# THE INTERROGATIVE IN NORTHERN SOTHO: A STUDY OF THE RELATION BETWEEN FORM AND MEANING

by

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# DECLARATION

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

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**SIGNATURE**

22 . 04. 2004

**DATE**

# DEDICATION

I am happy to dedicate this dissertation to my mother Annah Mongwe, my mother-in-law Angelina Mogale, my wonderful wife Mmatapa Joyce and my children Tintswalo, Jamela, Lucia, Vinolia and Bevan.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to take time and thank those who have assisted in the completion of this dissertation.

My special gratitude goes to Prof R.N. Madadzhe, my supervisor, for generously giving me his time, his expert advice, patience, encouragement and critical commends during the course of the study. To him I say "May the Glory of the Lord be with you forever".

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Above all, I give thanks to OUR ALMIGHTY GOD for allowing me to complete this study within the envisaged period. For with God nothing is impossible.

# KAKARETŠO

**Karolo 1** yona e laetša matseno mo pukwaneng ye. Mo karolong ye maikemišetšo-magolo a akaretša kalo ya dinyakišišo, maikemišetšo a sengwalwa, maikemišetšo-thwii dinyakišišong tša sengwalwa, tebeledišišo ya dingwalwa tše dingwe (dipuku).

**Karolo 2** yona e hlaloša ka mehuta le sebopego sa mabotši. E hlaloša magoro a maina le makgokedi, lekgoka-sedirile lekgoka-sedirwa, mehuta ya mabotši: mang? Bomang? -kae? -fe? -kakang? Na?/naa?, a?/afa?, eng?, -ng?, bjang?, kae?, a go kopakopana: goreng?, ke ka lebaka lang?, hleng?, mabotši a mabedi lefokong letee: kae bjang? eng bjang? mang neng?, eng kae?, neng kae? kae neng?, mang bjang?, mang kae?, eng neng?, neng bjang? bjang-bjang.

**Karolo 3** e laetša dihlopha tšeo di laetšago mabotši, Leba, lehlaodi, lehlathi le lešala.

**Karolo 4** yona e laetša tlhalošo ya mabotši: potšišo, go laetša tebanyi/kgatelelo, go se tshephiše goba lenyatšo, mabotši a tharedi a go laetša go makala, lethabo, a go laetša lehloyo goba go lebelelela selo fase ka go nyatša, a go tšhoša, boikgogomošo, a go laetša go nyama, lebaka le dipotšišo tšeo dikarabo tša gona di tsebjago ke seboledi.

**Karolo 5** yona e hlaloša ka go akaretša le ditšhišinyo go tšwa dinyakišišong mo dikarolong tša ka godimo.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## 1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The interrogative as defined by Louwrens (1991), is a word or sentence that is employed to express a question. Interrogatives can be used in various forms in different languages such as Northern Sotho, English, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga. For the purposes of this study, only two languages (i.e., English and Northern Sotho) will be utilised to exemplify the use of the interrogative phenomenon. In Northern Sotho, problems of communication often crop up because an interrogative may be used to denote different meanings when applied in different sentences. Fo example:

(1)    a.    O dira mphato **mang** ngwaga wo?

             (In **which** standard are you this year?)

    b.    O bone **mang** maabane?

             (**Whom** did you see yesterday?)

In the above two examples, the interrogative **mang** is used to indicate both animate and inanimate objects. This causes confusion among speakers who are not well-versed with Northern Sotho. The question that often gets posed is: Why should **mang** denote two items instead of being specific? This is just but one of the questions that this research will endeavour to answer. This usage is not applicable to English wherein, for example, the interrogative **who** is used to indicate persons only, and **which** only indicates animals and objects.

Besides utilising single words to form interrogatives, Northern Sotho can also employ full sentences to serve as interrogatives. This occurs when a statement is changed into a question due to the application of intonation. For example:

(2)  a.  Mosadi ó à ápéà.

         (A woman is cooking.)


    b.  Mósádí ó á ápéá?

         (**Is** a woman cooking?)


The high intonation shown in example (2b) above indicates the question form. The use of **is** at the beginning of the sentence in the English translation indicates that the statement is indeed in a question form. The word **is** in English is usually used after the subject but once it appears at the beginning of a sentence, then the whole sentence is thus transformed into an interrogative.


Comparatively speaking, English seems to have more interrogative terms than Northern Sotho. For instance, the different interrogatives such as **what, who, which, whom** are all translated as **mang** in Northern Sotho.


As many studies are currently based on English, many students of Northern Sotho find it difficult to learn how to use Northern Sotho interrogatives. One of the causes of this is that English interrogatives often start the sentence (Eckersley, 1970:116), while the converse is the norm in Northern Sotho. For example:


(3)  a.  **Who** wrote the letter?

         (Ke **mang** a ngwadilego lengwalo?)


    b.  Lengwalo le ngwadilwe ke **mang**?

         (The letter was written by **whom**?)


Todd and Hencock (1986:499) postulate their own theory on the use of interrogatives by stating that **who** is a subject and **whom** is an object pronoun.

The application of interrogatives in Northern Sotho must be related to the use of the appropriate verb. This implies that the correct selection must be applied for both the verb and the interrogative. Therefore, interrogatives cannot be used haphazardly:

(4)   a.   O dula **kae**?

           (Where do you stay?)


      b.   *O sepela **mang**?

           (Whom do you walk?)


From example (4a) above one deduces that the verb **dula** clearly corresponds with the interrogative **kae**? But in example (4b) above, the verb **sepela** does not correspond with the interrogative **mang**? and this leads to the ungrammaticality of the sentence. For the statement to be grammatical it must read:


(5)   O sepela le **mang**?

      (With **whom** are you walking?)


The sentence in example (5) above is now grammatical due to the insertion of the morpheme **le**. From the above-given examples (4 -5) it becomes evident that selectional restriction is important because it might cause some problems to non-speakers of Northern Sotho.


It is also vital that speakers of Northern Sotho should know where to place the interrogatives. There are, in some cases, specific interrogatives for indicating aspects such as place, time, and quantity.


(6)   a.   O dula **kae**?

           (Where do you stay?)

b. O tlile **neng**?

(When did you arrive?)

c. O na le dipudi **tše kae**?

(How many goats do you have?)

d. O nwele **eng**?

(What did you drink?)

Interrogatives in (6a-d) denote **place, time, number,** and **thing/object,** respectively. Changing the way in which they have been used would inadvertedly also change the gist of the meaning. For example:

(7) a. O tlile **neng**?

(When did you come?)

b. *O tlile **eng**?

(What did you come?)

Sentence (7b) is ungrammatical as the verb **tlile** cannot function properly with **eng**. Interrogatives are also used to reflect Northern Sotho discourse subtleties such as emphasis (confirmation), and doubt:

(8) a. A ga se nna wa go tla moo maabane?

(Was it not me who came there yesterday?)

b. Le bone nna?

(Did you see me?)

Examples (8a-b) denote semantic features of emphasis (confirmation) and doubt. Such usage of interrogatives needs a thorough analysis as it seems that no study of this nature has yet been undertaken in Northern Sotho.

## 1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main aim of this study is to investigate the interrogative aspect in Northern Sotho. This aim is hereby attained by mainly focussing on the relation between meaning and form. The following kind of questions also help to achieve the stated aim:

- What are interrogatives?
- What are the functions of interrogatives?
- Where should interrogatives appear?
- Are there any meanings associated with interrogatives?

## 1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

A thorough investigation of the interrogative aspect in Northern Sotho is undeniably of great value as it will enable us to understand the speakers of the language better.

## 1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is significant because it endeavours to:

- Indicate the use of interrogatives in Northern Sotho in comparison to that in English;
- Address the problem of definitions which is confusing;
- Examine the use of appropriate verbs which are related to the interrogatives; and
- Create a better relationship between speakers and listeners.

## 1.5 METHODOLOGY

In this study, the qualitative research method is used to gain an understanding of the topic under discussion. This method is used to compare the use of English and Northern Sotho interrogatives.

### 1.5.1  Collection of information

#### 1.5.1.1  Primary sources

First-hand information was obtained from the people interviewed. Information was thus gathered through consultations with professionals such as teachers and other language specialists. For the purpose of this study, unstructured questions were used in order to give the respondents an ample chance to express their own views.

#### 1.5.1.2  Secondary sources

The main aim of using this method in the study is to utilise the information already collected by different scholars. Information was obtained by consulting library books, research papers, Internet and dissertations.

## 1.6  LITERATURE REVIEW

There are different scholars who attempted to study the interrogatives in Northern Sotho and other languages. Their work plays an important role in this research as it forms the basis of this study.

### 1.6.1  Nokaneng and Louwrens (1996)

According to Nokaneng and Louwrens (1996), interrogatives can be distinguished from a normal statement by a change of intonation. They state that some interrogatives reveal what is explained by either the subject or object. Like other authors who made attempts to study the interrogatives, these two concentrated on the form but turned a blind eye on the function of interrogatives. Though intonation may effect some changes on the meaning of a spoken statement or sentence, the application of punctuation marks in a written sentence may also affect the meaning.

## 1.6.2 Ziervogel, Lombard and Mokgokong (1977)

Like other scholars who conducted studies on the interrogatives in Northern Sotho, Ziervogel, Lombard and Mokgokong also emphasise the intonation that brings about changes in the meaning of a sentence. Much emphasis was put on the position of single words that cause some interrogation in Northern Sotho, unlike with English interrogatives that are used at the beginning of a sentence.

In Northern Sotho, most interrogatives are either in the middle or at the end of a sentence. Without giving a detailed explanation of the function that each interrogative carries when used in different positions in a sentence, one may become confused because there are currently more English speakers than Northern Sotho speakers. In case one is given a paragraph in Northern Sotho where one is requested to identify some interrogatives and write full sentences in question form, a large number of problems would be experienced because of the lack of an adequate vocabulary. In order to avoid such confusion one must avoid using some English words in Northern Sotho language constructions.

## 1.6.3 Poulos and Louwrens (1994)

According to Poulos and Louwrens (1994), there are some interrogatives in Northern Sotho that start a sentence as in English. Examples of such interrogatives are **a?** **afa?** **naa?** and **na?** as in English. **A?** and **afa?** can only start a sentence but cannot be placed anywhere in a sentence, whereas **naa?** and **na?** can be used freely anywhere in a sentence, i.e., in the beginning, in the middle or at the end of a sentence. The **naa?** and **na?** questions, according to Poulos and Louwrens, expect a '**yes**' or '**no**' answer, whereas **afa?** and **a?** demand no answer as the answer is well-known to the speaker. These question forms **afa?** and **a?** are regarded as rhetorical questions because no answers are needed to such questions.

The main problem with the present day Northern Sotho speakers is that they are unable to distinguish between the 'yes'/'no' questions and rhetorical questions in their application of the interrogative words. In support of this statement, Lewis and Pen (1989:373) mention that questions are requests for confirmation or information and that they may take the form of interrogative reversals - the **yes/no** questions. It is also said that they are questions that seek affirmation or negation. In general, Northern Sotho interrogatives may not function as straightforward subjects of verbs as in English. In this case Poulos and Louwrens give a detailed explanation on the form and meaning of interrogatives in Northern Sotho but fail to give a clear distinction between the 'yes'/'no' questions and rhetorical questions. This is the problem which must be addressed by this research.

### 1.6.4 Louwrens (1991)

Louwrens is of the view that sentences that are used to express questions in Northern Sotho interrogatives can be divided into three major categories, depending on the pragmatic functions which they fulfil in a given context of discourse. They include those used to question the information contained in the verb, those used to question the information contained in either the subject or object noun phrase and those used to question the information carried by the sentence as a whole. According to Louwrens (1991:140), the **na?/naa?** questions that demand 'yes'/'no' answers, as indicated by other scholars, can also be used as rhetorical questions as shown in the following example:

9. Ga o na ditsebe **naa**?

   (Don't you have ears?)

The **naa?/na?** questions, as discussed by other scholars, demand the 'yes'/'no' answers but as used in the above example, they represent a rhetorical question as the answer is well-known to the speaker. From this discussion, non-speakers of Northern Sotho would find it difficult or rather confusing to distinguish between the use of **naa?/na?** and **afa?**,

**a**? as interrogatives, and might instead begin to intermingle them. On the other hand, Northern Sotho speakers would become more knowledgeable because of such language developments. This research thus sets out to gather relevant information in order to enhance the understanding of Northern Sotho language and assist in addressing such problems as those in question.

### 1.6.5 Lombard and Mokgokong (1993)

According to Lombard and Mokgokong (1993), interrogatives are referred to as particles because they occur in word groups called particle groups. However, their study on interrogatives is too shallow in that they only give an indication of a series of particles that could serve as interrogatives. In fact, particles in Northern Sotho are currently referred to as prefixes. The statements made by Lombard and Mokgokong may be confusing because one may conclude that interrogatives are prefixes and suffixes.

This research must be able to point out those interrogatives that serve as prefixes and those that are suffixes. In order to guard against such confusions, this study will be able to furnish relevant information that will enable one to distinguish between prefixal and suffixal interrogatives, since not all interrogatives will fall in one category.

Although the earlier mentioned scholars have earnestly attempted to analyse the relation between form and meaning of the interrogative in Northern Sotho, each one has only concentrated on one side of the study, namely, either on form or meaning. Nokaneng and Louwrens studied the use of interrogatives based on the change of intonation, a view that is also supported by Ziervogel.

Poulos and Louwrens concentrated on initial interrogatives and suffixes. They are supported by Lombard and Mokgokong as well as Makena, who regards interrogatives as prefixes and suffixes.

In dealing with this research topic, scholars have therefore partially discussed interrogatives but have not paid enough attention on the crucial aspects of the interrogatives, such as form and meaning.

## 1.7    DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

### 1.7.1  Noun Phrase (NP)

A noun phrase is defined as a phrase which is headed by a noun and whose dependents may be determiners, modifiers, complements, and peripheral or marginal dependents. Skockwel (1977:55) defines noun phrases as clusters of words of which the nucle are nouns and that they can be independent expressions. In their tactical functions they are subjects and objects of predicates. A noun phrase is also a group of words in which the most important word is a noun or a pronoun, for example

(10)    **Baeng** ba go tšwa Europa ba tlile.
        (Visitors from Europe arrived).

According to Leech (1981:181), noun phrases consist of a head word, preceded optionally by one or more pre-qualifiers, and followed optionally by one or more post-qualifiers. Fromkin and Rodman (1981:199) state that they may be easily identified because they are the only ones that can function as either a subject or an object in a sentence.

### 1.7.2  NP Subject

Lombard and Mokgokong (1993:101) define the subject noun as that noun that normally has the grammatical function in a sentence to perform or bring to pass the process or action that is included in the verbal root. For example:

(11)  Monna o a ja.

(The man is eating).

From the above-mentioned sentence, it is the man (monna) who peforms the process of eating (go ja). The man (monna) is therefore referred to as the grammatical subject of the sentence.

According to Pratt (1985:117), the subject of a sentence is the particular person(s) or thing(s) about which a thought is expressed or information is given, and that subject is a noun. Fromkin and Rodman (1981:233) state that the subject of a sentence is often, but not always, the 'doer' or 'agent'. In English, the subject usually precedes the verb while in most languages the subject of a sentence precedes the object.

### 1.7.3  NP object

The object may be described as a person or thing to which an action or feeling is directed. Grammatically, it can be a noun or its equivalent, governed by an active transitive verb or by a proposition. Therefore, verb stems which take an object in the sentence are used transitively.

(12)  Ba aga ntlo.

(They are building a house).

From the above-mentioned sentence one deduces that the building action is directed towards a house as the object of the verb. According to Collins and Hollo (2000:257), the object is the function of a clause element which may, in many cases, become the subject through passivisation, which is typically a noun phrase, and which is characteristically associated with the 'patient' or 'goal' of an activity. For example:

(13)  a.  Matome o **ngwala lengwalo**.

(Matome is writing a letter).

b. **Lengwalo** le **ngwalwa** ke Matome.

(The letter is written by Matome).

## 1.7.4 Verb Phrase (NP)

A verb is a part of speech with different inflectional forms typically referring to an action or activity. It is also a word which is used to indicate an action, state or occurrence, and forms the main part of the predicate of a sentence. Collins and Holloc (2000:30) state that a verb phrase is when the vast majority of verbs have the distinctive property of functioning as the head of verb phrases (which in turn function as the predicator within the clause). Auxiliaries (e.g., will, must, have) are a closed subclass of verbs which function as dependents within verb phrases.

Verbs characteristically express action, activities and events (which explains why they are traditionally defined as doing words). The Sepedi verb consists of a verb stem, which is in turn built up of a root and an ending or termination **-a.** As an infinitive, a verb functions as a noun where 'go' indicates the infinitive class of nouns, the 'go' is also a class prefix as in the following example:

(14)  go sepela.

(to walk).

## 1.7.5 Sentence

A sentence is a set of words complete in itself as the expression of a thought, containing or implying a subject and predicate, and conveying a statement, question, exclamation or command. According to Huyford and Heasley (1983:16), a sentence is neither a physical event nor a physical object. It is conceived abstractly as a string of words put together by the grammatical rules of a language. A sentence can therefore be thought of as the ideal string of words behind various realization in utterances and inscriptions. There are three types of sentences, namely, simple, complex and compound sentences.

## 1.7.5.1 A simple sentence

A simple sentence is a sentence that contains one predicate (be it a verb or copulative) or contains a single verbal element only. Ziervogel et al. (1977:125), in their attempt to define a simple sentence, state that it is a sentence with only one verb:

(15)   Mma o re rutile mešomo ya matsogo?
       (Did mother teach us manual labour?)

This is evident only with the predicative clause because single words that form clauses without being predicates are also simple sentences, although without a finite verb:

(16)   Aowa!
       (No!)

Furthermore, the copulative that is a predicative clause can be a single sentence with or without some reference to any particular noun class:

(17)   Ke bohlale?
       (Is it cleverness?)

## 1.7.5.2 A complex sentence

A complex sentence is a sentence that has one or more subordinate clauses embedded within its structure. According to Louwrens (1991:30), complex sentences are sentences that consist of at least two clauses, each containing its own verbal element. This is characterized by the fact that one of its clauses functions as the main clause, whereas the other clauses act as subordinate clauses. For example:

(18)   Ke tla robala ge ke jele.

(I shall sleep after eating.)


1.7.5.3   Compound sentences


Compound sentences are sentences that contain two independent clauses.  They are
sentences with more than one subject or predicate:


(19)   Lehodu le utswitše fela ba le swere.

(The thief has stolen but he is arrested.)


The above-given sentence can be represented in a tree diagram as follows:

```
                                    S
                   /                |                \
                  S                 |                 S
                /   \               |               /   \
              /      \              |             /      \
            /         \             |           /         \
          NP          VP          CONJ        NP          VP
          |           |                       |           |
          N           V          fela        pro          V
          |           |                                   |
        Lehodu     utswitše                             swere
```
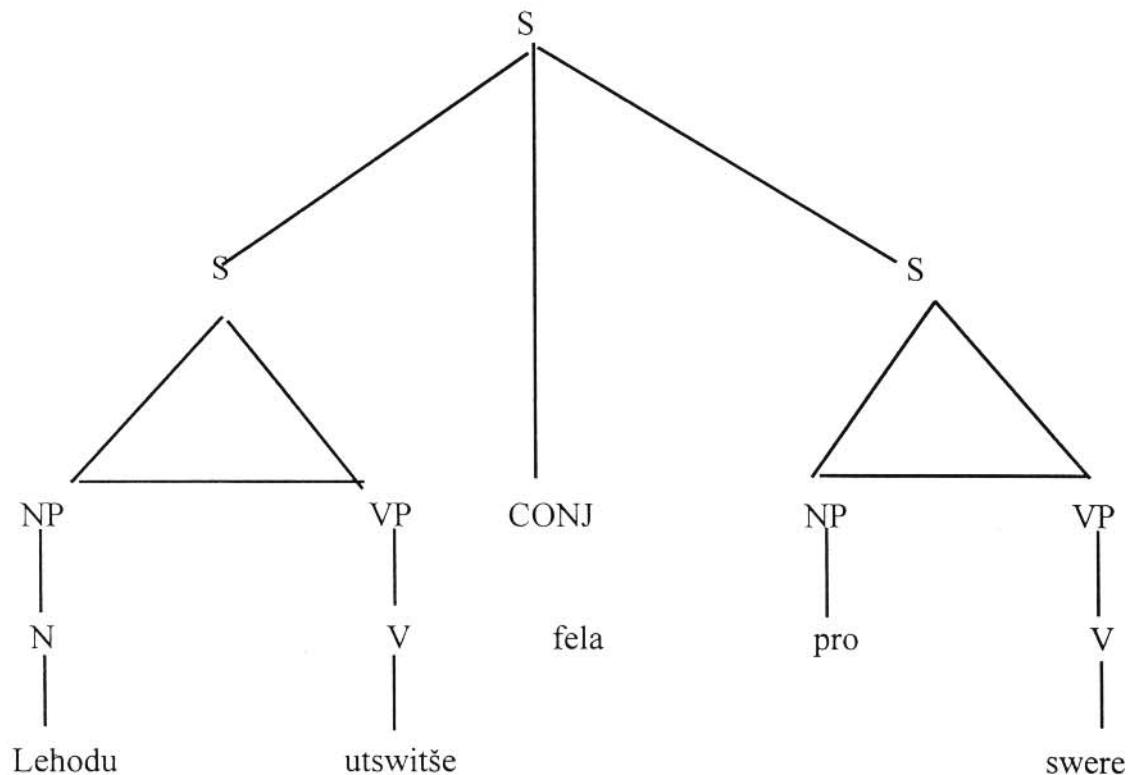
According to Ziervogel et al., (1977:126), the compound sentence in English,  unlike in
N. Sotho, is generally regarded to be a sentence consisting of independent clauses, i.e.,
main clauses joined together by a co-ordinative conjunction as in:

(20)   ("She came and he went")

A fihla gomme a sepela.

The Northern Sotho interpretation is not clear as the (a's) in **a fihla** and **a sepela** are not specific as to whether the one who arrived is a man or a woman, as well as the one who went away.

### 1.7.6  Suffix

A suffix is a morpheme which is added at the end of a word to form a derivative. Lombard and Mokgokong (1993:22) alternately state that suffixes are morphemes that occur to the right of a root, i.e., the ending:

| (21) | **Words** | **Roots** | **Suffix** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | aga | -ag- | -a | (build) |
| | sehlareng | -hlare- | -ng | (at the tree) |
| | ngwana | -ngw- | -ana | (child) |

According to Ziervogel et al., (1977:119), the interrogative is not a particular part of speech as far as its form is concerned in Northern Sotho. Interrogatives need not even be words but may be suffixes:

(22)   O a mo rata **na**?

(Do you love him?)

The use of **na** in the sentence above signifies that the sentence is in the interrogative form. The interrogative **na** that follows the verb **rata**, which can be divided into the root **rat-** and the suffix -a cannot be broken into some parts like it can be with **rata**. The interrogative **na** cannot be broken into any root – just as the suffix -**a.** If **na** can be broken into some parts (– same as -**a**) it does not give meaning. Therefore, it remains **na** without the possibility of the root and the suffix being separated.

### 1.7.7  The Prefix

Prefixes are morphemes that precede the root of a word.  Alternatively, these are morphemes that appear to the left of a root:

| (23) | **Words** | **Roots** | **Prefix** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | motho | -tho | mo- | (Human being) |
| | bosadi | -sad | bo- | (Womanood) |

A prefix is also defined as a verbal element placed at the beginning of a word to adjust or qualify in meaning,  or as an inflectional formative.

### 1.7.8  The root

A root is defined as the core element of a word, that part which carries the basic meaning of a word.  The root is a word that cannot be broken any further into smaller morphemic units.  For example:

| (24) | a. | mosadi | $\Rightarrow$ | mo- | prefix |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | (woman) | | -sadi | root |
| | | | | | |
| | b. | motho | $\Rightarrow$ | mo- | prefix |
| | | (human being) | | -tho | the root |

It further gives credit that a number of suffixes, called extensions, may be placed between a root and an ending.  These determine various phases of the meaning of the root.

## 1.7.9 The Copulative

A copulative, in simple terms, is classified as a connector that connects a subject and a predicate. According to Ziervogel et al., (1977:17), a copulative expresses the word "to be" without being necessarily a verb itself. Louwrens (1991:63) defines a copulative as a word group that in its fullest form, consists of the subject, the copula and the complement, but sometimes the subject may often be deleted. For example:

| (25) | **Subject** | **Copula** | **Complement** |
|---|---|---|---|
| (a) | (Matome) | **ke** | moruti. |
|  | (Matome | is a | priest) |
|  | (**Is** Matome | a | priest?) |
|  |  |  |  |
| b. | (Mma) | o **sa le** | mašemong. |
|  | (Mother | is still | in the field) |
|  | (**Is** mother | still | in the field?) |
|  |  |  |  |
| c. | (Tate) | o **na le** | dikgomo |
|  | (Father | has | cattle) |
|  | (Does father | have | cattle?) |

(26)  Mošemane yo o ka gae.

(This boy is at home).

b.        S          V          O

Molemi o    rekile      mogoma.

(The farmer bought the plough).

Nouns such as **ngwana** and **molemi**, which occupy the basic subject position, always show compulsory agreement with the verb by means of the subject concord. The above-mentioned examples indicate subjectival agreement.

(28)   a.      Monna o a **le** ngwala **lengwalo**.

            (The man writes a letter).

    b.      Mosadi o betha ngwana/Mosadi o a **mmetha ngwana**.

            (The woman beats a child).

    c.      Re hweditše katse **ka ntlong**.

            (We found the cat in the house).

    d.      Morutiši o beile dipuku **godimo** ga tafola.

            Morutiši o beile dipuku **tafoleng**.

            (The teacher put the books **on** the table.)

    e.      Morutiši o beile dipuku **kae**?

            Morutiši o beile **kae** dipuku?

            (**Where** did the teacher put the books?)

    f.      Mma o sepetše **ka** sefatanaga toropong.

            (Mother went to town **by** car.)

g.    Na mma o ile **ka eng** toropong?

(L.t. **With what** did mother go to town?)

(**How** did mother go to town?)

In sentences (28a-b) above, the nouns **lengwalo** and **ngwana**, which occupy the object position, always show compulsory agreement with the verbs by means of the object concords **le** and **mo**, respectively. Sentences (28c-d) with the prepositions **ka** and **godimo** convey agreement between **katse** and **ntlong** and **dipuku** and **tafola** respectively. This indicates the place where the **cat** and the **books** are found which implies inside the house and on the table respectively. Sentence (28e) is a question that demands an answer to indicate place. In sentence (28f)the application of the preposition **ka**, which is an instrument, brings agreement between **sepetše** and **sefatanaga**. The insertion of the interrogative form **ka eng** changes the sentences in (28 f, g) to be in question form, which demands the answer to indicate the instrument which is used to go to town.

## 1.8    ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

**Chapter one** is an introductory chapter, which covers the statement of the problem, aims and objectives of the study, rationale for the study, significance of the study, methodology, and literature review.

**Chapter two** focuses on the types and form of the interrogatives.

**Chapter three** deals with other categories that appear with interrogatives.

**Chapter four** concentrates on the semantics of the interrogatives.

**Chapter five** concludes and gives the recommendations based on the previous chapters.

# CHAPTER TWO

# TYPES AND FORM OF THE INTERROGATIVE

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this chapter is to analyse the types and form of the interrogatives in Northern Sotho. In other words, the chapter will endeavour to show the categories that can function as interrogatives; and also to examine the morphological structure of such interrogatives. It is of vital importance for one to know the different types of interrogatives and how they are spelt or pronounced.

According to Ziervogel et al., (1977:119), the interrogative is not a particular part of speech as far as its form is concerned in Northern Sotho, but it belongs to a variety of categories. Poulos and Louwrens (1994:373) echo Ziervogel et al.'s sentiment when they say interrogative forms are discussed under different headings. These may be distinguished between interrogatives that are fully-fledged words in their own right, and those that are stems and cannot stand on their own. The latter type of interrogatives requires some or other prefixes or concords before they can become whole words. All these issues will come under scrutiny in this chapter.

## 2.2 NOUN CLASSES AND AGREEMENT

Collins and Hollo (2000:249) aver that agreement is the correspondence in terms of grammatical features such as person and number, and between the verb and the subject. In the same vein, Siewierska (1991:186) postulates that agreement is the modification of one element to match the properties of another element.

The object morpheme (concord) must agree with the object while the subject morpheme (concord) must also be in agreement with its subject. For example:

(1)   a.      **Dikgomo di** sepetše?

              (Are the cattle gone?)

      b.      *****Dik**gomo **ba** sepetše?

              (The cattle **they** gone.)

The sentence in (1b) is ungrammatical because the morpheme **ba** is not in agreement with **dikgomo**, which starts with the prefix **di**; in a nutshell **b** and **di** are not in agreement. The reason for this is that **ba** is the class concord of class 2 (of people) whereas **di** is the class concord belonging to class 10 (of animals). However, the morpheme **di** in the first sentence (1a) is in agreement with **dikgomo**, which start with the same morpheme **di** as the class prefix.

There are several types of agreement in Northern Sotho (subjectival, objectival, prepositional, existential, notional agreement, etc.). For the purpose of this study, only subjectival and objectival agreement will be handled, as they have a bearing on the form and types of interrogatives in Northern Sotho.

### 2.2.1 Subjectival agreement

According to Madadzhe (1977:175), the maximal projection of this category is the subjectival agreement phrase [AgrS] where subjectival agreement is the head of this phrase [AgrS]. A subjectival agreement morpheme shows agreement with the subject NP. For example:

(2)   a.      **Batho ba** robetše.

              (People are asleep.)

b. Ke **batho bafe** ba robetšego?

(Who are the people asleep?)

(3) a. **Pere e** hwile.

(The horse is dead.)

b. Ke **pere efe** e hwilego?

(Which horse is dead?)

From the sentences above, it is evident that **ba** is in agreement with **batho** in (2a) and the interrogative **bafe** is in agreement with **batho** in (2b). In sentence (3a) the morpheme **e** is in agreement with the subject **pere** while the interrogativ **efe** is in agreement with the subject **pere** in (3b).

The following table illustrates the subjectival morphemes for the noun class in Northern Sotho with their corresponding interrogative morpheme. In this case, the pronominal stem is -**fe** whereby its morphology consists of the class concord plus the pronominal stem:

| (4) | **Noun Class** | **Prefix** | **Subjectival Agreement** | | **(cc & pro. stem)** |
|-----|----------------|-----------|---------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| | 1 | mo- | **o** + fe | = | ofe? (m-deleted) |
| | 1(a) | (n-) | **o** + fe | = | ofe? |
| | 2 | ba- | **ba** + fe | = | bafe? |
| | 2(a) | bo- | **ba** + fe | = | bafe? |
| | 3 | mo- | **o** + fe | = | ofe? |
| | 4 | me- | **e** + fe | = | efe? |
| | 5 | le- | **le** + fe | = | lefe? |
| | 6 | ma- | **a** + fe | = | afe? |
| | 7 | se- | **se** + fe | = | sefe? |

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| Noun class | Prefix | Subjectival Agreement | | (cc + pro. stem) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | di- | **di** + fe | = | dife? |
| 9 | n- | **e** + fe | = | efe? |
| 10 | di- | **di** + fe | = | dife? |
| 14 | bo- | **bo** + fe | = | bofe? |
| 15 | go- | **go** + fe | = | gofe? |
| 16 | ga- | **go** + fa | = | gofe? |
| 17 | go- | **go** + fe | = | gofe? |
| 18 | mo- | **go** + fe | = | gofe? |
| 'X' | ga- | go + fe | = | gofe? |

(**cc + pro. stem** denotes class concord plus pronominal stem)

Noun classes can be used with interrogatives in sentences whereby  they appear as subjectival agreement as in the following:

(5)   1.   O bone mošemane **ofe**?

(Which boy did you see?)

1.(a)   Ke **ofe** mma yo o mmethilego?

(L.t.  It is which mother that you have punished?)

(Which mother did you punish?)

2.   O bone bašemane **bafe**?

(Which boys did you see?)

2.(a)   Ke **bafe** bomma ba o ba bethilego?

(L.t.  It is which mothers that you have punished?)

(Which mothers did you punish?)

3.  O remile mohlare **ofe**?

    (Which tree did you cut?)


4.  O remile mehlare **efe**?

    (Which trees did you cut?)


5.  O bolela leleme **lefe**?

    (Lt. What tongue do you speak?)

    (Which language do you speak?)


6.  O bolela maleme **afe**?

    (Which languages do you speak?)


7.  Matome o rema dikgong ka selepe **sefe**?

    (With which axe does Matome cut the wood?)


8.  Matome o rema dikgong ka dilepe **dife**?

    (With which axes does Matome cut the wood?)


9.  Ke kgomo **efe** e fulago?

    (Which cow is grazing?)


10. Ke dikgomo **dife** di fulago?

    (Which cattle are grazing?)


14. O jele bogobe **bofe**?

    (Which porridge did you eat?)

(7)  a.  Mosadi o a **mo** ješa ngwana.

(The woman is feeding (it) the child.)

b.  Mosadi o ješa **ofe ngwana**?

(Which child is being fed by the woman?)

From the example in (6a) above, it is clear that **di** is in agreement with the object **dikgomo** while in (6b) the interrogative **dife** is in agreement with the object **dikgomo**. In sentence (7a), the morpheme **mo** is in agreement with the object **ngwana**, whereas the interrogative **ofe** is in agreement with the object **ngwana** in (7b).

The following table is an illustration of the objectival morpheme and the noun classes with the corresponding interrogative pronouns. The pronominal stem is **-fe**, wherein its morphology consists of the class concord plus the pronominal stem:

(8)  **Noun Class    Prefix    Objectival Agreement Morpheme    cc + pron. stem**

| Noun Class | Prefix | Objectival Agreement Morpheme | | cc + pron. stem |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | mo- | mo + fe | = | ofe? (m-deleted) |
| 1(a) | (n-) | mo + fe | = | ofe? (m-deleted) |
| 2 | ba | ba + fe | = | bafe? |
| 2(a) | bo | ba + fe | = | bafe? |
| 3 | mo- | **o** + fe | = | ofe? |
| 4 | me- | **e** + fe | = | efe? |
| 5 | le- | **le** + fe | = | lefe? |
| 6 | ma- | **a** + fe | = | afe? |
| 7 | se- | **se** + fe | = | sefe? |
| 8 | di- | **di** + fe | = | dife? |
| 9 | n- | **e** + fe | = | efe? |
| 10 | di- | **di** + fe | = | dife? |

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| 14 | bo- | **bo** + fe | = | bofe? |
| 15 | go- | **go** + fe | = | gofe? |
| 16 | ga- | **go** + fa | = | gofe? |
| 17 | go- | **go** + fe | = | gofe? |
| 18 | mo- | **go** + fe | = | gofe? |
| 'X' | ga- | go + fe | = | gofe? |

Noun classes can be used with interrogatives in sentences whereby they appear as objectival agreement, as in the following:

(9)  1.     Monna o bethile ngwana **ofe**?

(Which child was beaten by the man?)


1(a)   Ke mma **ofe** wa go rogwa ke bana?

(Which mother was insulted by the children?)


2.     Monna o bethile bana **bafe**?

(Which children were beaten by the man?)


2.(a)   Ke bomma **bafe** ba go rogwa ke bana?

(Which mothers were insulted by the children?)


3.     Mošemane o epile molete **ofe**?

(Which hole has been dug by the boy?)


4.     Mošemane o epile melete **efe**?

(Which holes were dug by the boy?)

5.    Malome o ngwadile lengwalo **lefe**?

      (Which letter was written by uncle?)


6.    Malome o ngwadile mangwalo **afe**?

      (Which letters were written by uncle?)


7.    Ke selepe **sefe** se robilwego ke monna?

      (L.t. It is which axe that has been broken by the man?)

      (Which axe was broken by the man?)


8.    Ke dilepe **dife** di robilwego ke monna?

      (L.t. It is which axes that have been broken by the man?)

      (Which axes were broken by the man?)


9.    O gamile kgomo **efe**?

      (Which cow did you milk?)


10.   O gamile dikgomo **dife**?

      (Which cows did you milk?)


14.   Ke bogobe **bofe** bo jelwego ke Lesiba?

      (L.t. It is which porridge that is eaten by Lesiba?)

      (Which porridge was eaten by Lesiba?)


15.   Ke go dula **gofe** go sa lokago?

      (Which manner of sitting is not good?)


16.   Ke fase **gofe** ga ntlo go palegilego?

      (L.t. It is which side of the ground of the house that is cracked?)

      (Which side of the house's floor is cracked?)

17. Ke godimo **gofe** ga thaba go swelego ka mollo?

(L.t. It is which top of the mountain that is been burnt by fire?)

(Which top of the mountain is burnt by fire?)


18. Ke morago **gofe** ga sefatanaga go khubilwego ke bašemane?

(L.t. It is which back of the car that is shuttered by the boys?)

(Which back of the car was shuttered by the boys?)


'X' Ke **gofe** gaMamabolo fao ba swerego lehodu?

(L.t. It is which side of Mamabolo that they have arrested a thief?)

(Which side of Mamabolo area was the thief arrested?)


From the above-mentioned examples, it has been clearly indicated how noun classes can be used with interrogatives in sentences whereby they appear as objectival agreement.


## 2.3 TYPES OF INTERROGATIVES

Interrogatives may be distinguished between those which are fully-fledged words and those which are stems and cannot stand on their own. The latter require some prefixes or concords before they can become whole words.


### 2.3.1 Interrogative words mang? bomang?

There are interrogatives that are referred to as fully-fledged because no affixations can be made on them as they can be able to stand on their own:


(10) a. Go apeile **mang** dijo?

(Who cooked the food?)

b. Go apeile **bomang** dijo?

(Who (are they) cooked the food?)

c. Ke bophelo **mang** bjo o bo phelago?

(What type of life are you living?)

d. Ke phoofolo **mang** ye o e tsomago lešokeng?

(Which type of animal are you hunting in the bush?)

e. Ke pula ya mohuta **mang** ye e nelego lehono?

(What type of rain has fallen today?)

The interrogative words **mang/ bomang**, as applied in the above-mentioned sentences, denote people and things as **who, what** and **which**. In sentences (10a-b), the interrogative **mang**, which means "who", denotes people as the possible answers to the questions, it demands the identity of a person who did the cooking, thus belonging to person classes (1, 1(a), 2 and 2(a). The interrogative **mang** in (10c-r) denotes things like **bophelo** (life), **phoofolo** (animal) and **pula** (rain).

2.3.2 The interrogative stems that cannot stand on their own are, namely, : **-kae**? for 'how many', **-fe**? for 'which', and **-kakang**? For 'how big'. These are adjectival stems which must occur with the adjectival prefix or concord before they can be used. For example:

(11) a. Ke tlile **gakae**?

(How many times have you come?)

b. O na le dikolobe **tše kae**?

(How many pigs do you have?)

c.      O bone diphoofolo **dife** tša lešoka?

(Which wild animals have you seen?)


d.      O rekile marotse a **makakang**?

(How big are the pumpkins that you bought?)


It is clear from the above-given examples that the interrogative stems are used with prefixes attached to them for them to become whole words and to be meaningful. Without prefixes being attached to them, they are meaningless.


2.3.3    The question forms **na?/naa?** Can be used at the beginning of a sentence, in the middle, at the end, and may also occur twice in a sentence. Wherein these question forms may occur twice in a sentence may denote emphasis. For example:


(12)    a.      **Naa** Matome o robetše?

        b.      Matome **na** o robetše?

        c.      Matome o robetše **naa**?

        d.      **Na** Matome o robetše **na**?

        e.      **Naa** Matome o robetše **na**?

        f.      **Naa** Matome o robetše **naa**?


All the above-mentioned sentences which are in question form may all be represented by the English translation question form that states thus: **Is Matome asleep**?


2.3.4    The question forms **a?** and **afa**? seem to have five variants, and can only occur at the beginning of a sentence. They are used mainly where answers are already known and also where questions do not demand answers:


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The above examples indicate that the interrogatives **eng**? or **-ng**? can be used to represent the question "what?" as in (14a-b) and for the "why?" question as in (14c).

2.3.6 The interrogative word **neng**? This is translated as "**when**?" in English:

(15) a. Ba tlo goroga **neng**?

(When will they arrive?)

b. O boile **neng** Gauteng?

(When did you come back from Johannesburg?)

c. O tla boela **neng** mošomong?

(When will you leave for work?)

2.3.7 The interrogative word **bjang**? This is used to ask the question '**how**' in English:

(16) a. Maphodisa ba swere **bjang** mahodu?

(How did the police arrest the thieves?)

b. O sepetše **bjang** go ya kerekeng maabane?

(How did you go to church yesterday?)

c. O ngwadile **bjang** ditlhahlobo tša mafelong a ngwaga?

(How did you write your end of the year examination (final examination?))

d. Nku ye e bolailwe **bjang**?

(How was this sheep slaughtered?)

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2.3.8  The interrogative word **kae**?  This asks the question "**where**?" and must not be confused with the stem **-kae**? meaning 'how many', which was discussed in 2.3.2:

(17)  a.  Ba dula **kae** basadi ba?

(Where do these women live?)


b.  O be o ile **kae** ge sekolo se e tšwa?

(Where were you when the school knocked off?)


c.  O šoma **kae** matšatši a?

(Where do you work nowadays?)

(Where are you employed nowadays?)


### 2.3.9  The miscellaneous interrogative items

In here, different questions demanding a reason are formed in Northern Sotho, using some word groups such as **goreng**? **Ke ka lebaka lang**? These may all be embraced by the question form **hleng**? which means "**for what reason**?"

(18)  a.  **Ke ka lebaka lang** o sa re mema ka moka?

(Why didn't you invite us all?)


b.  **Hleng** a sa re mema ka moka?

(Why didn't he invite us all?)


c.  **Goreng** o sa ya mošomong?

(Why didn't you go to work?)

## 2.3.10 **Multiple questions**

These are questions that evoke more than the answer wherein the two question words are used like **kae**? and **bjang**? These two may interchange, but as a general rule the one that comes first is the one that receives the focus of attention:

(19)  a.  Malose o wele **kae bjang**?
          (Where and how did Malose fall off?)

      b.  Malose o hweditše tšhelete **bjang kae**?
          (How and where did Malose get money?)

      c.  O gobaditšwe ke **eng bjang**?
          (What injured him and how?)

      d.  O boditšwe ke **mang neng**?
          (Who told you and when?)

      e.  Le yo dira **eng kae**?
          (What are you going to do and where?)

      f.  Le boledišane **neng kae**?
          (When and where did you talk to each other?)

      g.  O etela **kae neng**?
          (Where and when do you take a visit?)

      h.  O gobaditšwe ke **mang bjang**?
          (Who injured you and how?)

i.      Lesiba o biditšwe ke **mang kae**?

          (Who called Lesiba and where?)


j.      Mosadi o tlile le **eng neng**?

          (What did the woman bring with her and when?)


k.      Monna o thwetšwe **neng bjang**?

          (When and how was the man employed?)


l.      Mosetsana ba mmolaile **bjang neng**?

          (How and when was the girl murdered?)


## 2.4   **CONCLUSION**

Different types and form of interrogatives were distinguished in this chapter. A lengthy discussion was based on those interrogative words that are fully-fledged and those that are stems and thus could not stand on their own, but rather require either a prefix or concord to become complete words.

It was clearly indicated in this chapter that different noun classes and their agreement are divided into subjectival and objectival agreement. Its main function is to mark the agreement between the subjectival or objectival agreement morpheme and the subject or object noun phrase. It is clear and evident that any use of a wrong agreement morpheme would lead to the ungrammaticality of a sentence.

It is from this background that one might guard against wrong usage of the agreement morphemes and the noun classes and all different types of interrogatives as indicated in this chapter. It is also from this discussion that one becomes clear about the correct use of the agreement morpheme with its corresponding noun class. It has also been stated in this chapter that each interrogative word used must correspond with the noun class or concord or the correct verb in the sentence.

# CHAPTER THREE

# OTHER CATEGORIES THAT APPEAR WITH INTERROGATIVES

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this chapter is to examine whether a variety of categories that appear with interrogatives can bring forth semantic changes in sentences. This chapter encompasses discussion on the copulative, adjective, adverbs, pronoun and selectional restriction.

## 3.2 THE COPULATIVE

The copulative is regarded as a linking verb, i.e., it links the subject and the predicate. According to Botne (1986), Jusuf (1990) and Du Plessis et al., (1995), the copulative is a fully-fledged verb that deserves attention. On the other hand, there are other scholars like Ziervogel et al., (1981), Lombard (1985) and Poulos and Louwrens (1990) who are of the opinion that the copulative is not a verb and should not be treated under verbs at all. The latter group of scholars put emphasis on the aspect of relations as a means of describing the copulative. It is from this discussion that principled premise will emerge for analysing the copulative in Northern Sotho.

There are various definitions of the copulative . Ziervogel et al., (1981:22) maintain that the copulative construction expresses the verb to be without necessarily being a verb itself. The following types of copulative verbs occur in Northern Sotho: **ke, se, ba, COP, le** (na).

### 3.2.1 The copulative verb "ke"

The copulative verb **ke** is distinguished from others by the utilization of the copula **ke**. In most instances, the copulative verb **ke** has NPs and APs as its complements:

(1)     a.      Monna **ke lešole**.
                (The man is a soldier.)

        b.      Monna **ke** yo **motelele**.
                (The man is tall.)

        c.      **Naa** monna ke lešole?
                (Is the man a soldier?)

        d.      **Na** monna ke **eng**?
                (What is the man?)

        e.      **Na** monna ke **mang**?
                (Who is the man?)

In sentences (1a-b) above, the copulative verb **ke** appears with the NP **lešole** and AP **motelele** as its complements. Du Plessis et al., (1995:353) are of the opinion that the copulative verb **ke** may never occur with any type of agreement in Inflection. In sentences (1c-e) above, the use of interrogative words **naa**? **na**, **eng**? and **mang**? change the sentences into question forms. Sentence (1c) as a question, requires the answer to become either a **yes** or a **no** whereas (1d-e) as a question asking **what** and **who** the man is, the answer to all these questions is that **monna ke lešole (the man is a soldier)**. As a result, sentence (1a) will have the following structure:

(2)

```
                      CP
                       |
                     AgrSP
                    /      \
                  NP        MP
                   |       /    \
                 Monna    M      TP
                          |     /   \
                         IND   T     VP
                               |      |
                              PRES    V
                                     /  \
                                    V    NP
                                    |     |
                                    ke   lešole
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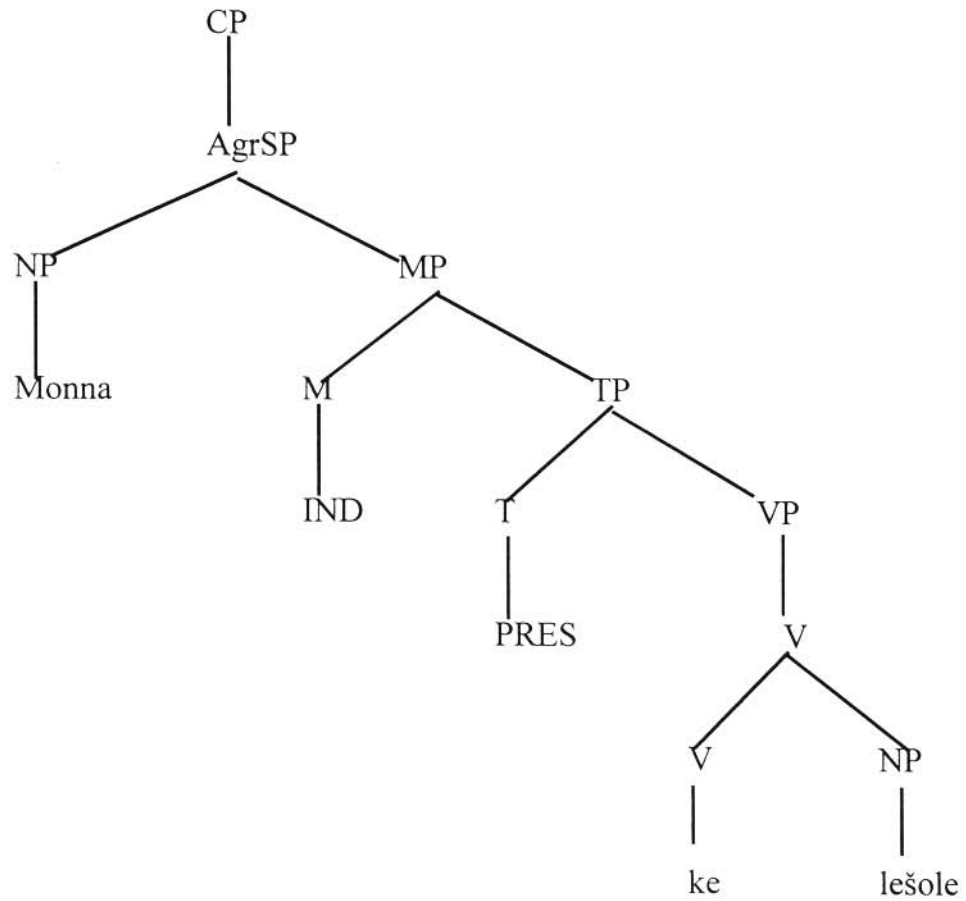
### 3.2.2 The copulative verb "COP"

The copulative word **COP** also expresses a stative meaning. However, it does not appear in an overt form in the surface structure of sentences in Northern Sotho. In Northern Sotho, this verb always appears in sentences with a **PP** with **NA** or a locative complement:

(3)   a.   **Mo**šimane **o** gae.
           (The boy is at home.)

      b.   Molemi **o na** le mabele.
           (The farmer has got maize.)

      c.   **Naa** mošemane o gae?
           (Is the boy at home?)

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d.      **Naa** mošemane o **kae**?

(Where is the boy?)

e.      **Naa** molemi o na le mabele?

(Does the farmer have maize?)

f.      **Naa** molemi o na le **eng**?

(What does the farmer have?)

In (3a-b) above, the copulative verb **COP** appears with the NPloc **gae** and the PP **na le mabele**, respectively. The other point is, when the abstract copulative verb **OP** appears, there must always be agreement in INFL with the subject. In the aforementioned sentences (3a-b), **o** serves as AGR in INF with the subject NPs **mošemane** and **molemi**, respectively. Because of this agreement, sentences (3a-b) will show the following structures:



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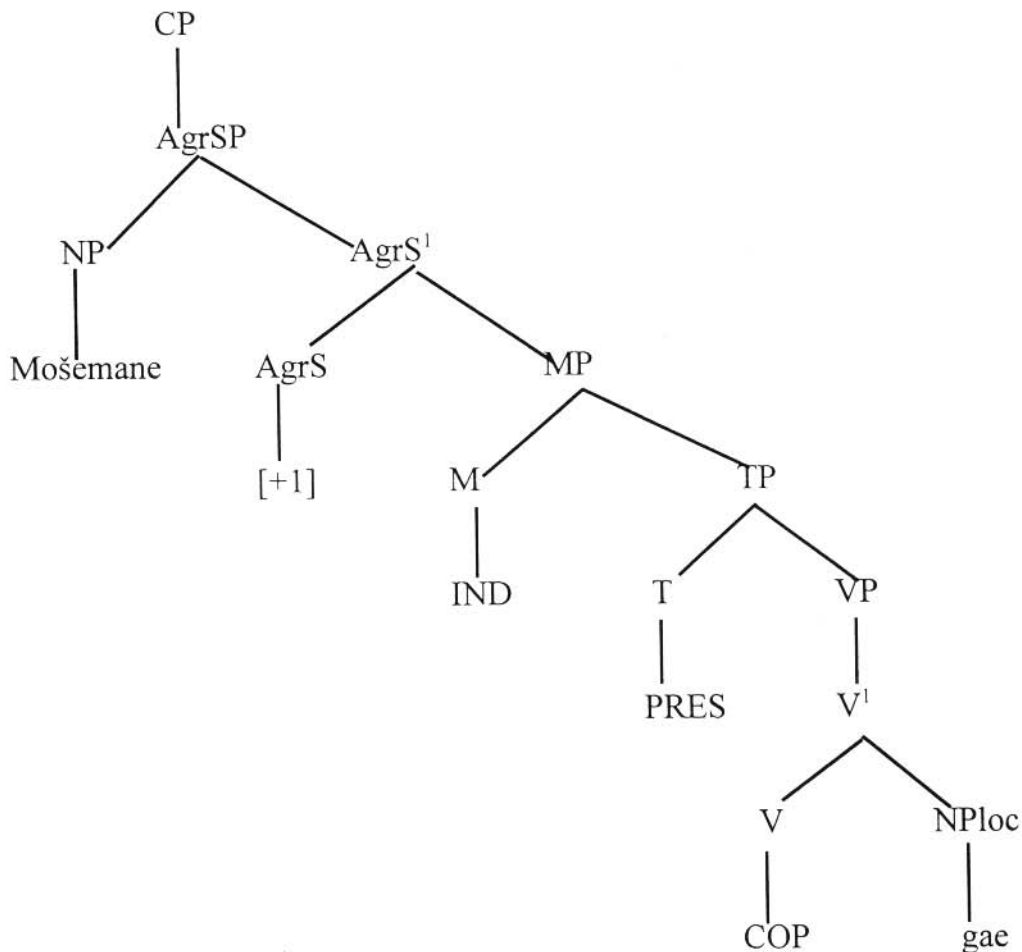
The **na** (le) that appears with the copulative verb **COP** has received divergent analysis from several scholars. Ziervogel et al., (1981:98) regards **na** as a copula while Poulos & Louwrens (1990) regard it as a prefix. From the linguistic evidence available, both of the above proposals seem to be incorrect. This becomes clear when a tree diagram is used to illustrate a sentence in which **na** (le) appears:

(5)   a.    Molemi o na le mabele.

           (The farmer has got maize.)

    b.
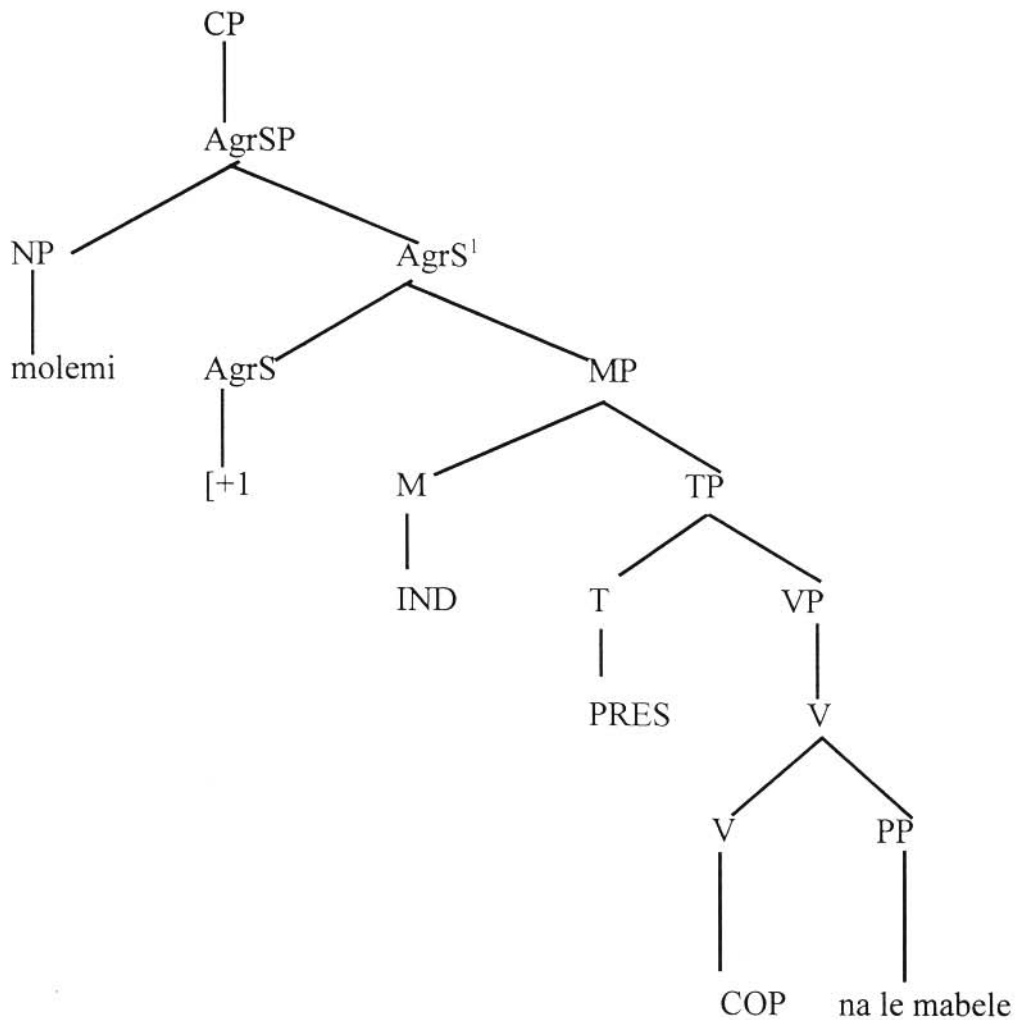
### 3.2.3 The copulative verb "ba"

The copulative verb **ba** is distinguished from the rest of the copulative verbs by virtue of being inchoative. This verb is inchoative because it depicts a movement or entry into some state or condition. The Northern Sotho **ba** is normally translated as **become** or **get**.

The copulative verb "**ba**" may utilise NPs and AP, as its complements:

(6) a. Mošemane o tla gola a **ba** monna.
   (The boy will grow to become a man.)

   b. Ngwana o tla gola a **ba** yo mogolo.
   (The child will grow to become **big**.)

   c. **Naa** mošemane o tla gola a ba **eng**?
   (The boy will grow to become what?)
   (What will the boy grow to become?)

In the above-mentioned examples, the verb **ba** appears with both the NP **monna** and the AP **mogolo** as complements. The copulative verb **ba** can be influenced in the same manner as any other ordinary verb. In other words, it can express mood, tense, agreement, negative and aspect. The following sentence illustrates this:

(7) a. Monna o sa tlo **ba** molemi.
   (The man will become a farmer).

   b. Monna ga a sa tlo **ba** molemi.
   (The man will no logner become a farmer.)

   c. **Naa** monna o tla **ba** molemi?
   (Will the man become a farmer?)

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(7b)

```
                    CP
                    |
                  AgrSP
                 /      \
               NP        AgrS¹
               |        /      \
             Monna   AgrS       NegP
                     |         /     \
                   [+ 1]     Neg      MP
                             |       /    \
                             ga     M      TP
                                    |     /    \
                                   IND   T      ASPP
                                         |     /     \
                                       PRES  ASP      VP
                                             |        |
                                             sa       V
                                                     /  \
                                                    V    NP
                                                    |    |
                                                    ba   molemi
```
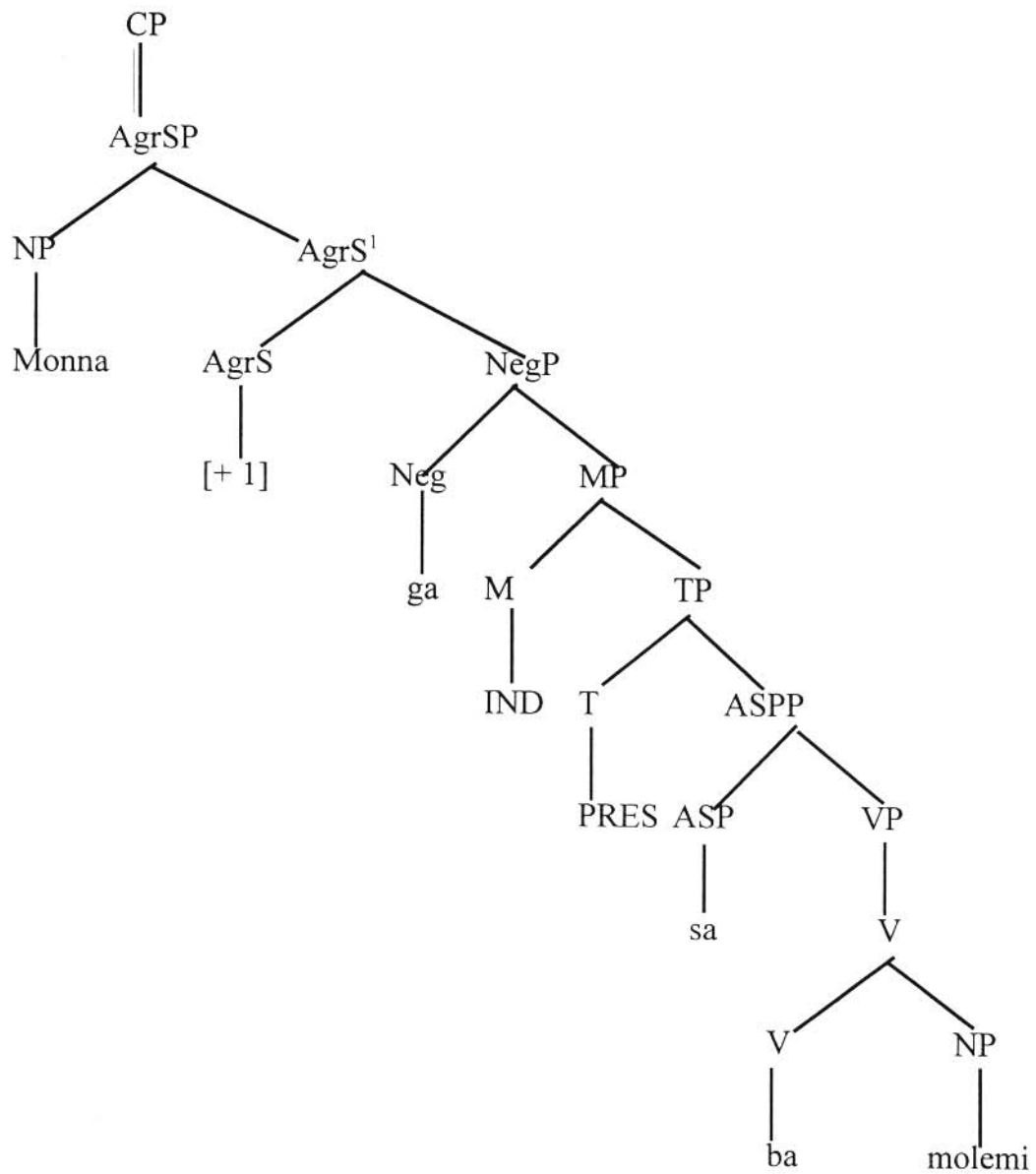
### 3.2.4  The copulative verb "se"

The copulative verb **se** differs from the rest of the copulative verbs in that it is a negative verb.  The form of the copulative verb **is** can only be indicated by employing **se:**
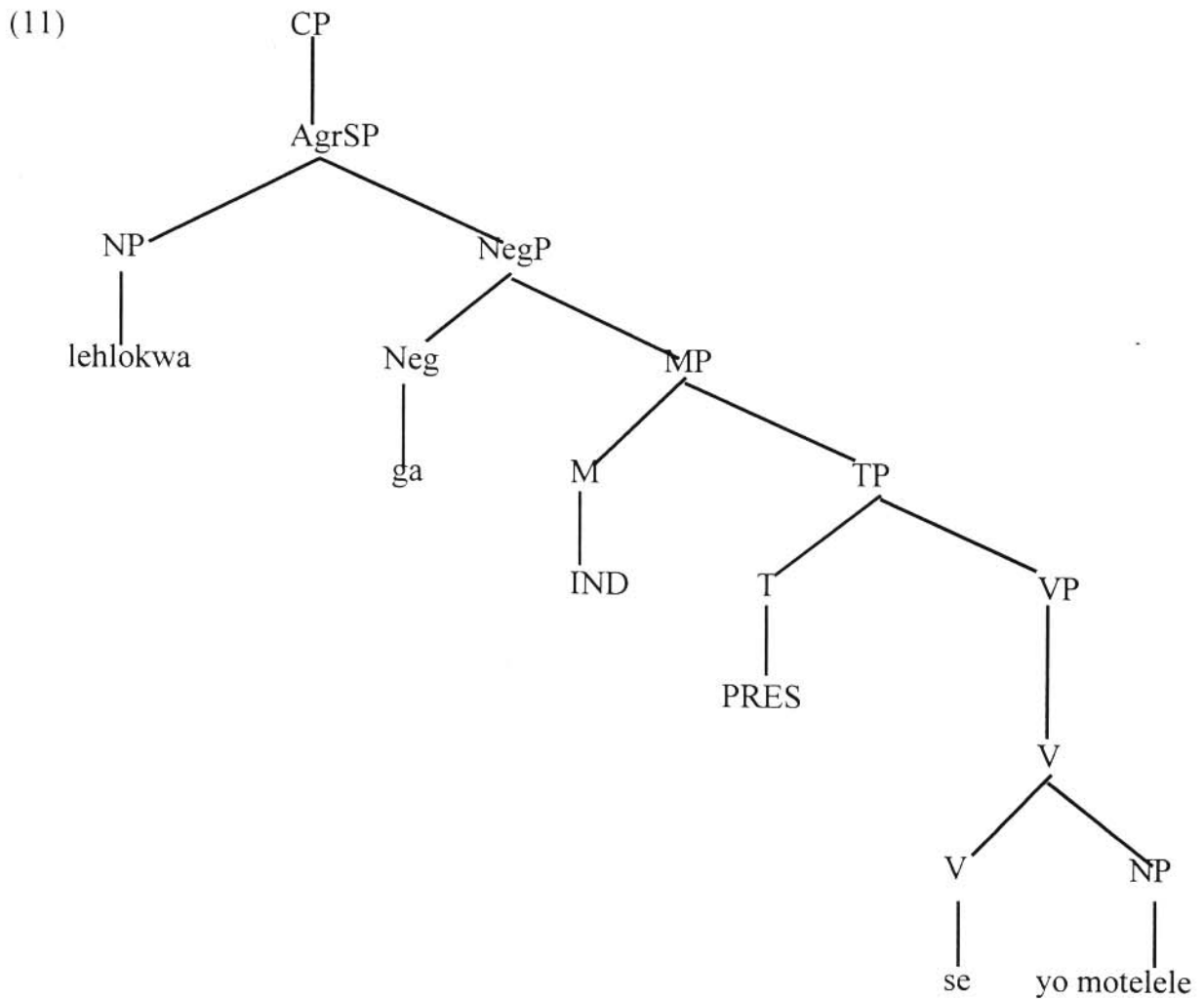
(8)    a.    Ge mogweraka e le moruti.
             (If my friend is a minister.)

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b.  Ge mogweraka e **se** moruti.

(If my friend is not a minister.)

The copulative verb **le** has been replaced by **se** in (8b). The negative verb **se** can also appear as the negative of the copulative verbs **ke** and **le**:

(9)  a.  Lehlokwa **ke** yo motelele.

(Lehlokwa is tall.)

b.  Lehlokwa ga **se** yo motelele.

(Lehlokwa is not tall.)

c.  **Naa** Lehlokwa ga **se** yo motelele?

(Is Lehlokwa not tall?)

(10)  a.  Kolobe ye e **lego** ye kgolo.

(The pig that is big.)

b.  Kolobe ye e **se** bego ye kgolo.

(The big that is not big.)

c.  **Naa** ke kolobe ye e **se** bego ye kgolo?

(Is it the pig that is not big?)

A noticeable feature in the sentences whereby **se** appears, is the presence of agreement in inflection. However, this does not mean that whenever **se** appears there will always be agreement. Sometimes the negative verb **se** may be used without agreement at all. This happens when **se** is used to replace the copulative verb **ke** as in (9), but the category NEG will be reflected as part of the inflection. For example:

(11)

```
                    CP
                    |
                  AgrSP
                 /     \
               NP       NegP
               |       /    \
          lehlokwa   Neg    MP
                     |      /  \
                     ga    M    TP
                     |     |   /  \
                    IND   T   VP
                          |    |
                        PRES   V
                              / \
                             V   NP
                             |    |
                             se  yo motelele
```

## 3.2.5  The copulative verb "le"

The copulative verb **le** differs from the rest of the copulative verbs in that it may only appear in relative sentences. It denotes a stative meaning and shows close relationship with the proto-form of the copulative verb:

(12)  a.    Mosima e sa **le** morutiši.

(Mosima is still a teacher.)


b.    Mosima ga e sa **le** morutiši.

(Mosima is no longer a teacher.)

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c. **Naa** Mosima e sa **le** morutiši?

(Is Mosima still a teacher?)

d. **Naa** Mosima ga e sa **le** morutiši?

(Is Mosima no longer a teacher?)

In this situation, the copulative verb **le** may occur in the positive of the stative identifying and descriptive copulative:

(13) a. Ge Lesiba e **le** mootledi.

(If Lesiba were a driver.)

b. Ge diphahlo di **le** boima.

(If the luggage were heavy.)

c. **Naa** ge diphahlo di **le** boima?

(Then if the luggage were heavy?)

(14) a. Ge Lesiba e sa **le** mootledi.

(If Lesiba were still a driver.)

b. Ge Lesiba e se sa le mootledi.

(If Lesiba were no longer a driver.)

c. **Naa** ge Lesiba e se sa **le** mootledi?

(The if Lesiba were no longer a driver?)

## 3.3    THE ADJECTIVE

An adjective is a word that qualifies either a noun or a pronoun.   According to Pratt (1985:72), words that come between the preposition and the object of the preposition are usually adjectives.  These words give information about the nouns or pronouns they precede.

Ziervogel et al., (1969:57) postulate that there are a number of ways in which English adjectives are expressed in Northern Sotho.  Since each may make use of another type of concord, in other words,  because each one is constructed in a different way, each is given a different name within the blanket term 'relative', although they all have the same function in the language, viz.,  to qualify a noun or pronoun.

There are different kinds of adjectives that occur in Northern Sotho, viz. those that denote size, colour, quality or value, number, gender (masculine and feminine), etc.

### 3.3.1  The adjective of size

(15)    a.      Letšepe le **lennyane**.
                (A small plough.)


        b.      **Naa** letšepe le **lebjang/lekaakang**?
                (How big is the plough?)


        c.      Leleme le **letelele**.
                (A long tongue.)


        d.      **Naa** ke leleme le **lebjang/lekaakang**?
                (How big is the tongue?)

In sentence (15c) above, the word **letelele** is composed of **le,** referred to as an adjectival prefix and also a class prefix of Class 5, whereas **-telele** is an adjectival root. The application of **naa** and **-bjang** in sentence (15d) is an indication that the sentence is in the question form. The **le-,** in **letelele,** is an adjectival prefix, which is also the head of class 5 of **leleme. Lebjang** appears in (15d) by virtue of the other adjectival word, i.e., **letelele.** This implies that without the appearance of **letelele,** it would not have been imperative to use **lebjang** at all.

### 3.3.2 The adjective of colour

(16)  a.     Maoto a **maso**.

(Black legs.)


b.     Dimpša tše **disehla**.

(Brown dogs.)


c.     **Naa** ke maoto a **mabjang**?

(What is the colour of the legs?)


d.     **Naa** dimpša ke tše **dibjang**?

(What is the colour of the dogs?)


e.     Mohlare wo **mošweu**.

(A white tree.)


f.     **Naa** ke mohlare wo **mobjang**?

(What colour is the tree?)

g.     Koloi ye **tala**.

(A green car.)


h.     **Naa** ke koloi ye **bjang**?

(What colour is the car?)


### 3.3.3  The adjective of quality or value or age

(17)   a.     Ntlo ye **tala** (kgale).

(An old house.)


b.     **Naa** ke ntlo ye **bjang**?

(What is the value of the house?)


c.     Legong le **bothata**.

(A hard piece of wood.)


d.     **Naa** legong ke le **lebjang**?

(How is the quality of a piece of wood?)


### 3.3.4  The adjective of number

(18)   a.     Dipuku tše **pedi**.

(Two books.)


b.     **Naa** dipuku ke tše **kae**?

(How many books?)

### 3.3.5  The adjective of gender (masculine and feminine)

(19)  a.  Kgomo ye **phaswa**.

  (A masculine or male beast.)

  b.  Kgomo ye **phaswana**.

  (A feminine or female cow.)

  c.  **Na** ke kgomo ya mohuta **mang**?

  (What kind of a beast is it?)

In Northern Sotho, an adjective normally follows the noun, unlike in English whereby it precedes the noun to which it refers.  Adjectives consist of a number of stems with their own types of concords known as adjectival concords.   In the adjectival construction there is a demonstrative of position and the adjectival concord plus the adjectival stem:

(20)  a.  Monna **yo mogolo**.

  (A big man.)

  b.  Ke monna yo **mobjang**?

  (What kind of a man?)

From sentence (20a) above, one can describe **monna** as a noun, **yo** as the demonstrative and adjectival concord, and **mo-** in **mogolo** is similar to the class prefix in **monna** of class 1.  This is followed by the adjectival stem -**golo**, which refers to something 'big' but in this case it refers to **monna**.  In sentence (20b) the insertion of **ke** at the beginning of a sentence and **bjang**, change the sentence into a question form.

The use of **ga se** in certain Northern Sotho sentences leads to such sentences being changed into negative.  For example:

(21)  a.  Monna **ga se** yo mogolo.

(The man is not big.)

b.  **Naa** ke monna **ofe**?

(What man is he?)

Sentence (21a) as represented in a tree diagram will appear thus:

(22)  CP
    |
  AgrSP
  /    \
NP      AgrS¹
|      /    \
monna AgrS    NegP
       |     /    \
     [+ 1]  Neg    MP
            |     /  \
            ga   M    TP
                 |   /  \
                IND T    VP
                    |    |
                  PRES   V¹
                        /  \
                       V    AP
                       |   /  \
                       se DEM  Adj
                          |     |
                          yo   mogolo
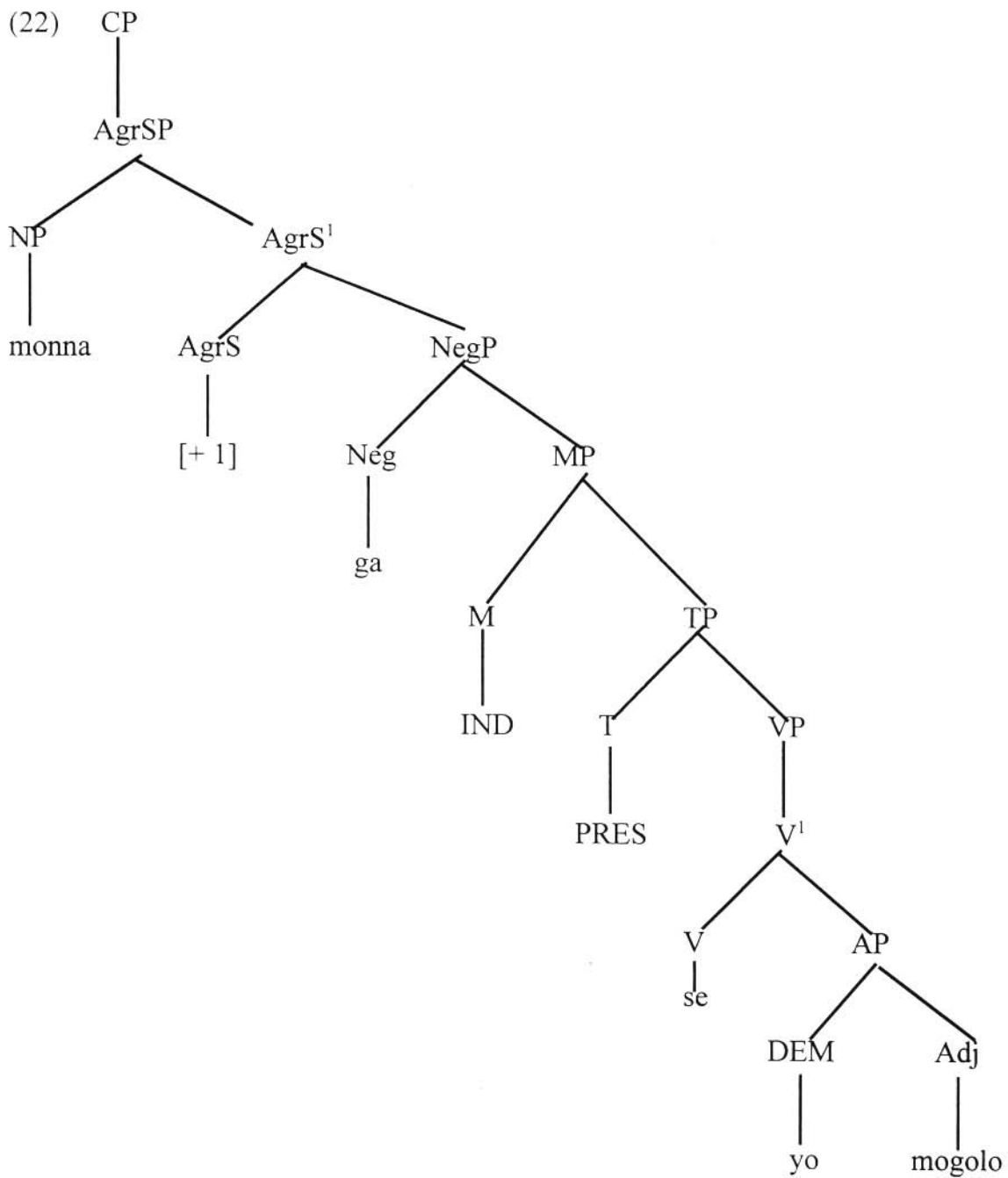
It is true that an adjective qualifies a noun or pronoun. The truth is revealed by the following sentences:

(23)  a.      Monna **yo mogolo** o tlile.

              (A big man has come.)


      b.      Monna **ofe** o tlile?

              (Which man has come?)


      c.      **Yo mogolo** o tlile?

              (A big one has come.)


      d.      **Ofe** o tlile?

              (Who has come?)


      e.      **Yena** (yo mogolo) o tlile.

              (He (a big one) has come.)


In sentence (23a) above the adjective **yo mogolo** qualifies the noun **monna** while the interrogative morpheme **ofe** in (23b) requires the answer to be an adjective, i.e., **yo mogolo** (which would be indicating the type of man that has come). Sentences (23c-d) are interrelated as (23c) begins with a demonstrative and adjectival concord **yo**, followed by the adjective **mogolo**, and (23d) begins with the interrogative morpheme **ofe**, which requires **yo mogolo** from (23c) to be the answer. Sentence (23e) reveals that the noun referred to by the pronoun **yena** is known to the speaker. From this background one deduces that to obtain the answer from (23e), the question might be the same as in (23d) and that the same answer as in (23c) may be required.

According to Poulos and Louwrens (1994:489), an adjective is very seldom used in isolation, i.e., without the qualificative prefix that makes it difficult to state what the basic tone of the adjective prefix is. Radford (1977:33) states that since adjectives can serve as

the complement of the verb, delimitation can be done on the class of adjectives unequally by saying that only adjectives can be used to complete a four-word sentence. For example:

(24)  a.  Ke **yo motelele** kudu.

(He is very tall.)


b.  **Na** ke yo **mobjang**?

(How is he?)


From the sentence above in (24a), the adjective forms a superlative degree **telele kudu**, which may also be indicated by reduplication of the adjectival root as in making **-telele** to become **teleletelele**, which means something very tall.


## 3.4   THE ADVERB

It is generally believed that adverbs provide more information about the actual performance or carrying out of an action or state.  It is the part of speech that modifies or limits a verb, an adjective or another adverb in the sentence.

According to Louwrens (1991:26),  adverbs describe the nature of the action in terms of time, place and manner. They concur with verbs irrespective of whether they are transitive or intransitive.


### 3.4.1  Adverbs of time

These adverbs give an answer to the question '**when**?' (**Neng**?) an action or process takes place.  For example:


(25)  a.  Bašemane ba tlo tla **lehono**.

(The boys will come today.)

b.  Bašemane ba tlo tla **neng**?

(When will the boys come?)

c.  Tate o tla boa gona **bjale**.

(Father will come back now.)

d.  Tate o tla boa **neng**?

(When will father come back?)

### 3.4.2 Adverbs of manner

These adverbs give an answer to the question '**how**?' (**bjang**?) an action or process takes place.  For example:

(26)  a.  Ngwana o jele **kudu**.

(The child ate too much.)

b.  Ngwana o jele **bjang**?

(How did the child eat?)

### 3.4.3 Adverbs of place

These adverbs give the answer to the question '**where**?' (**Kae**?) an action or process takes place.  Although some scholars argue that there are no adverbs of place but rather nouns of locative classes and nouns locativised by means of the suffix -(**e**)**ng**, and others being the demonstratives of the locative classes.  For example:

(27)  a.  Mosadi o apea dijo ka **moraleng**.

(The woman cook some food in the kitchen.)

b.      Mosadi o apea dijo **kae**?

(Where does the woman cook food?)

c.      Malose o ile **toropong**.

(Malose went to town.)

d.      Malose o ile **kae**?

(Where did Malose go.)

Adverbs co-occur with verbs irrespective of whether they are transitive or intransitive. For example:

(28)    a.      O tla goroga lehono.

(He will arrive today.)

b.      O tla goroga neng?

(When will he arrive?)

The above-mentioned sentence in (28a) stresses the time at which one will be arriving and is identified by the adverb **lehono**. Sentence (28b) is in a question form and is distinguished by the interrogative morpheme **neng**. The interrogative **neng** demands as to when will an action happen.

Lombard et al., (1985:166) deduce that the majority of adverbs in Northern Sotho have developed from other word categories or have been derived from other word categories. Adverbs that are derived from other word categories are known as derived adverbs. Such adverbs are formed by means of adjectival prefix "**ga**". The adjectival prefix **ga** is placed before the adjectival root and the noun.

(29)  a.    O gobetše **gagolo**.

           (He is greatly injured.)


      b.    Na o gobetše **bjang**?

           (How is he injured?)


It is true that an adverb modifies a verb. This truth is revealed by the adverb **gagolo** in sentence (29a) above which is derived from the adjectival root -**golo**. By adding the adjectival prefix **ga**- to the adjectival root, the result is an adverb. Sentence (29b) is in a question form and this is due to the insertion of the interrogative morphemes **na** and **bjang**, which in turn leads the answer to be an adverb of manner.


(30)  a.    O lletše **gabohloko**.

           (He cried bitterly.)


      b.    O lletše **bjang**?

           (How did he cry?)


In the sentence (30a) above, the adjectival prefix **ga**- is placed before the noun **bohloko** to become **gabohloko**.


In trying to express the form and function of adverbs in Northern Sotho, English, etc., Jeffries (1928:136) states that the kinds of form that tend to have an adverbial function in English are prepositional phrases (e.g., on the table; **tafoleng**). Adverbs (e.g., sometimes; **nako ye nngwe**) and some noun phrases (e.g., one day; **tšatši le lengwe** or **tšatši le tee**).


According to Jeffries, the meeting point between form and function is most obvious because all forms when used in an adverbial position in a sentence, take on the meaning of the word class of adverbs.


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## 3.5    THE PRONOUN

A pronoun can be described as a word that indicates something concrete or abstract, without being its name, or a word that is used to replace a noun. It functions as a noun but differs from nouns in that pronouns may function as qualifications and represent a thing or person previously mentioned, known or having been asked about. For example:

(31)    a.    **Bana** ba swere **noga**.

(Children caught a snake.)


b.    **Bona** ba swere **yona**.

(They caught it.)


c.    Ke **bomang** ba swerego **eng**?

(Who (are they) caught what?)


Sentence (31b) above proves that a pronoun can replace a noun as the pronouns **bona** and **yona** replaced the nouns **bona** and **noga,** in (31a) respectively.

According to Börjers and Burridge (2001:54), pronouns differ from nouns in that they generally don't like being modified by elements which precede them. In their argument, they state that, basically, pronouns are substitutes not for nouns but for a full noun phrases. For example:

(32)    a.    **Ngwana** o ragile **segwagwa** ka **leoto**.

(The chid kicked a frog with a foot.)


b.    **Yona** e ragile **sona** ka **lona**.

(It kicked it with it.)

e.     Ke rema **tšona**.

      (I am chopping them.)

f.     **Na** ke rema **eng**?

      **Na** ke rema**ng**?

      (What am I chopping?)

From the examples in (33b & e) above, we observe the fact that the pronouns **yona** and **tšona** replaced the nouns **mpša** and **dikgong** in (3a & d) respectively.

Sometimes absolute pronouns can be used along with the nouns they qualify. For example:

(34)  a.     Dikgomo **tšona** di a hwa.

         (Cattle (they) are dying.)

    b.     Ke **eng** tše di hwago?

         (What are dying?)

    c.     Batho **bona** ba a lapiša.

         (People are troublesome.)

    d.     Ke **bomang** ba go lapiša?

         (Who are troublesome?)

The appearance of the pronouns **tšona** and **bona** with **dikgomo** and **batho** in sentences (34a & c) is meant for emphasis. In Northern Sotho sentences, the following can be meaningful but cannot be translated literally in English:

(35)  a.     **Tšona tšona** di a hwa.

         (Literal translation: **They they** are dying.)

         (Communicative translation: **They** are really dying.)

b. **Bona bona** ba a lapiša.

(Literal translation: **They they** are troublesome.)

(Communicative translation: They are really troublesome.)

### 3.5.2 Demonstrative pronoun

This indicates the position with reference to the speaker. Three basic distances can be distinguished, namely, 1st distance e.g., **mo,** which indicates that the distance is next to a speaker. 2nd distance **moo,** which indicates that the distance is little bit removed away from a speaker and the 3rd distance **mola** which indicates that the distance is far away from a speaker:

(36) a. Sefatanaga se fetile **mo**.

(The car past here.)

b. Sefatanaga se fetile **moo**.

(The car past there.)

c. Sefatanaga se fetile **mola**.

(The car past there.)

d. Sefatanaga se fetile **kae**?

(Where did the car pass through?)

The demonstrative **mo** in sentence (36a) indicates the distance from which the car passed the speaker. The interrogative **kae** in sentence (36d) demands the answer on the distance at which the car passed a speaker, and in this case, it is the first distance that is indicated by **mo**. The different forms within each position are listed in the table below:

(37)

| Class | Positions | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1a** | **1b** | **2** | **3** |
| 1(a) | yo | yona | yoo | yola |
| 2(2a) | ba | bone | bao | bale |
| 3 | wo | wono | woo | wola |
| 4 | ye | yeno | yeo | yela |
| 5 | le | leno | leo | lela |
| 6 | a | ano | ao | ale |
| 7 | se | seno | seo | sela |
| 8 | tše | tšeno | tšeo | tšela |
| 9 | ye | yena | yeo | yela |
| 10 | tše | tšeno | tšeo | tšela |
| 14 | bjo | bjono | bjoo | bjola |
| 15 | mo | mono | moo | mola |
| 16 | fa | fano | fao | fale |
| 17/18 | mo | mono | moo | mola |

### 3.5.3 Possessive pronouns

These are pronouns that indicate persons as possessors. They indicate 1st person as the speaker, the 2nd person as the person spoken to and the 3rd person as the person spoken about. For example:

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(38)  a.  Ke monna wa **gagwe**.

(He is her husband.)
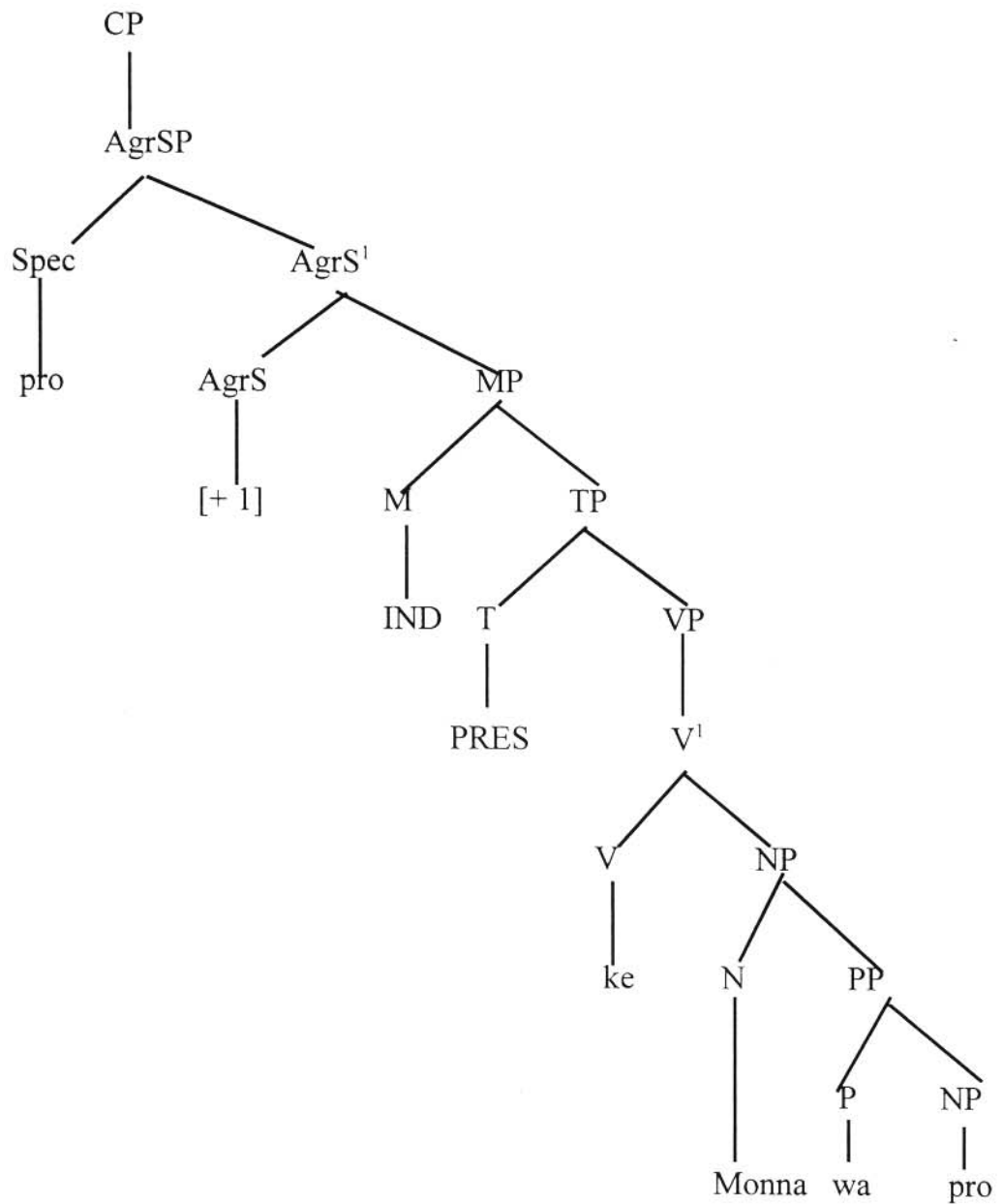
b.  Ke monna wa **mang**?

(Whose husband is he?)

From the examples given above, we deduce that the possessive **gagwe** in (38a) indicates that the husband belongs to somebody, and thus might also serve as an answer to the interrogative morpheme **mang** in (38b).

The possessive stem may act as a subject or object in a sentence. For example:

(39)  a.  **Yaka** e sepetše.

(For me) mine has gone.)

b.  Ke ya **mang** e sepetšego?

(Whose has gone?)

c.  Ke bone **sa gago**.

(I saw yours (for you)).

d.  Ke bone sa **mang**?

(Whose did I see?)

In the sentence (39a) mentioned above, the possessive stem **yaka** acts as the subject of the sentence while **sa gago** in (39a) may act as the object of the sentence. Sentence (38a) can be represented in a tree diagram as follows:

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(40)

```
                           CP
                            |
                          AgrSP
                         /      \
                      Spec       AgrS¹
                       |        /      \
                      pro    AgrS        MP
                             |          /    \
                           [+ 1]       M       TP
                                       |      /    \
                                      IND    T      VP
                                             |       |
                                           PRES      V¹
                                                    /    \
                                                   V      NP
                                                   |     /    \
                                                  ke    N       PP
                                                        |      /    \
                                                        |     P      NP
                                                        |     |       |
                                                      Monna   wa     pro
```

**Ke monna wa gagwe**.

### 3.5.4  **Quantitative pronouns**

These pronouns denote the terms **all**, **alone**, **many**, **some**, etc.  They are divided into two types, namely, the inclusive quantitative and the exclusive quantitative.
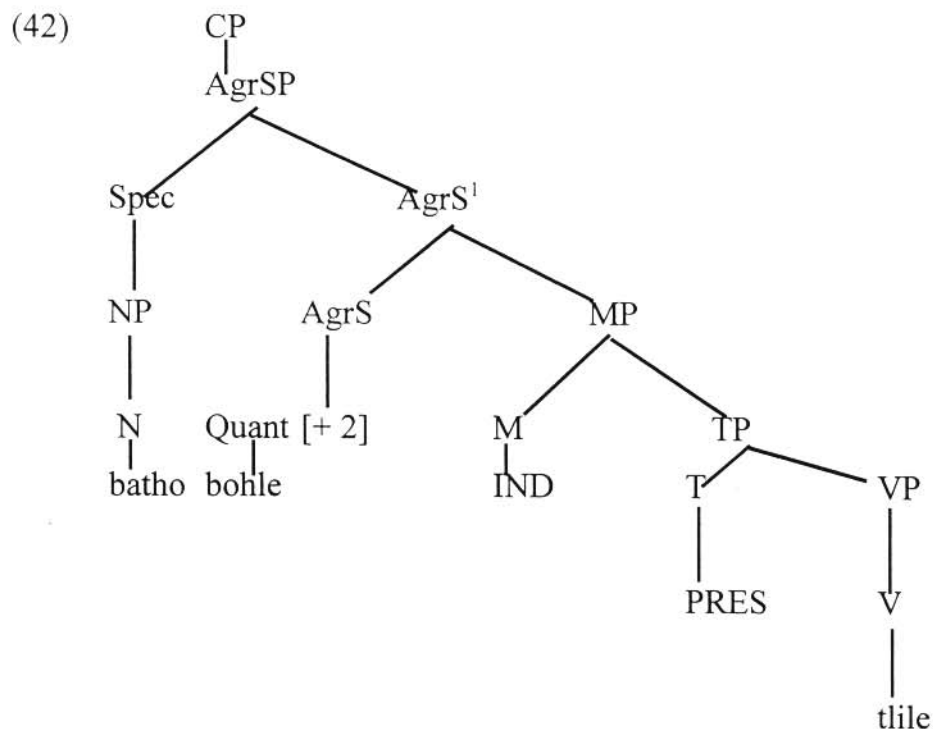
### 3.5.4.1  Inclusive quantitative

This is characterised by the stem **-ohle** (**all**, **whole**), which embraces the noun class prefixes.

The prefix is attached to the stem of a word that can take a place of the stem -ohle, 'ka moka' as in the following:

(41)  a.   Dinku **tšohle** di hwile.
           (All the sheep are dead.)

      b.   Ke dinku **dife** tše di hwilego?
           (Which of the sheep are dead?)

      c.   Batho **bohle** ba tlile.
           (All people have come.)

      d.   Ke batho **bafe** ba ba tlilego?
           (Which of the people came?)

The interrogative **dife** and **bafe** as used in (41b-d) above, replace the quantitative pronouns **tšohle** and **bohle**, respectively. Sentence (41c) cited above can be represented in a tree diagram as follows:

(42)

### 3.5.4.2 Exclusive quantitative

This expresses the English word **alone** of which the Northern Sotho equivalent word is "noši"/"nnoši". For example:

(43)    a.      O ngwadile ka **noši.**

           (He wrote (the book) by himself (alone))

        b.      O ngwadile puku le **mang**?

           (With whom did he write the book?)

        c.      O bolela a **nnoši**.

           (He speaks alone.)

        d.      O bolela le **mang**?

           (With whom does he speak?)

From the examples in (43a-c) above, one observes that the words **noši** and **nnoši** signifying that the action is done by one person. The interrogative stem **mang** in (43b-d) demands the answer in (43a-c) to be **noši/nnoši**.

### 3.6    SELECTIONAL RESTRICTION

The application of interrogatives in Northern Sotho must be related to the use of appropriate verbs. This implies that correct selection must be applied for both a verb and its responding interrogative. There are specific verbs that are restricted to specific interrogatives, hence the application of unsuitable interrogatives on some verbs might lead to ungrammaticality of the sentence. For example:

(44)    a.    O **ya kae**?

            (Where do you go?)


    b     O **dula mang**?

            (Who/whom do you stay?)


From sentence (44a) mentioned above one deduces that the verb **ya** clearly corresponds with the interrogative **kae**? In sentence (44b) above, the verb **dula** does not correspond with the interrogative **mang** and thus leads to the ungrammaticality of the sentence. For the statement/sentence (44b) to be grammatical it must read as follows:


(45)    O **dula kae**?

        (Where do you stay?)


Sentence (45) is now grammatical due to the insertion of the correct interrogative **kae**, which corresponds to the verb **dula**. From sentence (45) it becomes evident that selectional restriction is important, given that it might cause problems to non-speakers of Northern Sotho if wrong interrogatives can be matched with some verbs with which they do not correlate. The correct form of the verb may also pose problems if used with a wrong interrogative. For example:


(46)    Mosadi o hlokofetše **bokae**?

        (How much did the woman die?)


The above sentence is ungrammatical as there is no agreement between the verb **hlokofetše** and the interrogative word **bokae**? For the sentence to be grammatical, it must be written as follows:


(47)    a.    Mosadi o hlokofetše **bjang**?

            (How did the woman die?)

b.      Mosadi o **gotše bokae**?

(How much did the woman earn?)

From the above-mentioned sentences (47a-b), these are now grammatical as the verbs **hlokofetše** and **gotše** correspond with correct interrogatives **bjang** and **bokae,** respectively. Sentence (47a) can still be grammatical with the interrogative **kae**? and **neng**? which could mean "where and when did the woman die?" Sentence (47b) is also grammatical, but with reference to the ungrammaticality of sentence (46), it was due to the wrong interrogatives. This simply implies that for a sentence to be grammatical, it needs the correct interrogative not a verb, as in (47b).

Repetition of some interrogatives in a sentence may create problems if used blindly without considering those that can be repeated:

(48)   a.      O tlile **neng**?

(When did you come?)

b.      O tlile **nengneng**.

(Lit. He came whenwhen.)

(Gram. He came sometimes back.)

The interrogative **neng** in (48a) is asking for when did the person arrive. In sentence (48b), the repetition of the interrogative **neng** to become **nengneng** does not serve as the interrogative any more. This results as an answer to the question in (48a). The problem that arises from the repetition is that the speaker is in doubt of the day on which the person spoken about came. The literal English translation in (48b) sounds ungrammatical as there is nothing like **whenwhen** in English grammar. Likewise the Northern Sotho interrogative morpheme **kae**? Can be repeated to become **kaekae**. The literal English translation as **where-where** becomes ungrammatical in everyday English usage.

## 3.7   CONCLUSION

In this chapter, other categories that appear with the interrogative were dealt with accordingly.   It was discovered that these categories, which appear with the interrogatives, bring forth semantic changes in a sentence.   It was discovered throughout the discussion that many scholars regard the copulative as not a verb, but through scrutiny copulatives can be regarded as verbs.

It was indicated in this chapter that other categories like the copulative, adjective, adverb ad pronoun, when applied with interrogatives, bring in meaningful sentences.   Selectional restriction, as another category that appears with the interrogative, was also widely discussed.   It was noted that application of interrogatives in Northern Sotho must be related to the use of appropriate verbs.   There are specific verbs that are restricted to specific interrogatives.   Application of unsuitable interrogatives to some verbs lead to the ungrammaticality of a sentence.   It was also discovered that some repeated interrogatives, when literally translated to English, become ungrammatical.

Different categories that appear with an interrogative bring forth meaningful sentences when applied with correct verbs.  The correct use of copulatives, adjectives, adverbs and pronouns with interrogatives results in grammatical sentences that could enhance non-Northern Sotho speakers to have confidence in listening to and speaking the language.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## THE SEMANTICS OF THE INTERROGATIVE

### 4.1    INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this chapter is to review the semantics of the interrogative in its various manifestations in Northern Sotho.

In simple terms, Lyons (1977:01) defines semantics as the study of meaning. In the same vein, Harford and Heasley (1983:01) give their definition of semantics as the study of meaning in language. They further postulate that a speaker's meaning is what a speaker means or intends to convey when she/he uses a piece of language, whereas on the other hand a sentence or word meaning is what a sentence or word means.

The meaning of an interrogative may be conveyed by some interjectives that are used with the interrogatives in question form, emphasis/focus, doubt or underrating, non-specific, surprise, joy or happiness, hatred or despise, fear, disappointment, pride, reason, and rhetoric questions.

### 4.2    THE SEMANTICS OF THE INTERROGATIVE AS CONVEYED IN DIFFERENT FORMS

#### 4.2.1    Question form

The semantics of an interrogative may indicate a question. Several question forms may be used to proof the validity of this statement. For example:

(1)    a.    **Na** Matome o tla fihla neng?

(When will Matome arrive?)

b.     Monna o sepela ka go nanya.

       (The man walks slowly.)


c.     Monna o sepela **bjang**?

       (How does the man walk?)


d.     **Na** Mokgadi o a šoma?

       (Is Mokgadi working?)


e.     Basadi ba buna mabele **naa?**

       (Do the women harvest mealies?)


f.     **Afa** ke go kwele gabotse?

       (Did I hear you well?)


g.     **Naa** tate o sepela le mang?

       (With whom is father walking?)


From the above-given examples (1a, c-f), the application of **na, naa, neng, bjang, afa** and **mang** as question forms reveal the meaning of each one of the sentences, which is entailed in the interrogative. The insertion of the interrogative morphemes in the basic sentences changed the sentences into question forms.


## 4.2.2  Emphasis or focus


Some interrogatives in Northern Sotho may express emphasis or focus or confirmation on something asked about. This is mainly indicated by the application of the interrogative morphemes in one sentence. For example:

(2)	a.	**A** ga se nna wa go go thuša maabane bošego naa?

(Was it not me who helped you last night?)

b.	**Na** Matome o a šoma naa?

(Does Matome work?)

c.	**Naa** molemi o bunne mabele naa?

(Did the farmer harvest his mealies?)

d.	**Na** ke eng se o se ngwalago?

(What is it that you write?)

(What are you writing?)

In sentence (2a) above, the speaker is making some emphasis or confirmation of what he did to the listener, as a reminder, though the very listener knows very well that he received some assistance last night. The speaker is therefore emphasising the asistance he offered to the person concerned. In sentences (2b-c) there appears to be some emphasis associated with **Matome** and **molemi**, respectively. Sentence (2d) above indicates the use of the copulative that appears to have the effect of placing more emphasis on the question word **eng?** since it occurs before the verb **ngwalago**.

### 4.2.3  **Doubt or underrating**

Northern Sotho interrogatives may sometimes express doubts or underrating whereby the speaker is doubtful of some events that are taking place. Sometimes interrogatives may be used to express underestimation or underrating of some objects or people. This is an expression of uncertainty, undermining or looking down upon someone in order to let him or her feel inferior. This is caused by those who mainly feel superior to others. For example:

(3)   a.   **Afa** monna yo ke wa gagwe?

           (Is this man her husband?)


      b.   Le bone yena?

           **Afa** le bone yena?

           **Afa** le bone yena naa?

           (Did you see him?)


      c.   Ke mosadi **mang** yena yo?

           (What kind of a woman is this?)


      d.   Ke monnanyana wa selo **mang** yena yo?

           (What kind of a (thing) man is this?)


      e.   Mmago o ile a dira **eng** se se botse, ka go hloka tsebe mo ga gagwe?

           (What best thing has your mother ever done because of not listening?)


      f.   **Afaeya**, monna Nanabedi e ka ba nnete?

           (Is that so, can it be true Mr Nanabedi?)


      g.   **Na** mosadi a ka dirang?

           (What can a woman do after all?)


      h.   O tla bolela e le **mang**?

           (Who are you to say a word?)


      i.   Moagišani ke yena fela naa, ke moagišane wa ka nageng ya **mang**?

           (Is he the only neighbour, for in whose country is he my neighbour?)

j.　　A ka go phemela **eng** yena yola a palelwa ke go itšhireletša ka boyena?

（How can he protect you while he is unable to protect himself?)


k.　　**Na** lefeela lela la lena le kae?

（Where is that useless guy of yours?)


Sentences (3a, b, f) mentioned above indicate that the speaker is not sure about some events whereby the answer is doubtful to be true. In (3b) the speaker is not sure whether or not the person who was seen on the scene was really him, whereas in (3a) the speaker is doubtful whether or not the man belongs to the woman due to the circumstances the man is always caught in. The application of the interrogative words in (3c-k) is an indication of degrading, underrating or underestimating or undermining someone. In (3c) the application of the interrogative word **mang** with **yena yo**, emphasising **mosadi**, expresses a feeling of underestimation or degrading on the part of the woman. This might result from bad things that the woman might have been seen doing. The words may be uttered by people who might be jealous of the woman or underrating her because of some events or activities that are questionable.


In sentences (3d and k) the addition of the suffix -**nyana** to the noun **monna** indicates some underrating as the suffix indicate something 'very small'. In addition to the suffix or diminutive -**nyana**, the word **selo** refers to a thing rather than a person, which also indicates underrating or degrading. The same thing applies to (3k) wherein the word **lefeela** means something useless. Moreover, this word does not apply to human beings as **selo** refers to non-human beings.


## 4.2.4 **Surprise/Astonishment/Amazement**


Some interrogatives may show surprise or astonishment or amazement as an indication for something one did not expect. It is an unexpected or astonishing event or circumstance which is overwhelming with wonder. For example:

(4)    a.    **Ao**! Ke ka pela bošego bjo mma?

(With an exclamation of surprise (Ao!) Is it early this time of the night mother?

b.    **Eng**? Afa ke go kwa gabotse?

(What? Do I hear you right?)

c.    Bathong! O bolailwe ke **eng**?

(Gosh! Who killed him?)

d.    Ke bošego nako yona ye, Hunadi?

(Do you regard it as late already Hunadi?)

e.    Hee! **Na** yo yena ke mang?

(With an exclamation of surprise (Hee!) Who is this one?)

f.    Aowi! **Na go** tlile bjang?

(How did it come about?)

g.    **Na** ke dilo **mang** tše di dirwago ke ngwana yo?

(What kind of things are being done by this child?)

h.    O re o tlile **bjang** mo, gona o nyaka eng?

(How did you come here and what do you want?)

i.    Bjale Naniki o tsena **bjang** mo ditabeng?

(Now how is Naniki connected to this issues?)

j.    Le **reng** le ntšhoša, lehono?

(Why do you make me frightened/fear today?)

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In the sentences (4a-j) mentioned above, interrogatives indicate amazement or surprise to show that things happened unexpectedly. Interfunctions also play a major role in some question forms of sentences as in (4a, c, e, f), and this is expressed by **bathong**; **hee**; **ao**! and **aowi**. The use of these interjections bring about emphasis in the sentences as a whole.

### 4.2.5 Joy or happiness

These are interrogatives that are used to express happiness or celebration of some occasions, good achievements or when welcoming someone. These can be something that someone has succeeded in doing, especially after a lot of efforts:

(5)    a.    (Ka go memeela) **Na** ke wena mma? Tsena.
           (With a smile), Is that you mother?  Come in.)

    b.    Šatee: **A** ga se ngwanaka yo a tšweletšego mafelelong?
           (With an exclamation of joy (šatee), is that not my child who succeeded at the end?)

    c.    Rato, ke tla thabišwa ke **mang** ge e se wena fela?
           (Love, who can make me happy if not you only?)

    d.    (Ka boleta) O re go **rileng** rato?
           (Very softly) What happened love?)

    e.    Mokgadi ngwanaka! **Na** ga se letšatši la gago la matswalo lehono?
           (Mokgadi my child, is it not your birthday today?)

In sentence (5a) above, the interrogative word **na** as used, seems to indicate surprise, but the sentence is guided by the words in brackets that show someone smiling for somebody whom he or she was longing for. After such a smile, a word of welcome is addressed to the

mother to show happiness or joy. Sentence (5b) above is dominated by the interjection of joy or happiness, **šatee!** which indicates how the parent felt after such a good achievement by the chid. The parent shows happiness by saying **šatee!** In sentences (5c-d) the words **rati** and **rato** express a feeling of appreciation or love, which is usually experienced when someone is happy. Sentence (5e) also indicates joy or happiness because of the word **ngwanaka** which emphasises how much the parent love his or her child. The statement that follows **ngwanaka** reminds the child of his or her birthday of which the parent shows some form of commitment of love to the child as he or she (parents) wants to celebrate with the child. In Northern Sotho, it is a sign of happiness if a parent could address his children as 'my son' or 'my daughter'.

### 4.2.6 Fear

Interrogatives in Northern Sotho may indicate fear, which is an unpleasant emotion caused by exposure to danger and the expectation of pain. Fear is something unpleasant that you get or feel when you think that something horrible is going to happen. If you fear someone or something it can make you feel nervous or worried and force you to utter some interjections leading to the question form. For example:

(6)  a.    Jo nna joo! Ke **dife** tšeo re di kwago?

          (With an exclamation of fear (Jo nna joo!) What is it that we hear now?)

      b.    Jo! Jo! Jo! **Na** o nyaka go re bontšhang?

          (With an exclamation of fear (Jo! Jo! Jo!) What do you want to show us?)

      c.    Joo! Go tseba **mang** seo ba tlilego go se dira ge ba boa?

          (With an exclamation of fear (Joo!) Who knows what they are going to do when they come back?)

d.  (Setopo se tletše fase) Modiro wo mokaakaa wo, le re ke wa bana?

(With a corpse lying on the floor) Do you say this murder was commited by children?)

e.  Ke **reng** ke garoga letswalo ge ke kopana le banna ba?

(Why do I feel frightened when I meet these two men?)

From the above sentences (6a-c), fright is indicated by the application of the interjections, **Jo nna joo! Jo! Jo! Jo!** And **Joo!** at the beginning of these three sentences. In sentence (6d), fear is revealed by the introductory words **setopo se tletše fase**. This is really frightening. Sentence (6e) also indicates fear by the use of the words **garoga letswalo**.

### 4.2.7  Hatred or despise

Interrogatives may indicate a feeling of intense dislike or ill-will. It is an action of disapproval that indicates that you do not like someone or something. For example:

(7)  a.  **Naa** go sa tlile yena yola wa maabane?

(Is he still the one who came yesterday that arrived?)

b.  E ka ba wena wa go gata ka motseng waka lehono?

(Can it be you who could enter into my house today?)

c.  **Na** o sa boile gape?

(Are you still back again?)

d.  Re bašemanyana ge o re lebeletše?

(According to your view, do we look like young boys?)

e.    **Na** sethotho sela sa maledu a matelele se bolela le mang?

(With whom is that stupid long-beared man speaking to?)

In sentences (7a-c) hatred is indicated and practised to its fullest. This is indicated by discovering a feeling of dislike that occurred between people wherein no one expects another to enter one's home. Sentences (7d-e) indicate despise whereby one thinks·he or she is superior and thus look down upon others as being inferior. The word **bašemane** as compared to adults indicates that others are cleverer while others are stupid, hence the word **sethotho**.

## 4.2.8 Rhetoric questions

These are questions that are asked whereby answers are already known. Answers to such questions are not expected. For example:

(8)    a.    **Afa** o a ikwa gore o bolela le kgoši?

(Can you feel or understand that you are talking to the chief?)

b.    Kgomo e a tsha.

E gangwa ke **mang**?

(The cow is ready to be milked.)

(Who can milk it ?)

c.    O tla bolela o le **mang**?

(Who are you to say a word?)

In sentence (8a) above, the question is asked in such a way that an answer is straightforward and well-known. The only thing is that the question is asked to make one aware that he or she is talking to someone who is higher or superior in status. In sentence (8b), the question is asked in the form of a statement of which this style is common in traditional courts. One

could stand up and say **kgomo e a tsha**, meaning that here is a case and someone would reply by saying **e gangwa ke mang**, which means how do we judge this case and they start discussing the case. In (8c), if such a question is asked, no answer is expected as the speaker feel undermined and think that he cannot ask any question as he is not considered to be as an important person.

### 4.2.9 Reason

There are interrogatives of reason whereby a question is asked that demands a reason for being. These are marked by **goreng** which is a contraction of **gore** and **eng**. The interrogative particle **hleng** or by the interrogative phrase **ke ka lebaka lang**, which means (it is) 'for what reason'. For example:

(9)  a.  **Go reng** o sa mpotša?

      **Hleng** o sa mpotša?

      **Ke ka lebaka lang** o sa mpotša?

      (Why didn't you tell me?)


   b.  **Hleng** o sa tla?

      **Ke ka lebaka la eng** o sa tla?

      (Why didn't you come?)


   c.  **Hleng** yena šo o hlahla le ba diroko?

      (Why is he running all over with girlfriends?)


   d.  **Ke ka lebaka lang** ge mošemane a thubile lefasetere?

      (Why did the boy break the window?)

e.     Mokgadi morwediaka, Ngwako **o reng** a sepela ka pela bjalo?

     (Mokgadi my daughter, why is Ngwako leaving so early?)

In the sentences (9a-e) above, the interrogatives of reason **goreng, hleng, ke ka lebaka lang** and **o reng** have been used to demand answers as to the causes of events.

### 4.2.10 Disappointment

Interrogatives may be used to show disappointment. To be disappointed is when one experiences an action that is not pleasant. It is a feeling of distress or vexation:

(10)   a.    Hleng bjalo molwetši ga a laetše bokaone?
         (Why is the patient not showing some improvements?)

       b.    Atšhi! **Naa** o sepetše le bana ka moka go ya gagabo?
         (With an exclamation of disappointment (Atšhi!) Did she go with all the children to her home of origin?)

       c.    Ba ka robatša bana ba batho ditšhileng tša mohuta wo?
         (Can they accommodate children in such a dirty place like this?)

       d.    Bjalo re **reng**? Bana ba ba a šala goba ba a sepela?
         (Now what do we say? Do these chidren remain here or they go?)

In sentence (10a) above, one becomes disappointed to get the patient not recovering and the interrogative **hleng** emphasises this disappointment. In (10b) the speaker has used the interjective **atšhi** to express disappointment to the fact that the woman left with all the children. Sentence (10c) also expresses a feeling of disappointment and this is revealed by the surprise experienced by the speaker. Sentence (10d) still indicate dissatisfaction, which then leads into disappointment as the speaker is in the dilemma of not knowing whether to leave the children or to take them along.

## 4.2.11  Non-specific

Some interrogatives do not convey specific meaning when applied in sentences. Such interrogatives are referred to as being non-specific, and their application in a sentence requires a yes or no answer. They do not give specific direction to the verb as applied in the sentence like in **a?/afa**? and **na?/naa?** Other statements become questions due to application of intonation which changes a plain statement into a question. These statements would also require a yes or no answer:

(11)  a.  **Na** ba go boditše?

   (Did they tell you?)


b.  Re a tloga **naa**?

   **Naa** re a tloga?

   (Do we go?)


c.  **A** o jele bogobe?

   (Did you eat porridge?)


d.  **Afa** o jele?

   (Did you eat?)


e.  Lesiba o robetše.

   (Lesiba is asleep.)


f.  Lesiba o robetše?

   O robetše Lesiba?

   (Is Lesiba asleep?)

From sentences (11a-b) given above, the application of the interrogative words **na/naa** requires the answers to be **yes** or **no**. Sentences (11c-d) indicate the application of the interrogative words **a/afa**, which demands no answer as the answer is well-known to the speaker but sometimes a **yes** or **no** answer from the same question may be required. These types of interrogatives are referred to as non-specific. Sentence (11e) is a plain statement that indicates that **Lesiba** is asleep, whereas (11f) refers to the latter statement, which is (11e), but changed because of intonation to make the statement a question form.

Sentence (11f), with the use of **is** at the beginning of a sentence in the English translation, best indicates that the statement is in a question form. The word **is** in English is usually used after the subject but once it appears at the beginning of a sentence, the whole sentence is then transformed into a question. This is also a non-specific interrogative as the statement would require a **yes** or **no** answer.

In support of the above statement, Ziervogel et al., (1977:119) postulate that in all cases of interrogative construction there is an inclination to make the tone of the voice higher. This means that a question is spoken in a higher tone or higher key level than the corresponding plain statement, this case is based on sentences (11e-f) above.

## 4.3    CONCLUSION

It is of utmost importance to have discovered the meanings as expressed by various interrogatives when used in different perspectives. It is also of vital importance to have laid a foundation on studying the meanings conveyed by different interrogative morphemes than studying them in general. The study of the semantics of the interrogative has revealed that their daily usage in speeches convey different messages to listeners. It is, therefore, important for speakers to use interrogatives in order to convey messages that might not leave a listeners in doubt.

Sometimes interrogatives may indicate emphasis or focus or confirmation of something by a speaker. This chapter has also treated several semantic aspects of which the most important are, namely, doubt, surprise, joy, hatred, despise, fear and disappointment.

It is also in this chapter whereby one may discover that some interrogatives in Northern Sotho do not convey specific meaning to listeners or readers. These interrogatives are referred to as non-specific. Apart from the afore-mentioned interrogatives, there are also those questions that may be passed without the need for an answer because answers are already known to the speaker. These are referred to as rhetoric questions.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## 5.1   CONCLUSION

In dealing with this research topic, it would seem like scholars have partially discussed the interrogatives in Northern Sotho but have not paid enough attention to the crucial aspects of the interrogatives, such as form and meaning.

It is through this research that one is able to point out those interrogatives that serve as prefixes and those that are suffixes. This was done in order to guard against such confusion. And a relevant information was furnished to enable one to distinguish between prefixal and suffixal interrogatives, as not all interrogatives fall in one category in Northern Sotho.

This research paper has endeavoured to show that to rely on a relational analysis only as regard the interrogative constructions may lead to incorrect and inadequate interpretation. It has been discovered from this research that the interrogative is not a particular part of speech, as far as its form is concerned in Northern Sotho, but rather belongs to a variety of parts of speech. As interrogatives belong to a variety of parts of speech or to different kinds of formatives, their position within the interrogative clause will differ accordingly.

It is from the findings of this research that non-Northern Sotho speakers discover that the plain statement and the interrogative clause have the same order of words, and that an interrogative clause needs not even to have an interrogative word to distinguish it from a plain statement. It was also indicated in this research that interrogatives in Northern Sotho tend to put emphasis on the following categories:

  \*      The verb:               O šoma **kae**?

                                      **(Where** do you work?)

  \*      The subject or object:     Ke **mang** yo a lwalago?

                                        (Who is it who is ill?)

| * | Object: | Tate o rekile dikgomo **dife?** |
|---|---------|----------------------------------|
|   |         | (Which cattle did father buy?)   |

| * | The sentence as a whole: | **Na** o a mo rata? |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------|
|   |                          | (Do you love her?)  |

Through this research, different types of form of interrogatives were distinguished. Some discussions were based on those interrogative words that are words in their own right, and those that are stems and this could not stand on their own but do require either a prefix or concord for them to become complete words. It was clearly indicated in this research that different noun classes and their agreement are divided into subjectival and objectival agreement. Its main function is to mark the agreement between the subjectival or objectival agreement morpheme and the subject or object noun phrase. It has been clearly stated in this research that any use of a wrong agreement morpheme would lead to the ungrammaticality of a sentence.

The research also focused on the fact that in Northern Sotho the adjective normally follows the noun, unlike in the English language wherein it precedes the noun to which it refers. Interrogatives sometimes, if used in a sentence, may demand the answer to be an adjective. It has also been shown that the process which is expressed by a verb can be questioned with respect to the time when it was carried out. As for the questioning of information carried by noun phrases, it became clear that different interrogative strategies are used when questioning the subject of a sentence, on the one hand, and the object of a sentence, on the other. It has been shown that noun phrases that act as subjects of sentences and that occur in the basic subject position, may not be questioned since they present old or known information. In order to be subjected to interrogation, the subject noun phrases need to appear in syntactic positions that are generally associated with new or definite (discourse) information.

As regards the question of objects, it has been indicated that the information carried by object noun phrase, which stand in the basic object position, may be questioned, since object noun phrases do not necessarily agree with verbs by means of the object concord.

Furthermore, the basic object position is also the one that is generally associated with new information. It became apparent that when objects agree with verbs, they may not be subjected to questioning, given that the object concord in such instances meets the information carried by the object noun phrase as being old or definite. The questioning of the information carried by the sentence as a whole has been shown to be accomplished by either changing the intonation of the sentence or by using interrogative particles. Such structures were characterised as **yes-no** questions.

## 5.2    RECOMMENDATIONS

It is after such a lengthy discussion on interrogatives that one may recommend the following:

- Northern Sotho speakers must always be careful when using interrogative morphemes as some use them incorrectly and end up being incoherent;

- Agreement must always be used correctly as wrong usage may distort the intended information;

- Correct interrogatives must be used with suitable verbs in order to avoid ambiguity; and

- In order to obtain the correct information, speakers mut know which interrogatives to apply.

This study confined itself to Northern Sotho only and it might be appropriate for future studies to also expatiate it by studying other languages on a comparative basis.

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