, or **Popi** might be too young to fall pregnant.

### 3.2.1.2 The imperative mood

The imperative mood is defined by the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (1987:524) as a verb form, or a set of verb forms that expresses a command. Leech *et al.*, (1982:80) define the imperative mood as one that is used to give orders or make requests. In Northern Sotho, the imperative mood occurs in positive and negative forms and does not have tense. Nokaneng (1987:119) supports this statement by saying that:

Modirišo wo ga o na mabaka; go hwetšwa tumelo le  
kganetšo fela ya leba.

The command is often directed to the second person singular or plural. That second person plural is indicated by the addition of a suffix **-ng**. The copula is formed by the copulative prefix **e** and the copulative verb **ba** in the positive form in singular:

- (8) a. **Eba** mosadi.  
(Be a woman.)



- b. **Eba monna.**  
(Be a man.)

Semantically speaking, the copulatives are not commands as such but a sort of encouragement, motivation or comfort. One cannot be commanded to become a woman whereas she is one already as in (8a) above. The woman in (8a) above is encouraged to be strong, confident, or patient enough to face whatever problems she is encountering.

The positive alternative form of the copula in the imperative mood is formed by the copulative verb **ba** plus **a**.

- (9) a. **Baa kgarebe.**  
(Be a young woman.)
- b. **Baa lesogana.**  
(Be a young man.)

The implication is the same as that in examples (8) above.

The addition of the suffix **-ng** indicates second person plural or honorifics.

- (10) a. **Ebang batho.**  
(Be people.)
- b. **Ebang babereki.**  
(Be workers.)
- c. **Ebang mosadi.**  
(Be a woman.) **singular**

- d. Ebang papa. **Singular**  
(Be a father.)

While example (10a) above indicates plurality, it means one should behave well or be disciplined as people are expected to be orderly. Sentence (10b) above suggests that workers should become responsible in their work, and (10c-d) above indicate honorifics and mean that the people referred to should display a sense of responsibility as is expected of any adult male or female.

The copula in the negative form is formed by the negative particle **se** and the copulative verb **be**. The suffix **-ng** is still indicating plurality and honorifics.

- (11) a. **Se be** lefšega.  
(Do not be a coward.)
- b. **Se be** mosadi.  
(Do not be a woman.)
- c. **Se be** ngwana.  
(Do not be a child.)
- d. **Se beng** lefšega.  
(Do not be a coward.)
- e. **Se beng** mosadi.  
(Do not be a woman.)
- f. **Se beng** bana.  
(Do not be children.)

Example (11a) above means that the addressee should be strong and not be frightened by useless things. The referent is encouraged to go forward, proceed and not stop what he/she was doing. Sentence (11b) encourages a man, for example, to be strong because women are believed to be weak by most cultures. Now, the referent must not be weak like a woman.

In example (11c) above, the addressee seems to be big enough but doing childish things, now he/she is discouraged from doing that. Those things may include failure to understand conditions and demanding things unnecessarily. Examples (11d-e) indicate respect in the negative form due to the use of the suffix **-ng**. Sentence (11f) indicates plurality in the negative form. Real commands also exist in the identifying copulative in the positive and negative forms, e.g.:

- (12) a. **Eba** mosadi waka.  
(Be my wife.)
- b. **Eba** moruti wa kereke ya rena.  
(Be the pastor of our church.)
- c. **Se be** moetapele.  
(Do not be a leader.)
- d. **Se be** mpimpi ya maphodisa.  
(Do not be the police's spy.)

Some of the commands in (12a-d) above are possible to carry out while others will be difficult to do so. This of course will depend on the context and situation. For instance, in a marriage ceremony, it is possible for the bridegroom to say: **be my wife**, to the bride. In other contexts, this may be highly insensitive as one cannot force a lady to be one's wife. Although these are commands, they may be expressing a wish as in (12b-d) above.

### 3.2.1.3 The potential mood

According to the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (1987:805), the potential mood indicates that something may happen or become so in the future. In Northern Sotho, the potential mood expresses possibility or ability and can occur in positive and negative forms. The identifying copulative in the potential mood does not have tense. According to Poulos and Louwrens's views (1994:302), the copula in the positive form is formed by the subject concord for persons, copulative prefix **e** in classes, the potential particle **ka** and the copulative verb **ba**. In fact, the subject concord in persons replaces the class prefix **e** in classes.

- (13) a. **Nka ba** lesogana. (1ps)  
(I can be a young man.)
- b. **Re ka ba** masogana. (1pp)  
(We can be young men.)
- c. **O ka ba** lesogana. (2ps)  
(You can be a young man.)
- d. **Le ka ba** masogana. (2pp)  
(You can be young men.)
- e. **E ka ba** lesogana. (3ps)  
(He can be a young man.)
- f. **Ba ka ba** masogana. (3pp)  
(They can be young men.)
- g. Ngwana **e ka ba** ngwetši yaka.  
(This child can be my daughter-in-law.)

- h. Mafahla ale **e ka ba** basadi ba gagwe.  
(The twin sisters can be his wives.)

The copulatives in (13a-h) indicate the possibilities of the subjects becoming the complements in the future. The copulatives do not indicate ability as ability can only be denoted by ordinary verbs, as in (14) below:

- (14) Matome a ka apea bogobe.  
(Matome can cook porridge.)

The copula in the negative form has two forms:

- (15) a. (i) Nka se **be** moloi. (1ps)  
(ii) Nka se ke ka **ba** moloi.  
(I cannot be a witch.)
- b. (i) Re ka se **be** baloi.  
(ii) Re ka se ke ra **ba** baloi.  
(We cannot be witches.)
- c. (i) O ka se **be** moloi. (2ps)  
(ii) O ka se ke wa **ba** moloi.  
(You cannot be a witch.)
- d. (i) Le ka se **be** baloi. (2pp.)  
(ii) Le ka se ke la **ba** baloi.  
(You cannot be witches.)
- e. (i) E ka se **be** moloi. (3ps)  
(ii) E ka se ke ya **ba** moloi.  
(He/she cannot be a witch.)

- f. (i) Ba ka se **be** baloi. (3pp)  
(ii) Ba ka se ke ba **ba** baloi.  
(They cannot be witches.)
- g. (i) Ngwano e ka se **be** ngwetši yaka.  
(ii) Ngwano e ka se ke ya **ba** ngwetši yaka.  
(This cannot be my daughter-in-law.)
- h. (i) Mafahla ale e ka se **be** basadi ba gagwe.  
(ii) Mafahla ale e ka se ke ya **ba** basadi ba gagwe.  
(Those twin sisters cannot be his wife.)

The copula in example (15a-h) above is either **be** or **ba**. The copulatives indicate possibility and ability in the negative form of the potential mood in (15a-h). Examples (15a-f) show that the subjects are not able to become witches because they are naturally not able. The same reason causes the possibility of them not to become witches in future. Sentence (15g) means it is not possible for the referent to be one's daughter-in-law because she is already married or too young to be one's daughter-in-law. The same also applies to (15h).

#### 3.2.1.4 The subjunctive mood

*The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (1987:1054) defines subjunctive mood as a verb form or a set of verb forms used in some languages to express doubt, wishes, situations that do not actually exist. Subjunctive mood has one positive form and two negative forms that indicate desire, instruction and necessity in proper verbs.

##### (16) Positive form

- a. (gore) **o bolele**. (desire)  
(so that) you should speak.

- b. (gore) **le tle le thuše.** (instruction)  
(so that) you come and help.
- c. Re swanetše gore **re fetše.** (necessity)  
(It is necessary that we complete.)

Negative form

- d. (i) (gore) **o se je.** (desire)  
(ii) (gore) **o se ke wa ja.**  
(so that) you should not eat.
- e. (i) (gore) **le tle le se thuše.** (instruction)  
(ii) (gore) **le tle le se ke la thuša.**  
(so that) you should not come and help.
- f. (i) Re swanetše gore **re se fetše.** (necessity)  
(ii) Re swanetše gore **re se ke ra fetša.**  
(It is necessary that we do not complete.)

The copula of the identifying copulatives in this mood in the positive form is: SC for persons or copulative prefix **e** in classes, and the CV **bê**. The mood is indicated by a subordinate clause. Lyons (1968:312) supports this statement by saying that:

... for the traditional grammarian the subjunctive was a mood of subordination par excellence.

That is the reason why subjunctive mood is written after the conjunction **gore**, which is bracketed in the examples below:

- (17) a. (gore) **ke be mooki.** (1ps)  
(so that) I should be a nurse.

- b. (gore) **re be** baoki. (1pp)  
(so that) we should be nurses.
- c. (gore) **o be** mooki. (2ps)  
(so that) you should be a nurse.
- d. (gore) **le be** baoki. (2pp)  
(so that) you should be nurses.
- e. (gore) **e be** mooki. (3ps)  
(so that) he/she should be a nurse.
- f. (gore) **ba be** baoki. (3pp)  
(so that) they should be nurses.
- g. (gore) phaga **e be** katse.  
(so that) wild cat should be a domestic cat.
- h. (gore) **e be** baagi ba Dwarsloop.  
(so that) they should be citizens of Dwarsloop.
- i. (gore) **e be** baratani ba mmakgonthe.  
(so that) they should be real lovers.
- j. (gore) **e be** mmu wa seloko.  
(so that) it should be loam soil.

The identifying copulative in the subjunctive mood in the negative form has two forms. One form consists of **se** for persons, copulative prefix **e** for classes, negative particle **se, ke**, CMP + a and the CV **ba**. The other form consists of SC for persons, copulative prefix **e** for classes, negative particle **se** and CV **bê**.



- (18) a. (i) (gore) **ke se be** lehodu. (1ps)  
(ii) (gore) **ke se ke ka ba** lehodu.  
(so that) I should not be a thief.
- b. (i) (gore) **re se be** mahodu. (1pp)  
(ii) (gore) **re se ke ra ba** mahodu.  
(so that) we should not be thieves.
- c. (i) (gore) **o se be** setlatla. (2ps)  
(ii) (gore) **o se ke wa ba** setlatla.  
(so that) you should not be a fool.
- d. (i) (gore) **le se be** ditlaela. (2pp)  
(ii) (gore) **e se ke ya ba** ditlaela.  
(so that) you should not be fools.
- e. (i) (gore) **e se be** sebody. (3ps)  
(ii) (gore) **e se ke ya ba** sebody.  
(so that) he/she should not be a lazy person.
- f. (i) (gore) **ba se be** dibodu. (3pp)  
(ii) (gore) **e se ke ya ba** dibodu.  
(so that) they should not be a lazy person.
- g. (i) (gore) **e se be** molato.  
(ii) (gore) **e se ke ya ba** molato.  
(so that) it should not be a crime.
- h. (i) (gore) **e se be** mathata.  
(ii) (gore) **e se ke ya ba** mathata.  
(so that) it should not be a problem.

- i. (i) (gore) **e se be** digole.  
(ii) (gore) **e se ke ya ba** digole.  
(so that) it should not be cripples.
  
- j. (i) (gore) **e se be** mpholo.  
(ii) (gore) **e se ke ya ba** mpholo.  
(so that) it should not be a poison.

The identifying copulative in the subjunctive mood expresses wishes or desire. Instructions are also possible as in (17c-d) and (18c-d) above. Whatever is done, it is done so that something should happen. In example (17j) for instance, compost, fertilizers and kraal manure are added to sandy soil so that it should be loamy soil. In the negative, whenever something is done, it is done so that a bad thing should not happen. The evidence is seen in examples (18a-j).

### 3.2.1.5 The infinitive mood

*The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (1987:537) defines the infinitive mood as the form of a verb that is usually used with ‘to’ and can follow a noun, adjective or other verbs. The copula of the identifying copulative in the infinitive mood is **go ba** in the positive form and **go se be** in the negative form. The meaning is ‘to be’ and ‘not to be’ in English. The infinitive mood in the identifying copulative is a subordinate clause as seen in the examples (19a-f) below:

- (19) a. **Go ba mosadi** ke mahlatse Afrika Borwa.  
(To be a woman is an advantage in South Africa.)
  
- b. **Go se be mosadi** ke mahlatse Afrika Borwa.  
(Not to be a woman is an advantage in South Africa.)

- c. **Go ba morutiši** ke moleko.  
(To be a teacher is a challenge.)
- d. **Go se be morutiši** go phalwa ke go ba morutiši.  
(Not to be a teacher is better than to be a teacher.)
- e. Ke duma **go ba modumedi**.  
(I wish to be a Christian.)
- f. Go nyakega **go se be lehodu**.  
(It is necessary not to be a thief.)

The identifying copulative in the infinitive mood has the features of a verb and a noun. Nokaneng (1987:98) concurs with this statement by saying:

Modirišo wo ke lediri ebile ke leina. O na le dika tša leina le dika tša lediri.

As a noun, the infinitive can function as a subject or an object. **Go ba mosadi** and **go ba morutiši** are subjects in sentences: **go ba mosadi ke mahlatse Afrika Borwa** and **go ba morutiši ke moleko** in (19a & c) above. In (19e-f) **go ba modumedi** and **go se be lehodu** are objects of the sentences: **Ke duma go ba modumedi** and **go nyakega go se be lehodu**.

Infinitives also bear the properties of a verb because they can be negated as in (19b, d and f) above. The meaning of a subordinate or dependent clause depends on the principal or independent clause. Sentence (19a) means that women in South Africa have a lot of benefits as a result of their gender. They have a lot of rights, greater job opportunities and leadership positions, scholarships recognition and tenders just to mention a few. Example (19c) above is that one wishes to be a Christian because as a Christian one will not waste money in buying liquor and drugs maybe,

pay consultation fees to traditional doctors for help and protection and one could have a peace of mind as a Christian.

### 3.2.1.6 **The consecutive mood**

Poulos and Louwrens (1994:241) say the consecutive mood is used when actions follow one another in a sequence.

It means actions are following one another in a regular unbroken order. The mood can occur in the positive and negative forms as subordinate clauses. The copula is **ya ba** in the positive and two negative forms **ya se be** and **ya se ke ya ba** as exemplified below:

- (20) a. Lesogana le swere lotho **ya ba mohumi**.  
(The young man won lotto and became a rich man.)
- b. Morutiši o šomile kudu **ya ba hlogo ya sekolo**.  
(The teacher worked very hard and became a principal.)
- c. Bogobe bo tla fola **ya ba molatša**.  
(The porridge will be cool and become stale.)
- d. Rakgolo o tla wa ka koloi **ya ba segole**.  
(Grandfather will be involved in an accident and become a cripple.)
- e. (i) Lesogana le swere lotho fela, **ya se be mohumi**.  
(ii) Lesogana le swere lotho fela, **ya se ke ya ba Mohumi**.  
(The young man won lotto, but did not become a rich man.)

- f. (i) Morutiši o šomile kudu fela, **ya se be hlogo ya sekolo.**
- (ii) Morutiši o šomile kudu fela, **ya se ke ya ba hlogo ya sekolo.**  
(The teacher worked hard, but did not become a principal.)
- g. (i) Rakgolo o tla wa ka koloji fela, **ya se be segole.**
- (ii) Rakgolo o tla wa ka koloji fela, **ya se ke ya ba segole.**  
(Grandfather will be involved in an accident but he will not become a cripple.)

The meaning of **ya ba mohumi** in (20a) above as a subordinate clause, depends on the principal clause **lesogana le swere lotho**. The young man became rich because he won lotto and did not misuse the money. The teacher in example (20f(i)) did not become a principal despite his/her had working. The reason is that one does not become a principal by merely working hard but, there are procedures followed like: applying, being shortlisted, competing and passing in an interview. If the panel can realize that one does not have leadership skills then one loses the post despite being a hard worker. Sentence (20d) means that it is easier and usual for older people to become cripples when involved in accidents because it is believed that at an older age the immune system of a person is very weak and bones are fragile.

Sentence (20e(i)) means that the young man won lotto, became a multi-millionaire but his riches did not last longer because he misused or overspent the money within a short space of time due to lack of financial management and professional advice. The examples in (ii)'s in (e-g) give more emphasis on what the (i)'s mean.

### 3.2.1.7 The situative mood

Grobler *et al.*, (1988:254) define a situative mood as one where two actions occur simultaneously or an action occur with the main action of a sentence. The situative mood in Northern Sotho indicates a set of conditions and it is a subordinate clause. The situative mood occurs in three tenses, namely: present, past and future; and in two forms, positive and negative.

#### (a) Present tense

The copula of the identifying copulatives is the relevant SC **e** for persons, copulative prefix for classes and CV **le**. In the negative form the copulative verb **se** replaces CV **le**.

- (21) a. Ge **ke le** noši mpotšišeng.  
(If I am alone, ask me.)
- b. Ge **ke se** noši mpotšišeng.  
(If I am not alone, ask me.)
- c. Ge **e le** mosetsana, a tle.  
(If she is a girl, let her come.)
- d. Ge **e se** mosetsana, a tle.  
(If the person is not a girl, let him come.)

#### (b) Past tense

The identifying copulative's copula is formed by the relevant SC for persons or copulative prefix **e** for classes, auxillary verb **be**, SC or copulative prefix **e** and the

CV **le**. In the negative form, the CV **le** is replaced by the CV **se** as seen in the following examples:

- (22) a. O go fepile ka ge **e be e le** rrago.  
(He maintained you because he has been your father.)
- b. O mo katile ka ge **e be e se** rragwe.  
(He raped her because he was not her father.)
- c. Ka ge **e be e le** mosadi o mo rogile.  
(Because she was a woman, he/she cursed her.)
- d. Ka ge **e be e se** mosadi, o mo tšhabile.  
(Because he was not a woman, he/she was afraid of him.)

(c) **Future tense**

In the future tense, the copula of the identifying copulative is formed by the relevant SC for persons or copulative prefix **e** for classes, **tla**, relevant SC or copulative prefix **e** and the CV **le** in the positive and the CV **se** replaces the CV **le** in the negative form.

- (23) a. Le ge **ke tla be ke le** mooki, nka se mo alafe.  
(Even if I would be a nurse, I will never nurse him/her.)
- b. Le ge **ke tla be ke se** mooki, nka se mo alafe.  
(Even if I would not be a nurse, I will never nurse him/her.)
- c. Le ge **e tla be e le** mmago, a ka se go kgone.  
(Even if she would be your mother, she could not do it.)

- d. Le ge **e tla be e se** kgoši, ke tla mo hlompa.  
(Even if he would not be a king, I will respect him.)

The situative mood, as indicated in 3.2.1.7 above, shows condition. In (21a) above, the sentence means that the speaker must be asked when alone. The motive behind is that one will be able to speak freely, like when one is informing the police about criminals, one wants to be sure of her/his safety, then, one needs to be alone. The negation in (21b) conversely means that one should not be asked questions when one is alone. At the presence of others, one can answer any question because in future those others will serve as witnesses should the need arise. It further means that there is no secret in whatever he/she is going to say. Example (21c) sets a condition whereby the person that must come should strictly be a girl not a boy or a woman. The motive behind is that girls are usually softspoken, respectful, more active than boys and are not naughty like boys. Women are older than girls, so, they must not come because they cannot act like girls. Sentence (22a) indicates that the person concerned was maintaining the child on condition that he was the biological father. The implication is that if he was not the biological father, he would not have maintained the child. Sentences (23a-d) above, however, do not show condition but concession. No matter what, things will happen regardless of any condition.

### 3.2.1.8 The hortative mood

According to Nokaneng (1987:108), the hortative mood is one that is used when a request is made and it also shows respect. Nokaneng further mentions that the following words precede the identifying copulative: **nke**, **anke**, **ake** and **a**. **Hle** may also be placed at the end of a sentence. The copula is a relevant SC and the CV **be** in positive and the relevant SC, CVs **se** and **be** in the negative forms.

- (24) a. Anke o be moetapele wa rena (hle).  
(Please, be our leader.)



- b. Anke o se be moetepele wa rena (hle).  
(Please, do not be our leader.)
- c. Ake o be kgoši ya Bapedi (hle).  
(Please, be Bapedi's chief.)
- d. Ake o se be kgoši ya Bapedi (hle).  
(Please, do not be Bapedi's chief.)
- e. Nke le beng banna.  
(Please be men.)
- f. Nke le se beng banna.  
(Please do not be men.)
- g. A re beng mašole.  
(Let us be soldiers.)
- h. A re se beng mašole.  
(Let us not be soldiers.)

The words **nke**, **anke**, **ake**, **a** and **hle** in the hortative mood serve to indicate a request and respect. Should those words be removed, the sentences will be in the imperative mood. The aforementioned words bring about the distinction between the two moods. The request, like a command, is directed to the second person singular or plural, as in examples (24a-h) above. The meaning of (24e) above, for instance, is that the said people (men) are requested to behave in a manner selffitting males or to be patient, tolerant or brave enough. Sentence (24g) means that one makes an appeal to fellow friends to join the military profession or to stay brave and confident. 'ng' is affixed to the copulative verb to show plurality as in examples (24e-h).

### 3.2.1.9 The habitual mood

Habitual mood is one showing that the preceding action will result in something usual, customary or something done as a habit. Louwrens (1991:46) supports the statement by saying that:

Habitual subordinate clauses present series of actions which are not only carried out in a particular order, but which are performed as a habit.

Lombard (1985:156) explains that a habitual mood is a verb indicating an action or process that proceeds as a habit from previous actions, processes or events.

A habitual mood is a subordinate clause in Northern Sotho and occurs in positive and negative forms. The copula of the habitual mood is a relevant SC or copulative prefix **e** and the CV **be** in the positive form. In the negative form, **se** precedes the **be** as seen in the following examples:

- (25) a. Masogana a nwa bjala kudu **e be** ditagwa.  
(Young men drink beer too much and habitually become drunkards.)
- b. Basadi ba reka dihlare **e be** baloi.  
(Women buy herbs and usually become witches.)
- c. Basetsana ba šomiša dipilisi **e se be** baimana.  
(Girls use contraceptive pills and usually do not fall pregnant.)

The meaning of example (25a) above is that when the young men drink too much beer, it is usual that they become drunkards. It is not a miracle or a magic, but a custom that will surprise no one. Sentence (25c) means that it is usual for girls who

use contraceptive pills not to fall pregnant. It will be a surprise should they (girls) fall pregnant while using contraceptives.

### 3.2.2 Identifying copulative; position and ambiguity

The normal (word order) position of elements in the identifying copulative is: subject (S), verb (V) and Object (O), where both the CV and the O serve as the complement of the S. When the elements change their normal positions, the semantics of the sentence will change although the subject and the objects remain identical and equal. The sentences are also ambiguous as they have more than one meaning. The grammatical ambiguity is, however, not caused by the word order change, but it is one characteristic of the identifying copulative. Grammatical ambiguity is one that is caused by the whole sentence rather than one element of the sentence. This process is called structural ambiguity. The examples below will clarify what is explained above:

- (26) a. Monna yo ke moloi. (SVO)  
(This man is a wizard.)
- b. Moloi ke monna yo. (OVS)  
(A wizard is this man.)
- c. Yo monna ke moloi. (SVO)  
(This man is a wizard.)
- d. Yo moloi ke monna. (OVS)  
(This wizard is a man.)
- e. Ke moloi yo monna. (VOS)  
(It's a wizard this man.)

- f. Ke moloi, monna yo. (VOS)  
(It's a wizard this man)

Sentence (26a) above either means the man is practising magic or witchcraft, or he is cruel. Example (26b) either means it is the man who practices witchcraft or magic not his wife, or it is the man who is cruel and his wife is not. In (29c) above, the sentence means the man is amongst others, and he is not like them, his behaviour is bad like that of a wizard. The example in (26d) denotes that the sex of the person practising witchcraft is male, whereas on the other hand it means the male person practising magic or witchcraft is brave. The word **monna** in that regard refers to his bravery and not his sex. While Sentence (26e) lays stress on the fact that the man is a wizard or that he is cruel, example (26f) gives an emphasis on the fact that actions of the man are bad and not necessarily that he practises witchcraft. In Sentences (26a-f) above, despite their semantic differences, the subject **monna** and its complement **moloi** remain identical and equal.

### 3.2.3 The identical copulative and the auxillary verbs

According to Louwrens (1991:61), there are three types of auxillary verbs, namely, those functioning as proper main verbs, real auxillary verbs and deficient auxillary verb forms. Lombard (1985:189) explains deficient auxillary verbs as verbs that are in any way shortened in a word group and he identified six of them, namely, ad hoc (gana go > gano), future (tla go < tlo), casual (fa go > fo, na go > no and dira go > dio), potential (ka), persistive (sa) and immediate past tense (tšwa go > tšo). In Northern Sotho, auxillary verbs in the identifying copulative indicate tense, mood and negation.

Louwrens (1991:61) and Lombard (1985:187-8) indicate that the complements of auxillary verbs may be the following mood: situative, infinitive, subjunctive and consecutive. Poulos and Louwrens (1984:272) support the statement by mentioning that auxillary verbs must be followed by some or other complement and that

copulatives may function as complements of auxiliary verbs. The following examples will justify the statement.

- (27) a. Matome o **rata** go ba kgoši . (Infinitive mood)  
(Matome wants to be a king.)
- b. Rebone o **tlwaetše** go ba ngwetši gohle. (Habitual mood)  
(Rebone is used to be a groom everywhere.)
- c. Malose e **kile** ya ba kgoši. (Past tense and indicative mood)  
(Malose once became a king.)
- d. Ba **ile** ba ba bagwera. (Past tense and indicative mood)  
(They were friends.)
- e. Bonang e **tla** ba mmasetšhaba. (Future tense and indicative mood.)  
(Bonang will be the queen.)
- f. Marumo e **hlwa** e eba moetapele. (Habitual mood)  
(Marumo used to be a leader.)
- g. Reneilwe o rutegile ya **napa** ya ba ngaka. (Consecutive mood)  
(Reneilwe studied and became a doctor.)
- h. Mmolotšeng **gore** e be monnanna. (Subjunctive mood)  
(Circumcise him so that he becomes a real man.)
- i. Ga **ešo** ya ba mosadi. (Negative)  
(She is not yet a woman.)

Sentence (27a) either means that Matome wants to be a tribal chief by the way he behaves, even though the chieftainship does not belong to him; or Matome behaves in a way that he wants to be a boss of the people around him. Example (27b) means whenever Rebone meets a new boyfriend she will stay at the boyfriend's home or place. In Sentence (27c), **Malose** was one time a chief but now he is not or he was a good person but now he is no longer good. The referents in example (27d) were friends and now they are no longer friends, but not necessarily that they are enemies now. In example (27e), **Bonang** is not a queen now but she will be one in the near future. Example (27f) displays ambiguity as it can either mean that **Marumo** was a good leader and now he is just a leader doing what is not expected of him; or **Marumo** was once a leader in his lifetime. Sentence (27g) means that **Reneilwe** became a doctor as a result of studying very hard. Example (27i) means that the referent is too young to be a woman or wife and cannot carry the responsibilities of a woman or wife. Examples (27) above indicate tense, moods and negation.

### 3.2.4 The identifying copulative and the conjunction

Leech *et. al.*, (1982:52) define conjunction in this way:

CONJUNCTIONS, like prepositions, are introductory linking words; but they often introduce clauses rather than phrases. In fact, they subdivide into two main classes, SUBORDINATING conjunctions and CO-ORDINATING conjunctions ...

Co-ordinating conjunctions link two main clauses while a subordinating conjunction links the main clause and the subordinate clause. The subordinating conjunctions indicate the subjunctive and the situative moods while the co-ordinating conjunctions indicate the indicative mood in the identifying copulative. The following examples justify the statement above:

- (28) a. **Ge e le mosadi** a tsene.  
(If it is a woman, let her come in.)
- b. **Ka ge e le mogatšago** mo patelele.  
(Because he/she is your spouse, pay for him/her.)
- c. **Le ge e le mokgekolo** o nyetšwe.  
(Even though she is an old lady, she is married.)
- d. O šomile kudu **gore e be hlogo ya sekolo**.  
(He/she worked very hard to become a principal.)
- e. **Matime ke kgoši ebile ke ngaka**.  
(Matime is a chief and a traditional doctor too.)
- f. **Marumo ke lephodisa fela ke lehodu**.  
(Marumo is a policeman but he is also a thief.)

In examples (28a-b) above, the subordinating conjunctions **ge** and **ka ge** inform us about the conditions on which the woman can come in and the money to be paid for the spouse. Sentence (28d) above tells us about the purpose of working hard. In sentences (28e-f) above, the coordinating conjunctions declare that **Matime** is a **chief** and a **traditional doctor** while **Marumo** is a **police** and a **thief**. In examples (28a-c) above, situative mood is shown and (28d) above shows subjunctive mood while (28e-f) above show indicative mood.

### 3.2.5 The identifying copulative and the interrogatives

According to the *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2003:658), an interrogative is a specialised word or sentence used when asking a question. Leech *et al.*, (1982:80-81) identify two types of interrogatives, namely, the **yes-no** and the **wh-** interrogatives. Louwrens (1991:134), on the other hand, identifies three of them as those used to question

the information contained in: the verb, either the subject or the object noun phrase and the sentence as a whole.

In Northern Sotho, the identifying copulative brings about answers of the two interrogatives ‘**mang**’ (who) and ‘**eng**’ (what). They are the **wh**- interrogatives according to Leech *et. al.*, (1982) and those used to question the information contained in either the subject or object noun phrases, that is, according to Louwrens (1991). Consider the following examples:

- (29) a. Mashashane ke mang? Question  
(Who is Mashashane?)  
  
Mashashane ke kgoši ya Matebele. Answer  
(Mashashane is the Matebele chief.)
- b. Kgoši ya lena e bile mang? Question  
(Who was your king?)  
  
Kgoši ya lena e bile Senwamadi. Answer  
(Your king was Senwamadi)
- c. Tau ke eng? Question  
(What is a lion?)  
  
Tau ke phoofolo ya lešoka. Answer  
(A lion is a wild animal.)

The answers to the two interrogatives, **mang** (singular), **bomang** (plural) and **eng**, are syntactically giving the complements of the subjects in the identifying copulative **Kgoši ya Matebele**, **Senwamadi** and **phoofolo ya lešoka** complement **Mashashane**, **kgoši ya lena** and **tau**, respectively in examples (29a-c) above. The



complements and the subjects are equal and identical, and can interchange positions without affecting the semantics of the sentences.

### 3.2.6 The identifying copulative and the proverbs

According to *The South African Oxford School Dictionary* (1996:351), a proverb is a short well-known saying that states a truth. Some Northern Sotho proverbs are in the identifying copulative. Some proverbs appear in a positive form while others in a negative form. In this case, the subject and its complement are not equal or identical but, share one or more qualities. The meaning that is brought about is figurative. The following examples illustrate this point well:

(30) a. **Bošego ke tau** bo re go sa re hlolane.

**Literal translation:** The night is a lion, we should check one another in the morning.

**Communicative translation:** **Bošego** (night) like **tau** (lion) is dangerous, neighbours should check one another whether bad things did happen or not over the night. This should be done in the next morning.

b. **Sehlare sa mosotho ke lekgowa.**

**Literal translation:** The medicine of an African is a white person.

**Communicative translation:** An African will stop bad behaviour or actions when reported to a white person because white people use to be feared by Africans, especially during the apartheid era.

c. **Mosadi ke pudi, monna ke nku.**

**Literal translation:** A woman is a goat, a man is a sheep.

**Communicative translation:** A woman is a coward like a goat and a man is brave like a sheep when challenges are met.

- d. **Didirwabana ke didirwabaloi.**  
**Literal translation:** The actions of children are the same as those of the witches.  
**Communicative translation:** Parents should be patient to children as children's behaviour are bad due to their mental immaturity.
- e. **Go leka noka ga se go wela.**  
**Literal translation:** To try to cross a river is not to fall into it.  
**Communicative translation:** A person should try to solve a problem no matter how difficult it is, because one might succeed in solving it.
- f. **Go ja monna ga se go mo fetša.**  
**Literal translation:** To eat a man is not to finish him.  
**Communicative translation:** One must not give up when one loses what one has (belongings), as long as ne lives, one will accumulate more wealth than before.

### 3.2.7 The identifying copulative and the idioms

According to *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (1987:517) an idiom is a phrase which means something different from the meaning of the separate words from which it is formed.

In Northern Sotho there are idioms that appear in the identifying copulatives as illustrated below:

- (31) a. **Go ba molomo o tee.**  
**Literal translation:** To be one mouth.

**Communicative translation:** To speak of one thing because of oneness.

b. **Go ba molomo wa batho.**

**Literal translation:** To be people's mouth.

**Communicative translation:** To speak on behalf of others.

c. **Go ba molomo wa lehlabula.**

**Literal translation:** To be the mouth of an autumn.

**Communicative translation:** To agree on one thing.

d. **Go ba tsebe ya motho.**

**Literal translation:** To be someone's ear.

**Communicative translation:** To listen on behalf of somebody, especially in a meeting.

e. **Go ba mpša.**

**Literal translation:** To be a dog.

**Communicative translation:** To be very poor or to misbehave.

f. **Go ba noga.**

**Literal translation:** To be a snake.

**Communicative translation:** To be a crook.

g. **Go ba kolobe.**

**Literal translation:** To be a pig.

**Communicative translation:** To be careless, eat too much or to be too fat.

h. **Go ba pelo ya motho.**

**Literal translation:** To be someone's heart.

**Communicative translation:** To be loved too much by somebody.

- i. **Go ba letsogo la motho.**

**Literal translation:** To be somebody's hand.

**Communicative translation:** To be a vice or a deputy of somebody, especially at work.

### 3.3 THE DESCRIPTIVE COPULATIVE

The complement in the descriptive copulative describes the subject as the name of the copulative suggests as in examples 32 below:

- (32) a. Legapu le monate.  
(The watermelon is sweet.)
- b. Thipa e bogale.  
(The knife is sharp.)
- c. Dijo di bose.  
(The food is delicious.)

**Monate, bogale** and **bose** in the above example describe the subject NPs **legapu, thipa** and **dijo** respectively. The descriptive occurs in different moods, tenses and forms.

#### 3.3.1 The descriptive copulative and moods

The following moods occur in the descriptive copulative:

##### 3.3.1.1 The indicative mood

The indicative mood in the descriptive copulative occurs in three tenses, namely: present, past and future; and two forms, which are, namely, positive and negative

(a) **Present tense**

The copula of the descriptive copulative in the present tense, positive form in the indicative mood, is the relevant SC as illustrated in examples (33a-e) below:

- (33) a. Wena o bohlae.  
(You are wise.)
- b. Bogobe bjo bo meetse.  
(This porridge is soft.)
- c. Lešela leo le bothata.  
(That cloth is hard.)
- d. Dieta tša ka di bonolo.  
(My shoes are soft.)
- e. Mosadi o boima.  
(A woman is troublesome.)

The examples in (33a-e) above, reflect the copulative verb COP in Northern Sotho. This verb is regarded as abstract as it cannot be reflected by a distinguishable morpheme. Its existence poses some terminological problems because Louwrens (1991:65) calls the copulative verb COP variable copulative particles, whereas Poulos and Louwrens (1984) call it a copulative prefix.

The meaning of Sentence (33a) above is that the referent is wise because he/she can learn or understand faster than other learners if he/she is learning. The sentence can also mean that the referent can make good judgement or decisions. Example (33b) means that the porridge is too soft than it is expected to be. What is meant in Sentence (33c) is that the cloth is made up of a strong material that is not easy to

tear, handwash and remove its wrinkles by hot iron. In Sentence (33d) above, what is meant is that the shoes are easy to walk due to its comfort or the shoes are easy to make (design). While example (33e) means that a woman is heavier in weight than a man, it also means that it is difficult to maintain a woman (to look after a wife).

The copula of the descriptive copulative in the present tense negative form (indicative mood) is formed by the morpheme **ga** and the relevant SC, as shown in examples (34a-e) below:

- (34) a. Tšhelete **ga e** bohlokwa.  
(Money is not important.)
- b. Thuto **ga e** bohlokwa lehono.  
(Education is not important today.)
- c. Ngwana **ga a** boima matšatši a.  
(A child is not a burden nowadays.)
- d. Ditaba **ga di** monate.  
(The news are not good.)
- e. Hlogo **ga e** bohloko.  
(Headache is not painful.)

Sentence (34a) above means that a large amount of money is not important but, what is important is how a person spends it. The same sentence implies that one can have enough money but misspends or mishandles it. The meaning of example (34b) is that education is useless today (nowadays) because educated people, just like the uneducated ones, are unemployed, especially in South Africa. Education, therefore, makes no difference. This may not be factually correct, but it is the general perception that prevails in the society. In Sentence (34c), the meaning is

that it is not difficult to bring up and maintain a child today because technology helps people in washing clothes for example, and a child-support grant is also available to the unemployed and low income earners in South Africa. In example (34d), what is meant is that news is not good because news may hurt or offend one. The Sentence in (34e) does not necessarily mean that a headache is not painful, but means that there are parts of the body that are more painful than headache, such as toothache for example.

(b) **Past tense**

According to Nokaneng and Louwrens (1999:340), there are two forms of the descriptive copulative in the past tense in the positive form as illustrated by example (35) below:

- (35) a. (i) Tatelo o **bile** bogale.  
(ii) Tatelo o **be** a le bogale.  
(Tatelo was fearsome.)
- b. (i) Itumeleng o **bile** botse.  
(ii) Itumeleng o **be** a le botse.  
(Itumeleng was beautiful.)
- c. (i) Dijo di **bile** bose.  
(ii) Dijo di **be** di le bose.  
(The food was delicious.)
- d. (i) Tlhahlobo ya mafelelo a ngwaga e **bile** boleta.  
(ii) Tlhahlobo ya mafelelo a ngwaga e **be** e le boleta.  
(The final year examination was simple.)

- e. (i) Meetse a **bile** borutho.
  - (ii) Meetse a **be** a le borutho.
- (The water was warm.)

Sentences (35a-e) above imply that the referents were once in some state and now they are no longer in that state. For example, **Itumeleng** in (35b) was once beautiful but now she is no longer beautiful. The reasons may be that she was young, well-mannered, well-maintained by then, but now she is older, a drunkard and exposed to malnutrition and hard conditions, hence she is no longer beautiful.

The descriptive copulative in the past tense negative form has four forms as exemplified below:

- (36) a. (i) Tatelo ga se a ba boleta.
- (ii) Tatelo ga a ba boleta.
- (iii) Tatelo ga se a be boleta.
- (iv) Tatelo o be a se boleta.
- (Tatelo was not/never polite.)
- b. (i) Itumeleng ga se a ba botse.
- (ii) Itumeleng ga a ba botse.
- (iii) Itumeleng ga se a be botse.
- (iv) Itumeleng o be a se botse.
- (Itumeleng was not/never beautiful.)
- c. (i) Dijo ga se tša ba bose.
- (ii) Dijo ga tša ba bose.
- (iii) Dijo ga se di be bose.
- (iv) Dijo di be di se bose.
- (The food was not/never delicious.)



- d. (i) Tlhahlobo ga se ya ba boleta.  
(ii) Tlhahlobo ga ya ba boleta.  
(iii) Tlhahlobo ga se e be boleta.  
(iv) Tlhahlobo e be e se boleta.  
(The final examination was not/never simple.)
- e. (i) Meetse ga se a ba borutho.  
(ii) Meetse ga a ba borutho.  
(iii) Meetse ga se a be borutho.  
(iv) Meetse a be a se borutho.  
(The water was not/never warm.)

The implication of Sentences (36a-e) above is that the referents were not what people think they are. For instance, **Tatelo** in Sentence (36a) was thought to be polite all along for example but, now that he is reflecting his true colours, it is realised that he was never polite. Likewise, **Itumeleng** in Sentence (36b) seemed to be beautiful because she used to wear make-up, for example, but now that she no longer wears it, it is realised that she was never beautiful.

(c) **Future tense**

The positive form of the descriptive copulative in the future tense is illustrated in the examples (37a-e) below:

- (37) a. Bana ba tla/tlo ba noši.  
(The children will be alone.)
- b. Baithuti ba tla/tlo ba mafolofolo.  
(The learners will be motivated.)

- c. Diaparo di tla/tlo ba boima.  
(The clothes will be heavy.)
- d. Lesogana le tla/tlo ba bonolo.  
(The young man will be submissive.)
- e. Roko yeo e tla/tlo ba botse.  
(That dress will be beautiful.)

Examples (37a-e) above imply that other actions or states occur prior to the descriptions given by the complements **noši**, **mafolofolo**, **boima**, **bonolo** and **botse**. For instance, example (37a) means that the children will be alone after their parents have died or left them alone at home. The dying or the leaving behind of the children occur before the children can be alone (**noši**). Likewise, **baithuti** in (37b) will be motivated after a motivational speech has been given to them.

The negative form of the descriptive copulative is characterized by the negative morpheme **se** preceding **be** as illustrated in examples (38a-e) below:

- (38) a. Bana ba ka se be noši.  
(The children will not be alone.)
- b. Baithuti ba ka se be mafolofolo.  
(The learners will not be motivated.)
- c. Diaparo di ka se be boima.  
(The clothes will not be heavy.)
- d. Lesogana le ka se be bonolo.  
(The young man will not be submissive.)

- e. Tšhukudu e ka se be botse.  
(A rhinoceros will not be beautiful.)

The general meaning of Sentences (38a-e) is based on the belief of one's society. For instance, society believes that men are not naturally submissive but women are. Sentence (38d) above therefore, suggests that the young man is aggressive, whereas Sentence (38e) suggests that a rhinoceros is ugly.

### 3.3.1.2 The imperative mood

The imperative mood in the descriptive copulative occurs in the positive and negative forms and does occur in present tense only. According to Grobler *et. al.*, (1988:355), the imperative mood is used to give orders, warnings, requests and courage. The orders (commands) are often directed to the second person singular or plural. Plurality is indicated by the suffix **-ng**. The following examples are illustrative of this:

- (39) a. Eba/baa boleta!  
(Be polite!)
- b. Eba/baa bohlale!  
(Be wise!)
- c. Ebang noši.  
(Be alone.)
- d. Ebang ba bantši!  
(Be many!)

The copula of the descriptive copulative in an imperative mood positive form is formed by the copulative prefix **e-** and CV **ba** as illustrated above. In Sentence (39a) the subject is requested to be polite as he/she seemed to be harsh for instance. In example (39c), the referent is warned to be careful of something, whereas in example (39e) the subject who is either in singular or plural is advised to be alone. Finally, in the sentence numbered (39d), the referents are encouraged to be many to work together in a group, for instance.

There are two ways in which the imperative mood in the descriptive copulative can be negated. The examples below justify the statements above:

- (40) a. (i) Se beng ba bantši!  
(ii) Le se ke la ba ba bantši!  
(Do not be many!)
- b. (i) Se be bothata!  
(ii) O se ke wa ba bothata!  
(Do not be difficult!)
- c. (i) Se be bogale!  
(ii) O se ke wa ba bogale!  
(Do not be bad-tempered!)

The negative morpheme **se** and the inflected form of **ba**, which is **be**, form the copula of the descriptive copulative in the imperative mood negative form.

Sentence (40a) above gives a warning that the referents should be few. Example (40b) request the referent not to be impossible. The referent in Sentence (40c) is advised to be polite.

### 3.3.1.3 The potential mood

The copula of the potential mood in the descriptive copulative positive form, is formed by the relevant SC, potential deficient verb **ka-** and the CV **ba** as illustrated by the examples in (41):

- (41) a. Dijo di ka ba bose.  
(The food can be delicious.)
- b. Kgarebe e ka ba botse.  
(A teenage girl can be beautiful.)
- c. Nama e ka ba boleta.  
(The meat can be soft.)

It seems as if Sentences (41a-c) above have possibilities depending on some implied conditions and other implications. The meaning of Sentence (41a) is that food can be delicious provided it is well cooked. The implied meaning is that food can be delicious unlike liquor. Sentence (41b) means that the girl can be beautiful if she puts on a prestigious evening dress. The same sentence also implies that teenage boys cannot be beautiful. In Sentence (41c), what is meant is that the meat can be soft if it is overcooked. The other meaning of the same sentence is that meat can be soft unlike bones.

There are two negative forms of the descriptive copulative for the potential mood. The examples below illustrate the statement above:

- (42) a. (i) Maswika a ka se be boleta.  
(ii) Maswika a ka se ke a ba boleta.  
(Stones cannot be soft.)

- b. (i) Lesea le ka se be noši.  
(ii) Lesea le ka se ke la ba noši.  
(A baby cannot be alone.)
  
- c. (i) Tšhwene e ka se be botse.  
(ii) Tšhwene e ka se ke ya ba botse.  
(A baboon cannot be beautiful.)

The meaning of Sentence (42a(i)) is merely that stones are naturally hard, so, there is no way that stones can be soft. The example in (42b(i)) means that society expects a mother to take care or look after her baby and it will, therefore, be highly unusual should a baby be left alone. Sentence (41c(i)) above means that a baboon is naturally ugly so, it cannot be beautiful. Sentences (42a(ii), b(ii) and c(ii)) are used to emphasise what is meant by those other sentences they appear with at the same letter.

#### 3.3.1.4 The subjunctive mood

The copula of the descriptive copulative in the positive form of the subjunctive mood is formed by the relevant SC and the copulative verb **be**. The descriptive copulative comes after **gore** as a subordinate clause, and it is darkened in the examples that follows:

- (43) a. Ke tlola mokhura a go tura gore **ke be boreledi**.  
(I use expensive body cream so that I can be smooth.)
  
- b. Tumi o apea nama ka dinokonoko gore **e be monate**.  
(Tumi cooks the meat with spice so that it can be delicious.)

- c. Lesegafela o tšeešwe bana gore **a be noši**.  
(They took Lesegafela's children away so that he can be alone.)
- d. Lolo o iphošonka gore **a be botse**.  
(Lolo wears make up so that she can look beautiful.)
- e. Selepe o gotetša hitara gore **go be borutho**.  
(Selepe switches on a heater so that the room can be warm.)

Examples (43a-e) above suggest that whenever something is done, it is done for a purpose and not for granted. In Sentence (43a) above, the expensive cream is used for the skin to be smooth, for instance. Likewise, in example (43b) **Tumi** adds spice to the meat to give it a good taste and flavour.

The subjunctive mood in the descriptive copulative has two negative forms that are illustrated by example (44) below:

- (44) a. (i) Moithuti o bala dipuku gore **tlhahlobo e se be bothata**.  
(ii) Moithuti o bala dipuku gore **tlhahlobo e se ke ya ba bothata**.  
(The learner studies so that examination cannot be difficult.)
- b. (i) Makgolokgolo o šogile mokgopa gore **o se be bothata**.  
(ii) Makgolokgolo o šogile mokgopa gore **o se ke wa ba bothata**.  
(Makgolokgolo softened the leather so that it cannot be hard.)
- c. (i) Delile o kutile Samsone meriri gore **a se be maatla**.  
(ii) Delile o kutile Samsone meriri gore **a se ke a ba maatla**.  
(Delilah cut Samson's hair so that he cannot be strong.)

- d. (i) Mmatladi o fokotša ngata ya dikgong gore **e se be boima**.  
(ii) Mmatladi o fokotša ngata ya dikgong gore **e se ke ya ba boima**.  
(Mmatladi reduces the firewood so that they cannot be heavy.)
- e. (i) Molatelo o oketša bupi gore **bogobe bo se be meetse**.  
(ii) Molatelo o oketša bupi gore **bogobe bo se ke bja ba meetse**.  
(Molatelo adds more mealie-meal so that the porridge cannot be soft.)

In Sentences (44a-e) above, what is suggested by the main clauses is meant for the improvement of what is suggested by the subordinate clauses. For example, in Sentence (44a) the reading of books is done to improve the performance of the candidate in the examination. Example (44c) conversely means that the cutting of Samson's hair was done to weaken him.

### 3.3.1.5 The infinitive mood

The infinitive mood in the descriptive copulative occurs in two forms, namely, positive and negative. The infinitive mood is formed by the subordinate clause as illustrated below in examples (45) and (46).

- (45) a. Ge batswadi ba se gona gae **go ba bohloko**.  
(If parents are not there it is painful.)
- b. Ge batswadi ba se gona gae **go ba monate**.  
(If parents are not at home it is nice.)
- c. Ge batswadi ba šoma ka moka **go ba monate**.  
(If all parents are working it is interesting.)



- d. Go a tšhoša **go ba noši**.  
(It is frightening to be alone.)
- e. Ge go šoma mosadi ka gae **go ba kaone**.  
(It is better if it is the woman who is working in a family.)

The copula **go ba** occurs in the infinitive mood positive form meaning ‘to be’ in English. Example (45a) means that it is painful if parents are not alive, because it is really difficult to replace parents at all times and to take all their responsibilities. Literally example (45b) means that while the cat is away, the mice will play. However, figuratively, it means that the children will feel free to play and misbehave when their parents are not at home. Sentence (45c) suggests that life is simple and better when both parents are working because they will help each other to maintain their children and themselves. The emphasis in example (45d) suggests that when one is alone fear will always accompany him/her. Example (45e) suggests that it is women who carry family responsibilities better than men. The general perception is that if it is a woman who is working in a family, it would be preferable because she will take care of everybody and everything in the family, unlike men who do not care much for their families.

The negative form of the infinitive mood is characterized by the copula **go se be**, meaning ‘not to be’ as illustrated in example (46) below:

- (46) a. **Go se be noši** go a nyakega mosading.  
(Not to be alone is necessary for a woman.)
- b. **Go se be boima** ga molato ke boitemogelo bja ramolao.  
(Not to be serious of a crime is the attorney’s experience.)
- c. **Go se be monate** ke go ba le mathata.  
(Not to be nice is to have problems.)

- d. Go laetša lehu ke **go se be kaone** ga bolwetši.  
(It shows death not to improve in a sickness.)
- e. **Go se be mafolofolo** ke bothata bja barutwana.  
(Not to be courageous is the problem of learners.)

The meaning of Sentence (46a) is that women should not be alone as they are not safe. They may be raped or kidnapped and killed. Sentence (46b) means that a crime may be serious but if a defence attorney is experienced it may become less serious. Less serious in this regard means that a light punishment may be given to the criminal. The meaning in Sentence (46c) is that if one is experiencing some problems he/she will be depressed. Example (46d) above is that if one is not healed or his/her condition does not improve, the person is going to die. In example (46e) above, what is meant is that a common problem of most learners is demotivation.

#### 3.3.1.6 The consecutive mood

The consecutive mood in the descriptive copulative occurs in positive form and two negative forms. The copulative verb in the positive form is **ba** as exemplified below:

- (47) a. Matome o šogile mokgopa **wa ba boleta**  
(Matome cured a leather and it became soft.)
- b. Temošo o apea nama **ya ba monate**.  
(Temošo cooks the meat and it becomes delicious.)
- c. Jumi o loutša selepe **sa ba bogale**.  
(Jumi sharpens an axe and it becomes sharp.)

- d. Ngwana o raloka nokeng **a ba meetse**.  
(The child plays in a river and becomes wet.)
- e. Barutiši ba ile kopanong **barutwana ba ba noši**.  
(Teachers went to a meeting and learners became alone.)

Sentences (47a-e) above, show that actions follow one another and that the second action depends on the first one. For instance, in example (47a) the curing of the leather by **Matome** is the one that causes it to become soft. Likewise, in Sentence (47e) the learners became alone after the teachers left then for a meeting.

The copulative verb in the negative form is **be** when used with the negative morpheme **-se-** and **ba** when used with morpheme **se ke-** as exemplified below:

- (48) a. (i) Maphodisa a boletše naye **a se be boleta**.  
(ii) Maphodisa a boletše naye **a se ke a ba boleta**.  
(Police talked to him/her but he/she did not become polite.)
- b. (i) Kefilwe o apeile nama ka meetse **ya se be monate**.  
(ii) Kefilwe o apeile nama ka meetse **ya se ke ya ba monate**.  
(Kefilwe boiled the meat but it did not become delicious.)
- c. (i) Mošemane o kgadilwe **a se be bogale**.  
(ii) Mošemane o kgadilwe **a se ke a ba bogale**.  
(The boy was punished but did not become ferocious.)
- d. (i) Monna o nwele bjala **a se be maatla**.  
(ii) Monna o nwele bjala **a se ke a ba maatla**.  
(The man drank beer and did not become strong.)
- e. (i) Barutwana ba paletšwe **ba se be le mafolofolo**.

- (ii) Barutwana ba paletšwe **ba se ke ba ba le mafolofolo**.  
(The learners failed and did not become motivated.)

The meaning of Sentence (48a) is that the police tried to talk to the troublesome referent, but it was in vain because he was not polite as usual. Sentence (48b) means that the water caused the meat not to be delicious because if **Kefilwe** would have cooked it with oil it would be delicious. In example (48c), what is meant is that the boy (referent) is usually ferocious but the punishment caused him not to be ferocious. Sentences (48d-e) mean that what is suggested by the principal clause is the cause of what is suggested by the subordinate clauses. For example, for the man not to be strong, it is because he drank, and for the learners not to be motivated it is because they failed.

### 3.3.1.7 The situative mood

The situative mood in the descriptive copulative occurs in three tenses and two forms (i.e., positive and negative). The situative mood forms subordinate clauses.

#### (a) Present tense

The copula of the descriptive copulative situative mood in the present tense is the relevant subject concord and the copulative verb **le** in the positive form. The examples below will be illustrative:

- (49) a. **Ge Polelo a le bohlae**, o tla re thuša.  
(If Polelo is wise, he will help us.)
- b. **Ge nama e le bose**, re tla eja.  
(If the meat is delicious, we will eat it.)

- c. **Ka ge mpša e le bogale**, ke tla e reka.  
(Because a dog is ferocious, I will buy it.)
- d. **Ka ge ba le noši**, ba tla tla.  
(Because they are alone, they will come.)
- f. **Le ge o le boleta**, batho ga ba kgotsofale.  
(Even is one is polite, people will not be satisfied.)

Examples (49a-b) show conditions that must be fulfilled first. For instance, **Polelo** will help the referent only if he is wise. The referents will eat the meat only if the meat is delicious. Sentences (49c-d) indicate reasons for executing the actions. One will buy a dog because it is ferocious, for instance. Sentence (49e) shows concession as people will not be satisfied despite one's polite behaviour.

The copula of the descriptive copulative situative mood in the present tense negative form is the relevant SC and the negative CV **se** as illustrated below:

- (50)
- a. Ge Boni a se bonolo, nka se mo hwetše.  
(If Boni is not ease, she will not accept my love.)
  - b. Ge lephopho le se bose, Lina o jela eng?  
(If the pawpaw is not sweet, why does Lina eat it?)
  - c. Ka ge basadi ba se maatla, ga ba dule.  
(Because women are not strong, let them remain.)
  - d. Ka ge ke se noši, mpatele.  
(Because I am not alone, pay me.)

- e. Le ge a se bohlae, mo ruteng.  
(Even though the person is not clever, teach him/her.)

Examples (50a-b) show conditions that should be met first for certain actions to be undertaken. One is sure that **Boni** will not accept his love if she is not a prostitute. Likewise, **Lina** will not eat the pawpaw if it is not sweet. Sentences (50c-d) suggest reasons for certain things to occur. Women should remain because they are not strong and one should be paid because she is not alone; the people accompanying one will serve as witnesses. Sentence (50e) show concession as the referent should be taught despite his/her not being clever.

(b) **Past tense**

The copula of the descriptive copulative situative mood in the past tense positive form consists of the relevant **SC**, the auxillary verb **be** and the CV **le**. In the negative form the CV **se** replaces the CV **le** as illustrated below:

- (51) a. (i) **Ge e be e le bogale**, e be e tla sega.  
(If it (knife) was sharp, it would cut.)
- (ii) **Ge e be e se bogale**, e be e ka se sege.  
(If it (knife) was not sharp, it would not cut.)
- b. (i) **Ge morwalo o be o le boima**, ke be nka se o kgone.  
(If the luggage was heavy, I would not be able to carry it.)
- (ii) **Ge morwalo o be o se boima**, ke be nka o kgona.  
(If the luggage was not heavy, I would be able to carry it.)

- c. (i) **Ge baithuti ba be ba le kotsi**, nka be ba swerwe.  
(If the students were dangerous, they would have been arrested.)
- (ii) **Ge baithuti ba be ba se kotsi**, nka be ba sa swarwa.  
(If the students were not dangerous, they would not have been arrested.)
- d. (i) **Ka ge ba be ba le bohlale**, ba tšweletše.  
(Because they were clever, they passed.)
- (ii) **Ka ge ba be ba se bohlale**, ba paletšwe.  
(Because they were not clever, they failed.)
- e. (i) **Le ge meetse a be a se borutho**, Bobo o a somišitše.  
(Even though the water was not warm, Bobo used it.)

When a sentence starts with the complementizer **ge**, or **ka ge**, or **e ge**, it shows condition, or reason or concession, respectively.

(c) **Future tense**

The morpheme **tla** or **tlo** indicates future tense in the positive form. The copula will also include the **be** and **le** or **ba** in the positive form, depending on the conjunction used in a sentence. In the negative form, the CV **le** was replaced by the CV **se**, **tla** by **ka** and **ba** by **se be**, as in examples below:

- (52) a. (i) **Ge meetse a tla ba borutho**, Kefilwe o tla hlapa.  
(If the water will be warm, Kefilwe will wash herself.)
- (ii) **Ge meetse a ka se be borutho**, Kefilwe a ka se hlape.

(If the water will not be warm, Kefilwe will not wash herself.)

- b. (i) **Ge Tshepo a tla ba noši**, ke tla mmotša  
(If Tshepo will be alone, I will tell him.)
- (ii) **Ge Tshepo a ka se be noši**, ke tla mmotša.  
(If Tshepo will not be alone, I will tell him.)
- c. (i) Rebone a ka se apare jeresi, **ka ge go tla be go le borutho**.  
(Rebone will not put on a jersey because it will be warm.)
- (ii) Rebone o tla apara jeresi **ka ge go tla be go se borutho**.  
(Rebone will put on a jersey because it will not be warm.)
- d. (i) Bopa ditena **ka ge o tla be o le mafolofolo**.  
(Build blocks because you will be diligent.)
- (ii) Se bope ditena **ka ge o tla be o se mafolofolo**.  
(Do not build blocks because you will not be diligent.)
- e. (i) **Le ge ke tla be ke le kaone**, nka se ye.  
(Even if I will be better, I will not go.)
- (ii) **Le ge ke tla be ke se kaone**, nka se ye.  
(Even if I will not be better, I will not go.)

Examples (52) above show the positive form in (i)'s and negative form in (ii)'s. Sentences (52a-b, 52c-d, and 52e) start with the complementizers **ge**, **ka ge** and **le ge**, showing conditions, reasons and concession, respectively.



### 3.3.1.8 The hortative mood

The following words precede the descriptive copulative **nke**, **anke**, **ake**, and **a**, to form a hortative mood. The word **hle** may also be placed at the end of the descriptive copulative to form a hortative mood. The descriptive copulative occurs in the positive and negative forms in the hortative mood. The copula is relevant SC and the CV **be** in the positive form and the relevant SC, **se** and **be** in the negative form as illustrated below:

- (53) a. (i) Nke **o be** boleta Retlile.  
(Please, be polite Retlile.)
- (ii) Nke **o se be** boleta Retlile.  
(Please, do no be polite.)
- b. (i) Anke **o be** bohlale Hlabirwa.  
(Please, be wise Hlabirwa.)
- (ii) Anke **o se be** bohlale Hlabirwa.  
(Please, do not be wise Hlabirwa.)
- c. (i) Ake **o be** mafolofolo.  
(Please, be diligent.)
- (ii) Ake **o se be** mafolofolo.  
(Please, do not be diligent.)
- d. (i) A **re beng** pelotelele.  
(Let us be patient please.)
- (ii) A **re se beng** pelotelele.

(Let us not be patient please.)

- e. (i) Anke **le beng** maatla hle.)  
(Please, be strong.)
- (ii) Anke **le se beng** bothata hle.  
(Please, do not be adamant.)

The hortative particles **nke**, **anke**, **ake**, **a** and **hle** bring about the meaning of requests, suggestions, respect and advice. In Sentence (53a(i)) above, the speaker is requesting **Retlile** to be polite as she shows some rude behaviour for example. The meaning of Sentence (53a(ii)) above, however, suggests that **Retlile** should not be too soft as that will worsen the situation. For instance, her children will go out of hand due to her softness. In example (53b(i)) above, the speaker is advising **Hlabirwa** to make an informed decision because it is impossible to request somebody to be wise. On the other hand, Sentence (53b(ii)) above advises **Hlabirwa** not to be overexcited and overreact. While example (53c(i)) encourages the referent to be diligent, (53c(ii)) above implies that the referent should not count the chickens before they are hatched. The meaning of (53d(i)) above is that fellow-friends are asked to be patient enough but (53d(ii)) above implies that enough is enough, they should not be patient any longer. Regarding Sentence (53e(i)) above the speaker is wishing the referents to recover and be strong from their sickness while in Sentence (53e(ii)) above, the speaker is requesting the referents to make up their minds.

### 3.3.1.9 The habitual mood

The descriptive copulative in the habitual mood occurs in positive and negative forms. The copula is formed by the relevant SC and the CV **be** in the positive form and the relevant SC and CVs **se be** in the negative form. The mood shows that something is done as a habit as exemplified below:

- (54) a. (i) Banna ba nwa bjala **ba be bohlale**.  
(Men drink beer and usually become wise.)
- (ii) Banna ba tsuba lebake **ba se be dihlong**.  
(Men smoke dagga and usually do not become shy.)
- b. (i) Basadi ba tlola ditlolo **ba be botse**.  
(Women use complexion creams and usually become beautiful.)
- (ii) Basadi ba tlogela ditlolo **ba se be botse**.  
(Women stop using complexion creams and usually do not become beautiful.)
- c. (i) Badiši ba loutša dilepe **di be bogale**.  
(The shepherds sharpen axes and usually the axes become sharp.)
- (ii) Badiši ga ba loutše dilepe **tša se be bogale**.  
(The shepherds do not sharpen axes and usually they do not become sharp.)
- d. (i) Mosetsana o apea bogobe sebaka **bo be meetse**.  
(The girl cooks porridge for a long time and usually the porridge becomes soft.)
- (ii) Mosetsana o apea nama ka meetse **ya se be bose**.  
(The girl cooks meat with water and usually it does not become delicious.)

- e. (i) Dingaka di alafa balwetši **ba be kaone**.  
(Doctors cure patients and usually patients become better.)
- (ii) Dingaka ga di alafe balwetši **ba se be kaone**.  
(Doctors do not cure patients and usually they do not improve health-wise.)

The examples in (54) above express the fact that the habitual mood which is a subordinate clause depends on the principal clause. Sentence (54a(i)) does not merely mean that men usually become wise when they drink beer, but also means that men drink beer and usually become bold and more confident. Likewise, example (54a(ii)) means that men smoke dagga and habitually not become shy or nervous.

### 3.3.2 The descriptive copulative's position and ambiguity

The normal word order (element position) in a sentence is the subject (S), verb (V) and object (O). The normal word order in a descriptive copulative is the subject which is a noun, the verb which is the copula called COP, and the object which is a noun from either Class 6 or Class 14. The copula and the complement are not divisible in the descriptive copulative. The following examples in (55) will illustrate that change in position of elements in descriptive copulative, results in semantic shift and structural ambiguity:

- (55) a. Mosadi wa ka o bohlale. (SVO)  
(My wife/woman is wise.)
- b. Mosadi o bohlale, wa ka! (SVO)  
(A woman is wise, mine!)

- c. Waka, o bohlale, mosadi. (VOS)  
(Mine, is wise, woman/wife.)
- d. Waka mosadi o bohlale. (SVO)  
(My wife is wise.)
- e. O bohlale waka mosadi. (VOS)  
(She is wise, my woman/wife.)
- f. O bohlale mosadi wa ka.  
(You are wise my wife/woman.) or  
(She is wise my wife/woman.)

In Sentence (55a) a man is indicating that his wife is wise while example (55b) means that women are usually wise but, the speaker's wife is wiser. While Sentence (55c) stresses the fact that the speaker's wife is wise, (55d) implies that the speaker's wife is wiser when compared to the wives of the listeners or it also means that the speaker's wife is wise while the wives of the listeners are stupid. As far as example (55f) is concerned, the husband is appreciating what his wife has done by telling her face to face that she is wise or the husband is telling other people that what her wife has done shows wisdom.

### 3.3.3 The descriptive copulative and the auxillary verbs

The auxillary verbs in the descriptive copulative indicate tense, mood and negation as illustrated below in example (56):

- (56) a. **Mmapule a ka ba botse** ge a ka hlapa.  
(Mmapule can be beautiful if she can wash herself.)  
(Potential mood)

- b. **Pheladi o rata go ba botse** manyalong.  
 (Pheladi use to be beautiful at weddings.)  
 (Habitual mood)
- c. Pontšho o tšea morwedi **gore go be bonolo** go mo fepa.  
 (Pontšho gains custody of her daughter so that maintaining  
 her can be easy.)  
 (Subjunctive mood)
- d. Hunadi o hlapile a tlola **a napa a ba botse**.  
 (Hunadi washed herself and wore make up and eventually became  
 beautiful.)  
 (Consecutive mood)
- e. Ge Dirang **a ka ba boleta** mo feng tšhelete.  
 (If Dirang can be soft, give him money.)  
 (Situative mood)
- f. Thabo ga ešo a ba maatla.  
 (Thabo is not yet powerful.)  
 (Negation)
- g. Fang Thabo dijo **o tla ba maatla**.  
 (Give Thabo food he will be strong.)  
 (Future tense and indicative mood)
- h. Moruti Mokoena **o kile a ba maatla**.  
 (Pastor Mokoena once became powerful.)  
 (Past tense and indicative mood)

Sentence (56a) means that it is possible for Mmapule to be beautiful if she can wash properly because she looks ugly just because she does not wash properly. Example (56b) means that Pheladi usually wears make-up, dresses to kill and looks beautiful only if she attends a wedding party. In Sentence (56c), the implication is that the purpose of Pontšho gaining the custody of his daughter is that he wanted to maintain the child freely and easily than when the child is with the mother.

As far as Sentence (56d) is concerned, Hunadi became beautiful after washing herself and wearing make-up. What Sentence (56e) means is that Dirang would be given money on condition that he becomes soft; if he is not the money should not be given to him. What is meant by (56f) is either that Thabo is not yet powerful for giving prophecy for instance, or he has been sick and now he is not yet strong. In Sentence (56g), it is implied that Thabo should be given food so that he can be strong since he is weak due to hunger. The example in (56h) means that in the past Pastor Mokoena was powerful in that he was healing people but now of late he is no longer able to heal people using the spirit of God.

#### 3.3.4 The descriptive copulative and the conjunction

There are two types of conjunctions used in the descriptive copulative, namely: co-ordinating and subordinating conjunctions. **Ebile** and **fela** are co-ordinating conjunctions and **ge**, **le ge**, **ka ge**, and **gore** are subordinating conjunctions. The co-ordinating conjunctions link two main clauses, and subordinating conjunctions link the main clause and the subordinate clause as illustrated below:

- (57) a. **Ge Morongwa a le botse** a tsenele phadišano ya bomasebotsana.  
(If Morongwa is beautiful, let her compete in beauty contest.)
- b. **Ka ge Tshepo a le kaone** go otlele yena.  
(Because Tshepo is better let him drive.)

- c. Temošo o lle **gore a be mafolofolo**.  
(Temošo ate so that she can be active.)
- d. Tshepang o paletšwe dithutong **le ge a le bohlale**.  
(Tshepang failed even if he was intelligent.)
- e. **Ditapišo o botse ebile o bohlale**.  
(Ditapišo is beautiful and she is also wise.)
- f. **Jumi o botse fela o a seleka**.  
(Jumi is handsome but he is naughty.)

In Sentence (57a) the speaker is doubting the beauty of Morongwa that is why the speaker says Morongwa should compete in a beauty contest if she is beautiful. The meaning in Sentence (57b) is that Tshepo should drive because Tshepo is better than all the patients he is with. Example (57c) means that Temošo's purpose of eating was to gain diligence. What is meant by example (57d) is that passing at school does not only depend on intelligence, but also on commitment. That is why Tshepang failed despite his intelligence. As far as Sentence (57e) is concerned, Ditapitšo is beautiful and also wise or intelligent. Finally, example (57f) suggests that Jumi is a handsome boy, but he is naughty, the speaker sees him as a person who spoils his beauty.

### 3.3.5 The descriptive copulative and the interrogative

In Northern Sotho, the descriptive copulative brings about the answers of interrogative **bjang** (how). According to Louwrens (1991:134), the interrogative **bjang** is questioning the manner in which a verb is carried out. Note the descriptive copulative questions below:



- (58) a. (i) Lesiba o bjang matšatši a? **Question**  
 (How is Lesiba these days?)
- (ii) Lesiba o bohlahe matšatši a. **Answer**  
 (Lesiba is wise these days.)
- b. (i) Mobe o bjang bošego? **Question**  
 (How is Mobe at night?)
- (ii) Mobe o botse bošego. **Answer**  
 (Mobe is beautiful at night.)

The meaning of Sentence (58a(i-ii)) is that **Lesiba** used to be stupid earlier on, but these days he is better than before or he improved, not that he is necessarily wise. Sentences (58b(i-ii)) means that **Mobe** as her name reveals, is ugly, but at night because one cannot see her properly she looks beautiful. There are actually many things that can make her beautiful at night. For example, the lights that are shining on her make-up and the evening dress she is wearing.

### 3.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter analyses the morphosemantics of both the identifying and the descriptive copulatives in detail. The distinction between the identifying and the descriptive copulatives is based on their semantics and morphological forms. In the identifying copulative, the subject is identified with or made equal to its complement, whereas in the descriptive copulative the subject is described by its complement. The identifying copulative is mainly identified by the copulative particle **ke** and the invariable subject concord **e**. The descriptive copulative is identified by the copulative verb COP. Most of the complements in the identifying copulative are names of concrete things, and most of the complements of a descriptive copulative are names of abstract things. The complements of the

identifying copulative that are nouns in Northern Sotho are also nouns in their English counterparts. The complements of the descriptive copulative are nouns of Classes 6 and 14 in Northern Sotho but their English counterparts are either nouns or adverbs. While there are a number of proverbs and idioms in the identifying copulative, there is no trace of Northern Sotho proverbs and idioms applicable to the descriptive copulative.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE LOCATIONAL AND THE ASSOCIATIVE COPULATIVES**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The objective of this chapter is to analyse the locational and the associative copulatives from a morphosemantic perspective. The discussion will also draw a clear distinction between the locational copulative and the descriptive copulative as discussed in 3.3, given that many scholars confuse the two and name both of them to be descriptive copulative due to their similar semantic function and form. This chapter will, however, concentrate on the locational and associative copulatives. The following morphological features will receive attention as they have a bearing on the locational and associative copulatives, namely: moods, tenses and forms; position of elements, ambiguity, auxillary verbs, conjunctions, interrogatives, proverbs and idioms.

#### **4.2 THE LOCATIONAL COPULATIVE**

The locational copulative as the name suggests, describes the place, location or position of the subject or referent. Poulos and Louwrens (1994:316) support this view by saying that the locational copulative expresses the place or location that the referent is in. The similarities between locational and descriptive copulatives is that, both describe the subject or reference and have the same form. The difference between the locational and descriptive copulatives is that the locational copulative describes the place of the subject whereas the descriptive copulative describes a specific feature other than place. With regard to the statement above, Poulos and Louwrens (1994:317) remark that:

As far as its form is concerned, this copulative is identical to the descriptive copulative, the only difference between the two, being that the descriptive copula describes the subject

in terms of a specific feature, whereas the locational copula expresses the locality in which the subject finds itself.

As the descriptive copulative has already been analysed previously in 3.3 above, let us concentrate on the locational copulative this time around.

#### 4.2.1 **The locational copulative and moods**

The following are nine moods occurring in the locational copulative.

##### 4.2.1.1 The indicative mood

The indicative mood occurs in three tenses in the locational copulative and also in two forms: the present, past and future tenses; and the positive and negative forms.

#### (a) **The locational copulative in the present tense (Indicative mood)**

(i) The copula of the locational copulative in the indicative mood, present tense and positive form is the relevant subject concord as illustrated by examples below:

- (1) a. Ba go morutiši.  
(They are at the teacher's.)
- b. O GaModjadji.  
(He/she is at GaModjadji.)
- c. Mosadi o ga gabo.  
(The wife/woman is at her parents' place.)
- d. BoLesiba ba sekolong.  
(Lesiba and company are at school.)

e. Koloji e kua Polokwane.  
(The car is in Polokwane.)

f. Dikgomo di gona.  
(The cattle are there.)

Examples in (1a-f) above reflect the copulative verb COP. The meaning of Sentence (1a) is that the referents are at the place where the teacher is in person not where the teacher stays. Example (1b) suggests that the subject is at the place called GaModjadji, whereas (1c) means the woman referred to is presently at her parents' home or place, but she usually stays at her own home with her husband. Sentence (1d) implies that Lesiba and his company are scholars or they are presently at school. Example (1e) denotes that the car is in a place called Polokwane, which is far away from a place where the speaker is. As far as Sentence (1f) is concerned, the cattle are available for slaughtering for instance, or the speaker saw the cattle and confirms that they are present.

(ii) The copula of the locational copulative in the indicative mood present tense negative form is formed by *ga* and the relevant SC as illustrated by example (2) below:

(2) a. Hlogo ya sekolo **ga e** mono.  
(The school principal is not here.)

b. Yo a nwago **ga a** ntshe.  
(The one drinking is not here.)

c. Dipudi **ga di** gona.  
(Goats are not there.)

d. Maredi **ga a** sekolong.  
(Maredi is not at school.)

- e. Koloji **ga e** gona mo Polokwane.  
(The car is not here in Polokwane.)

What Sentence (2a) means is that the principal is far away from the speaker's place or the principal is there but absent-minded. Example (2b) denotes that all the people with the speaker are non-drinkers or the one who is drinking is at that moment not present. The meaning of Sentence (2d) is that **Maredi** is not a scholar or **Maredi** is at that time not at the school premises. What is implied in example (2e) is that there are few cars in **Polokwane** as compared to other cities or a particular car is not in **Polokwane**, but it is somewhere else.

(b) **The locational copulative in the past tense (Indicative mood)**

- (i) There are two positive forms of the locational copulatives in the indicative mood past tense as exemplified below:

- (3) a. (i) Pudi e bile šakeng.  
(ii) Pudi e be e le šakeng.  
(A goat was in the kraal.)
- b. (i) Ngwana o bile gona.  
(ii) Ngwana o be a le gona.  
(The child was there.)
- c. (i) BoThabo ba bile mošomong.  
(ii) BoThabo ba be ba le mošomong.  
(Thabo and his friends were at work.)
- d. (i) Dipuku di bile gona.  
(ii) Dipuku di be di le gona.  
(Books were there.)

- e. (i) Mokgadi o bile kgauswi.
- (ii) Mokgadi o be a le kgauswi.
- (Mokgadi was close.)

The meaning of Sentences (3a-e) above is that the referents were at a point in time somewhere but now of late they are no longer at the same place. For example, Sentence (3b) means there was a child at a family but, of late, the child is no longer there. The child might have died or moved to another place.

- (ii) There are four negative forms of the locational copulative in the past tense indicative mood as exemplified below, which are distinguished by the use of the morphemes **ga** or **ga se** or **se**:

- (4) a. (i) Pudi **ga se** ya ba šakeng.
- (ii) Pudi **ga** ya ba šakeng.
- (iii) Pudi **ga se e** be šakeng.
- (iv) Pudi e be e **se** šakeng.
- (A goat was not/never in the kraal.)
  
- b. (i) Ngwana **ga se** a ba gona.
- (ii) Ngwana **ga** a ba gona.
- (iii) Ngwana **ga se** a be gona.
- (iv) Ngwana o be a **se** gona.
- (A child was not/never there.)
  
- c. (i) BoThabo **ga se** ba ba mošomong.
- (ii) BoThabo **ga** ba a ba mošomong.
- (iii) BoThabo **ga se** ba ba mošomong.
- (iv) BoThabo ba be ba **se** mošomong.
- (Thabo and his company were not/never at work.)

- d. (i) Dipuku **ga se** tša ba gona.  
(ii) Dipuku **ga** tša ba gona.  
(iii) Dipuku **ga se** di be gona.  
(iv) Dipuku di be di **se** gona.  
(Books were not/never there.)
- e. (i) Mokgadi **ga se** a ba kgauswi.  
(ii) Mokgadi **ga** a ba kgauswi.  
(iii) Mokgadi **ga se** a be kgauswi.  
(iv) Mokgadi o be a **se** kgauswi.  
(Mokgadi was not/never close.)

The implication of Sentences (4a-e) is that it was as though that the subjects referred to in (4) were once at a particular place or existed but it is clear that they were nowhere. For instance, Sentences (4c) means that Thabo and his company were never at work.

(c) **The locational copulative in the future tense (Indicative mood)**

(i) The copula of the locational copulative in the indicative mood future tense positive form is formed by the relevant subject concord, **tla** or **tlo** and the copulative verb **ba** as illustrated below:

- (5) a. Ngwana o tla/tlo ba gona.  
(There will be a child.)
- b. Dipuku di tla/tlo ba gona.  
(Books will be there.)
- c. Bana ba tla/tlo ba sekolong.  
(Children will be at school.)



- d. Dibofša di tla/tlo ba kgolegong.  
(Prisoners will be at prison.)
- e. Phuthego e tla/tlo ba kerekeng.  
(The church congregation will be at the church.)

In Sentences (5a-e) above, the speaker has hope that the subjects in (5) will be at a certain place in the near future. There are, of course, reasons that give the speaker that hope. For instance, in (5a) if a woman is pregnant, there is hope that there will be a child; in (5b) if the government provides schools with books, there is hope that books will be there (at school/s); if schools reopen, there is hope that children will be at school as in (5c); there is hope that if people commit crime and are arrested, they will be in prison as exemplified by example (5d) and, finally, (5e) indicates that on Sunday, hopefully, the congregation will be at church.

- (ii) There are two negative forms of the locational copulative in the future tense indicative mood. One form is characterized by the negative morpheme **se** preceding **be**, and the other form by **se ke** preceding **ba**, as in example (6) below:

- (6) a. (i) Mahodu a ka se be kerekeng.  
(ii) Mahodu a ka se ke a ba kerekeng.  
(Thieves will not be in the church.)
- b. (i) Ngwetši e ka se be bjalweng.  
(ii) Ngwetši e ka se ke ya ba bjalweng.  
(A bride will not be in a shebeen.)
- c. (i) Monna a ka se be dipitšeng.  
(ii) Monna a ka se ke a ba dipitšeng.  
(A man will not be cooking.)

- d. (i) Ngwana a ka se be mošomong.  
(ii) Ngwana a ka se ke a ba mošomong.  
(A child will not be at work.)
- (v) (i) Mosadi a ka se be banneng.  
a. Mosadi a ka se ke a ba banneng.  
(A woman will not be amongst men.)

The meaning of Sentences (6a-e) is based on the belief of one's society. It is generally believed by society that thieves will not be in church, a bride will not be in a shebeen, a man will not cook, a child will not work, and that a woman will not be amongst men. Example (6), therefore, does not necessarily express negation, but rather a belief.

#### 4.2.1.2 The imperative mood

The imperative mood occurs in two forms in the locational copulative, the positive and negative forms. The imperative mood does occur in present tense only, in the locational copulative. The imperative mood gives order, warning, request or courage to the second person singular and plural. For plurality and respect, a copulative verb is affixed with **-ng**.

- (i) The copula of the locational copulative in the indicative mood positive form is formed by the copulative prefix **e** and the copulative verb **ba** as shown by example (7) below:

- (7) a. Eba kgole!  
(Be far away.!)
- b. Eba gona!  
(Be there (present)!)

- c. Ebang kgauswi koko!  
(Be close grandma!)
- d. Ebang kerekeng Sontaga se!  
(Be in the church this Sunday!)
- e. Eba ntlong Dikeledi!  
(Be in the house Dikeledi!)

In Sentence (7a) the subject is warned not to be involved in other people's business. Sentence (7b) expresses a request that the subject should be present or available. Likewise, example (7c) requests the referent to be close or to be involved and because **-ng** is used in singular, it expresses respect. Sentence (7d) commands the referent to be present or available in the church that Sunday. Sentence (7e) requests the referent to be inside the house as it is cold outside.

- (ii) There are two forms in which negation occurs in the locational copulative imperative mood as seen below in example (8):

- (8) a. (i) Se be kgole!  
(ii) O se ke wa ba kgole!  
(Do not be far away!)
- b. (i) Se be gona!  
(ii) O se ke wa ba gona!  
(Do not be present/available!)
- c. (i) Se beng kgauswi koko!  
(ii) Le se ke la ba kgauswi koko!  
(Do not be close grandma!)

- d. (i) Se beng kerekeng Sontaga se!  
(ii) Le se ke la ba kerekeng Sontaga se!  
(Do not be at the church this Sunday!)
  
- e. (i) Se be ntlong Dikeledi!  
(ii) O se ke wa ba ntlong Dikeledi!  
(Do not be inside the house Dikeledi!)

What is denoted by example (8a) is that the referent should be close, whereas Sentence (8b) implies that the subject should not come or avail himself/herself. The meaning of Sentence (8c) is that grandma should not involve herself. In Sentence (8e), the referents are commanded to be absent from church that Sunday. As far as example (8d) is concerned, **Dikeledi** should be somewhere but not in the house. She may be outside, in the car or under a tree – not in the house.

#### 4.2.1.3 The potential mood

The potential mood in the locational copulative occurs in the positive and negative forms.

- (i) In the positive form, the potential mood is formed by the relevant SC, **ka** and **ba**. There are two negative forms that occur in the locational copulative as exemplified below in (9):

- (9) A. a. Babereki ba ka ba gona.  
(Workers can be there.)
  
- b. Ngwana a ka ba gona.  
(A child can be there.)
  
- c. Boloji bo ka ba ntshe.  
(There can be witchcraft.)

- B. a. (i) Moruti a ka se be bjaleng.  
 (ii) Moruti a ka se ke a ba bjaleng.  
 (A pastor cannot be at a shebeen.)
- b. (i) Baruti ba ka se be gona komeng.  
 (ii) Baruti ba ka se ke ba ba gona komeng.  
 (Pastors cannot be at the initiation school.)
- c. (i) Ngwana a ka se be gona mola.  
 (ii) Ngwana a ka se ke a ba gona mola.  
 (There cannot be a child.)

Sentences (9A) indicate possibilities that depend on implied conditions. Example (9Aa) denotes that workers can be available during holidays, for example, provided they get extra money. The meaning in example (9Ab) is that a child can be born if the mother stops contracepting or if the father can be prepared to maintain the child. In Sentence (9Ac), a person is very ill and does not recover even if the person gets treatment, so, it means that the disease is caused by witchcraft and that is why it is difficult to get cured.

Example (9B) depends on the societal belief. For instance, in (9Ba), society believes that a pastor cannot be in a shebeen because a pastor is not expected to be there. The same applies to (9Bb) where pastors are not expected to be in an initiation school because it is believed that initiation is for heathens and not for Christians. The example in (9Bc) implies that an old man and an old woman cannot bear a child because it is believed that after menopause the old woman cannot conceive, hence the speaker says there cannot be a child referring to that old people's home.

#### 4.2.1.4 The subjunctive mood

There are two forms in the locational copulative in the subjunctive mood which are, namely, the positive and the negative forms.

(i) The positive form is characterised by the copula that is formed by the relevant subject concord and the copulative verb **be**. The subjunctive mood comes after **gore** and forms a subordinate clause as illustrated below:

- (10) a. Ke mmoditše gore **a be gona**.  
(I told him/her so that he/she can be there.)
- b. Mosadi o tšere bana gore **ba be kgauswi**.  
(The woman took the children so that they can be close.)
- c. Ba mmiditše gore **a be ntshe**.  
(He/she was called so that he/she can be there.)

(ii) There are two negative forms in the locational copulative subjunctive mood as illustrated below:

- (11) a. (i) Ngwato o bala kudu gore **a se be sekolong išago**.  
(ii) Ngwato o bala kudu gore **a se ke a ba sekolong išago**.  
(Ngwato studies very hard so that he should not be at school next year.)
- b. (i) Ngwako o tlogetše bjala gore **a se be mathateng**.  
(ii) Ngwako o tlogetše bjala gore **a se ke a ba mathateng**.  
(Ngwako stopped drinking beer so that he should not be in trouble.)

- c. (i) Hlogo ya sekolo ga e laole tšhelete gore **e se be molekong**.  
 (ii) Hlogo ya sekolo ga e laole tšhelete gore **e se ke ya ba molekong**.

(The school principal does not manage the school finances so that the principal should not be in trouble.)

Examples (10) and (11) above suggest that whatever is done it is done for a purpose and not for granted. For instance, in example (10a), the referent was told so that he/she can be available. In (10b), the woman took her children so that they can be close to her. In example (11a), Ngwato studies hard so that he can pass and not be at school the following year. Likewise, in (11c) the principal does not manage the school money so that he cannot be attempted to mishandle it.

#### 4.2.1.5 The infinitive mood

The infinitive mood occurs in two forms in the locational copulative, which are, namely, positive and negative. The copula is **go ba** in the positive form and **go se be** in the negative form, as illustrated below:

- (12) a. Go boima **go ba kgole** le gae.  
 (It is difficult to be far away from home.)
- b. Go kaone **go ba kgauswi** le gae.  
 (It is better to be closer to home.)
- c. Go bose **go ba Gauteng**.  
 (It is good to be in Gauteng.)
- d. Ba paletšwe **go ba kerekeng**.  
 (They failed to be in church.)

- e. Le re makaditše ka **go ba gona**.  
(You surprised us by being there.)

The meanings of the bolded infinitive clauses depend on the main clauses. Example (12a) means it is difficult to be far away from one's home because the relationship between the spouse becomes weak, traveling to and from home is expensive and children are also not close to their one parent. Sentence (12b) suggests that it is easy to look after the family, transport will be cheap and a very strong relationship between family members exists. The meaning of (12c) above is that one lives better in Gauteng because there are better opportunities like job, recreation, education and transportation just to mention a few. In example (12d), what is implied is either that the referents failed to attend the church at a particular Sunday or due to alcohol and drug addiction, the referents failed at all to attend church. In Sentence (12e), the speaker did not expect to see the referents at the place the speaker saw them, that is the reason why the speaker was so surprised.

Examples in 13 indicate the negative form:

- (13) a. Ga go nyakege **go se be gona mošomong**.  
(It is not advisable to be away from work.)
- b. **Go se be makgoweng** ke mathata.  
(Not to be at work is a problem.)
- c. **Go se be kgauswi** go go thušitše.  
(Not to be close helped you.)

Sentence (13a) means that it is not advisable to dodge or to be absent from work for no apparent reason because one might be fired from work as a result. The example in (13b) denotes that it is a problem when an adult person is not working because the person will depend on relatives for everything. The implication of example (13c) is that something terrible happened while the referent was not present, that is why it was



an advantage for the referent to be away from the scene because the referent would be shocked.

#### 4.2.1.6 The consecutive mood

The locational copulative occurs in the positive and negative forms in the consecutive mood.

(i) In the positive form, the copula is formed by the relevant SC and the CV **ba**, as exemplified below:

- (14) a. Lehodu le swerwe ke basadi, **la ba mathateng**.  
(A thief was caught by women and the thief got in trouble.)
- b. Barutiši ba bidityšwe, **ba ba sekolong**.  
(Teachers were called and they went to school.)
- c. Moruti o kgopetšwe go tla lehung, **a ba gona**.  
(A pastor was asked to attend a funeral and he was there.)

Example (14a) means that the thief was caught red-handed by women who in turn beat him like nobody's business. What is meant by Sentence (14b) is that teachers were invited to come to school and then they went. In example (14c), it is implied that a pastor was invited to hold a funeral service and he did.

(ii) There are two negative forms that occur in the locational copulative in the consecutive mood. The examples below will justify the statement:

- (15) a. (i) Phaahle ba mo kgopetše go tla **a se be gona**.  
(ii) Phaahle ba mo kgopetše go tla **a se ke a ba gona**.  
(Phaahle was requested to come but he was not present.)

- b. (i) Ramaila o lwetše ganyane **a se be bookelong**.  
 (ii) Ramaila o lwetše ganyane **a se ke a ba bookelong**.  
 (Ramaila was not seriously ill and did not go to hospital.)
- c. (i) Mokgadi o rakile bana ka moka **ba se be kgauswi**.  
 (ii) Mokgadi o rakile bana ka moka **ba se ke ba ba kgauswi**.  
 (Mokgadi chased away all the children and they did not get close.)

Sentence (15a) means that **Phaahle** was invited to come but he did not come due to reasons best known to him. Example (15b) suggests that **Ramaila** was not seriously ill and that is the reason he was not admitted in hospital. What is meant by Sentence (15c) is that **Mokgadi** wanted to talk to adults only, and that is why she chased all the children and the children were far away from the place where adults were meeting.

#### 4.2.1.7 The situative mood

In the locational copulative, the situative mood occurs in three tenses and two forms. The locational copulative is formed by the subordinate clause in the situative mood.

##### (a) Present tense

The copula of the locational copulative is **le** and the relevant subject concord in the situative mood present tense positive form as seen in examples below:

- (16) a. Re tla ya ge **e le kgauswi**.  
 (We shall go if it is near.)
- b. Ge **e le kgole**, Lesiba o tla loga maano.  
 (If it is far away, Lesiba will plan.)

- c. Le ge **ke le gona** le šomeng.  
(Even if I am here you must work.)
- d. Ngwana o a thekgwa **le ge a le lethabong**.  
(A child should be supported even if the child is in happiness.)
- e. Ka ge motho **a le mathateng** mo thuše.  
(Because one is in trouble, help him/her.)

Sentence (16a) means the referent will go if it is near, implying that the referent will not go if it is far away. What is implied by Sentence (16b) is that **Lesiba** will decide on what to do if and only if it is far away. The sentence implies that **Lesiba** will make arrangements for transport if the place is far. As far as the example in (16c) is concerned, the referents do not work very hard when the speaker is there, now the speaker advises them to work even if the speaker is there or present. What is meant by example (16d) above is that the referents who are also parents of the child referred to, only support the child when the child encounters some problems, here they are advised to support the child in happiness too. Sentence (16e) implies that a person should be helped only if the person is in trouble.

The negative form of the copula in the situative mood in the locational copulative present tense is formed by relevant subject concord and copulative verb **se** as illustrated below:

- (17) a. Ge **a se kerekeng** a rotoge.  
(If he/she is not at church, let him/her come.)
- b. Ka ge **a se mošomong** mo leseng a tle.  
(Because he/she is not at work, leave him/her to come.)
- c. Ge **a se bjaleng** ga go na taba.  
(If he/she is not in the shebeen, it does not matter.)

- d. Ge Leuba **a se gona** o tla re thuša.  
(If Leuba is not there, she will help us.)
- e. Re tla fihla gona bjale ge **go se kgole**.  
(We shall arrive early if it is not far.)

Sentence (17a) means that if the referent is not at church the referent must come. It implies that the church is the only holy place that one cannot be disturbed when one is there. The implication of example (17b) is that one's work is important and when one is there one should not be called, and that is why the referent should come because the referent is not at work. What is meant by Sentence (17c) is that the referent is a drunkard and may waste money, so, when the referent is not there, it is though he/she is at the shebeen even if he/she is not at a shebeen. As far as example (17d) is concerned, **Leuba** is not a good person because the speaker and company can be helped by Leuba's wife only if **Leuba** is not there. At Leuba's presence she cannot help them. Sentence (17e) suggests that the speaker and company will arrive soon because their destination is not far away.

(b) **Past tense**

Here, the copula of the positive form is formed by the relevant subjects concord, the auxiliary verb **be** and the copulative verb **le**. In the negative form, the copulative verb **se** replaces the copulative verb **le**, as indicated by the examples below:

- (18) a. (i) Ge Ditapišo **a be a le sekolong**, nka be ke mo fepa.  
(If Ditapišo was at school, I would have provided for her.)
- (ii) Ge Ditapišo **a be a se sekolong**, ke be nka se mo fepa.  
(If Ditapišo was not at school, I would not have provided for her.)

- b. (i) Ge motse **o be o le kgauswi**, Kefilwe o be a tla ya.  
(If the village was near, Kefilwe would go.)
- (ii) Ge motse **o be o se kgauswi**, Kefilwe o be a ka se ye.  
(If the village was not near, Kefilwe would not go.)
- c. (i) Ge boMalose **ba be ba le kerekeng**, nka be ba se ba swarwa lehono.  
(If Malose and company were at church, they would not have been arrested today.)
- (ii) Ge boMalose **ba be ba se kerekeng**, nka be ba swerwe lehono.  
(If Malose and company were not at church, they would have been arrested today.)
- d. (i) Ge koloi **e be e le gona**, Selina nka be a phela.  
(If there was a car, Selina would have been alive.)
- (ii) Ge koloi **e be e se gona**, Selina nka be a hwile.  
(If there was no car, Selina would have died.)

(c) **Future tense**

The copula of the locational copulative in the situative mood future tense positive form is characterized by **tla** or **tlo** and the CV **ba**, **be** and/or **le**. In the negative form, **tla** or **tlo** is replaced by **ka**, **le**, **se** and **ba** by **se be**, as illustrated below:

- (19) a. (i) Ke tla ja ge **ke tla be ke le kgauswi** le dijo.  
(I shall eat if I shall be next to the food.)

- (ii) Ke tla ja ge **ke tla be ke se kgauswi** le baapei.  
(I shall eat if I shall not be next to the cooks.)
- b. (i) Ke tla thaba ge **o tlo ba gona**.  
(I shall be happy if you will be there.)
- (ii) Ke tla thaba ge **o ka se be gona**.  
(I shall be happy if you will not be there.)
- c. (i) Le ge dimpša **di tla ba ntshe**, batho ba tla no utswa.  
(Even if dogs will be there, people will still steal.)
- (ii) Le ge dimpša **di ka se be ntshe**, batho ba ka se utswa.  
(Even if dogs will not be there, people will not steal.)
- d. (i) Ka ge **ke tla be ke le mošomong**, nka se fetše go ngwala.  
(Because I will be at work, I won't finish writing.)
- (iii) Ka ge **ke tla be ke se mošomong**, ke tla fetša go ngwala.  
(Because I will not be at work, I will finish writing.)

#### 4.2.1.8 The hortative mood

The locative copulative in the hortative mood occurs in two forms, which are, namely, positive and negative. To form a hortative mood, the following words: **nke**, **anke**, **ake**, or **a** must precede the locative copulative, and **hle** may also be placed at the end of the locative copulative to form a hortative mood. Let us consider the following examples:

- (20) a. (i) Nke o be kerekeng Hlabirwa.  
(Please, be at church Hlabirwa.)

- (ii) Anke o se sa ba bjaleng Mokoena.  
(Please, do not be at the shebeen Mr Mokoena.)
- b. (i) Ake o be kgauswi le Rebotile.  
(Please, be near Rebotile.)
- (ii) Ake o se be kgole le Rebotile.  
(Please, do not be far away from Rebotile.)
- c. (i) Temošo e ba Gauteng hle.  
(Temošo be in Gauteng please.)
- (ii) A o se be metlaeng hle.  
(Please, do not joke.)

The hortative particles bring about the meaning of requests, suggestions, advice and show respect and also differentiate between imperative and hortative moods.

In Sentence (20a(i)), the speaker is advising **Hlabirwa** to be a Christian. Example (20a(ii)) suggests that **Mr Mokoena** should stop drinking beer. The speaker requests that the referent should advise Rebotile in Sentence (20b(i)). The implication of example (20b(ii)) is that the referent should give **Rebotile** moral support. What is meant by (20c(i)) is that the speaker advises **Temošo** to go to Gauteng for better job opportunity. Sentence (20c(ii)) implies that the referent should not joke, for it is not the time to.

#### 4.2.1.9 The habitual mood

The habitual mood in the locative copulative occurs in positive and negative forms. The mood indicates that whenever something is done it is done, as a habit. The examples below show that the copula is the relevant subject concord and the

copulative verb **be** in the positive form. In the negative form, the copula is the relevant subject concord and the copulative verbs **se** and **be**.

- (21) a. (i) Batho ba phela bošaedi, ke moka **ba be kerekeng**.  
(People live carelessly, and then go to church.)
- (ii) Batho ba phela bošaedi **ba se be kerekeng**.  
(People live carelessly and then don't go to church.)
- b. (i) Bana ba tloga ka magae **ba be mmileng**.  
(Children leave their homes and go to live in streets.)
- (ii) Bana ga ba tloge magae **ba se be mmileng**.  
(Children do not leave their homes and do not live in streets.)
- c. (i) Bašomi ba tloga magaeng **ba be kgauswi le mešomo**.  
(Workers leave their homes and live next to their working places.)
- (ii) Bašomi ba tloga magaeng **ba be kgauswi le mešomo**.  
(Workers leave from home to be near their working place.)

#### 4.2.2 The locational copulative; position and ambiguity

The normal word order is SVO as has been already indicated in 3.3.2 above. In the following examples, we shall see how position of elements affect the semantics of the sentence:

- (22) a. Lesogana la gagwe le gona. (SVO)  
(Her son/boyfriend is there.)



- b. Lesogana le gona la gagwe. (SVO)  
(The son/boyfriend is there, hers.)
- c. La gagwe le gona lesogana. (VOS)  
(Hers is there, son/boyfriend.)
- d. La gagwe lesogana le gona. (SOV)  
(Her son/boyfriend is there.)
- e. Le gona la gagwe lesogana. (VOS)  
(He is there the son/boyfriend of hers.)
- f. Le gona lesogana la gagwe. (VSO)  
(He is there the son/boyfriend of hers.)

Example (22a) suggests that the son or boyfriend of the referent is around or he is well built. The meaning of (22b) is that there is a young man who is the referent's son or boyfriend. Sentence (22c) implies that the young man seen is not the referent's son or boyfriend because the one seen is thin while hers is stout. The example in (22d) means that the referent's special son or boyfriend is there not the one seen. Sentence (22e) denotes that the referent's son or boyfriend is stout while the one in (22f) implies that no one should take chances because the referent's boyfriend or son is present.

The structural ambiguity in the examples above is led primarily by the two words: **lesogana** and **gona**. **Lesogana** either means son or boyfriend, while **gona** may either mean to be present or to be stout.

#### 4.2.3 The locational copulative and the auxillary verbs

Auxillary verbs in the locational copulative show tense, mood, and negation as we shall see in examples below:

- (23) a. **Mpa e ka ba gona** ge a sa hlabe.  
(Pregnancy can be possible if she does not contracept.)  
(Potential mood)
- b. **Lesedi o rata go ba Gauteng** ka maikhutšo a dikolo.  
(Lesedi usually goes to Gauteng during school holidays.)  
(Habitual mood)
- c. Lenkwang o a bitšwa **gore a be ntshe kgorong**.  
(Lenkwang is summoned so that he can be in the traditional court.) (Subjunctive mood)
- d. Thabang o tlile a **napa a ba kerekeng** Sontaga se.  
(Thabang came and eventually went to church this Sunday.)  
(Consecutive mood)
- e. **Ge Pheladi a ka ba gona** le mpotše.  
(If Pheladi can be there, tell me.) (Situative mood)
- f. **Ngwana ga ešo a ba ntshe**.  
(A baby is not yet there.) (Negation)
- g. **Lerato o tla ba toropong** go se kgale.  
(Lerato will be in town not long.) (Future tense).
- h. **Mokgekolo o kile a ba gona** nako ye telele.  
(An old woman has been present for a long time.)  
(Indicative mood and past tense)

Example (23a) implies that there is a possibility of the referent falling pregnant if she does not contracept with an injection. What example (23b) means is that Lesedi has a habit of going to Gauteng when schools close. What is meant by Sentence (23c) is

that it is necessary to summon Lenkwang because he should attend the court. Sentence (23d) means that Thabang came home and then attended the church service. In example (23e), the speaker should be informed when **Pheladi** is there and when she (Pheladi) is not there it does not matter. As far as example (23f) is concerned, a baby is not yet born but it is in its mother's womb. In Sentence (23g), it is implied that **Lerato** will stay in town as soon as possible. The implication of example (23h) is that there was an old woman for a longer period but now she has passed away or moved to another place as she is no longer there.

#### 4.2.4 The locational copulative and the conjunction

The co-ordinating conjunction links two main clauses and subordinating conjunctions link the main and the subordinate clauses. **Ebile** and **fela** link main clauses while **ge**, **le ge**, **ka ge** and **gore** link main and subordinate clauses as illustrated below:

- (24) a. O berekelang **ge tšhelete e le gona**?  
(Why do you work if money is there?)
- b. **Le ge mošomo o le gona**, ga ba o nyake.  
(Even if there is a vacant post, they do not want to work.)
- c. **Ka ge o se sekolong**, nketele.  
(Because you are not at school, visit me.)
- d. Ke tshwanelo **gore moruti a be kerekeng**.  
(It is necessary for a pastor to be in church.)
- e. Ke moruti fela, **o mathateng**.  
(He is a pastor but, he is in trouble.)

Sentence (24a) means that there is no reason for one to work if one has enough money. Example (24b) suggests that some people are lazy to work and they always say there is no work, even if it is available. In Sentence (24c), the speaker invites the referent to visit him/her because the referent is not schooling. What is meant by example (24d) above is that, it is necessary for a pastor to be always available in church to help the congregation in whatever church service they require. In Sentence (24e), it is implied that a pastor fell into temptations and got in trouble despite his Christianity.

#### 4.2.5 The locative copulative and the interrogative

The locative copulative in Northern Sotho answers the interrogative **kae** (where). According to Louwrens (1991:134), the interrogative **kae** is questioning the place where a verb was or is carried out. Let us look at the locative copulative questions below:

- (25) a. (i) Mahodu a kae? (Question)  
(Where are thieves?)
- (ii) Mahodu a kgolegong. (Answer)  
(The thieves are in jail.)
- b. (i) Malebo o kae? (Question)  
(Where is Malebo?)
- (ii) Malebo o Polokwane. (Answer)  
(Malebo is in Polokwane.)

The examples in (25) above do not necessarily express the place where the verb was or is carried out as Louwrens (1991:134) puts it, but they describe the place wherein the subjects are. The complements **kgolegong** and **Polokwane** describe the places where the subjects **mahodu** and **Malebo** are, respectively.

#### 4.2.6 The locational copulative and idioms

According to *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2003:622), an idiom is a group of words in a fixed order that have a particular meaning, that is different from the meanings of each word understood on its own. In Northern Sotho, the idioms in the locational copulative begin with the infinitive form **ba**, which is also a copulative verb.

Let us look at the following examples:

- (26) a. **Go ba gona.**  
**Literal translation:** To be there.  
**Communicative translation:** To be tall, fat and strong.
- b. **Go ba godimo.**  
**Literal translation:** To be high.  
**Communicative translation:** To have a very good status in society.
- c. **Go ba fase.**  
**Literal translation:** To be low.  
**Communicative translation:** To have a low status in society.
- d. **Go ba morago.**  
**Literal translation:** To be back.  
**Communicative translation:** To be ill-informed.
- e. **Go ba moyeng.**  
**Literal translation:** To be in air.  
**Communicative translation:** To be pregnant.
- f. **Go ba melomong ya batho.**  
**Literal translation:** To be in the mouths of people.

**Communicative translation:** To be gossiped about because one is notorious.

g. **Go ba mabakeng.**

**Literal translation:** To be in times.

**Communicative translation:** To menstruate.

h. **Go ba šakeng.**

**Literal translation:** To be in the kraal.

**Communicative translation:** To be restricted in movement by a spouse.

### 4.3 THE ASSOCIATIVE COPULATIVE

According to Poulos and Louwrens (1994:311), the associative copulative expresses the English verb “to have”, and is characterised in Northern Sotho by the copulative verb stem **-na**. Poulos and Louwrens (1994:311) further explain how an associative copulative is formed, namely, a copulative verb stem **na** is always preceded by a SC and always followed by the associative prefix **le-** and sometimes the copulative verb **ba** and its variants are used instead of **na**. This will be seen later in the discussion.

#### 4.3.1 The associative copulative and moods

The following are nine moods that the associative copulative occurs in.

##### 4.3.1.1 The indicative mood

The associative copulative just like all other copulatives, occurs in the present, past and future tenses and; positive and negative forms.

(a) **Present tense**

The copula of the associative copulative is formed by the SC, **na** and **le** in the positive form. The negative form is formed by the negative morpheme **ga**, **se**, **na** and the **le** used for emphasis as in examples below:

- (27) a. (i) Pheladi o na le roko.  
(Pheladi has a dress.)
- (ii) Pheladi ga a na (le) roko.  
(Pheladi does not have (even) a dress.)
- b. (i) Hunadi o na le bana.  
(Hunadi has children.)
- (ii) Hunadi ga a na (le) bana.  
(Hunadi does not have children.)
- c. (i) Go na le taba.  
(There is an issue.)
- (ii) Ga go na taba.  
(It does not matter.)
- d. (i) Tsela e na le dikotsi.  
(The road has accidents.)
- (ii) Sefofane ga se na dikotsi.  
(An aeroplane does not have accidents.)
- e. (i) Bjala bo na le tšhelete.  
(Beer has money.)

- (ii) Bjala ga bo na tšhelete.  
(Beer does not have money.)

The examples above show the possessive, associative relationships and existence. Example (27a(i)) means **Pheladi** has expensive and beautiful clothes. Sentence (27a(ii)) conversely suggests that **Pheladi** does not have enough clothing. What example (27b(i)) means is either that **Hunadi** is fertile, has children or she is accompanied by children. The implication of (27b(ii)) is that **Hunadi** is barren or she is not accompanied by children. What is meant by Sentence (27c(i)) is that there is a crucial matter or issue, whereas example (27c(ii)) denotes that there is nothing that the speaker can do. As far as Sentence (27d(i)) is concerned, there are more accidents in roads than in water or air transports. Conversely, the example in (27d(ii)) means that there are less accidents caused by aeroplanes. The example in (27e(i)) implies that the business of selling beer gives a lot of profit than any other business. The opposite meaning is given by Sentence (27e(ii)).

(b) **Past tense**

There are two forms of the associative copulative in the positive form past tense indicative mood as illustrated below:

- (28) a. (i) Dikgogo di be di na le matswiana.  
(ii) Dikgogo di bile le matswiana.  
(Hens had chickens.)
- b. (i) Diaparo di be di na le ditšhila.  
(ii) Diaparo di bile (le) ditšhila.  
(Clothes were dirty.)
- c. (i) Sesi o be a na le monyanya.  
(ii) Sesi o bile le monyanya.  
(My sister had a party.)



The examples in (28a-c) express the past events or states.

There are four negative forms in the past tense in the associative copulative as illustrated by examples below:

- (29) a. (i) Kgogo ga se ya ba le matswiana.  
(ii) Kgogo ga se e be le matswiana.  
(iii) Kgogo ga ya ba le matswiana.  
(iv) Kgogo e be e se na (le) matswiana.  
(The hen did not/never have chicks.)
- b. (i) Diaparo ga se tša ba le ditšhila.  
(ii) Diaparo ga se di be le ditšhila.  
(iii) Diaparo ga se tša ba le ditšhila.  
(iv) Diaparo di be di se na (le) ditšhila.  
(The clothes were not/never dirty.)
- c. (i) Sesi ga se a ba le monyanya.  
(ii) Sesi ga se a be le monyanya.  
(iii) Sesi ga a ba le monyanya.  
(iv) Sesi o be a se na (le) monyanya.  
(My sister did not/never had a party.)

Sentence (29a) means that the hen never had chicks even if it laid eggs, the eggs never hatched into chicks in its life-time. Example (29b) implies that the clothes were never dirty. What is implied by example (29c) is that the referent's sister never had a party.

### (c) **Future tense**

The associative copulative in the future tense indicative mood positive form is characterized by **tla** or **tlo** preceding **ba** and preceded by the relevant SC, as shown in the examples below:

- (30) a. Modimo o tla ba le rena.  
(God will be with us.)
- b. Gadifele o tla ba le ngwana.  
(Gadifele will have a child.)
- c. Ngwaga wo o tla ba le mabele.  
(This year there will be a good harvest.)
- d. Go tla ba le pula.  
(There will be rain.)
- e. Ka 2010 Afrika Borwa e tla ba le tšhelete.  
(In 2010 South Africa will have money.)

The associative copulative in the indicative mood future tense negative form has two forms as illustrated below:

- (31) a. (i) Modimo a ka se be le rena.  
(ii) Modimo a ka se ke a ba le rena.  
(God will not/never be with us.)
- b. (i) Gadifele a ka se be le ngwana.  
(ii) Gadifele a ka se ke a ba le ngwana.  
(Gadifele will not/never have a child.)
- c. (i) Ngwaga wo o ka se be le mabele.  
(ii) Ngwaga wo o ka se ke wa ba le mabele.  
(This year there will be no harvest.)
- d. (i) Go ka se be le pula.  
(ii) Go ka se ke gwa ba le pula.  
(It will not/never rain.)

- e. (i) Ka 2010, Afrika Borwa e ka se be le tšhelete.
- (ii) Ka 2010, Afrika Borwa e ka se ke ya ba le tšhelete.  
(In 2010, South Africa will not/never have money.)

#### 4.3.1.2 The imperative mood

The associative copulative in the imperative mood occurs in the positive and negative forms in the present tense. The imperative mood gives order, warning, request or courage to the referent. The imperative mood is directed to the person singular or plural. To show plurality and respect, the copulative verb **ba** is affixed with **-ng**.

The copula of the associative copulative in the imperative mood positive form is formed by the copulative prefix **e**, the copulative verb **ba** and the associative prefix **le**. In the negative form, the copula is formed by the negative morpheme **se**, the copulative verb **be** and the associative prefix **le**, as illustrated by the following examples:

- (32) a. (i) Eba le pelotelele.  
(Be patient.)
- (ii) Se be le pelompe.  
(Do not be cruel.)
- b. (i) Ebang le matšato.  
(Be active.)
- (ii) Se beng le magaba.  
(Do not be overexcited.)
- c. (i) Eba le tšhelete pele.  
(Have money first.)

- (ii) Se be le metlae.  
(Do not joke.)
- d. (i) Eba le nnete.  
(Talk the truth.)
- (ii) Se be le maaka.  
(Do not talk lies.)
- e. (i) Ebang le mafolofolo koko.  
(Be ferocious grandma.)
- (ii) Se beng le mathaithai motswala.  
(Do not be tricky cousin.)

In Sentence (32a(i)), the referent is advised to be patient because the speaker sees the referent as a short-tempered and impatient person. In example (32a(ii)) the speaker is warning the referent to stop cruelty as it is not good for humanity. The meaning of (32b(i)) is that the subjects are requested to be active as they seem to be passive. The speaker in (32b(ii)) warns the referents not to be overexcited as that may cause them depression, as it is believed by Africans to be like that. The implication of example (32c(i)) is that the referent must first save money before the referent may do whatever he/she wants to do. What Sentence (32c(ii)) implies is that the referent is warned against cracking jokes while people are serious. For example (32d(i)), the speaker does not trust the referent, he/she thinks the referent is lying and ask the referent to speak the truth only. The speaker in Sentence (32d(ii)) warns the referent to stop lying. As far as sentence (32e(i)) is concerned, the old lady is encouraged to be ferocious, whereas in (32e(ii)) the speaker requests the referent to stop tricks.

#### 4.3.1.3 The potential mood

The associative copulative occurs in positive and negative forms in the potential mood and occurs as subordinate clauses as in examples (33) below:

- (33)A a. Malele o rekile koloi, **a ka ba a na le tšhelete.**  
(Malele bought a car, he might have some money.)
- b. Sebotse o anega mengato, **a ka ba a na le ngwana.**  
(Sebotse is drying up nappies, she might have had a baby.)
- c. **Pitso a ka ba a na le matsatši,** hleng mosadi a sa re etele?  
(Pitso might have some days, why does his wife not visit us?)
- d. **Ntemošeng a ka ba a na le mpa,** o reng a dula a robetše?  
(Ntemošeng might have fallen pregnant, why does she always sleep?)
- e. Pholo ye ga e fule **e ka ba e ne malwetši.**  
(This bull does not graze, it might be sick.)
- B. a. Malele o rekile paesekela, **a ka ba a se na tšhelete.**  
(Malele bought a bicycle, he might not be having some money.)
- b. Sebotse ga a anega mengato, **a ka ba a se na ngwana.**  
(Sebotse does not dry up nappies, she might not be having a baby.)
- c. **Pitso a ka ba a se na matsatši,** o boetše morago.  
(Pitso might not be having days, he went back to work.)
- d. **Ntemošeng a ka ba a se na mpa,** ga fetoge.  
(Ntemošeng might not have fallen pregnant, she has no body changes.)
- e. Pholo ye e fula botse, **e ka ba e se na malwetši.**  
(This bull grazes well, it might not be sick.)

#### 4.3.1.4 The subjunctive mood

The associative mood occurs in the negative and positive forms, and occurs as a subordinate clause in the subjunctive mood as seen in the following examples:

- (34) a. (i) Moruti o rapela **gore a be le phuthego**.  
(The pastor prays that he should have a congregation.)
- (ii) a. Moruti o rapela **gore a se be le phuthego ye mpe**.  
(The pastor prays that he should not have a bad congregation.)
- b. Moruti o rapela **gore a se ke a ba le phuthego ye mpe**.  
(The pastor prays that he should not have a bad congregation.)
- b. (i) Morutiši o ruta bana **gore ba be le tlhompho**.  
The teacher teaches the learners so that they can respect.)
- (ii) a. Morutiši o ruta bana **gore ba se be le maroga**.  
b. Morutiši o ruta bana **gore ba se ke ba ba le maroga**.  
(The teacher teaches the learners so that they must not swear.)
- c. (i) Moitheri o botša Lebone **gore a be le mafolofolo**.  
(Moitheri tells Lebone to be active.)
- (ii) a. Moitheri o botša Lebone **gore a se be le mpa**.  
b. Moitheri o botša Lebone **gore a se ke a ba le mpa**.  
(Moithei tells Lebone to be careful and not fall pregnant.)

- d. (i) Mosadi o kgopela mogatšagwe **gore a be le lerato.**  
(A woman asks her husband to have love.)
- (ii) a. Monna o kgopela mosadi **gore a se be le lehufa.**  
b. Monna o kgopela mosadi **gore a se ke a ba le lehufa.**  
(A man asks his wife not to have jealous.)

Considering examples (34) above, we notice that the copula of the associative copulative in the positive form subjunctive mood is formed by the relevant SC, CV **be** and the associative prefix **le** in (34a(i), b(i), c(i), d(i) and e(i)). Looking at (34(ii)s the negative form occurs in two ways.

#### 4.3.1.5 The infinitive mood

The associative copulative occurs in two forms in the infinitive mood as subordinate clauses. The copula in the positive form is formed by the prefix **go-**, CV **ba** and the associative prefix **le**. In the negative form, the copula is formed by the prefix **go-**, the negative morpheme **se**, the CV **be** and the associative prefix **le** as shown in the given examples below:

- (35) a. (i) Ke nyaka **go ba le monna.**  
(I want to be with/have a man.)
- (ii) Ke nyaka **go se be le monna.**  
(I want not to be with/have a man.)
- b. (i) **Go ba le lapa** ke mathata.  
(To have a family is a problem.)
- (ii) **Go se be le lapa** ke mathata.  
(Not to have a family is a problem.)

- c. (i) Šemi o tshwenywa ke **go ba le tšhelete**.  
(Šemi is troubled by abundance of money.)
- (ii) Šemi o tshwenywa ke **go se be le tšhelete**.  
(Šemi is troubled by lack of money.)
  
- d. (i) **Go ba le malwetši a matšatši a**, ke mathata.  
(To have these fashioned diseases, is a problem.)
- (ii) **Go se be le malwetši a matšatši a**, ga se bohlae.  
(Not to have these fashioned diseases, is not wisdom.)
  
- e. (i) **Go ba le maaka** ke sebe.  
(To have lies is a sin.)
- (ii) **Go se be le maaka** ke taba ye botse.  
(Not to have lies is good news.)

In Sentence (35a(i)), the speaker is a woman who wishes to be happily married. In example (35a(ii)), a woman wishes to remain single as she knows the problems encountered in marriage. Sentence (35b(i)) means that to have a family is a problem because it means more responsibility. Conversely, example (35b(ii)) implies that if one does not have a family it is also a problem because one will suffer a social stigma. Example (35c(i)), on the one hand, means that Šemi is actually stressed by his lots of money and cannot socialise, on the other hand, Sentence (35c(ii)) denotes that Šemi is financially bankrupt and now he is depressed as a result. What is meant by Sentence (35d(i)) is that suffering from HIV/AIDS is a very big problem because the disease is incurable and maintaining good health is expensive. As far as (35d(ii)) is concerned, one should not think he/she is wise if he/she is not infected by HIV/AIDS because there are many ways to contract the disease, all which are beyond one's control (blood exchange in an accident, for instance, is beyond one's control). The implication of (35e(i)) is that it is really sinful to tell lies because it is even prohibited by one of the Ten Commandments in the Old Testament of the Bible; while example (35e(ii)) means that it is good not to tell lies because honesty is the best policy.



#### 4.3.1.6 The consecutive mood

The associative copulative occurs in two forms in the consecutive mood. The copula in the positive form consists of the relevant consecutive subject concord, CV **ba** and the associative prefix **le**. In the negative form, the copula consists of the relevant consecutive SC, the negative morpheme **se**, the copulative verb **be** and the associative prefix **le**, as illustrated below:

- (36) a. (i) Motšhabeng o nyakile mošomo **a ba le mahlatse** a o hwetša.  
(Motšhabeng looked for a job and fortunately got it.)
- (ii) Motlatšišeng o nyakile mošomo **a se be le mahlatse** a se o hwetše.)  
(Motlatšišeng looked for a job, unfortunately he did not get it.)
- b. (i) Refilwe o šomile **a ba le tšhelete**, a aga ntlo.  
(Refilwe worked hard, had money and built a house.)
- (ii) Refilwe ga a šoma, **a se be le tšhelete**.  
(Refilwe did not work and did not have money.)
- c. (i) Bana ba ithutile **ba ba le mangwalo a marematlou**.  
(Children studied and acquired matric certificates.)
- (ii) Bana ga se ba ithuta **ba se be le mangwalo a marematlou**.  
(Children did not study and did not acquire matric certificates.)
- d. (i) Moruti o utswitše **a ba le madimabe a swarwa**.  
(A pastor stole, was unfortunate and got arrested.)

- (ii) Moruti o utswitše **a se be le madimabe** a go bonwa.  
(A pastor stole and did not have the misfortune of being seen.)
  
- e. (i) Afrika-Borwa e ralokile **ya ba le dino tše tharo** ya thopa sefoka.  
(South Africa played, scored 3 goals and won.)
  
- (ii) Afrika Borwa e ralokile **ya se be le nno** ya lewa.  
(South Africa played, scored no goal and lost the game.)

The consecutive mood is characterised by a series of events that depend on one another as seen in the examples in (36) above.

Sentence (36b(i)), for example, means that **Refilwe** had money after working and she built a house after having money. Likewise, Sentence (36e(i)) means that South Africa could not score three goals if it did not play, and could not win if it did not score the three goals. That is the reason why we say the series of events depend on one another in the consecutive mood.

#### 4.3.1.7 The situative mood

The associative copulative occurs in three tenses and two forms in the situative mood as subordinate clause. The following are used in the situative mood: **ge**, **le ge**, and **ka ge**:

##### (a) Present tense

The copula of the associative copulative in the situative mood present tense positive form consists of the relevant subject concord, the copulative verb **na**, and the associative prefix **le**. In the negative form, the copula of the associative copulative is

formed by the relevant subject concord, the negative morpheme **se** and the copulative verb **na**. The copulative prefix **le** may be excluded, as in the following examples:

- (37) a. (i) **Ge o na le tšheletenyana** nkadime R100.  
(If you have little money, borrow me R100.)
- (ii) **Ge o se na tšheletenyana** o šomelang?  
(If you do not have little money why do you work?)
- b. (i) **Le ge o na le tšhelete** o ka se mphe.  
(Even if you have money, you won't give me.)
- (ii) **Le ge o se na tšhelete** ga o bonale.  
(Even if you do not have money one cannot notice.)
- c. (i) **Ka ge o na le tšhelete** aga ntlo.  
(Because you have money build a house.)
- (ii) **Ka ge o se na tšhelete** se belaele.  
(Because you do not have money do not worry.)

The meaning of (37a(i)) is that if the referent has some money, the referent should lend the speaker at least R100. What is meant by example in (37a(ii)) is that the referent does not have enough money that is why the referent is working. The implication of Sentence (37b(i)) is that the referent will not give the speaker money even if the referent has it because the referent is a miser. As far as example (37b(ii)) is concerned, the referent is always presentable to an extent that one cannot notice if the referent does not have money. The meaning of example (37c(i)) is that the speaker is advising the referent to build a house because the referent has enough money. Example (37c(ii)) means that the speaker is comforting the referent because the referent is worried that he/she cannot pay off her/his debts, for instance, due to lack of money.

(b) **Past tense**

The following examples show us how the associative copulative occurs in the situative mood past tense in the positive and negative forms:

- (38) a. (i) a. **Ge Mašilo a be a na le sethunya** nka be a ba feditše.  
b. **Ge Mašilo a bile le sethunya** nka be a ba feditše.  
(If Mašilo had a gun, he would have killed them all.)
- (ii) a. **Ge Mašilo a be a se na sethunya** nka be ba mo gobaditše.  
b. **Ge Mašilo a sa ba le sethunya** nka be ba mo gobaditše.  
(If Mašilo did not have a gun, they would have hurt him.)
- b. (i) a. Re tlile naye **ka ge re be re na le koloji.**  
b. Re tlile naye **ka ge re bile le koloji.**  
(We came with her/him because we had a car.)
- (ii) a. Re tlile naye ka dinao **ka ge re be re se na koloji.**  
b. Re tlile naye ka dinao **ka ge re sa ba le koloji.**  
(We came with her/him on foot because we had no car.)

From the examples given above, we can deduce that there are two positive forms and two negative forms of the associative copulative in the situative mood past tense. Two copulative verbs **na** and **bile** occurs in the positive form.

Examples (38a(i)) means that a group of people were fighting Mašilo and he defeated them but did not kill them because he had no gun. As far as examples (38a(ii)) are concerned, **Mašilo** was fighting a group of people and they did not hurt him because,

he protected himself with a gun he had. The implication of Sentences (38b(i)) is that the speaker and company came with the referent with a car because they had it. The denotation of examples (38b(ii)) is that the speaker and company came with the referent on foot because they had no car to transport them.

(c) **Future tense**

The future tense is characterised by **tla** or **tlo** and sometimes the **tla** or **tlo** can be replaced by **ka** in the positive form as illustrated by examples below:

- (39) a. (i) a. Ngwaga wo o reke koloi **ka ge o tla be o na le tšhelete.**
- b. Ngwaga wo o reke koloi **ka ge o ka ba o na le tšhelete.**  
(Buy a car this year as you will be having money.)
- (ii) O lese koloi **ka ge o tla be o se na tšhelete.**  
(Leave a car because you will not have money.)
- b. (i) O ka se šome **le ge o tla be o na le ngwana.**  
(You will not work even if you will be having a child.)
- (ii) O ka šoma **le ge o tla be o se na ngwana.**  
(You can work even if you will not be having a child.)

Example (39a(i)) means that the referent should buy a car this year because the referent will be having money, unlike in the previous years. What is implied by example (39a(ii)) above is that the referent is advised to give up buying a car because the referent would not be having enough money to do so. What is meant by Sentence (39b(i)) is that, the speaker warns the referent that the referent won't work even if the referent is accompanied by his/her child. In other words, the work is too difficult for

two people, it needs many more. Sentence (39b(ii)) means that the work is too light, and that is why the referent can work alone without being assisted by his/her child.

#### 4.3.1.8 The hortative mood

The associative copulative in the hortative mood occurs in both the positive and negative forms. The words **nke**, **anke**, **ake** or **a** precede the associative copulative to form a hortative mood, as illustrated in the examples given below. The copula is the relevant SC, **be** and **le** in the positive form. In the negative, **se** is found between SC and **be**.

- (40) a. (i) Anke o be le ngwana mogatšaka.  
(Please, have a baby my darling.)
- (ii) Anke o se be le ngwana mogatšaka.  
(Please, do not have a baby my darling.)
- b. (i) Ake o be le tšhelete pele hle!  
(Please, have money before.)
- (ii) Ake o se be le manganga.  
(Please, do not be stubborn.)
- c. (i) Ake ba be le monagano.  
(Please, let them have mind.)
- (ii) Ake ba se be le dinonwane.  
(Please, let them stop their tales.)
- d. (i) A o bile le rena kopanong?  
(Were you with us at the meeting?)

- (ii) A ga se wa ba le lapa peleng?  
(Did you not have a family before?)

**He** can be placed at the end of a sentence to form hortative mood. Sentence (40a(i)) means that the speaker is asking his darling to fall pregnant and have a child. Example (40a(ii)) means that the speaker is not prepared to be a father, so, he asks his darling not to fall pregnant and have a child. What is meant by Sentence (40b(i)) is that the speaker is asking the referent to budget money before they can do whatever they want to do. In Sentence (40b(ii)), the speaker is asking the referent not to argue. The implication of (40c(i)) is that the speaker wishes that the referents think constructively. The denotation of Sentence (40c(ii)) is that the speaker wishes that the referent should speak the truth and the truth only. Example (40d(i)) implies that the speaker asks the referent whether or not the referent was also in the same meeting as the speaker. Sentence (40d(ii)) denotes that the speaker was asking the referent whether the referent had a family before or not.

#### 4.3.1.9 The habitual mood

In the associative copulative, the habitual mood indicates that whatever is done, is done as a habit. The associative copulative occurs in both the positive and negative forms in the habitual mood. The copula consists of the relevant SC, copulative verb **be** and associative prefix **le** in the positive form. In the negative form, the copula consists of the relevant SC, negative morpheme **se**, **be** and **le**, as illustrated below by examples (41):

- (41) a. (i) Basadi ba sepela kudu ka maoto **ba be le mafogohlo**.  
(Women walk too much on foot and have sores between their thighs.)
- (ii) Basadi ga ba sepele kudu ka maoto **ba se be le mafogohlo**.  
(Women do not walk too much on foot and do not have some sores between their thighs.)

- b. (i) Bašemane ba ja kudu **ba be le mmele**.  
(Boys eat too much and become fat.)
- (ii) Bašemane ga ba je kudu **ba se be le mmele**.  
(Boys do not eat too much and do not become fat.)
- c. (i) Re rekiša kudu ka paseka **re be le tšhelete**.  
(We sell too much during Easter and have a lot of money.)
- (ii) Ga re rekiše kudu ka Paseka **ra se be le tšhelete**.  
(We do not sell too much during the Easter and we do not have a lot of money.)

Example (41a(i)) means that when women walk on foot for a longer time, they usually develop sores between their thighs due to friction and that is why they have to put on tights. Sentence (41a(ii)) means that when women do not walk for a longer time on foot, they usually do not develop sores between their thighs due to less friction. What is implied by example (41b(i)) is that boys eat a lot of food and usually become fat as a result. Example (41b(ii)) implies that boys do not eat a lot of food and usually do not become fat. As far as Sentence (41c(i)) is concerned, the speaker and company make a lot of profit through selling during Easter and usually make a lot of profit. The implication of example (41c(ii)) is that the speaker and company do not make a lot of profit through selling during Easter.

#### 4.3.2 The associative copulative, position and ambiguity

The normal word order in the associative copulative is SVO, that is, the subject, copulative verb and the complement. When the position of these elements change, the semantics of the sentences gets affected. The associative copulative is structurally ambiguous but with the change of position of element it becomes worse as seen in the examples below:



- (42) a. Basadi ba ba na le bana. (SVO)  
(These women have/are with children.)
- b. Bana ba ba na le basadi. (OVS)  
(These children have/are with wives/women.)
- c. Ba basadi ba na le bana. (SVO)  
(These women have/are with children.)
- d. Ba bana ba na le basadi. (OVS)  
(These children have/are with wives/women.)
- e. Ba na le bana ba basadi. (VOS)  
(They have/are with female children.)
- f. Ba na le basadi ba bana. (VSO)  
(They have/are with wives of these children.)

Sentence (42a) either means that women have children or women are with children. Example (42b) implies that either these children are with women or these young men are already married and have wives. The implication of Sentence (42c) is either that the pointed few women have children or they are with children, but the rest do not have or they are not with children or that those pointed few women have many children but the rest have few children. The denotation of the example in (42d) is either that the pointed few young men have wives but the rest do not have wives or that the pointed few children are with women and the rest are alone. Sentence (42e) suggests that the referents have female children or that the referents have children that have grown up into being women. The referents in this regard may be males or females. Sentence (42f) means either that they have wives who have stepchildren or that their wives have small babies (still breastfeeding.)

From examples in (42) above, one could see how associative copulative has an interesting structural ambiguity.

#### 4.3.3 The associative copulative and the auxiliary verbs

Auxillary verbs in the associative copulative indicate tense, mood and negation, as shown in the examples below:

- (43) a. Lefehlo o **nyaka** go ba le mosadi. (Infinitive mood)  
(Lefehlo wishes to have a wife.)
- b. Re **ile** ra ba le banna. (Indicative mood past tense)  
(We had husbands or we were with men.)
- c. Dikeledi o **tla** ba le ngwana kgwedi ye. (Indicative future tense)  
(Dikeledi will have a baby this month.)
- d. Lefa o **tlwaetše** go ba le basadi. (Habitual mood)  
(Lefa is used to having wives or to be with women.)
- e. Mo pateleng **gore** a be le maatla. (Subjunctive mood)  
(Pay him/her so that he/she can be motivated.)
- f. Ga ešo a ba le ngwana. (Negation)  
(She does not yet have a baby.)

Sentence (43a) means that Lefehlo would like to marry and have a wife. In Sentence (43b), the speaker is saying they once had husbands. In other words, they were married and then divorced. The meaning of Sentence (43c) is that Dikeledi will soon give birth to a baby as she is presently nine months pregnant. Sentence (43d) either means that whenever one sees Lefa he is always with a woman or that Lefa is used to having more than one wife. Sentence (43e) means that the speaker is advising the

employer of the referent to pay his/her employee so as to motivate him/her to work harder than he/she is doing. Example (43f) implies that the referent is pregnant but not yet delivered.

#### 4.3.4 The associative copulative and the conjunctions

The subordinating complementizers are giving up the subordinate clause in the associative copulative and the co-ordinating conjunctions are giving up the principal clauses. Let us look at the following examples:

- (44) a. **Ge a na le ngwana** mo nyale Lesiba.  
(If she has a child marry her Lesiba.)
- b. **Ka ge a se na ngwana** mo tlogele.  
(Because she does not have a child leave her.)
- c. **Le ge Mosima a na le tšhelete**, mo fe ye nngwe.  
(Even if Mosima has money, give her more.)
- d. **Mmoniseng o na le bana ebile o na le basadi**.  
(Mmoniseng has/is with many children and many wives/women.)
- e. **Mmoniseng o na le bana fela** ga a ba fepe.  
(Mmoniseng has children but he does not provide for them.)

Sentences (44a-c) contain the subordinating conjunctions **ge**, **ka ge** and **le ge** whereas Sentences (44d-e) contain the coordinating conjunctions **ebile** and **fela**. Sentence (44a) means that the speaker is advising **Lesiba** to marry her even if the child is not his because she shows fertility by having at least one child already. What is meant by Sentence 44(b) is that the speaker is advising the referent not to marry the woman because she is barren or the referent should not marry the woman because they do not have a child of their own. Example (44c) implies that the referent does not want to give **Mosima** some money because **Mosima** has her own money, but the speaker is

advising the referent to give **Mosima** more money because a woman needs money from a man. Sentence (44d) denotes that either **Mmoniseng** is married to many wives and these wives also have many children with him or **Mmoniseng** is accompanied by many children and women. What is implied by example (44e) is that **Mmoniseng** has many children and he does not provide for them.

#### 4.3.5 The associative copulative and the interrogatives

In Northern Sotho the associative copulative brings about answers of the two interrogatives ‘**mang?**’ (who?) and ‘**eng?**’ (what?). According to Leech *et. al.*, (1982), the above-mentioned interrogatives are called the **wh-** interrogatives. Let us consider the following examples:

- |      |    |  |                        |
|------|----|--|------------------------|
| (45) | a. | O na le mang?<br>(With whom are you?)<br>Ke na le basetsana.<br>(I am with girls.)   | Question<br><br>Answer |
|      | b. | Selepe o na le eng?<br>(What does Selepe have?)<br>Selepe o na le tšhelete.<br>(Selepe has money.)   | Question<br><br>Answer |
|      | c. | Diboko o na le bomang le eng?<br>(With whom is Diboko and what does he have?)<br>Diboko o na le basadi le tšhelete.<br>(Diboko is with the women and money.) | Question<br><br>Answer |

From the examples given above, one can notice that the questions clear up the ambiguity brought about by the associative copulative. Hence, example (45a) means that the speaker is with girls. Sentence (45b) implies that **Selepe** has a lot of money. In example (45c) mentioned above, **Diboko** is with women and he has money also.

What is meant by the **bo-** affixed to **mang** in Sentence (45c) is to show plurality and nothing else. It is obvious that the interrogative **mang** leads to associative relation and **eng** leads to possession and description, as in Sentence (45d) given below:

- (45) d. O na le eng molamo? Question  
(What does brother-in-law have?)  
Molamo o na le makoko. Answer  
(My brother-in-law is proud.)

#### 4.3.6 The associative copulative and the proverbs

There are many proverbs that appear in the associative copulative. Some appear in the positive form, while most of them appear in the negative form as will be seen in examples below. The proverbs do not show any relation that is association, possession or description. The meaning of the proverbs are figurative.

- (46) a. **Kgakakgolo ga e na le mabala, mabala a na le kgakana.**  
**Literal translation:** The big guinea fowl does not have spots, the guinea fowl chick does.  
**Communicative translation:** The actual behaviour of parents is manifested by their children.
- b. **Se na molomo se na le malome wa sona.**  
**Literal translation:** A person with mouth has his/her uncle.  
**Communicative translation:** One is able to negotiate and succeed with his/her mouth.
- c. **Ngwana wa noga o na le bonoga.**  
**Literal translation:** A baby snake has the poison of a snake.  
**Communicative translation:** The child of one's enemy is also one's enemy.

- d. **Kgomo e se nang dinaka e iphemela ka go loma.**  
**Literal translation:** A beast without horns protects itself by biting.  
**Communicative translation:** A person cannot hurt another without carrying a dangerous weapon.
- e. **Pelo ga e na tšhiwana.**  
**Literal translation:** The heart does not have an orphan.  
**Communicative translation:** An angry person will not only fight his/her opponent but everyone.
- f. **Kubu ga e na bosodi ge e eja lehlakanoka la gabo yona.**  
**Literal translation:** The hippopotamus cannot be blamed for grazing the reeds that belong to it.  
**Communicative translation:** People should mind their own business. They should not blame one if he/she is doing his/her own things at his/her family.
- g. **Legotlo ga le na la mošemane.**  
**Literal translation:** There is no small rat.  
**Communicative translation:** The child of an enemy is also an enemy.
- h. **Leoto ga le na nko.**  
**Literal translation:** A foot has no nose.  
**Communicative translation:** One will never know where and when one will meet danger.
- i. **Mahodu le babolayi ga ba na dinala.**  
**Literal translation:** Thieves and murderers do not have nails.  
**Communicative translation:** Criminals are lazy and want to reap where they did not plough.

- j. **Moforwa ga a na bogolo.**  
**Literal translation:** An adult person can be lied to.  
**Communicative translation:** A liar will lie to everybody young or old.
- k. **Moloi ga a na mmala.**  
**Literal translation:** A witch does not have colour.  
**Communicative translation:** One cannot tell if a person is bad until that person proves it.
- l. **Ntwa ga e na lešokotšo.**  
**Literal translation:** A war does not have a profit.  
**Communicative translation:** It is not necessary to fight continuously, better stop and forgive each other.

#### 4.3.7 The associative copulative and idioms

In Northern Sotho, there are a lot of idioms that appear in the associative copulative in positive and negative forms as illustrated below:

- (47) a. **Go ba le molomo.**  
**Literal translation:** To have a big mouth.  
**Communicative translation:** To talk too much.
- b. **Go se be le molomo o botse.**  
**Literal translation:** Not to have a good mouth.  
**Communicative translation:** To speak something that comes true or happens as said.
- c. **Go ba le tsebe.**  
**Literal translation:** To have an ear.  
**Communicative translation:** To understand or to obey.

- d. **Go se be le tsebe.**  
**Literal translation:** Not to have an ear.  
**Communicative translation:** To disobey or not to take advice.
- e. **Go ba le hlogo.**  
**Literal translation:** To have a head.  
**Communicative translation:** To be intelligent or to understand faster.
- f. **Go se be le hlogo.**  
**Literal translation:** Not to have a head.  
**Communicative translation:** To be dull or to learn slowly.
- g. **Go ba le sebetse.**  
**Literal translation:** To have a liver.  
**Communicative translation:** To be bold or brave.
- h. **Go ba le letswalo.**  
**Literal translation:** To have conscience.  
**Communicative translation:** To be a coward.
- i. **Go ba le thari.**  
**Literal translation:** To have many children.  
**Communicative translation:** To be more fertile or to bear many children.
- j. **Go ba le leleme.**  
**Literal translation:** To have a tongue.  
**Communicative translation:** To lie or to gossip.



k. **Go ba le lenala/seatla.**

**Literal translation:** To have a nail or hand.

**Communicative translation:** To steal.

l. **Go ba le letsogo.**

**Literal translation:** To have an arm.

**Communicative translation:** To always beat a wife/child.

All the idioms mentioned above can be negated and the meanings of the negated idioms will be the opposite of the meaning of the positive idioms.

#### 4.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the locational and the associative copulatives in detail, focusing on their morphosemantics. A clear distinction between the descriptive and locational copulatives has also been given in this chapter. In the locational copulative, the complement describes the place of the subject. In the associative copulative, the relationship between the subject and the complement are indicated as associative, possessive, existence or descriptive. Both the locational and the associative copulatives use the variable particles and copulative verbs that resemble the subject concord. The difference is that, in the associative copulative, the verb stem **na** and/or the associative particle **le** are employed. There is no trace of proverbs in Northern Sotho that occur in the locational copulative whereas there are many proverbs and idioms that occur in the associative copulative form.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.1 CONCLUSION

This research project deals with the morphosemantics of the copulative verb in Northern Sotho. The study actually examines the categorical status of the copulative verbs in Northern Sotho. It was discovered that some scholars regard the copulative as a fully-fledged verb, whereas others regard the copulative as an aspect of relation. Both views are taken into favourable consideration in this research. The copulative is examined from a morphological and syntactical point of view and six copulative verbs are thus identified, namely, **ke, se, ba, le, na** and **COP**.

The focus was then on the morphological and semantical points of view wherein the relationship between the subject and the complement of the copulative verb is emphasised. Four types of copulatives with regard to the above-mentioned relations are distinguished, which are, namely: the identifying, descriptive, locational and associative copulatives.

**Chapter One** deals with the background to the problem. This chapter also expresses the statement of the problem, which is that most scholars treat the morphology of copulatives without considering the syntax and semantics of copulatives.

**Chapter Two** examines the categorical status of copulatives by analysing the copulatives in Northern Sotho. Both the Government and Binding, and Minimalist theories are utilized in this chapter, especially in the application of the diagrams and analysis. The morphological and syntactical analysis of the following copulative elements received attention: **ke, se, ba, le, na** and **COP**.

**Chapter Three** analyses the identifying and descriptive copulatives in detail from a morphosemantic perspective. The following morphological features receive attention: moods, tenses and forms; position of element and ambiguity; auxillary verbs; conjunctions; interrogatives; and proverbs and idioms.

In **Chapter Four**, a discussion of the locational and associative copulatives is presented. It is in this chapter that a clear distinction is drawn between the descriptive and locational copulatives. Much emphasis is put on the following morphological features that have a bearing on the locational and associative copulatives: moods, tense and forms; position of elements and ambiguity; auxiliary verbs; conjunctions; interrogatives; and proverbs and idioms.

**Chapter 5** concludes the research study. The findings and the recommendations are presented in this chapter in the form of a summary.

## 5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed recommendations of the study are that:

- Copulatives are imperative in that they are used frequently by speakers and writers of the Northern Sotho language. Hence speakers, translators, scholars, teachers and other users of the language should use copulatives properly;
- Copulatives are dependent on moods as they show declaration, requests, commands, necessity, encouragement and habits, all of which are very important for communication in the Northern Sotho language when used correctly;
- Some idioms falling under identifying copulative are derogative or sensitive in nature, so, they should be used with care; and
- Finally, the study indicates that the semantics of the copulatives is mostly figurative in nature, and it is of course of great importance that further research projects be done on the semantics of copulatives. Research has already been done on morphology of copulatives whereas there is still little research on syntax and semantics.

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