

**ELEMENTS OF NORTHERN SOTHO ORTHOGRAPHY: A
LINGUISTIC APPROACH**

By

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, MARIA KGABO MALEPE declare that the dissertation **ELEMENTS OF NORTHERN SOTHO ORTHOGRAPHY: A LINGUISTIC APPROACH**, has not been previously submitted by me for any degree at this or any other institution, that this is my own work in design and all material contained therein has been duly acknowledged.


.....
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late grandmother Ngwana'Mabotša Maserole-a-Mothata.

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Chapter 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Webster (1972:1594) defines orthography as “the art of writing words with the proper letters according to the standard usage; correct spelling.” In the same vein, <http://www.google.orthography> (1997:1), offers the following definition, namely, “a method of representing a language or the sound of language by written symbols; spelling.”

These definitions indicate that orthography deals with the way words are written, that is, the use of correct symbols or letters agreed upon in language writing. Hence Haas (1982:37), defines orthography as “ the system of rules and convention which are complied with when spoken utterances are put down in writing.” In other words, orthography is about written language whereby sounds articulated in human speech are represented by symbols.

The importance of orthography lies in the fact that it is used in the standardization of a language. For instance, Ziervogel (1975:40), divides Northern Sotho into twenty-two dialects. Therefore, for the standardization of this language, books were compiled with standardized terminology and orthography rules called *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 1 to Number 4*. These were compiled by the Northern Sotho Language Board. Terms that were selected and included in the orthography were, according to Northern Sotho Language Board (1988:1), of high usage frequency.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

The written history of African languages as spoken in the Republic of South Africa dates back to between the eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth century when the European missionaries first started with the task of recording the native languages of various communities they served. They realized that the words in these languages differ substantially from those found in the European languages.

Kosch (1992:2), traces the beginning of the history of Northern Sotho as a written language back to the founding of the first Berlin Mission Station in the Transvaal by the following scholars: Alexander Merensky and Heinrich Grützner, in 1859. Kosch (1992:2), explains also that Gerlachshoop, which was the name of their station, was surrounded by the Kopa speaking people (Sekopa is one of the Northern Sotho dialects).

The missionary work also extended to the Sepedi dialect speakers. Inspired by the reports of the London missionary, Robert Moffat, who translated the Bible into Setswana, the missionaries at that time considered Sepedi to belong to the Setswana language. Sepedi, like Sekopa, is also classified as a dialect of Northern Sotho.

During that time, the dialect in which missionaries first recorded the Bible became the standard language. In Northern Sotho, Sepedi was used as the standard language; hence Kosch's (1992:3), statement that Sepedi became the standardized form of Northern Sotho.

Meinhof (1932:3) maintains that, for the orthography used by scholars like Endemann in Northern Sotho, as well as that formerly in the use for Sesotho and Setswana, several spellings were used up to the year 1929, whereby a certain degree of uniformity was attained. For example:

(1) Vowels : **a e i o u**

	Sepedi	Setswana	South Sotho
Open vowels	e o	ê ô	é ó
Closed vowels	ẹ ọ	e o	ē ō

Meinhof also explains that regular verbs and verb suffixes in Sepedi both end in */-a/*. For example:

(2) a. Class two (2)

Va in *vana*.

(children)

b. Class Sixteen (16)

Fa

(here)

c. Class Five (5)

Le in *lefa*

(pay)

Of the primary vowels of Meinhof, the five vowels, namely, **a e i o u**, are still maintained in Northern Sotho, while in the orthography of the said language eleven vowels are classified as follows:

Central vowel: [a]

Front vowels: [i e ɛ ɛ̃ ɛ̂]

Back vowels: [o ɔ ɔ̃ ɔ̂ u]

Meinhof also classifies the Sepedi consonants in four groups, which are, namely, plosives, affricates, fricatives and semi-vowels. To him, /w/ is the only semi-vowel found in Sepedi. Presently, /y/ is also classified as a semi-vowel in Northern Sotho. Although there are differences in how Meinhof classifies vowels and consonants in Sepedi, Setswana and Sesotho, there are similarities in as far as Northern Sotho is concerned.

According to Louwrens (1991:2), the state of affairs that marked the early writing history of African languages was confusing. Two contradictory methods of word division emerged. They are, namely, disjunctive and conjunctive methods. Louwrens (1991:2), describes the disjunctive method as a method according to which relatively simple and short linguistic units, which often occur as autonomous words in languages such as English and Afrikaans, are written separately from each other. For example:

(3) *Ke tla mo kgopela.*

(I shall ask him/her.)

In the conjunctive method, simple units are joined together to form long words. For example, in isiZulu:

(4) *Entshonalanga.*
(in the west)

Even if Louwrens (1991:2) and the Northern Sotho Language Board (1988:6), indicate that in the Sotho languages, and in particular, Northern Sotho, disjunctive method was the more acceptable method of word division, conjunctive method is also used. It is indicated in *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4* (1988:6), that special provision was made in some cases. Hence, in Northern Sotho, there are compound words such as the following:

(5) *Moidibalomogolo.*
(state of deep unconsciousness)

The reason for selecting disjunctive method, as Louwrens (1991:2), indicates, is that Sotho languages lack semi-vowels between syllables that consist of a vowel only. For example, if conjunctive methods were used:

(6) *O a mpona* would be *oampona.*
(he/she sees me.)

Ga a mpone would be *gaampone.*
(he/she does not see me.)

On the other hand, Doke (1954:129), concludes that word division in African languages is characterized by one and only one main stress, which usually falls

on the penultimate syllable. Therefore, Louwrens (1991:2), says that Doke's findings subscribe to the conjunctive method of word division, which correctly records what the native speaker says.

Herbert (1993:185), explains that scholar such as Doke recommended that African languages must use conjunctive method as they are agglutinating in type, as the following quotation illustrates:

Agglutinating languages are those in which grammatical forms are expressed by the combining or adhesion of elements to the various roots, these formative elements being recognizable as independent words detachable from the root, and being affixed to the other roots or even stand alone in the sentence.

As it has been illustrated in Herbert's work, it seems to be probable that Northern Sotho has the same structure. The emphasis is apparent in the following examples:

(7) The root *-tho-* in:

<i>Motho</i>	<i>Setho</i>	<i>Botho</i>
(person)	(human)	(kindness)

The root *-tho-* cannot stand on its own in a sentence, whereas monomorphemic roots such as the following can stand alone in a sentence:

(8) *gae* and *ruri*

(home) (really)

However, Louwrens (1991:3) says that Doke's recommendation of using the conjunctive method failed in the Northern Sotho language. As a result, it was

considered necessary to have as many as nineteen spelling rules in Northern Sotho, while on the other hand, the isiZulu language only requires four.

Besides the fact that in Northern Sotho the conjunctive method failed in favour of the disjunctive method, the said language still faces the following problems in its orthography:

a. The phonological problems

Speech sounds that are articulated in both the same manner and the same sound are, however written differently, as evidenced in the following examples:

(9) [ʃ] as /š/ or /sh/ in

Common nouns	Proper nouns
<i>mošomo</i> (work)	Mashamaite
<i>mošemane</i> (boy)	Mashego

(10) [ts] as /tšh/ or /ch/

Common nouns	Proper nouns
<i>Tšhwene</i> (Monkey)	<i>Chuene</i>
<i>Tšhilo</i> (grinding stone)	<i>Chokoe</i>

The proper noun *Chuene*, together with other nouns, like *Kwena* and *Nare*, are used in naming people in the Moletši and GaMatlala areas, amongst Northern Sotho speaking people, although their respective pronunciation forms differ in tone from that of animals:

Tšhwene *Nare* *Kwena*
 (monkey) (buffalo) (crocodile)

It is only the spelling in *Chuene* that differs from that of *tšhwene* (monkey), whereas others are similar in terms of spelling.

(11) *Oa* and *wa* in proper nouns:

<i>oa</i>	<i>wa</i>
<i>Segoale</i>	<i>Segwale</i>
<i>Segooa</i>	<i>Segowa</i>

(12) *oe* and *we* in proper nouns:

<i>oe</i>	<i>we</i>
<i>Chokoe</i>	<i>Chokwe</i>
<i>Kgoete</i>	<i>Kgwete</i>

The examples in eleven and twelve above create a problem even where people who share them as surnames spell the nouns differently, as indicated.

b. Capital letters

- (13) *Modimo* and *modimo*
(God) (ancestor)

The noun *Modimo* (God) is always spelt with a capital letter /M/ whereas *modimo* (ancestor) is spelt with a small letter /m/.

The locative particles:

- (14) *Ba ile gaMashamaite*.
(They went to Mashamaite's home)

Ba ile GaMashamaite.
(They went to a place called Mashamaite)

In both examples, the nouns and the locative particles are joined together as one word, and the proper noun *Mashamaite* is written with a capital letter /M/ even though it is in the middle of the noun. The problem lies again in the difference between *ga* (at) and *Ga* (at), as in example (14) above. These are spelt with different letters, that is, the capital and the small letter, with no valid reason, as Louwrens (1991:45) indicates that the locative particles have no specific meaning.

c. Dialect influence in proper nouns

(15) *Motšatši* and *Modjadji*

In the noun *Modjadji*, there is the influence of the Selobedu dialect, whereas in other dialects of Northern Sotho, such as Sepedi, the noun would be *Motšatši*.

(16) *Mosibudi* and *Mošibudi*.

The noun *Mosibudi* spelt, with /s/, has the influence of Setlokwa dialect, while *Mošibudi*, with /š/, is used in other dialects of Northern Sotho.

1.3. METHODOLOGY

1.3.1 Primary method

The primary method used in this study by the researcher comprised conducting interviews with thirty-five respondents consisting of ten teachers, ten learners, five lecturers, three lexicographers, four members of Northern Sotho Language Board and three language specialists.

In all these cases, random sampling was used. In order to get reliable information, the researcher will use the face-to-face technique, as this would allow both the researcher and the respondents to clarify issues where necessary.

1.3.2 Secondary method

The secondary method is also relevant to this study, and thus the researcher collected data from library books, articles, dissertations, and the internet.

1.4. AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to analyse the Northern Sotho orthography and propose possible solutions to improve on the present usage of the language. In order to achieve this aim, the following research questions needed to be answered:

- a. Which words are problematic in terms of spelling in Northern Sotho?
- b. Which methods should be applied in analysing orthographical deficiencies in Northern Sotho?
- c. What is the impact of the use of incorrect orthography in Northern Sotho?

1.5 DELIMITATION

The scope of the orthographical research in Northern Sotho, as defined in this study, only deals with spelling.

1.6 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The rationale behind this study is to improve on the standard and usage of correct spelling in Northern Sotho.

1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review explicitly supports the view that research has been conducted in the historical development of Northern Sotho orthography, but the gaps found within it dictate the need for more research so as to find answers to other orthographical issues that are still puzzling.

1.7.1 Louwrens (1991)

Louwrens (1991) reveals the history of African languages from the late eighteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century; that is, those spoken in

the Republic of South Africa. He clarifies the two methods that emerged during that time, which are, namely, disjunctive and conjunctive methods.

In his discussion, Louwrens reveals what scholars such as Doke contributed in the writing system of the South African languages. Besides the fact that Doke's findings (which are discussed in the background section above) were subscribed to the conjunctive method, Doke, in his book entitled *Growth of Comparative Bantu Philology*, divides the African languages into seven zones and four sub-zones as follows:

Zones	Sub-zones
1. North Western	1. North Eastern
2. Northern	2. East central
3. Congo	3. South central
4. Central	4. West central
5. Eastern	
6. South Eastern	
7. Western	

In addition, Louwrens examines the locative particle /ga/ and concludes that it has no specific meaning, but he does not give the reason why it is written in a capital letter when used with what he terms "the neighbourhood," as in *Ga-Mashamaite*, and in small letter when it occurs in common names, as in *gaMashamaite*.

In both examples, the first /M/ in *Mashamaite* is written in a capital letter, and the difference lies in /ga/ and /Ga/. Louwrens' study indicates the history of Northern Sotho as being important in this research.

1.7.2 Herbert (1993)

According to Herbert (1993), African languages are agglutinating in type. He explains the difference between isolating languages such as Chinese and Sudanic family of languages, as opposed to African languages, which are agglutinative. Herbert also describes the work of scholars such as Professor Alice Werner, who also explains African languages as usually classed as agglutinating.

Herbert (1993:105) explains further that agglutinating compound occurs widely in Bantu languages in two ways, namely:

(i) in the formation of compound nouns. For example:

(17) *entshonalanga*

(in the west)

(ii) in the “fluent sentence compounding”, as shown in the following examples:

(18) *Ngibona ihlashi elikhulu ebomvu* that agglutinates into

(I see a big red horse.)

ngibon'-ihlash'-elikhul'-ebomvu

(19) *Umtanakhe uhlezi ekhaya* that also agglutinates into

(His child is sitting at home)

umtanakh'-uhlez'-ekhaya

The isiZulu examples in (17, 18 and 19) above have been written conjunctively, which is a system also used in Shona, Swahili and isiXhosa, to mention but a few examples.

Herbert's study is indeed useful as it sheds more light on conjunctive writing.

1.7.3 Haas (1982)

Haas (1982) explains clearly the problems of orthography with the difference between spoken language, on the one hand, and the written norm, on the other hand. He explains that the problem emerges when we are confronted with the difference between spoken utterances and their written counterparts. Haas continues by indicating that the written and the spoken languages complement one another, hence he explains orthography as:

A kind of bridge leading from the spoken norm to the written, or more precisely a set of rules enabling a member of a given language community to transpose his spoken utterances into the corresponding written ones.

The above given extract indicates that the spoken language has to do with the written language. The speakers of the language will be able to understand the written language if it corresponds with the spoken language.

Haas also indicates the problem that emerges between the phonetic transcription and what he terms the "unphonetic spelling" in words such as "right", "rite", "write" and "wright" in the written language, while in phonetic transcription their optical structure [rait] is inevitably identical.

The example is an indication that phonetic transcription is intended to indicate the acoustic qualities of the spoken utterances, while written language refers more to the meaning of those written utterances. This, however, seems not to be the case in the Northern Sotho orthography, whereby nouns like *Motšatši* and

Modjadji are written differently because of the influence of the different dialects in Northern Sotho.

Furthermore, Haas indicates that, on orthography and dialects, the orthographer can ignore the problems of dialect variation by basing his system on the prestige dialect, and this leaves other dialects to fend for themselves.

This is also a worthwhile study as it enriches the topic under discussion.

1.7.4 Northern Sotho Language Board (1988)

Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4, which helps in identifying words that are standardized in Northern Sotho, indicates in several instances that the difference, for example, in identical sound, where and when to use capital letters, was just an agreement by the Northern Sotho Language Board.

There is a contradiction between, for example, what is indicated on pages fourteen and twenty. On page fourteen, there is an explanation: Certain places such as *gaMasha* are named after people. The name of that person is written in capital letter.

The instruction in this case is that the locative */ga/* is spelt with the small letter */g/*. On the other hand, on page twenty, the explanation is as follows: *GaModjadji* is not an official place name as in the case with *GaNchabeleng*, that is why the */ga/* in the middle of a sentence is not written with a capital letter.

The contradiction lies in the fact that *gaMasha* in page fourteen, and *GaNchabeleng* in page twenty are both, according to the *Northern Sotho*

Terminology and Orthography Number 4, “official places”; but the locatives /ga/ and /Ga/ are written differently.

On page twenty-four, examples of pairs of words which are accepted as standard forms are given, and it is stated that dialect forms should be avoided as far as possible, but most of the words have been selected from *GaSekhukhune* dialect, (that is Sepedi).

Some of the words do not mean exactly the same with their English and Afrikaans counterparts. For example:

(20) add salt - *sout byvoeg* - *loka, noka, hlagiša*

In Northern Sotho, *go hlagiša* is to bring forth, therefore, such words may mislead language learners in this language.

Some words are spelt wrongly, as in page twenty. For example:

(21) *Hlaphetšwa* (to be guarded) instead of *hlapetšwa* that is spelt with the /p/ as an ejected sound and not an aspirated sound.

The examples given indicate that *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4* also needs to be looked into and some necessary adjustments be done. It will also be useful in the research on orthography in Northern Sotho.

1.7.5 Frost and Katz (1992)

Frost and Katz (1992) explain agglutinating languages where they use Sumerian language as an example in which a word consists of one or two monosyllabic morphemes, namely, (CVC), (V stands for vowel and C for consonants). They

also explain that the only linguistic units that have served as the basis for spelling units are syllables and phonemes.

Furthermore, Frost and Katz explain that words can be analysed into morphemes as well as segments and syllables, but the inventory of morphemes in the language are subject to continual change.

Northern Sotho words also consist of CVCV structure, but unlike the Sumerian language, the last vowel is not excluded. This will be useful in this discussion as it also discusses the differences between conjunctive and disjunctive methods.

1.7.6 Esterhuysen (1975)

The dissertation by Esterhuysen (1975) examines the development of Northern Sotho as a written language. It draws a distinction between the period before 1929 and the period thereafter. Esterhuysen says that the orthography of Northern Sotho was standardized in 1929 whereas that of Setswana was in 1937. In 1947, a uniform orthography for Northern Sotho was then accepted.

The dissertation in question also examines the development of the system of symbols in 1929; the subsequent changes in 1947 to match that of Setswana; the system of modifying symbols when it was decided to eliminate alternative symbols with regard to certain speech sounds; the method of word division; and the differences between the method of pre-October 1929 era and the present official method employed.

This will also be useful in this study as it portrays the history and the development of the orthography of Northern Sotho.

1.7.7 Kosch (1992)

Kosch (1992) explains the history of Northern Sotho that dates back to the findings of the first Mission Station among the Northern Sotho speakers in the Transvaal by Alexander Merensky and Heinrich Grützner in 1859. Kosch explains that the first Northern Sotho dialects the missionaries came across with was Sekopa and Sepedi. Merensky and Grützner classified Sepedi with Setswana language. Sepedi was used as a standardized form of Northern Sotho.

The missionaries first recorded the Bible in Sepedi as a standardized language. Kosch also indicates that the first words in Northern Sotho, and more specifically Sepedi, were published in 1862 in the Berlin missionary report in an article by Merensky entitled “*Beitrage zur Geschichte der Bapedi*”. The article explains the history of Northern Sotho which is important as it indicates the changes in the orthography of Northern Sotho from the eighteenth century, and the influence of Sepedi dialect in the present orthography.

1.7.8 Meinhof (1932)

Meinhof’s work indicates that the orthographical scholars like Endemann found similarities among South Sotho, Setswana and Northern Sotho. He highlights the vowels in the languages and show their differences and similarities.

Meinhof also presents the consonants used in the nineteenth century, and among other sounds, the /x/ for the present /g/ and /v/ for /b/ were used. The phonetic classification of Sepedi consonants is tabulated by Meinhof as follows:

Phonetic classification of Sepedi consonants

	Plossives		nasals	Affricates		Fricatives		Semi-vowel
	fortes	lenes		Fortes	lenes	fortes	lenes	
	voiceless	voiced		Voiceless	voiced	Voiceless	voiced	
Velars	<i>kh</i> <i>nkx</i>	<i>k'</i> <i>nk'</i>	'n	<i>kX</i> <i>'nkX</i>		X	y	
Laterals	<i>th</i> <i>nth</i>	<i>t' nt'</i>						
Palatals			'n		<i>dj')ndj</i>	X		
Cerebrals		<i>d')</i>						
Alveolars	<i>th</i> <i>nth</i>	<i>t' nt'</i>	n					
a)								
b)				<i>ts nts</i>	<i>t'z</i> <i>nt'z</i>		r	
c)				<i>tš ntš</i>	<i>tž</i> <i>ntž</i>	<i>dž ndž</i>	s	
Labia a)				<i>ps</i> <i>mps</i>	<i>pz'</i> <i>mpz'</i>		š	
Alveolars b)				<i>pš</i> <i>mpš</i>	<i>pž'</i> <i>mpž'</i>		<i>fs</i> <i>fš</i>	<i>vz</i> <i>vž</i>
bilabials	<i>ph</i> <i>mph</i>	<i>p'</i> <i>mp</i>	m				f <u>v</u>	w

Even though some of the symbols that Meinhof used have since been changed, most of the symbols or vowels and consonants have remained the same. The five vowels namely: **a**, **e**, **i**, **o** and **u** are still used in the Northern Sotho orthography.

He also indicates nine vowels whereas at present in the Northern Sotho orthography, eleven vowels are maintained. There is one semi-vowel from Meinhof's table, namely, **w**, whereas the current orthography in Northern Sotho indicates two semi-vowels (that is, **w** and **y**).

Meinhof also mentions all the Noun Classes in Northern Sotho, but differs in spelling with the present orthography as the table given below illustrates:

Noun classes

Meinhof	Present orthography, as in Ziervogel
1 <i>Mo</i>	1 <i>mo, ngw-</i>
1 <i>va</i>	la
2 <i>Mo</i>	2 <i>ba, b-</i>
3 <i>Me</i>	2a <i>bó-</i>
4 <i>le</i>	3 <i>mo-, ngw-</i>
5 <i>Ma</i> plural of Classes 4 and 14	4 <i>me-, nyw-</i>
6 <i>Se</i>	5 <i>le</i>
7 <i>li</i>	6 <i>ma-</i>
8 –singular of Class 10	7 <i>se-</i>
9 <i>li</i> , plural of Classes 9 and 11	8 <i>di</i>
10 lost in Setswana singular of Class 10	9 <i>n-m-N-</i>
14 <i>Vo</i>	9a-
15 <i>Xo-</i> infinite prefix	10 <i>din-, dim-, diN</i>
16 <i>fa-</i> preposition “at”	10a <i>di-</i>
17 <i>Xo-</i> preposition “in”	14 <i>bo-, bj-</i>
18 <i>Mo-</i> preposition “in”	15 <i>go-</i>
	16 <i>fa-</i>
	17 <i>go-</i>
	18 <i>mo</i>

In both noun classes by Meinhof and Ziervogel, Classes (11), (12), (13), and (19) to (21), do not occur. Meinhof's work is also important in this research as it helps in the comparison between the old and the new Northern Sotho orthography.

Chapter 2

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF NORTHERN SOTHO

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to present a historical background of Northern Sotho. As Northern Sotho does not exist in isolation, it will also be necessary to give a brief historical exposition of other languages with which it is related. In this regard, differences and similarities between Sotho and Nguni language groups as well as the relationship amongst Sotho languages are looked into. More importantly, differences and similarities amongst Northern Sotho dialects are also considered. An observation on how these developments shaped the present Northern Sotho orthography is also made against the progress achieved by the current language boards. In a nutshell, this chapter deals with the history of African languages in South Africa, the standardization of Northern Sotho, dialects and the involvement of language boards in the development of Northern Sotho.

2.2 THE HISTORY OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES IN SOUTH AFRICA

According to Haas (1993:37), the problems of orthography emerge clearly when confronted with the difference between spoken utterances and their written counterparts. Haas (1993:37) further states that orthography is a kind of bridge between the spoken norm and written form.

Thus, from the above, it is evident that the spoken language is important in the written form of any language. It is, therefore, important for the researcher to look in the historical background of African languages before the 20th century,

which is reflected in Chapter 1 as the period when European missionaries started with the task of writing these languages.

Wilson, in Lanham (1978:15), indicates that African languages' oral history from the records of the early travellers and tentative archaeological evidence, points to the presence of Nguni (main languages: isiZulu, isiXhosa, Siswati) on the east coast of South Africa from at least the 16th century. Nguni and Sotho (main languages: Sesotho, Setswana, Northern Sotho) as the two language clusters, have strong circumstantial evidence to support their presence for at least half of the 15th centuries of what Lanham (1978:15) terms the "iron Age in South Africa." Lanham (1978:15) furthermore indicates that the isiXhosa language has an influence of the Khoisan languages, as evident in the click consonants of their phonology, and the fifteen percent of the isiXhosa vocabulary is Khoi. In addition, Westphal, in Lanham (1978:16) alludes to the fact that Khoisan had a great impact on Sotho languages as well. This provides evidence that Khoisan has an influence on both the Nguni and the Sotho languages. Although in both language groups only one language in each group uses clicks, there is a relationship with other languages in its own group as illustrated below:

(1) Nguni languages

isiZulu	Siswati	isiXhosa
<i>jikelele</i> (all over)	<i>jikelele</i> (all over)	<i>jikelele</i> (all over)
<i>wonke</i> (all)	<i>wonke</i> (all)	<i>wonke</i> (all)

(2) Sotho languages

Sesotho	Setswana	Northern Sotho
<i>Ngwana</i> (child)	<i>Ngwana</i> (child)	<i>Ngwana</i> (child)
<i>robala</i> [ɣoβala] (sleep)	<i>robala</i> (sleep)	<i>robala</i> (sleep)

Although the pronunciation of [r] is [ɣ] in Sesotho, the written orthography is similar to that of its counterparts.

Meinhof (1932:16), agrees with Lanham (1978:16), by stating that Sesotho in the Sotho language group is the only one that has taken over click sounds from Khoisan. Meinhof explains further that Sesotho borrowed a number of words from isiXhosa since isiXhosa's /kh,th,ph/ correspond to Sesotho's /h,r,ff/. This is evident in words such as the following:

(3)

isiXhosa	Sesotho	Northern Sotho
<i>/kh/ ekhaya</i> (home)	<i>/h/ hae</i> (home)	<i>/g/ gae</i> (home)
<i>/th/ thina</i> (we)	<i>/r/ rona</i> (we)	<i>/r/ rena</i> (we)
<i>/ph/ phendula</i> (reply)	<i>/ff/ fetola</i> (reply)	<i>/ff/ fetola</i> (reply)

The examples given in item three above show similarities between Sesotho and Northern Sotho /r/ and /ff/ and the difference between Sesotho /h/ and Northern Sotho /g/.

Lanham (1978:16), explains that due to more than two centuries of contact with English and Afrikaans, the vocabularies of African languages have been considerably extended by loans in spheres where black and white contact opened up areas of reference and experience. According to Kunene, in Lanham (1978:16), the loaning is largely the creation of the Department of Bantu Education. Those lists of loaned words and expressions were used for teaching school subjects. Lanham (1978:16), also indicates that the acceptance and permanence of such manufactured vocabulary have not been studied and well documented.

Thus, it is evident that even though in some instances clarity has been provided as reflected in *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 1-4* (1988), there are still deviations from the normal Northern Sotho grammatical rules such as in the following examples:

(4)

English	Afrikaans	Loaned words in Northern Sotho	Northern Sotho pronunciation
Clinic	<i>Kliniek</i>	<i>Kliniki</i>	[tʰleneki]
Dry clean	<i>Droogskoonmaak</i>	<i>Traeklina</i>	[t'eraetl'elene]
Zinc	<i>Sink</i>	<i>Zink</i>	[siŋki]
Video clock	<i>Video horlosie</i>	<i>Videowatšhe</i>	[βiliowatʃʰe]

Sesotho sa Lebowa National Body in *Spelling and Orthography Rules* (2005), and *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4* (1988), show the combination of /k/ and /t/ with other consonants, (a consonant is a sound, voiced

or voiceless, in which the air passage is either stopped entirely at some point, or narrowed, so as to give rise to audible friction) as follows:

(5)

k	t
<i>/kg/</i> in <i>kgomo</i> (cow)	<i>/tl/</i> in <i>tlala</i> (full or hunger)
<i>/kh/</i> in <i>khudu</i> (tortoise)	<i>/tlh/</i> in <i>tlhabologo</i> (enlightenment/civilization)
<i>/nk/</i> in <i>nko</i> (nose)	<i>/th/</i> in <i>thala</i> (underline)
	<i>/ts/</i> in <i>tsela</i> (road)
	<i>/tsh/</i> in <i>tshela</i> (jump/cross over)
	<i>/nt/</i> in <i>ntahle</i> (backhand)

The problem that lies in the loaning of words in the *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4* (1988), is that, there are some direct contradictions with the language rules of Northern Sotho. For example, *kliniki*, which would be pronounced as [ḳliniki] instead of [tl'eneki] and *traeklina* as [t'raeklina] instead of [t'eraetl'elene], as the majority of respondents confirm. In Northern Sotho, the */kl/* and */tr/* combinations are not common. The common pronunciation of these speech sounds by Northern Sotho speakers would be [t'] for */kl/* and [t'e] for */tr/*. The contradiction is also realised in the translation of words. In *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4* (1988:124,125,159), the translations of the following words are as follows:

(6)

English	Afrikaans	Northern Sotho
dry	<i>droog</i>	<i>oma/omiša</i>
clean	<i>Skoon</i>	<i>hlwekilego</i>
clock	<i>horlosie</i>	<i>tšhupanako</i>

To show the relationship between the words in examples (4) and (6), the word “dryclean” in example (6) could, for example, be translated as *omahlwekilego*, *omišatlhweko* or *komišotlhweko* derived from *oma/omiša* and *hlwekilego* in example (6), while instead of using the word *watšhe*, in *video-watšhe* (example (4)), the word *tšhupanako* could have been used and have *tšhupanakovideo* or *videotšhupanako*. It is also clearly indicated in the *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4* (1988:13), that the sounds [v] and [z] are categorised under “clicks and unusual consonants”. This is an indication that the two speech sounds are not commonly used in Northern Sotho. It is for this reason that one may argue that the noun *zinki* is incorrect, the correct one is *lesenke* (*sink* in Afrikaans), and the noun *videowatšhe* be *sešupanakobedio* or *tšhupanakobedio*. This is an indication that the *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4* (1988), needs to be looked into and necessary changes on the orthography be made according to the rules of Northern Sotho.

Kosch (1992:3), states that the beginning of the history of Northern Sotho as a written language could be traced back to the finding of the first Berlin Mission Station in the Transvaal by Alexander Merensky and Henrich Grutzer in 1857. The first authoritative grammar on Northern Sotho in 1876, entitled *Versucheiner Grammatik des Sotho*, was published by Karl Endemann whose priorities was to systematise the unstandardised orthography.

In an article entitled *Standardization and Development of Orthography in Sesotho sa Leboa: A Historical Overview*, Mojela (2005:1) explains that the missionaries played a major role in the development of the written orthography of Northern Sotho. The main aim of the written orthography for those Northern Sotho dialect speakers was to christianise the Bapedi nation as it is stated that "...to teach the Bapedi people the word of God".

The dialect in which the missionaries first recorded the Bible became the standard language. Hence, Sepedi became the standard language of Northern Sotho, because the missionaries landed amongst the Sepedi speaking people of Bopedi and Tafelkop. Therefore, as Mojela indicates, there were little or no missionary activities in other areas of Northern Sotho dialects such as Moletši, Bolobedu and Botlokwa, to mention just a few. Esterhuysen (1972:8) states that, before October 1929, there was no co-ordination body that controls the development of the written form of Northern Sotho. As a result, everyone wrote the language as he thought best. This is supported by the *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4* (1988:5), which explains that before 1930 several differing Northern Sotho orthographies were in use.

This is an indication that before 1929 different forms of spelling were used in Northern Sotho. In the orthography meeting that took place in 1910 about the Setswana orthography, the representatives from Berlin missionaries of the Northern Transvaal also discussed the differences between the Northern Sotho and Setswana orthographies (Esterhuysen, 1972:81).

Although the central orthography committee in 1928 elected the subcommittees for Sotho, Nguni, Tshivenda and Xitsonga, where in the subcommittee of Sotho language group was given a task to compile a single orthography for Northern

Sotho, Sesotho and Setswana, the submission made by the subcommittee was not approved, (Esterhuyse, 1972:83). The reasons for not approving the submission, as Esterhuyse (1972:83) indicates, were as follows:

- i. The administration of Basotholand could not approve of any change in Sesotho orthography; and
- ii. There was a fundamental disagreement between Northern Sotho and Setswana representatives.

In 1929, the Northern Sotho orthography was agreed upon by the Transvaal Sotho District Committee of the Transvaal Education Department (TED), (*Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4*, 1988:5). The orthography was adopted and published in 1930. Meinhof (1932:58) shows several ways of spelling amongst the Sotho languages that were current up to 1929 as follows:

(7)

Sepedi	Setswana	Sesotho	Phonetically
b			<u>v</u>
	b	b	b
by		bj	bž
by			<u>vy</u> , <u>vž</u>
d	d		
f,	f		<u>f</u>
		f	f
fs			fs
fy		fsh	fš
h			

j		j	dž
k	k	k	k
kh	kh		k
kx)	kx)	kh	kx
l	l	l	l
m	m	m	m
ng	ng ⁶)	ng	n
ny	ny	ny	n
p	p	p	p
p	ph	ph	ph
ps			pz
phs			ps
phš		psh	pš
py		pj	pž
py			py
r	r	r	r
s	s	s	s
š)	š)	sh	š
t	t	t	t'
th	th	th	th
ts	ts	ts	ts
thst	ths	tš	ts
tš)	tš)	tj	tž)
thš)	thš)	ch	tš
tl	tl	tl	t'
thl	thl	tlh	th

w	w	w	w
x10)	x10)		
y	y	e	y

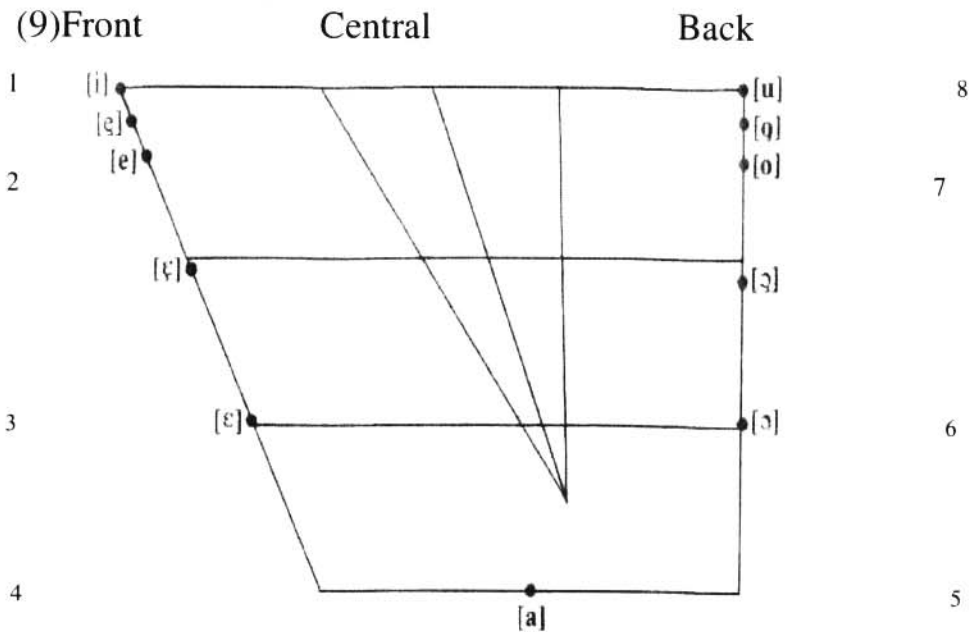
The orthography symbols **a, e, i, o, u** were used to represent the basic vowels and it is a pleasant surprise to observe that the symbols are still being used to represent the basic vowels in Northern Sotho. Westermann (1933:21) says that a vowel is a voiced sound whereby the air has a free space passage through the mouth or through the mouth or nose. Vowels are also classified according to the part of the tongue used, that is, front, back and central, and according to the degree of raising of the tongue into close that is, tongue raised high, open i.e. tongue low down in the mouth and half closed and half open i.e. tongue intermediate position. Other vowels, according to Meinhof (1932:58), were as follows:

(8) a. Open vowels:

b. Closed vowels:

Northern Sotho	Setswana	Sesotho
<u>e</u> , <u>o</u>	ê , ô	è , ò
e , o	e , o	ē , ō

Northern Sotho presently maintains seven basic vowels and four raised vowels. This brings the numbers of Northern Sotho vowels to eleven. They are, namely, [**a e ɛ ɛ̃ i o ɔ ɔ̃ u**]. These vowels are represented on the international vowel chart as follows:



The numbers one to eight on the vowel chart indicate the international cardinal vowels. Westermann (1933:22) explains cardinal vowels as a series of vowel sounds chosen, irrespective on any language, to serve as a scale or measure with which the vowels of any particular language can be compared. The description of the Northern Sotho basic vowels are as follows:

a. [a] open central low middle vowel, as in the following:

apea [ap'ea]
(cook)

There is only one [a] in Northern Sotho. It lies between the cardinal vowels four [ɑ] and five [a].

b. [i] closed high front vowel, as in the following:

bina [βina]
(dance)

It is identical with cardinal vowel number one, which is also [i].

c. [e] half-closed mid high front vowel, as in the following:

tseba [ts'eβa]

(know or jealous)

It lies between cardinal vowel number three, which is [ɛ] and one [i].

d. [ɛ] half-open mid low front vowel, as in the following:

lêma [lɛma]

(spoil)

It is the same as cardinal vowel number three, which is also [ɛ].

e. [u] closed high back vowel, as in the following:

kudu [kɯɮu]

(too much)

It is the same as cardinal vowel number eight, which is also [u].

f. [o] half-closed mid high back vowel, as in the following:

sekolo [sek'olo]

(school)

It lies between cardinal vowel number eight [u] and six [ɔ].

g. [ɔ] half open mid low back vowel, as in the following:

opela [ɔp'ɛla]

(sing)

It is the same as cardinal vowel number six, which is also [ɔ].

Cardinal vowels four and five are not used in Northern Sotho. Mid vowels /e, ê, o, ô/ are raised when high vowels /i/ and /u/ occur in the next succeeding

syllable in the same word, therefore, they would sound almost the same as that particular high vowel. For example:

(10) When [o] and [e] are used, as in the following:

a. Stem vowels

[e] in *sediba* [sɛʃiβa]
(well)

[o] in *moruti* [mɔrut'i]
(priest)

b. Personal deverbatives

[o] in [ts'oma] becomes [o] in [mots'ɔmi]
(hunt) (hunter)

[e] in [lema] becomes [e] in [molɛmi]
(plough) (farmer)

c. The causative suffix /-iša/

[o] in [ts'oma] becomes [ɔ] in [ts'ɔmifa]
(hunt) (help hunt/make hunt)

[e] in [lema] becomes [ɛ] in [lɛmifa]
(plough) (make plough/ help plough)

d. The perfective suffix /-ile/

[o] in [ts'oma] becomes [o] in [ts'ɔmilɛ]
(hunt) (hunted)

[e] in [lema] becomes [ɛ] in [lɛmilɛ]
(plough) (ploughed)

The vowels [e] and [o] in Northern Sotho are affected by the problem of spelling, as indicated by the examples under ten. The words *sediba* and *moruti* under example ten, might be spelt as *sidiba* and *muruti* because of the vowels [e] and [o] that are affected by the vowel [i] and [u] in the next syllable. It is only in phonetic transcripts, as indicated in the examples, where it is indicated that the sound change of vowels does not affect the spelling of words. Although it is indicated in *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4* (1988:5), that care should be taken that, for example, the [o] in [mɔrut'i] should not be represented by [u], the problem lies in the fact that spoken utterances affect the written form of a language, hence the spelling *molimi* and *muruti* where the [e] is spelt as [i] and [o] as [u].

The raised vowels [ɔ] and [ɛ] do not cause the problem of spelling in Northern Sotho, because when affected by high vowels [i] and [u] or middle vowels [e] and [o] they sound like the middle vowels. For example:

(11) When [ɔ] and [ɛ] are used as in:

a. Perfective deverbatives

[ɛ] in the verb [rɛka]	would become [ɛ] in the noun [morɛk'i]
(buy)	(buyer)

b. The perfective suffix

[ɔ] in the verb [lɔβa]	would become [ɔ] in [lɔβilɛ]
(sustain)	(sustained)

c. Causative suffix

[ɔ] in [lɔt'a] would be [ɔ̣] in [lɔt'ifa]
 (take care of) (make/help take care of)

Other vowels that are also affected by the spelling mistakes because of the spoken utterances, but are explained to be accepted as in the standard form by *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4* (1988:5) are, for example, in words such as the following:

(12)

Standard	Non-standard
<i>mošemane</i> [moʃemane] (boy)	<i>mošimane</i> (boy)
<i>potšišo</i> [p'otʃiʃo] (question)	<i>putšišo</i> (question)
<i>sesepeḽi</i> [sesəp'li] (that which walks)	<i>sisipidi</i> (that which walks)
<i>seraloki</i> [seraloʔki] (player)	<i>Seraluki</i> (player)

Double vowels are also retained in Northern Sotho in words such as the following:

(13)

ee	aa	oo
<i>meetse</i> (water)	<i>baagi</i> (builders)	<i>boomo</i> (purposely)
<i>meetlwa</i> (thorns)	<i>maano</i> (plans)	<i>phoofolo</i> (animal)

Two semi-vowels /w/ and /y/ are also used in Northern Sotho. A semi-vowel has characteristics of a vowel and a consonant. It is an independent vowel glide in which the tongue starts from the position of a close or half-close vowel and immediately moves to some more open position (Westermann,1933:89). Ziervogel (1975:126), indicates that, in the practical orthography, semi-vowels are not, as a rule, allowed between two vowels. There are alternatives in Northern Sotho wherein vowels occur with or without semi-vowels in daily speech, as indicated in the following examples:

(14)

<i>buwa</i> (slaughter)	<i>bua</i> (slaughter)
<i>beya</i> (put/place)	<i>bea</i> (put/place)

Furthermore, Ziervogel (1975:126) says that it has been decided in the Northern Sotho orthography to use the spelling “Leboa” for North and “Lebowa” for authority. According to *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4* (1988:7), the symbol /w/ is used to present the semi-vowel glide with consonants (back labialisation). In describing a consonant, Lyons (1981:75) says that consonants are speech sounds that are articulated or produced by a temporary obstruction of airstream as it passes through the mouth. Labialisation is when non-labial speech sounds are made to be labial, that is, to affect the movement of lips when being articulated. For example:

(15) a. *kwala* [kwala]
(be audible)

- b. *hwa* [hwa]
(die)

It is indicated furthermore in the *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4* (1988:7), that glides are not indicated in the standard orthography and Leboa (North) is written without a glide when it indicates a particular wind direction (point on the compass). The semi-vowel glide /y/ is used in words like the following:

- (16) a. *yena*
(him/her)

- b. *bolaya*
(kill)

Besides some differences in the usage of vowels in different dialects, all the Northern Sotho dialects maintain the eleven vowels and two semi-vowels in their daily spoken and written language forms.

In 1937, the Setswana corresponding committee adopted an independent orthography after failing to reach an agreement with the Transvaal Sotho District Committee. On the other hand, the initiation by the Transvaal Education Department in 1947 towards the unification of orthographies resulted in the Somerset House Conference of February 1947. A number of changes in the orthographies in that conference were agreed upon. From 1947, several meetings were held wherein the Transvaal Education Department was trying to unite the Sotho languages so as to have a single orthography. The orthography subcommittee of the Sotho Language Board adopted the unified orthography on 20 October 1950, (*Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4*,

1988:5). The orthography was compulsory until 1953. As time went by, it was first the Northern Sotho Language Committee, followed by the Northern Sotho Language Board, which took a decision to make various changes to the orthography adopted in 1950, and the decisions were consolidated during the Northern Sotho Language Board meeting of 27 March 1985.

Even though the three Sotho languages show more similarities than the Nguni languages, it would have been difficult for the three languages to use the same orthography as quite a number of words in the three languages differ so much that it would be difficult for one language speaker to understand some words of the other, as evidenced in the following examples:

(17)

Northern Sotho	Setswana	Sesotho
<i>thoma</i> (start)	<i>simolla</i> (start)	<i>qala</i> (start)
<i>aowa</i> (no)	<i>nyaa</i> (no)	<i>chee</i> (no)
<i>letšoba/leloba</i> (flower)	<i>tšheše</i> (flower)	<i>palesa</i> (flower)
<i>kudu</i> (too much)	<i>thata</i> (too much)	<i>haholo</i> (too much)
<i>lefela/lehea</i> (maize)	<i>mmopo</i> (maize)	<i>poone</i> (maize)

On the other hand, there are also similarities amongst three Sotho language groups that make it simple for speakers to understand one another more than they can understand speakers in the Nguni language group. For example:

(18)

Northern Sotho	Setswana	Sesotho
<i>mosadi</i> (woman)	<i>mosadi</i> (woman)	<i>mosadi</i> (woman)
<i>lerato</i> (love)	<i>lerato</i> (love)	<i>lerato</i> (love)
<i>lema</i> (plough)	<i>lema</i> (plough)	<i>lema</i> (plough)
<i>thaba</i> (mountain)	<i>thaba</i> (mountain)	<i>thaba</i> (mountain)
<i>motho</i> (person)	<i>motho</i> (person)	<i>motho</i> (person)

2.3 THE STANDARDIZATION OF NORTHERN SOTHO

The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1999:1399) explains standardize as cause to conform to a standard. To determine the properties of comparison with a standard. Northern Sotho is the home language of about four million two hundred and eight thousand nine hundred and eighty (4 208 980) people in South Africa and it is mostly spoken in Limpopo and Gauteng Provinces (<http://www.google.com/search> 2005:2). Lanham (1978:16) defines Northern Sotho as a generic term for the variety of dialects that in some cases, differ markedly from one another. This language is often referred to as “Sepedi” as in the constitution of South Africa. In actual fact, Sepedi is considered but a dialect of the language, Northern Sotho ([http://www.us.english.org/foundation_research/alp/view_Research.asp?CID=32 and TID=2005:2](http://www.us.english.org/foundation_research/alp/view_Research.asp?CID=32_and_TID=2005:2)). Northern Sotho is a member of the Sotho language group. Different dialect clusters are found in the

Northern Sotho speaking area. Louwrens (1994:54), explains a dialect as a regionally or socially distinctive variety of a language, identified by a particular set of words and grammatical structures. Spoken dialects are usually also associated with distinctive pronunciation or accent. Louwrens (1994:54) also says that a dialect cluster is a group of dialects spoken in the same geographical area, characterised by certain common phonological, morphological and lexical features.

Sepedi, which is also one of the Northern Sotho dialects, falls under the Bapedi dialect cluster. Mokgokong (1966:9) says that the Pedi/Bapedi originally broke away from a Kgatla tribe under the leadership of a certain *Thobela*, moved eastwards, and finally settled in the area between the Olifants and Steelpoort river. The area is known as Driekop (Ga-Ratau). Here they adopted the name Bapedi. They discarded their original totem *kgabo* (monkey), and venerated *noko* (porcuine). Today, a few of them, notably *Ramoshaba* clan, have the *tlou* (elephant) as their totem. From Mokgokong's explanation, one can conclude that Bapedi is a "nickname" for the Batswana (Kgatla) who moved and settled in the East. Bakgatla is a group of Setswana speaking people, and Sekgatla is a dialect in Setswana. The Batswana are known even today by their totem *kgabo*, which they also use to refer to one another.

The Sepedi dialect, which is found in the East of Limpopo Province, Sekhukhuneland, as Ziervogel (1975:124) indicates, was regarded as the standard language by the missionaries when they started with the writing of African languages. One might conclude that the missionaries termed their written language Sepedi, not realising that it was the language spoken in that area that is related to another language in the neighbourhood, which, together with Sepedi, formulates broadly spoken language, namely, Northern Sotho.

Moto (1990:92) indicates that although Sepedi is a dialect in Northern Sotho, the Northern Sotho language is based on this particular dialect. Moto (1990:92) also groups the Sepedi dialect speakers into the following groups:

(19)

Bapedi	Batau	Bakone	Baroka	Other
Mamone	Masemola	Maserumula	Phašankwana	Mphahlele
Mohlaletse	Nchabeleng	Phokwane		Mothapo
	Marishane	Marangrang		
	Nkadimeng	Mathabatha		
	Phaahla	Chuene		
	Kgapola	Maja		

According to Moto (1990:92), these groups formulate the dialect cluster of Sepedi, and the common characteristics of their language is realised in the following sounds:

(20)

<i>[ʈ]</i>	<i>[ɦ]</i>	<i>[psh]</i>	<i>[sw]</i>
<i>hlapa</i> [ʈap'a] (wash)	<i>lehono</i> [leɦono] (today)	<i>pshira</i> (nauseat)	<i>leswiswi</i> (darkness)
<i>hlogo</i> [ʈɔʎɔ] (head)	<i>lehea</i> [leɦea] (maize)	<i>pshio</i> (kidney)	<i>swiela</i> (sweep)

In an article entitled *Standardization and Development of Orthography in Sesotho sa Leboa: A historical overview*, Mojela (2005:2) indicates that the

written Northern Sotho that was limited to the dialect around Bapedi and also called Sepedi during the missionary period, was characterized by the following:

- a. It was not a formal standardization in the real sense as there was no centralized authority controlling and standardizing the so-called written “Sepedi language”.
- b. The orthography was purely in Sepedi as the missionaries worked in Bopedi and regarded Sepedi to be a language on its own since they did not know other dialects or even languages that had resemblances to Sepedi.
- c. There were no developed orthography and spelling rules.
- d. The written language represented the dialects spoken by a small fraction of the Northern Sotho communities, while the majority of the dialects of Sesotho sa Leboa (Northern Sotho) were not written since there were little or no missionary activities in their areas.
- e. There was neither clear distinction nor clear defined relationship between Sepedi and other Northern Sotho dialects in its neighbourhood or the relationship with the Sotho language spoken in Botswana (Setswana) and Lesotho (Sesotho).

The implication from the above explanation indicates that the missionaries’ role was not to research the language “Sepedi” itself, as they would have come into contact with dialects and or languages that were almost similar to Sepedi. Their main aim, as indicated earlier on, was to teach the Christian religion to the people they came into contact with. One would be correct to say that any language they could have come in contact with, would have been used for

writing. If the language they came into contact with was, for example, Selobedu, Setlokwa or Sepulana, to mention a few, that particular language could have been taken as the standard language. Hence, Sepedi was recognised as the standardized language by the missionaries. To simplify their work, the missionaries had to teach people how to read and write and maybe even how to talk their (missionaries') language, so that they would understand better and help them in spreading the word of God, hence the writing of Sepedi. Kosch (1992:3) supports this by indicating that the Berlin Missionaries considered Sepedi to belong to the Setswana language. Setswana, according to *go.24.co.za* (30/08/2005), was the first Sotho language to have a written form. In 1806, Heinrich Lichtenstein wrote *Upon the Language of the Beetjuana*, whereas in 1815 John Cambell wrote *Tonal Language*.

Kosch (1992:3), explains further that ever since 1834, when the first Berlin missionaries arrived in the country, they wanted to work amongst the Setswana speaking people as they were inspired by encouraging reports of the London Missionary, Robert Moffat, who translated the Bible into Setswana. Therefore, because of the fact that their writing of languages was religion orientated, they could not perhaps even be interested in the similarities between Sepedi and Setswana languages or may not even have realised these similarities. Esterhuysen, in Kosch (1992:3), says that the first words in Northern Sotho, specifically Sepedi, were published in 1862 in the Berlin Missionary reports, in an article by Merensky entitled: *Beitrage zur Geschichte der Bapedi*. <http://www.google.com/search?www.bible.society.co.za/resources/translation> (2005:10), shows the translation of the Bible into Northern Sotho. The first attempt was by the missionary society, the pioneer translator being pastor

J.F.C Knothe. The important dates in the history of the Northern Sotho Bible are indicated as follows:

(21)

1890	First scripture to be published. The New Testament. London: British and Foreign Bible Society. Translated by J.F.C. Knothe of the Berlin Evangelical Missionary Society
1904	First Bible Berlin: Berlin Missionary Society After the death of Pastor Knothe in 1982, the translation work continued by G. Trümpelmann and H. Kuschke, assisted by A. Serote and G. Eislen.
1951	Revision of the Bible London: British and Foreign Bible Society. The Bible translation was revised and put into a new orthography by Dr P.E. Schwelnuss and a committee.
1988	Latest translation of the Bible Cape Town: Bible Society of South Africa. Translated by Rev. J.M. Louw, the exaggerate and project co-ordinator, Father M Teffo and Reverend J.S. Ramoba, assisted by various scholars and linguists.

The continuous translation brings about the differences in spelling, standardized words and the phonological changes, without affecting the meaning of the scripture. The regular changes made in the orthography of the Bible support the fact that standardization of Northern Sotho or of any other language is not static. Examples of changes made between publications of 1986 and 2004 are as follows:

(22)

1986	2004
<i>Psalm</i> (Psalm)	<i>Pesalome</i> (Psalm)
<i>mogwegadi</i> (father in law)	<i>ratswale</i> (father in law)
<i>Egipita</i> (Egypt)	<i>Egepeta</i> (Egypt)
<i>kokobetša</i> (press or humiliate)	<i>gatelela</i> (oppress)
<i>gagolo</i> (too much)	<i>kudu</i> (too much)

The pronunciation of the nouns *Egepeta* and *Pesalome* are common amongst the Northern Sotho speakers, unlike *Egipita* and *Psalm*. The combination in the Northern Sotho rules also does not allow sounds like /ps/ except where it is only used in a dialect such as Sekopa, which uses the word *psila* for beautiful, while all other Northern Sotho dialects use the word *botse* for beautiful. In supporting this, Ziervogel (1975:1075) says that /ps/ is a Sekopa sound that except for borrowed words, is not used for standard language. The consonant /m/ in Psalm, as indicated in the Northern Sotho standardization rules, is also not used as the last syllable in a word, while the combinations of // and /m/, as in example (22) 1986, is not allowed.

The word *mogwegadi* (father in law) is commonly used in the Sepedi dialect, whereas most of the Northern Sotho dialect speakers use *ratswale* for father-in-law. *Kokobetša*, mostly used as meaning to press, is used in the scripture

meaning to oppress. The word commonly used for oppression is *gatelela*, hence the changes in 2004 translation. The word *gagolo* has an influence of Sesotho, which uses *haholo*, meaning “too much”, while Northern Sotho’s standardized term is *kudu* (too much).

After the death of Knothe in 1892, the Berlin Missionary Society commissioned G. Trümpelmann to translate the Bible into Northern Sotho, with the assistance of Abram Serote, who was trained as a teacher at Batšhabelo in Middleburg, (Kosch 1992:4). The language used at Botšhabelo is Sekopa, hence Ziervogel (1975:24), indicates that Sepedi lost its supremacy somewhat as a consequence of historical events that resulted in Sekopa making its influence felt, especially in the translation of the Bible. Some of the early writings on Christian religion, to mention just a few, were the following:

Thuto ya tumelo ya Bakriste: (Knothe, 1893)

Gethsemane le Golgotha: (Eiselen, G. 1932)

The common symbols used in these early writings are the following:

(23)

<i>x (g)</i>	<i>kx (kg)</i>	<i>by(bj)</i>	<i>y (j)</i>	<i>fs (sw)</i>	<i>py (pš)</i>
<i>maxato</i> (steps)	<i>kxona</i> (able)	<i>byaloka</i> (like)	<i>Yesu</i> (Jesus)	<i>mofsa</i> (new)	<i>eupya</i> (but)
<i>mexopolo</i> (minds)	<i>makxonthe</i> (real)	<i>byalwa</i> (beer)	<i>Bayuta</i> (the Jews)	<i>fsiela</i> (sweep)	<i>mpya</i> (dog)

The symbols in the brackets, in the examples above, are those that are being used in the present standardized Northern Sotho. Besides the symbols above, some of the words that are presently written as separate words in the standardized Northern Sotho were in the early writings written as follows:

(24)

Early writings	Presently
<i>bjaloka</i> (like)	<i>bjalo ka</i> (like)
<i>waka</i> (mine)	<i>wa ka</i> (mine)
<i>kamoka</i> (all)	<i>ka moka</i> (all)

According to Kosch (1992:4), some of the texts based on the Mamabolo dialect emerged between 1912 and 1945 wherein authors like C. Hoffmann wrote valuable texts on culture, folklore and history. On the other hand, between 1940 and 1960, dialects of the Polokwane area, such as Setlokwa, Sehananwa, Semoletši and SegMatlala, made their influence felt as leading writers were from the said area (Ziervogel, 1975:124). In his book, *Mengwalo* (Essays), E.K.K. Matlala uses words commonly used in Moletši and Matlala dialects such as the following:

(25)

Moletši/Matlala	Standardized form
<i>Xantong/gantong</i> (now/now adays)	<i>bjale</i> (now/now adays)
<i>monnyana</i> (a lady/big girl)	<i>lekgarebe</i> (a lady/big girl)
<i>lentswe</i> (voice/a word)	<i>lentšu</i> (voice/a word)
<i>nna</i> (sit/stay)	<i>dula</i> (sit/stay)
<i>rupa</i> (circumcise)	<i>bolla</i> (circumcise)
<i>tshwana</i> (alike)	<i>swana</i> (alike)

After 1960, writers from Bopedi led the way again in the writing of novels, drama, poetry and short stories, therefore the influence of Sepedi were intensified. Amongst the Bapedi writings are the writings of O.K. Matsepe, who is also known for his unique style of writing in Northern Sotho novels and poetry. Although Matsepe is praised for his language, the problem of using words from the Sepedi dialect and the spelling affected by the spoken language of the Bapedi, plays a role in his writings. For example, Matsepe uses spellings such as in the following words:

(26)

O.K Matsepes' spelling	Northern Sotho Orthography
<i>banabešu</i> (brethren)	<i>banabešo</i> (brethren)
<i>mošimane</i> (boy)	<i>mošemane</i> (boy)
<i>motsumi</i> (hunter)	<i>motsomi</i> (hunter)

The standardized Northern Sotho uses an /o/ in *bešo* and not /u/. In *mošemane*, the second syllable is /še/ not /ši/ and *motsomi* with the /o/ in the last but one syllable. The word *motsomi* is derived from the verb *tsoma*, and the /o/ is influenced by the /i/ in the last syllable and sounds like [u]. Matsepe's Sepedi dialect is identified through words like the following:

(27)

Sepedi	Other dialects
<i>ntshe</i> , in <i>motho wa ntshe</i> (that particular person)	<i>gona</i> , in <i>motho wa gona</i> (that particular person)
<i>ntshe</i> , in <i>ga a ntshe</i> (he/she is not there)	<i>gona</i> , in <i>ga a gona</i> (he/she is not there)
<i>Lesetša</i> (leave it)	<i>Lesatlogela</i> (leave it)
<i>Bagaditšong</i> (Women married to the same man or brothers)	<i>Bagadikane</i> (Women married to the same man or brothers).

The word *ntshe* (there/that) is commonly used by Bapedi, whereas other dialects use *gona* (there/that). *Lesetša* is used in standardized Northern Sotho as *lesa* (leave it) or *tlogela* (leave it), whereas *bagaditšong* (women married to the same man /brothers) is in other dialects *bagadikane* (women married to the same man/brothers).

Another example of the Sepedi dialect author is S.P.P. Mminele, who in his book, *Ngwana wa mobu* (1967: 3), uses the Sepedi dialect words such as the following:

(28)

Sepedi	Other dialects
<i>itia</i> (beat)	<i>betha</i> (beat)
<i>botoga</i> (come over)	<i>tšwelela</i> (come over)
<i>ka meriti</i> (in the afternoon)	<i>thapama/manthapama</i> (in the afternoon)

The above given examples bear reference that every author was using his own dialect, therefore Northern Sotho orthography was then standardized and problems in spelling were eliminated. Although this was done, a variety of alternatives occurred where, for example, Ziervogel (1975:124) explains that in compiling *Groot Noord Sotho Woordeboek* (which is a dictionary of Northern Sotho words, nouns, proverbs, idioms and explanations in English and Afrikaans), words accepted by their informants as fairly generally known throughout the Northern Sotho area were entered and words that they regarded

as being too dialectical, but found in print, were entered in the standard orthography.

The explanation given about the influence of different dialects in the writing of Northern Sotho language by 'leading writers' bears reference that the language used in writing during that period was not agreed upon. Every author was, as indicated before, using his/her own dialect, and thus the dialects that had no leading writers were not represented in the standardization of Northern Sotho. Ziervogel (1975:124) comes up with contradictory statements when he indicates that Northern Sotho orthography was standardized and even the words that were 'too dialectical' were included in the dictionary.

2.4 **NORTHERN SOTHO DIALECTS**

Northern Sotho dialects are classified by Ziervogel (1975:124) in the geographical area of Limpopo Province as follows:

a. **South Central**

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

b. **Central**

Sepedi, Sekone, Setau, Seroka and Moletlane.

c. **North West**

Sehananwa, Setlokwa, Moletši, Matlala, Mamabolo and Dikgale.

d. **North Eastern**

Selobedu, Setswapa, SePhalaborwa and Sekgaga.

e. Eastern

Sepulana and Sekutswe.

Any language with a reasonably large number of speakers will develop dialects, especially if there are geographical barriers separating groups of people from each other, or if there are divisions of social class (Louwrens, 1994:54). As indicated earlier on, Northern Sotho is a home language of around 4 208 980 people. Ziervogel's classification agrees with the definition by Louwrens as he divides the dialects in five separate geographical areas around the Limpopo Province. The researcher will look into the morphological and the phonological differences amongst the dialects found in the same geographical area.

2.4.1 Basic Phonology

Katamba (1989:60) explains phonology as a branch of linguistics that investigates the way in which speech sounds are used systematically to form words and utterances.

2.4.1.1 Vowels

The eleven vowels used in Northern Sotho are grouped as follows:

(29)

Front	Central	Back
unrounded	Open	Rounded
High = [i]		[u]
Middle = [e ɛ ε ξ]		[o ɔ ɔ ɔ]
Low =	[a]	

It was indicated earlier on that in Northern Sotho double vowels are used in the standardized language in words such as *meetse* (water) and *phoofolo* (animal) usually also associated with distinctive pronunciation or accent. Some of the Northern Sotho dialects use what might be heard as double vowels in a number of words. The first vowel is prolonged and articulated with a rising tone or rather the second vowel is raised, but in practical orthography only one vowel is written. The Central, South Central and North Eastern areas in the Limpopo Province use double vowels in words such as the following:

(30)

<i>piitšo</i> [p'i:tʃo] (invocation)	<i>Pitšo</i> [p'itʃ`o] (invocation)
<i>muuši</i> [mu:ʃi] (smoke)	<i>muši</i> [muʃi] (smoke)
<i>ngwaana</i> [ŋwa:na] (child)	<i>ngwana</i> [ŋwana] (child)

Moletši, Matlala and Setlokwa dialects differ with their counterparts in the North West area namely Mamabolo and Dikgale. The former dialects use single vowels while the latter use double vowels. The difference might be caused by the fact that even though they are classified in the same area by Ziervogel (1975) in his classification, the Mamabolo and Dikgale dialects are more closer to the South Central dialects like Mothiba, Mothapo and Makgoba hence the influence. The difference in vowels is also realized in the alternation of [e] and [ɛ]. For example: Sekopa and Sepulana dialects use [ɛ] in words such as:

(31)

Northern Sotho Orthography	Sekopa and Sepulana
<i>apea</i> [ap'ea] (cook)	<i>apêa</i> [ap'ea] (cook)
<i>bea</i> [βea] (put)	<i>bêa</i> [βea] (put)

Sepedi dialect also uses [ɔ] in *ngwako* (house) [ŋwak'o] and have [ŋwa:kɔ] while most of the dialects use [o]. Another phenomenon as indicated by Ziervogel (1975:125) is the alternation of /o/ or /u/ with /-we/, /-wi/ or /-wa/ as in the following examples:

(32)

Sepedi dialect	Matlala and Moletši dialects
<i>lentšu</i> (voice or word)	<i>lentswe</i> (voice or word)
<i>uša</i> (cause to fall)	<i>wiša</i> (cause to fall)
<i>šwahla</i> (break out)	<i>šohla</i> (break out)

In some cases there are also alternatives where the semi-vowels /w/ and /y/ may or may not be used as in:

(33)

<i>boa</i> (return)	<i>boya</i> (return)	<i>bowa</i> (return)
<i>leboa</i> (North)	<i>leboya</i> (North)	<i>lebowa</i> (North)
<i>rua</i> (keep stock)		<i>ruwa</i> (keep stock)

2.4.1.2 Consonants

Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4 (1988:11) divides the Northern Sotho consonants into three categories which are the voiceless, the voiced and the clicks and unusual consonants. Like vowels, some consonants are articulated differently amongst the Northern Sotho dialects as indicated in the following examples:

2.4.1.2.1 Voiceless consonants

Voiceless consonants are consonants produced without the vibration of vocal cords (Katamba, 1989:49). They are divided into:

i. Ejected plosives

Plosives consonants are consonants formed by stopping the air passage at some points. They consist of a stop, a release of the stop and some subsequent sound which follows the release (Westermann, 1953:49). The ejected plosives are:

(34) [p'] in [p'alɔ]
(sum/number)

It is articulated as [b] in [balɔ] in Selobedu, Sekgaga and Setswapo.

- (35) [t'] as in [t'aβa]
(matter)

It is articulated as [d] as in [daβa] (matter) in Selobedu, Sephalaborwa and Setswapo, while in Sekopa and Segamphahlele dialects it is articulated as [t] as in [t'aβa] (matter).

- (36) [k] in [kit'ima]
(run)

In Selobedu, Sephalaborwa and Setswapo the [k] is articulated as /g/ as in [gidima] (run).

- (37) [tl'] in [tl'aβa]
(surprise)

It is articulated as [t] as in [t'aβa] (surprise) in Setlokwa, Sehananwa, Segamatlala, Moletši, Dikgale and Mamabolo. Selobedu, Sephalaborwa and Setswapo articulate the [tl'] as [d] as in [daβa] (surprise) while in Sekutswe and Sepulana the sound [kl] as in [klala] (hunger) is used.

Selobedu, Setswapo and Sephalaborwa dialects in the above examples use voiced consonants where most of the dialects use the voiceless consonants. The gampahlele dialects differ with the dialects found in the same area with it, on the articulation of [t']. Moletši, Matlala, Mamabolo, Setlokwa, Sehananwa and Dikgale articulate the ejected lateral speech sound [tl'] as dental speech sound [tl].

ii. Aspirated plosives

Aspiration is marked by [h] which is written after the symbol which is articulated with an aspiration. In Northern Sotho the [h] aspiration mark is realised in words like [kx^homo] (cow) whereas in most of the words it is written as a speech sound as in the following examples:

(38) a. [kh] in [khut'a]
(hide)

b. [ph] in [phefɔ]
(wind)

c. [th] in [thaβa]
(mountain)

[th] is articulated as [t̥h] in Sekopa and Segamphahlele dialects.

d. [tlh] as in [tlhayɔ]
(nature)

[t̥lh] in [t̥lhaɔ] as articulated in Moletši, Matlala, Setlokwa and Segananwa dialects.

iii. Fricatives

They are speech sounds or consonants which are articulated by narrowing the air passage at some point, the air escapes through this narrowed space making a fricative sound. Fricatives are sounds such as:

(39) a. [f] dental as in [fep'a] (take care of) is articulated as bilabial [ɸ] in Sekopa.

b. [fs] in *mefsikela*
(flue)

- c. [f] in *lefšega*
(a coward)
- d. /g/ [ɣ] in [ɣata] (stab) is articulated as [ɦ] as in [ɦat'a] in Setlokwa, Moletši and Matlala dialects.
- e. /h/ [ɦ] as in [ɦula] (rob)
- f. /hl/ [ɬ] in [ɬap'a] (wash) lateral speech sound is articulated as /tʰ/ [tʰapa] in Sehananwa, Setlokwa, Moletši and Matlala.
- g. [s] as in [sela] (jump over). It is articulated as /tsh/ [tsh^hela] in Setlokwa, Sehananwa, Moletši and Matlala dialects, while in Sepulana it is sometimes articulated as [k^h] as in [k^helɔ] (something).
- h. /š/ [ʃ] in [ʃala] (remain behind) is articulated in Setlokwa as [s] in words such as [sala] (remain behind).

iv. **Affricates**

Unlike plosives in affricates a stop is released slowly. An affricate is formulated by two sounds, a stop plus a fricative. The following sounds are affricates:

- (40) a. tš [tʃ] in [βitʃa] (call) is articulated as [d] in Selobedu and [tz] in Sepulana.
- b. [ts'] in [motse] (home) is articulated as [tʃ] in Sepulana as in [mutʃ'i] and [dz] in [modze] in Selobedu.
 - c. [pf] in [mpfa] (dog) is articulated in Selobedu and Setswapo as [bz] in [mbza].

d. /tšw/ as in *go tšwa* (going out) is in Setlokwa dialect articulated as /kw/ as in *go kwa* (going out) and [gw] in Selobedu and have [ho gwa] (going out).

Aspirated affricates

(41) a. /kg/ in *kgona* is articulated as [k^h] in Selobedu.

(able)

b. /tsh/ in *tshela*.

(six)

c. /tšh/ in *tšhaba*

(run away)

d. /psh/ in *pshikologa* (roll) is [ph] as in *phikoloa* (roll) in Setlokwa, Moletši and Matlala dialects.

e. /pšh/ in *pšhatla*

(smash)

2.4.1.2.2 **Voiced consonants**

Katamba (1989:49) says that voiced sounds are sounds produced with the vocal cords vibrating at regular intervals. The following sounds are voiced:

i. Nasals

(42) a. [m] in *motho*

(person)

b. [n] in *nna*

(I)

c. [ɲ] in *nyala*

(marry)

- d. [ŋ] in *mong*.
(owner)

The sound [ŋ] is often articulated in Setlokwa, Sehananwa, Moletši and Matlala dialects as [n] in words such as [moŋe] (owner).

ii. Alveolar retroflex

- (43) a. [ɺ] in *dula* [ɺula]
(stay/sit).

iii. Palatal fricatives

- (44) a. [ʒ] in [ʒa] (eat) is articulated as [ɺ] as in [ɺia] (eat) in Setlokwa dialect when used in the present tense. The Mamabolo and Mothapo dialects articulated it as [l] in the past tense in words such as [l:le] (have eaten).
- b. [βʒ] in [βʒala] (beer) is articulated as [ʒw] as in [ʒwala] (beer) in Moletši and Matlala dialects while in Sepedi dialect is [ʒw] as in [ʒwala] (beer).

2.4.1.2.3 Clicks and unusual consonants

Click consonants are sound of plosive nature made with the breath going in instead of out like most of the sounds. They occur in isiXhosa, Sesotho and the Khoi and San languages (Westermann, 1933:98). For example:

i. Clicks

- (45) a. /c/ in *nce-nce-nce* (imitating a sound made by a watch)

ii. Unusual consonants

(46) a. /v/ in *vurvur...* (a sound made by wind).

b. /z/ in *zwing...* (a sound of a thrown stone).

The clicks and unusual consonants are not used in Northern Sotho's everyday language. They are in most cases except when used in loaned words, used to imitate some sounds as in the examples given in 40 and 41.

In the above examples, with both vowels and consonants, the researcher indicated dialects that differ with the present standard sounds in the orthography of Northern Sotho. Most of the dialects which are not indicated as to how they articulate their sounds are in most cases using the sound as those that are used in the standardized Northern Sotho language. The examples given also bear reference that in standardizing Northern Sotho language a thorough research is needed so that dialects are compared, to minimise disadvantaging some of the dialects as it is at present.

Although Haas (1982:59) indicates that the orthography can ignore the problems of dialectical variation by basing its system on one prestige dialect and leave speakers of the other dialects to fend for themselves, the question in Northern Sotho would be: 'which dialect is the 'prestige dialect' and which criterion will be used in selecting that particular dialect? On the other hand, using one dialect in Northern Sotho will cause difficulties in spelling for other dialect speakers. The definition of orthography by Haas (1982:38), that orthography is a kind of a bridge leading from the spoken norm to the written, or a set of rules enabling a member of a given language community to transpose his spoken utterances into the corresponding written ones, also gives room to the fact that dialects as

spoken languages need to be considered when transposing spoken language to written language.

The researcher agrees with Haas (1982:38), on the fact that two phonologies in dialects may differ phonetically and therefore there will be a need to one correspondence between phonemes of each dialect. For example in the ejected plosive [tɬ'] as indicated in example (37) which is articulated as [tɬ] in Setlokwa, Matlala and Moletši dialects, the sign can be avoided and the orthography provide one symbol for the phoneme correspondence. In the case of terminology, the orthography can also use different dialects terminologies for synonyms, so that a variety of dialects be involved.

2.5 THE LANGUAGE BODIES THAT ARE INVOLVED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NORTHERN SOTHO

As already stated, the writing of Northern Sotho was initiated by the establishment of the mission station around the Sekhukhuneland area (Bapedi and Tafelkop). From the interaction that the missionaries had with the Bapedi a form of writing which was called Sepedi emerged. The existence of writings in other Northern Sotho dialects brought about new challenges in the standardization of Northern Sotho. The same can be said about other languages in the Sotho group (Setswana and Sesotho). An attempt was made by the Transvaal Education Department which took the lead to unify the Sotho language group into a single standard Sotho orthography. This did not go well hence Esterhuyse's (1975:105) indication that on 30 August 1961 in a meeting held in Pretoria by the Bantu Language Body a decision was taken that the Sotho Language Committee be destroyed. Three Sotho Language Committees were then formulated. The Department of Black Education approved the decision on 2

2 April 1962. The three language committees, Setswana, Sesotho and Northern Sotho were then born. In 14 August 1962 the Northern Sotho Language Committee held their first meeting in Pretoria. The *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 2* also emerged, which was the same as the *Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 1* of 1975 (Esterhuysen 1975:105).

The Northern Sotho Language Committee conducted a thorough investigation on the Northern Sotho spelling. Changes were made and the Bantu Language Board was instructed to approve the recommendations made. After the approval, the spelling was published in the Education News Letter of March 1967. Some of the changes made were as follows:

(46)

Old orthography	New orthography
<i>jw</i>	<i>bj</i>
<i>jwala</i>	<i>bjala</i>
(beer)	(beer)
<i>rojwa</i>	<i>robja</i>
(be broken)	(be broken)
<i>fs</i>	<i>sw</i>
<i>fsiela</i>	<i>swiela</i>
(sweep)	(sweep)
<i>kgaufsi</i>	<i>kgauswi</i>
(near)	(near)

In some cases changes made from the old orthography to the new is an indication that some of the Northern Sotho dialects were not considered as the old orthography was not covering them. For example the symbol /jw/ as

indicated earlier on is a speech sound used in Moletši, Matlala and Setlokwa dialects, but it is changed in favour of /bj/ in the new orthography.

Investigations and decisions continued and in the course of time the Northern Sotho Language Committee followed by the Northern Sotho Language Board decided to make various changes. The particulars and decisions were all consolidated during the Northern Sotho Language Board meeting of 27 March 1985 (*Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4*, 1988:5). In 1988 *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4* was published, of which the orthography is compulsory for the Northern Sotho standardized language.

The *Constitution of Republic of South Africa* (1996:4) label the eleven official languages of the Republic of South Africa as follow: Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Seswati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, Isindebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu. In recognising the historically diminished use status of the indigenous languages of the South African people, the state must as the constitution indicates:

- i. take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advanced the use of these languages.
- ii. The National and Provincial governments may use any particular official languages for purposes of government taking into account the balance of the needs and preferences of the population as a whole or in the province concerned, but the national government and each provincial government must use at least two official languages.

The Department of Education in the Republic of South Africa adopted the two statements indicated above in the *Revised National Curriculum Statement* (RNCS) (2004:iv) by:

i. Making it a policy that learners in the Foundation Phase (Grade R to 3) be taught in their own home language.

ii. The Language Learning Area Statement includes all the eleven official languages indicated earlier on and all the languages approved by the Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB) and the South African Certification Authority (SAFCERT) such as Braille South African, Sign Language and Khoi (Nama and San).

Furthermore the Department of Education also granted the support on the recognition of all thirteen languages in South Africa including sign language and Khoi. As enshrined in the constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB) Act 59 of 1995 replaced all the language boards which existed during the Bantustan Era (Mojela, 2005:4). The PANSALB's duty is to promote and create conditions for the development and use of all the official languages which amongst them is Northern Sotho/Sepedi. The *Northern Sotho National Language Body* (NSNLB) as constituted in 2001 compiled a draft revision manuscript for the orthography and spelling rules of the existing *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4* of 1988. The manuscript, according to Mojela M.V. (member of the NSNLB), is still in progress. Much as there is a struggle for single standard Northern Sotho orthography at present, much more still remains to be unravelled from within Northern Sotho language as far as the existence of dialects is concerned.

2.6 CONCLUSION

Even though there are still some orthographical problems in the Northern Sotho orthography, it is evident from the above historical background that the spoken norm and written form had a complementary role towards the development and standardization of the Northern Sotho language. As such a further indepth analysis of the Northern Sotho orthography is necessary.

Chapter 3

PRINCIPLES AND RULES OF ORTHOGRAPHY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The existence of the written language depends on the spoken language. Both written and spoken languages have principles and rules that govern their existence. Werner (1925:10) bears reference to this when saying that, on the contrary no language has yet been discovered which is without grammatical rules. This does not mean that the rules are consciously formulated, or that there exists anything in the shape of a written grammar unless as it is as of now drawn by official bodies in agreement to coordinate implementation. As such, it is imperative that a thorough study should be made to show how principles and rules in spoken language are useful in maintaining a written standardized language. In this chapter, the general principles of orthography, the rules and methods of writing Northern Sotho and the problems encountered in the orthography will be discussed.

3.2 THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF ORTHOGRAPHY

Westermann (1990:17) and http://www.bisharat.net/documents/poal_30.htm (2006:1) discuss general principles that should be observed in fixing the orthography of any particular language as follows:

- a. The orthography of a given language should be based on the principle of one letter for each phoneme of a language. This means that whenever two words are distinguished in sound, they must also be distinguished in orthography. The term phoneme is used to denote any small family of sounds that may be regarded as a

single entity. It often happens that two distinct sounds may occur in a language without native speaker being aware that they are different. This happens where one of the sounds occurs only in certain positions in connected speech, while the other never occurs in those positions. Thus, in Northern Sotho the phoneme /d/ is used with the high vowels /i/ and /u/ only. For example:

(1)

<i>du</i>	<i>di</i>
<i>dula</i> (sit)	<i>dineo</i> (gifts)
<i>dumela</i> (agree)	<i>dino</i> (drinks)

/l/ is used with all the other vowels except with /i/ and /u/, as evident in the following words:

(2)

<i>la</i>	<i>le</i>	<i>lo</i>
<i>lapa</i> (get tired)	<i>lema</i> (plough)	<i>loma</i> (bite)

It is indicated in the *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4* (1988:11) that symbols like /d/, in combination with [a], are used in loan words like 'dahlia'.

b. The existence of diphones must be recognized. The term diphone is used to indicate a normal sound together with the variants of it heard from different

speakers of the language. In Northern Sotho, speakers in different dialects may pronounce the syllable /di/ as /ji/ and /t/ as /t̥/ but the orthography /di/ and /t/ are adequate for covering both pronunciation. The /f/ in the Northern Sotho is also pronounced in others as bilabial [Φ], but the letter [f] can be used in orthography with the necessary conventions as to dialect pronunciation.

c. It may sometimes be convenient to depart from strictly phonetic system, in order to avoid writing a word in more than one way. Northern Sotho realizes such differences in words such as:

(3)

(a)	(a) <i>fularela</i> (turns one's back)	<i>furalele</i> (turn one's back)
(b)	<i>kgola</i> (clear dirt)	<i>kgora</i> (clear dirt)
(c)	<i>boetša</i> (take back)	<i>bušetša</i> (take back)
(d)	<i>emang</i> (getting to a halt/stop)	<i>emago</i> (getting to a halt/stop)

In example 3. a, and b, /la/ and /ra/

c. /oe/ and /uše/

d. /ng/ and /go/.

The syllables are used as alternatives as agreed upon by the Board of Northern Sotho in compiling rules that govern this language (*Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4, 1988:15*).

Frost (1999:18) says that the only linguistic units that have served as a basis for spelling units are syllables and phonemes. *The Oxford Dictionary* (1999:1450) explains a syllable as a unit of pronunciation having one vowel sound, with or without surrounding consonants and forming all or part of a word. On the other hand, http://www.bisharat.net/document/poal_30.htm (2006:01) indicates that the term phoneme is used to denote any small family of sounds that may be regarded as a single entity. Phonemes consist of only one sound. Phonemes also serve to distinguish one word from the other. For example:

(4)

(a)	<i>dila</i> (plaster/smear)	<i>dula</i> (sit/stay)
(b)	<i>bula</i> (open)	<i>buna</i> (harvesting)

The phonemes /i/ and /u/ in 4 (a) above bring up the difference between the two words that are exactly the same except for the two vowels, the same as /l/ and /n/ in 4 (b).

It is also indicated that when /ng/ [ŋ] is found in a language as a separated phoneme, it is recommended that the sound be written /ng/ whenever it occurs, that is to say, also before /k/ and /kg/. This is not the case in Northern Sotho; hence the problem of spelling in words such as the following:

(5) a. *nko* [ŋkɔ]

(nose)

b. *nkgata* [ŋkx^hat'a]

(treaded on)

c. *nngala* [ŋŋala]

(desert me)

The syllables are not only characterized as with one vowel sound. Examples of these types of syllables in Northern Sotho are as follows:

(6)

VV	VCV	CVCV	NCV	CCV	CVVCV	VCVV	VCGV
<i>ee</i> (yes)	<i>e-pa</i> (dig)	<i>pa-lo</i> (sum/number)	<i>n-ko</i> (nose)	<i>l-la</i> (cry)	<i>ba-a-gi</i> (builders)	<i>a-pe-a</i> (cook)	<i>o-kwa</i> (to be nursed)
	<i>e-ma</i> (stand)	<i>se-pe-la</i> (walk)		<i>m-ma</i> (mother)	<i>Pho-o-fo-lo</i> (animal)		

(V= Vowel (long or short), C=Consonants, N=Nasal, G=Glide (w or y))

Problems encountered in spelling with syllabic /n/ will be discussed later.

3.3 THE RULES OF NORTHERN SOTHO ORTHOGRAPHY

Without rules, the grammar of a language will hardly be sustained. There must be a logical thinking behind the use of grammar. Like principles, rules must also be simple and user friendly. There must also be a lot of consultation before the rules can be implemented. Northern Sotho is presently using the following rules; as consolidated during the Northern Sotho Language Board meeting of March 1985, *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4* (1988:5).

3.3.1 Vowels

As indicated earlier on, Northern Sotho maintains seven basic vowel symbols /a, e, ê, i, o, ô, u / and four raised vowels [ɛ̣ ɛ̥ ɔ̣ ɔ̥]. The circumflex / ^ / on vowels / ê / and / ô / is not used in everyday normal writing, but in scientific works like dictionaries, so as to reflect the correct pronunciation.

3.3.1.1 Double vowels

Ideophones and interjections should be spelt with a double vowel where necessary. The term ideophone refers to a category of highly expressive words that are used to denote various concepts such as colour, taste, smell, sound and feeling, as well as other states of condition (Louwrens, 1994:79). For example:

(7) a. **colour:** *twaal!* in *hempe ya gagwe e re twaal!*

(pure white) (his shirt is pure white)

talee! in *naga e talafetšee e re talee!*

(pure green) (the land is pure green)

b. **taste:** *haa!* in *pherefere e a baba e re haa!*

(very bitter) (the pepper is very much bitter)

tswee! in *dipongpong di bose di re tswee!*

(too sweet) (sweets are very much sweet)

c. **sound:** *thuu!* representing a sound made by something that hits against something else.

- d. **smell:** *fong!* Representing a sound made by someone bemused by a dirty smell.
- e. **feeling:** *agaa!* representing a sound made by someone expressing satisfaction.
- f. other states of condition in words such as the following:
 - thwii!* representing the word *loka* (straight)
 - tuu!* representing the word *homola* (quite)

Richard, in Louwrens (1994:8), explains interjection as a word that indicates an emotional state or attitude, such as delight, surprise, shock and disgust, but that has no referential meaning. They are interposing words that are used to express a variety of emotions such as the following:

- (7) a. **joy:** *šatee! Iiiuu! agee!*
(ululation)
- b. **disapproval:** *aaowa!*
(no!)
- c. **sorrow:** *joo! aowi!*
(gosh!)

Double vowels are also retained in an everyday language (spoken and written), of Northern Sotho, such as in the following examples:

(8) Nouns derived from verbs

a. *baagi*: derived from the verb *aga*
(builders) (build)

b. *mooki*: derived from the verb *oka*
(a nurse) (to nurse)

(9) Some verbs stems written in double vowel are the following:

a. *diila*
(poor)

b. *ahlaahla*
(discuss)

3.3.1.2 Vowel coalescence

Coalescence is a process according to which two sounds or words contract or merge to form a single linguistic unit. It is often observed in verb groups whereby the introductory member of the group is followed by an infinitive (Louwrens, 1998:25). For example:

(10) The final suffix of the verb coalescences with the infinite prefix / go-/, as in the following:

Ke nyakile go hwa - *ke nyakilo hwa*
(I almost died) (I almost died)

In nouns such as the following:

Nouns of Class 6 /Ma / as plurals of nouns of Class 5 /Le /. The /a / in /Ma / (Class 6) changes to /e / as a result of the coalescence of the /i / in Class 5 (singular form) and /a / in Class 6 (plural form). For example:

(11)

Class 5 /Le /	Class 6 /Ma/
<i>leino</i> (tooth)	<i>meno</i> (teeth)
<i>leihlo</i> (eye)	<i>mahlo</i> (eyes)

(12) **Past tense**

<i>ja</i> + <i>ele</i> = <i>jele</i> (eat) (has eaten)
<i>kwa</i> + <i>ele</i> = <i>kwele</i> (hear) (heard)

3.3.1.3 Raised vowels

There are four raised vowels in Northern Sotho, namely, which are [ɛ̣ ɛ̣̂ ɔ̣ ɔ̣̂]. These are used without diacritics in a normal orthography. Problems encountered in the Northern Sotho orthography because of the raised vowels have been discussed in Chapter two above.

3.3.1.4 Semi vowels and glides

Westermann (1933:47) explains semi-vowels as gliding sounds made by the tongue starting from the position of close vowels and immediately moving towards a more open word. Northern Sotho orthography provides only two semi vowels, which are namely /y/ and /w/ as in:

(13) a. *wena*
(you)

b. *yena*
(him/her)

Phonetically, a glide is a sound produced as the vocalcords move towards or away from articulation of a vowel consonant (*The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 1999:602).

3.3.2 Consonants

The following consonants are used in Northern Sotho:

3.3.2.1 Normal Consonant

(14)

<i>b</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>l</i>
<i>Bona</i> (sees)	<i>dula</i> (sit)	<i>lefa</i> (pay)	<i>aga</i> (build)	<i>lehea</i> (maize)	<i>dijo</i> (food)	<i>kua</i> (there)	<i>leka</i> (try)
<i>bana</i> (children)	<i>dintlo</i> (houses)	<i>fula</i> (graze)	<i>gana</i> (refuse)	<i>huma</i> (be rich)	<i>ja</i> (eat)	<i>kuka</i> (pick up)	<i>lla</i> (cry)

<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>š</i>	<i>t</i>
<i>mma</i> (mother)	<i>nna</i> (I)	<i>pula</i> (rain)	<i>rena</i> (us)	<i>sepela</i> (walk)	<i>lešela</i> (cloth)	<i>setulo</i> (chair)
<i>motho</i> (person)	<i>nama</i> (meat)	<i>pitša</i> (pot)	<i>raloka</i> (play)	<i>sona</i> (it)	<i>šupa</i> (seven/point)	<i>temana</i> (verse)

3.3.2.2 Unaspirated diagraphs

(15)

<i>bj</i>	<i>fs</i>	<i>fš</i>	<i>hl</i>	<i>kg</i>	<i>ng</i>	
<i>bjala</i> (beer/to sow)	<i>eupša</i> (but)	<i>lefša</i> (be paid)	<i>hlaba</i> (stab)	<i>kgoši</i> (king)	<i>ngapa</i> (scratch)	
<i>bjoko</i> (brain)	<i>lefsifsi</i> (darkness)	<i>lefšega</i> (coward)	<i>lehlapa</i> (vulgar)	<i>kgomo</i> (cow)	<i>legong</i> (piece of wood)	
<i>ny</i>	<i>pš</i>	<i>sw</i>	<i>šw</i>	<i>tl</i>	<i>ts</i>	<i>tš</i>
<i>nyala</i> (marry)	<i>eupša</i> (but)	<i>swara</i> (hold)	<i>šwaba</i> (fade)	<i>tlala</i> (hunger)	<i>tsela</i> (road)	<i>tšea</i> (take)
<i>nyepo</i> (riddle)	<i>mpša</i> (dog)	<i>leswika</i> (stone)	<i>šweu</i> (white)	<i>tlola</i> (smear)	<i>matsapa</i> (initiative)	<i>tšofala</i> (get old)

3.3.2.3 Aspirated diagraphs

(16)

<i>kh</i>	<i>ph</i>	<i>th</i>	<i>psh</i>
<i>khuta</i> (hide)	<i>phefo</i> (wind)	<i>phutha</i> (fold)	<i>pshio</i> (kidney)
<i>khudu</i> (tortoise)	<i>mphato</i> (standard)	<i>thaba</i> (mountain/happy)	<i>ipshina</i> (enjoy)

<i>pšh</i>	<i>tlh</i>	<i>tsh</i>	<i>tšh</i>
<i>pšhatla</i> (brake)	<i>tlhala</i> (divorce)	<i>tshela</i> (jump over)	<i>tšhela</i> (pour)
<i>pšha</i> (get dry)	<i>tlholo</i> (creation)	<i>letsha</i> (lake)	<i>tšholla</i> (pouring out)

3.3.2.4 Syllabic consonants

(17)

<i>l</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>ny</i>	<i>ng</i>
<i>lla</i> (cry)	<i>warra</i> (brother)	<i>mma</i> (mother)	<i>nna</i> (I)	<i>nnyala</i> (marry me)	<i>nku</i> [ŋku] (sheep)
<i>mollo</i> (fire)	<i>morwarre</i> (brother)	<i>mmopi</i> (creator)	<i>monna</i> (man)	<i>ntši</i> (fly)	<i>legong</i> (wood)

3.3.2.5 Clicks and unusual consonants: (*c q v b z*)

Clicks are not normally used in Northern Sotho, except in cases where a certain sound is imitated, as in the following example:

(18) / *c* / in *ncence* (as a sound made by the clicking of a watch). A click is also used in words such as the following one:

(19) *nxae*
(sorry)

3.3.3 Marking of intonation

Northern Sotho is a tone language with two basic tones, which are: High (H) and Low (L). Tone is defined by Louwrens (1994:199) as pitch variations which affect the meaning and function of words. Northern Sotho experiences the different tones in words such as:

(20)

<i>nóká</i> (waist)	<i>nòkà</i> (river)	<i>nókà</i> (pouring salt)
<i>phàlá</i> (of beauty)	<i>phá lá</i> (impala)	<i>phà là</i> (xylophone)

http://www.bishartat.net/documents/poal_30.htm (2006:03) indicates that in books for Africans, generally speaking, tones need only be marked when they have grammatical functions or when they serve to distinguish words like in every respect, and even then, they may be sometimes omitted when the context makes it quite clear which word is intended. As a rule, it will suffice to mark the high or the low tone only. In the Northern Sotho orthography, the tone marks are not used and, as indicated by *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4* (1988:13), they should be used where there is a likelihood to be confusion or in scientific words. On the other hand, Abercrombie (1965:105), in differentiating tone from intonation, says that tone is speech melody when it is a property of a sentence. This means that in tone language, a change of speech melody (sound) is likely to change the meaning of individual words, as indicated in examples in twenty above, whereas in an

intonational language a change of speech melody is likely to change the meaning of the sentence as a whole. For example:

- (21) i. *Māpōrōgō kē ngākā yā Bōpēdī*
(Maporogo is a doctor of Bopedi)
- ii. *Māpōrōgō, kē ngākā yā Bōpēdī*
(Maporogo, I am a doctor of Bopedi)
- iii. *Māpōrōgō kē ngākā, yā Bōpēdī.*
(Maporogo is a doctor of Bopedi)

The first sentence as indicated, might be a statement. A level tone is used, therefore the message delivered is that Maporogo is a doctor who comes from Bopedi or stays at Bopedi. In the second and third sentences, there is what can be termed `a falling tone` with the pattern (ˉ ˉ ˉ ˉ _ _ _ _). In the second sentence the tone falls after the name Maporogo. The /ke/ (I) after the proper noun Maporogo is stressed and the phrase *ke ngaka ya Bopedi* (I am the doctor of Bopedi) is pronounced with a low tone and delivers the message that the speaker himself is a doctor of Bopedi. The different tones between the /ke/ in (i) and (ii) bring the difference in meaning between the two sentences. In the third sentence, the tone falls after the common noun *ngaka* (doctor), and the stress falls on the possessive construction /ya/ (of) which changes the meaning to, Maporogo being confined to Bopedi only. Therefore, in tone languages, the meaning of a word or a sentence might be identified by pitch characteristics and or tone.

3.3.4 Marking of Elision

Elision is the omission of a sound or syllable in speech (*The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 1999:463). Elision in Northern Sotho is realized as in the following phrases:

- (22) *ngwana wa ngwanaka* becomes *ngwana'ngwanaka*
(my child's child) (my child's child)

The /wa/ is elided and because the elision is incomplete, the position where the apostrophe is written is important. At some instance, the apostrophe is not necessary. For example:

- (23) a. *ke ka lebaka la eng?* might be, *ke ka baka lang?*
(for what reason?) (for what reason?)
- b. *malome o nyaka go sepela* might be, *malome o nyako sepela*
(uncle would like to go) (uncle would like to go)

In example (23) a., the /le/ in *lebaka* (reason) is elided. There is also a vowel elision in *la eng/* (what about), which becomes *lang/*. In example (23) b., the /g/ in the phrase *lo nyaka go /* (he/she wants to) is elided and there is also vowel coalescence between the /o/ in */go/* and the /a/ in *nyaka* (want). Therefore, the phrase becomes *lo nyako/* (he/she wants to).

3.3.5 The use of capital letters

A capital letter is used in Northern Sotho in the following cases:

3.3.5.1 At the beginning of the sentence:

(24) *Ke a sepela*

(I am going)

3.3.5.2 In the names of:

(25)

people	places	tribal/nation	languages	deity
<i>Ramokone</i>	<i>Polokwane</i>	<i>Bapedi</i>	<i>Setlokwa</i>	<i>Morwamotho</i>
<i>Malepe</i>	<i>Tubatse</i>	<i>Basotho</i>	<i>Sepulana</i>	<i>Yogodimodimo</i>

3.3.5.3 In references to the deity, when the noun is absent, the capital should be used with concord or pronouns. When the noun occurs, the concord or pronoun is not written with a capital letter. For example:

(26) *Re a go kgopela wena Morena, gore o kwe thapelo tša rena*

(We ask you o Lord to hear our prayers.)

3.3.5.4 In names of places that are named after people

In this case, the name of the person is written with a capital letter even if it is in the middle of the word. For example:

(27) *Motse wa gagwe o kua gaPhasha.*

(His/her place/home is at *gaPhasha*.)

3.3.5.5 When the plural prefix /bo-/ is used with a name, the initial letter of the name should be capitalized but not the prefix, unless it is the first word in the sentence, as in the following example:

(28) *Ke boletše le boNkadimeng lehono.*

(I talked to Nkadimeng and company today.)

3.3.5.6 Personal names

When a woman gets married, in other African tradition, she is given a new name by the bridegroom's people. The name is written as follows:

(29) a. *Mmakgabo*

(Kgabo's mother)

b. *MmaModiegi*

(Modiegi's mother)

The names *Mmakgabo* and *Mmamodiegi* turn to be proper names to the woman while at the same time it means the first born child of *Mmakgabo* will be *Kgabo* and of *Mmamodiegi* will be *Modiegi*. In *mma* (mother), which in this case stands for *mmago* (the mother to), there is an elision of /go/. The name of the child (that is, the first born) is written with a capital letter when not joint to /*mma*/, thus, we have *Kgabo* and *Modiegi* as proper nouns. *Mma* (mother) is also used when addressing married woman where it is joined to the family name as indicated in the following:

(30) a. *MmaMatlala*

(Mrs. Matlala)

b. *MmaMalepe*

(Mrs. Malepe)

Typifying names that are used as proper names in address, in the general language, titles and the forms of relationship could be set as follows:

3.3.5.7 When a special person is indicated as given below:

(31) a. *Profesa*

(Professor)

b. *Ke Kgoši*

(He is a King)

3.3.5.8 When it occurs before first names:

(32) a. *Ke bone Profesa Lebone*

(I saw Professor Lebone)

b. *Ke ngwana wa Morena le Mohumagadi Thulare*

(He/she is Mister and Missus Thulare's child)

3.3.5.9 In the case of kinship, when it is used to address someone:

(33) *Ke bone rangwane, but, ba a go bitšša, Rangwane*

(I saw my uncle)

(they are calling you, Uncle)

3.3.5.10 In determining Time/Date

(34) Names of:

Days	Months	Church and world days
<i>Mošupologo</i> (Monday)	<i>Julae</i> (July)	<i>Keresemose</i> (Christmas)

3.3.5.11 Ideologies, religious, schools of thought:

(35) a. *Sekriste*
(Christianity)

b. *Selutere*
(Luthern)

3.3.5.12 Organized activities:

(36) The names of:

Institutions	Bodies	Government Departments
<i>Yunibesithi ya Limpopo</i> (The University of Limpopo)	<i>Boto ya Maleme a</i> <i>Northern Sotho</i> (The Northern Sotho Language Board)	<i>Kgoro ya thuto</i> (The Department of Education)

3.3.5.13 Publications:

- (37) a. Books: *Lesang Bana*
b. Brochures: *Tšwelopele*
c. Newspaper: *Seipone*

3.3.6 **Word division**

The two methods of word division, which are, namely, disjunctive and conjunctive methods are discussed in Chapter four in full.

3.3.7 The possessive construction

The word possessive refers to the grammatical constructions that express ownership. The possessive construction in Northern Sotho occurs in the following forms:

(38)

Person	Personal possessive		Family possessive		Community possessive	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
First	<i>Ya ka</i> (mine)	<i>Ya rena</i> (ours)	<i>Yešo</i> (ours)	<i>Ya borena</i> (of our families)	<i>Ya gešo</i> (of our community)	<i>Ya gaborena</i> (of our communities)
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Second	<i>Ya gago</i> (yours)	<i>Ya lena</i> (yours)	<i>Yeno</i> (of your family)	<i>Ya geno</i> (of your families)	<i>Ya geno</i> (of your community)	<i>Ya gabolena</i> (of your communities)
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Third	<i>Ya gagwe</i> (his/hers)	<i>Ya bona</i> (theirs)	<i>Yabo</i> (theirs)	<i>Ya bobona</i> (theirs)	<i>Ya gabo</i> (theirs)	<i>Ya gabobona</i> (theirs)
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural

Some words in the possessive construction are written conjunctively. For example:

(39) From the phrase */ga gabol/* (at her/his home/place), which is written disjunctively, words are formulated, like the following:

- a. *ga gabobona*
(at their places/homes)
- b. *segagabobona*
their tradition/style/language
- c. *bommagobona*
(their mothers)

Whenever a place is formed with /a-/, this name is written as one word. For example, GaMphahlele. This is formed from the personal noun, Mphahlele. It is also stated that nouns like GaModjadji are written with the small letter /ga/ when in the middle of the sentence because they are not official names, as in the following examples:

- (40) a. *ba ya ga Modjadji*
(they are going to Modjadji`s house)
- b. *ba ya GaModjadji*
(they are going to the place where Modjadji rules)

The difference between the two sentences in example forty above is that the first one, that is (40) a., which is written disjunctively, indicates that the place ga Modjadji is where Modjadji is found, while the second sentence in(40)b., which is written conjunctively, indicates the place where Modjadji reigns.

3.3.8 The demonstrative and absolute pronouns

The demonstrative pronoun is a word used to indicate the position of the speaker and the addressee, whereas an absolute denotes a word which is used to refer to

a noun or a deleted noun. The absolute pronoun can be used together with the noun to which it refers (Louwrens, 1994:1). The form of the absolute pronoun written with semi-vowels is acknowledged as the standard form of the demonstrative pronoun by the *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4* (1988:20), as in the following examples:

(41)

<i>Position 1</i>	<i>Position 2</i>	<i>Position 3</i>
Noun Class 1	Noun Class 1	Noun Class 1
<i>Monna yo</i> (this man)	<i>Monna yoo</i> (that man)	<i>Monna yola</i> (that man over there)
Noun Class 3	Noun Class 3	Noun Class 3
<i>Molomo wo</i> (this mouth)	<i>Molomo woo</i> (that mouth)	<i>Molomo wola</i> (that mouth over there)

It is also clearly indicated in the *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4* (1988:24) that the dialectical forms of the demonstrative pronoun should be avoided.

3.3.9 Personal names

The general rule is that proper names of people should be spelled in their original form. Examples of personal names are the following:

- (42) a. *Rakgoale*
 b. *Rakgwale*
 c. Joshua

Biblical names like Joshua are accepted as written in the latest Biblical translation.

3.3.10 Place names

Just like with personal names, places` s names are also written as they were originally spelt by their owners and not according to European languages as shown bellow:

(43)

European	Original
<i>Sekukuni/Secoecoeni</i>	<i>Sekhukhune</i>
<i>Mafeking</i>	<i>Mafikeng</i>
<i>Bochabelo</i>	<i>Botshabelo</i>

Other places` names derived from people`s names, such as GaChuene and GaMatlala, are written with capital /g/ and the first letter of the personal name is also written with a capital letter. As indicated earlier on, they are also written conjunctively.

Where a place`s name has an international or interlinguistic character, i.e., where the same form is used in different languages, it should be retained, like in the following examples:

(44) a. Durban

b. Port Elizabeth

c. Burgersfort

Where the name is modified to hint the characteristics of different languages, the Sothoization of such names is justified. For example:

(45) a. *Freistata*
(Free State)

b. *Egepeta*
(Egypt)

Established forms may also be retained. These are names such as the following:

(46) a. *Tubatse*
(Burgersfort)

b. *Mashishing*
(Lydenburg)

3.3.11 Foreign words and ideas

The coining of Northern Sotho words is justified where ideas are expressed by different languages, as indicated in the following examples:

(47) a. *kgoro ya thuto*
(The Department of Education)

b. *kgotla o mone*
(jam)

Words adopted to Northern Sotho syllable structure from English as the ones below:

(48) a. *krediti* not *kerediti*
(credit)

- b. *moprofeta* not *moporofeta*
(prophet)

Spelling of loan words from Latin, Greek and Hebrew must keep its relationship with the original. For example:

- (49) a. *atmosphere*
(atmosphere)

- b. *demokrasi*
(democracy)

Spelling of international words remains unchanged, like the ones mentioned below:

- (50) a. *vivace*
b. *pianissimo*
c. *da capo*

3.3.12 Names of months

Northern Sotho names like *Pherekgong*, for January, and *Manthole*, for December, are not used. Instead, the English names are Sothoised, as in the following examples:

- (51) a. *Janaware*
(January)

- b. *Desemere*
(December)

3.3.13 **Original numbers used are**, for example:

- (52) a. *ngwana wa mathomo*
(the first child)

- b. *ngwana wa boeswai*
(the eighth child)

3.3.14 **Abbreviations**

- (53) a. *Mna* for *Morena*
(Mr) (Mister)

- b. *Moh* for *Mohumagadi*
(Mrs) (Missus)

3.3.15 **Dialectical forms**

The following dialectical words are accepted as being in standard form:

(54)

<i>kgola</i> (clear weeds away)	<i>kgora</i> (clear weeds away)
<i>tshepha</i> (trust)	<i>tshepa</i> (trust)
<i>kgwatha</i> (touch)	<i>kgoma</i> (touch)

3.4 METHODS OF WRITING NORTHERN SOTHO

Werner (1925:28) says that European missionaries, usually the first to reduce a language to writing, have introduced the Roman alphabet into their school, adapting it as well as they could to the sounds of native speech. In Northern Sotho, three methods of writing are used. They are the following:

3.4.1 Monographs

Monographs are what *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4* (1988:7) term the normal consonants. These are consonants with a single phoneme as in words such as the following:

(48) a. *s-e-p-e-l-a*

Sepela

(go, walk)

b. *o-p-e-l-a*

opela

(sing)

Monographs are simple to learn and write. Once a learner knows, for example phonics /s/, /p/ and /l/ in *sepela* (go, walk), it is easy to merge them with any vowel to formulate a syllable and there after a word.

3.4.2 Diagraphs

In Northern Sotho, diagraphs are divided into two types. They are consonants with two phonemes. For example:

3.4.2.1 Aspirated diagraphs

(55)

<i>kh</i>	<i>ph</i>	<i>th</i>	<i>kg</i>
<i>khutlo</i> (full stop)	<i>phela</i> (alive)	<i>thaba</i> (mountain/be happy)	<i>kgona</i> (able)
<i>khuta</i> (hide)	<i>phala</i> (impala)	<i>thula</i> (collide)	<i>kgope</i> (bachelor)

3.4.2.2 Unaspirated diagraphs

(56)

<i>bj</i>	<i>fs</i>	<i>fš</i>	<i>hl</i>
<i>Bjang</i> (grass)	<i>Mafsikela</i> (colds)	<i>Lefšega</i> (coward)	<i>Hlaba</i> (stab)
<i>Bjala</i> (beer)	<i>Fsiela</i> (sweep)	<i>Sebofša</i> (prisoner)	<i>Hloya</i> (hate)

3.4.3 Trio graphs

Trio graphs are consonants with three phonemes. They are used in Northern Sotho, as in the following nouns of Class 9 (N):

(57) a. *tlhahlobo*

(examination)

b. *tlhokomelo*

(care)

The noun *tlhahlobo* (examination) is derived from the verb *hlahloba* (to examine), while *tlhokomelo* (care) is derived from *hlokomela* (take care of). Besides using the triographs, there are also what can be termed polygraphs in Northern Sotho. This is realized where the verb that begins with /hl/ is used together with the objectival concord of the first person singular /n/, as in the following example:

(58) a. *hlaba + nna* becomes *ntlhaba*
 (stab) + (I) (stab me)

b. *hlompha + nna* becomes *ntlhompha*
 (respect) + (I) (respect me)

3.5 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN THE ORTHOGRAPHY OF NORTHERN SOTHO

At the beginning, the standard form of the Northern Sotho Orthography was outlined. Although there was an agreement that *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4* of 1988 contains the correct forms of spelling in Northern Sotho Standardized Language, there are some cases in the orthography that need to be revisited. The researcher will use the following examples as problematic items that still need attention:

- i. Speech sounds that are similar in all characteristics of manner and place of articulation but differ in spelling.
- ii. The use of the alveolar speech sound [n] before the velar speech sounds; [k], [kx^h], [k^h]
- iii. Nouns derived from verbs starting with the verb stem [†]

- iv. Dialectical forms;
 - a. meaning
 - b. aspirated and unaspirated speech sounds.
 - c. usage of capital letters.

3.5.1 Speech sounds

There are some instances in Northern Sotho where two similar speech sounds are spelt differently. This is realized, for example, wherein a sound in common noun is spelt differently from a similar sound used in a proper noun. The tendency is to spell the sound in a proper noun the same as how the sound is spelt in English, as evident in the following examples:

(59)

Common Nouns		Proper Nouns	
Northern Sotho	English	Northern Sotho	English
š <i>lešole</i> (soldier)	sh (ship)	sh Reshoketšwe	sh President Bush
<i>bošego</i> (at night)	(shirt)	Boshego	Bishop
<i>tšh</i> <i>tšhwene</i> (monkey)	ch chalk	ch Chuene	ch Charles
<i>tšhegofatšo</i> (blessing)	child	Chegofatšo	Archibold

The proper nouns like Reshoketšwe and Chegofatšo are derived from verbs *go šokelwa* (fill pity for) and *go segofatšwa* (to be blessed) respectively. The nouns *Tšhegofatšo* and *Chegofatšo*, which both mean to be blessed or a blessing, are spelt differently as indicated in the examples above. Although, as indicated earlier on, according to the rules in Northern Sotho Orthography, personal names are to be spelt as in their original form. Confusion is likely to arise, hence it is indicated in <http://www.bisharat.net/documents/poal30.htm> (2006:2) that, if two languages are written with two different systems of orthography, confusion is likely to arise and unnecessary difficulty is placed in the path of the learner.

As indicated earlier on, it is the policy of the Department of Education in South Africa that learners in the Foundation Phase (Grade R to Grade 3) receive education through the medium of mother tongue (*Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 School Policy*, 2002:4). Changes of orthography in sounds that are articulated the same way in different languages affect spelling, especially when, for example, Northern Sotho speaking learners are introduced to first additional language, which, in this case, might be English. Northern Sotho learners would have been taught the spelling as /š/ and /tšh/ from Grade R up to Grade 2 and when English writing is then introduced in Grade 3 it will become a problem for some learners, if not all, to change the two sounds to the English /sh/ and /ch/, respectively, and to keep the Northern Sotho /š/ and /tšh/ for Northern Sotho only, but to spell Northern Sotho words, for example, proper nouns, with the orthography used in English.

The tendency of using different spelling in proper nouns that are similar is also a problem in Northern Sotho, as evident in the following examples:

(60)

Northern Sotho		Phonetics
<i>oe</i> Kgoete Chokoe	<i>we</i> Kgwete Chokwe	[w]
<i>oa</i> Segooa Segoapa	<i>wa</i> Segowa Segwapa	[w]

The nouns in example sixty above are even spelt differently by people who share them. There are cases, for example, whereby people from the same family spell their surname differently because of the two different spellings used, although the *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4* (1988:20) indicates the rule of “originality” in personal names. The other problem is that the sound [w] also used as /w/ in Northern Sotho Orthography, is commonly used with all the vowels to formulate syllables in words, while /oa/ and /oe/ are not common.

The researcher agrees with http://www.bisharat.net/documents/poal_3o.htm (2005:2) on the fact that: “it would obviously be a great advantage if, in the orthography of the language, the value of the letters were the same or nearly as possible the same as those learners have already learnt from their mother tongue”.

3.5.2 The use of alveolar speech sound [n] before the velar speech sound

[ḳ], [k^h] and [kx^h]

An alveolar speech sound is the speech sound articulated with the tip of the tongue at the upper alveolar ridge, while the velar speech sounds are articulated with the back of the tongue pressed to the velum and the tip is at the lower alveolar.

In Northern Sotho, the alveolar speech sound [n], as in [n:na] (I), changes its place of articulation when used before the velar speech sounds like [ḳ], [k^h] and [kx^h], as indicated in the following examples:

(61) a. *nko* [ŋḳɔ]

(nose)

b. *nkgo* [ŋkx^hɔ]

(clay pot)

c. *nkhola* [ŋk^hola]

(do me a favour)

The spelling in the above given examples bring confusion because in the Northern Sotho orthography the sound [ŋ] is written as /ng/, as in the following:

(62) a. *mong*

(owner)

- b. *ngapa*
(scratch)

Hence, the common misspelling of words like *nko* as *ngko*, *nkgo* as *ngkgo* and *nkhole* as *ngkhola*. In this case, also the researcher agrees with to the fact indicated in http://www.bisharat.net/documents/poal_30.htm. (2005:2) that, if /ng/ is found in a language as a separate phoneme, it is recommended that the sound be written as /ng/ wherever is used.

3.5.3 Usage of capital letters

There are some instances in the usage of capital letters in Northern Sotho that may cause confusion. In this case, the researcher will look into the following aspects:

3.5.3.1 When the plural prefix /bo-/ is used with names. According to the *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4* (1988:14), when the plural prefix /bo-/ is used with a name, the initial letter of the name should be capitalized, but not the prefix, unless it is the first word in the sentence. For example:

(63) *Ke sepetše le bo Mokgadi lehono.*

(I walked together with Mokgadi and company today.)

(64) *BoMokgadi ba robetše.*

(Mokgadi and company are asleep.)

The plural /bo-/ forms part of the name Mokgadi in the case of the rule indicated. When Mokgadi is written with capital letter, we find the capital letter

in the middle of a word. This could be separated from the name, which is the /bo-/ and Mokgadi be two separate words and the sentences in the examples (63) and (64) above will be written as follows:

(65) *Ke sepetše le bo Mokgadi lehono.*

(I walked together with Mokgadi and company today.)

(66) *Bo Mokgadi ba robetše.*

(Mokgadi and company are asleep.)

3.5.3.2. Places named after people

There is a contradiction in the *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4* (88:14 and 20). On page fourteen it is indicated that certain places such as *gaMasha* are named after people. The name of the person is written with a capital letter while the formative /ga/ is written with a small letter: on page twenty the following example are given:

(67) a. *Ba ya GaNchabeleng.*

(They are going to GaNchabeleng)

b. *Ba ya gaModjadji*

(They go to the place where Modjadji rules)

c. *Ba ya ga Modjadji.*

(They are going to Modjadji's house)

The contradiction is realized in the examples given on pages (14) and (20), respectively. It is noted that *gaModjadji* is not the official place, as in the case with *GaNchabeleng*, that is why the /ga-/ in the middle of the sentence (in

example (67)b. is not written with a capital letter. GaMasha and GaNchabeleng are two official places but contradictory to what is indicated in the orthography rules, the two places are written differently as realized in the examples.

The problem of writing two capital letters in one word, like in GaNchabeleng, also confuses the learners who in turn might not see any problem in writing two capital letters in a single word or rather write a capital letter in the middle of a word.

3.5.3.3 In kinship terms

The following examples may cause confusion

(68) *Ke bona malome.*

(I see uncle)

(69) *Ke a go bona, Malome.*

(I see you, Uncle)

Malome (uncle) is a common noun. A common noun is a name for a thing or people belonging to a particular class or group of things or people that are like each other in certain respects. To bring the difference between how proper nouns and common nouns must be written, that is, in connection with the capital and small letters, the researcher says that it is better to use capital letters with proper nouns only, and to let common nouns be written with small letters in all respect.

3.5.4 Dialectical forms

The *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4* (1988:24) indicates a number of dialectical words that are allowed in the standard language. Some of the words are too dialectical and may be found to be used in one dialect. For example:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| (70) a. <i>kgola</i>
(clear dirt) | <i>kgora</i>
(clear dirt) |
| b. <i>roba</i>
(heavy) | <i>imela</i>
(heavy) |
| c. <i>itia</i>
(hit) | <i>betha</i>
(hit) |

In dialects like Setlokwa, Sekone (SeMoletši and SegaMatlala) for example the word *kgola* might mean (to shed teeth or hit foot against), depending on the pronunciation, and would take a person who uses /-la/, in *kgola*, to be lipsing. Again, the term *roba* in those dialects mean, in everyday language, (to brake) rather than to be heavy, while *itia* is never used in most of the dialects except Sepedi dialect, wherein it means to hit. One other aspect in the dialect form is the use of aspiration and nonaspiration in some words, as in the following pairs of words:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| (71) a. <i>tshepha</i>
(have confidence) | <i>tshepa</i>
(have confidence) |
|---|------------------------------------|

b. <i>šutha</i>	<i>šuta</i>
(stand aside)	(stand aside)
c. <i>tshela</i>	<i>sela</i>
(cross over)	(cross over)

The problem in the aspiration and nonaspiration form is that correctness of a word will depend on the dialect used by a particular person. For example, an educator who uses the nonaspiration sound might mark a learner who uses the aspiration sound wrong. To curtail this confusion, there must be an agreement on a standard form of writing such words.

3.6 CONCLUSION

It is evident from the aforegiven explanations (on the *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4*) that the significance of the indepth research study about principles of writing the Northern Sotho orthography, the grammatical rules and problems encountered cannot be overemphasized. The impact of the existence of the different dialects within the Northern Sotho language, as well as the influence of other languages in shaping the standardized form of the (Northern Sotho) language, need regular review and revisitation to align its shape, even though this practice would remain a continuous process for its existence.

Chapter 4

METHODS USED IN THE WRITING OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the first attempt in writing African languages during the nineteenth century, different methods of writing the same words were used. According to Louwrens (1991:1), seemingly no two writers divide words in exactly the same way. What another author would regard as a single word the other would regard as two or more words. On the other hand, Werner (1925:16), says that languages are classed not only according to relationship or genealogically but also according to their structure. Turker, in Werner (1925:17), explains the structure as the formation of words and, particularly, the modification in what he terms declention or conjugation or more comprehensively as accidence. Werner (1925:17) also indicates that most philologists are agreed that there are three distinct types of language, which are, namely, isolating, agglutinative and inflexion. In this chapter, types of languages and the methods of writing will be discussed. The status of Northern Sotho pertaining to both the type of language and the methods of writing will be observed.

4.2 TYPES OF LANGUAGES

4.2.1 Isolating languages

Bloemfield (who introduced the isolability type of language), in Louwrens (1994:92), explains isolability as a minimum free form, that is, the smallest unit that can constitute, by itself, a complete utterance. Isolating languages are characterized by the following:

i. All the words are monosyllabic, that is, words consisting of a single syllable. In Northern Sotho, there are monosyllabic words such as the following:

(1)

<i>ja</i> (eat)	<i>tla</i> (come)	<i>kwa</i> (hear)	<i>nwa</i> (drink)
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ii. They undergo no modification to express person, gender number, case, mood or tense. This is not the case in Northern Sotho.

iii. All syntactic relations have to be shown by the order of words in a sentence constituents like subject, verb and object following each other in a particular order. For example, in the following sentence:

(2) *Monna o rema mohlare*

(a man chops a tree)

Subject	Verb	Object
<i>Monna</i> (man)	<i>Rema</i> (chop)	<i>Mohlare</i> (tree)

The relationship amongst the three constituents in example two above is that the subject, *monna* (man), is responsible for the action, *rema* (chop) is a verb, while the action falls on the object *mohlare* (tree), and this cannot be vice versa as it will distort the meaning.

iv. There is no such thing as word stress or accent. The place of accent is taken by intonation or pitch. In Northern Sotho, intonation is marked with the acute accent and the grave accent. This means that different from the isolating languages, Northern Sotho uses accent. In Northern Sotho, there is also stress which is realized in the penultimate syllable in words. The syllable is also lengthened, as in the following examples:

(3) a. *monna* articulated as [mon:na]
(man) (man)

b. *mosadi* articulated as [mosa:ʒi]
(woman) (woman)

The /n/ in *monna* (man) and /sa/ in *mosadi* (woman), which are the penultimate syllables in the examples given in three, are stressed and lengthened.

Although Northern Sotho shows resemblances of the isolating type of language, such as monosyllabic words, relations in words in a sentence, as well as the use of intonation, not all the words in the Northern Sotho language are monosyllabic as most of the words in Northern Sotho retain more than one syllable. The modification to express person, gender, number, mood and tense is used.

4.2.2 Agglutinating languages

Louwrens (1994:9) explains agglutinating languages as those languages that are characterized by the extensive use of affixes, that is, prefixes, infixes and suffixes. Louwrens (1994:9) also indicates that Black African languages belong to the agglutinative language type. This includes Northern Sotho. In addition, the agglutinating languages have a system according to which nouns are

grouped into classes, as well as a type of grammatical agreement whereby tone plays a pivotal role. In addition, Werner (1925:17) characterizes the agglutinating type of languages as follows:

i. Formative elements are attached to the roots in order to express relations of number, case, tense and so forth. A formative is an alternative term used to refer to the word morpheme, which means the smallest meaningful unit in a language. In Northern Sotho, language formatives are divided into prefixal and suffixal formatives.

ii. The formative elements can always be recognized as independent words detachable from the root, can be affixed to another root or even stand-alone in a sentence as in the following Northern Sotho words like:

(4)

<i>Mongmodiro</i> (owner of work)	<i>Gonabjale</i> (now)	<i>Moetapele</i> (leader)
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In *mongmodiro* (owner of work), *mong* (owner) can stand alone as a word, the same as *modiro* (work). *Moeta* (clay pot) can be used as an independent word, the same as *pele* (first or front).

Northern Sotho shows resemblances of the agglutinative type of languages. Almost all the characteristics of the agglutinative type of language are found in Northern Sotho. The noun class prefixes have been outlined in Chapter one,

while in Chapter three tones have been discussed. Therefore, it would be proper to classify Northern Sotho with agglutinative languages.

4.2.3 The inflexional, organic or amalgamating languages

Richards, in Louwrens (1994:86), defines inflexion as the process of adding an affix to a word or changing it in some other way, according to the rules of the grammar of a particular language. The characteristics of inflexional type of a language are as follows:

i. Formative elements are added to the roots, but those formatives cannot be recognized as separate words. For example, the Northern Sotho noun class prefixes cannot exist apart from other parts of the words like the stem and or the suffix.

ii. They modify the meaning of words, not merely by the prefixes and suffixes but by internal change of vowel, such as in the following English words: man-men, foot-feet, sing-sung. Northern Sotho also uses words such as the following:

(5)

<i>bona – bone</i> (see) (saw)	<i>ema - eme</i> (stand) (stood)	<i>swara - swere</i> (hold) (held)
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iii. They recognize the distinction between masculine and feminine. This is also an element recognized in Northern Sotho, as in the following examples:

(6)

Male	Female
<i>Monna</i> (Man)	<i>Mosadi</i> (woman)
<i>Roto</i> (male baboon)	<i>Madibekwane</i> (female baboon)
<i>Mošemane</i> (boy)	<i>Mosetsana</i> (girl)
<i>Rakgolo</i> (grandfather)	<i>koko</i> (grandmother)
<i>Tate</i> (father)	<i>Mma</i> (mother)
<i>Mogogonope</i> (cock)	<i>Sethole</i> (hen)

Northern Sotho shows the characteristics of all the types of languages discussed. As Werner (1925:19) indicates, although Black languages are commonly called agglutinating, many of their formative elements are true inflexions of the agglutinative type, including Northern Sotho. However it also has the characteristics of an isolating language of which Werner (1925:18) indicates that the isolating languages have agglutinative features.

4.3 METHODS OF WRITING AFRICAN LANGUAGES

It has been mentioned earlier on that if early writings are examined, it seems as if no two writers divided words exactly the same way. Different methods of writing African languages were used whereby every author was not certain

whether his/her method was correct or not, hence Louwrens (1991:1) indicated that, from this uncertain and obviously confusing state of affairs that marked the early writing history of South African Black languages, two (2) contradictory methods of word division emerged. They are, namely, disjunctive and conjunctive methods. Like in other languages, Northern Sotho authors also found themselves in the struggle of not knowing which of the two methods would be more correct than the other. The researcher looks into these two methods and the position of Northern Sotho between the two methods.

4.3.1 Conjunctive method

Louwrens (1994:34) says that conjunctivism is a term used to refer to the convention of writing whereby different elements of the same word are written conjunctively, that is, as one word. Conjunctivism is realized in Northern Sotho words such as the following:

(7)

<i>modulasetulo</i> (chairperson)	<i>mongmodiro</i> (owner of work)	<i>moetapele</i> (leader)	<i>Mmaphuti</i> (Phutis' Mother)
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The examples given in seven above are written conjunctively in the standardized language. They can be divided as follows:

(8)

Word	Noun class	Verb	Noun
<i>modulasetulo</i> (chairperson)	1 /mo/	<i>dula</i> (sit)	
	7 /se/		<i>setulo</i> (chair)
<i>mongmodiro</i> (owner of work)	1 /mo/		<i>mong</i> (owner)
	3 /mo/		<i>modiro</i> (work)
<i>Mmaphuti</i> (Phuti's mother)	1 /mo/		<i>mma</i> (mother)
	1a -		Phuti

The above given example is an indication that, in Northern Sotho, conjunctivism is sometimes used, hence the *Nordic Journal of African Studies* (2002:250) indicates that Sepedi (Northern Sotho) is sometimes treated in the same way as conjunctively written languages. The plural prefix /bo/ of (Class 2a), used as the plural form of (Class 1a), also indicates the conjunctivism, as in the following words:

(9)

<i>Bomodulasetulo</i> (chairpersons)	<i>BoMmaphuti</i> (Phutis' mothers)	<i>Bonkadingala</i> (Traditional doctors)	<i>Boreatseba</i> (Traditional doctors)
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The /bo/ is joined to the nouns of (Class 1) to form the plural form. The nouns *modulasetulo* (chairperson) and *Mmaphuti* (Phuti's mother) can be used as proper and common nouns, respectively.

The /e-/ that is prefixed to monosyllabic verb stems is joined to the stem, as in the following examples:

(10)

<i>etla</i> (come)	<i>eja</i> (eat)	<i>enwa</i> (drink)	<i>ekwa</i> (hear)
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The adverbial prefixes /ga/ and /go/ should be joined to the stem. For example:

(11)

<i>Seswai</i> and <i>gaseswai</i> (eight) (eight times)	<i>Tee, gatee, gotee</i> (One) (once) (together)	<i>Nne</i> and <i>gane</i> (Four) (four times)
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When a place name is formed with the prefix /ga/ as in the following:

(12) *GaMarota*

GaMolepo

GaMphahlele

GaMamabolo

4.3.2 Disjunctive method

Disjunctivism is a situation where in the constituents of one and the same word are written separately. It is the opposite of conjunctivism (Louwrens: 1994:34).

Despite the fact indicated earlier on that Northern Sotho be treated the same way as the conjunctively written languages, it is also indicated in the *Nordic Journal of African Studies* (2002:250) that for Sotho languages, that is, Northern Sotho, Sesotho and Setswana, disjunctivism presents very few problems, since most formatives in these languages constitute syllables and can therefore be easily written in conjunctive method. Another reason, as stated in the journal, is that, unlike the Nguni languages, Sotho languages lack semi-vowels between syllables and therefore conjunctivism would cause problems in the writing of Sotho languages that in most cases, consist of vowel syllable only. This can be seen in words such as the following:

(13)

Northern Sotho	isiZulu
(a) <i>ke a mo rata</i> (I love him/her)	(a) <i>ngiyamthanda</i> (I love him/her)
(b) <i>ao a lego a batho ka moka</i> (which belong to all people)	(b) <i>ngowabantu bonke</i> (which belong to all people)

In the example (13a) above Northern Sotho has four words, whereas isiZulu uses one word, in (13b), there are seven words in Northern Sotho against two of isiZulu, in the phrases that have exactly the same meaning. Although the examples in thirteen above indicate the difference of words combination found in languages that are written disjunctively, as in Northern Sotho, and conjunctively, as in Isizulu, the Northern Sotho spoken language differs from its written form as indicated in the following examples:

(14)

Spoken form	Written form
<i>keyamrata</i> (I love him/her)	<i>ke a mo rata</i> (I love him/her)
<i>kawona</i> (with it)	<i>ka ona</i> (with it)

As the above mentioned examples in fourteen indicate, in Northern Sotho, the written form in a spoken utterance is mostly used when stressing a fact, whereas in normal speaking not all the words or sounds are uttered.

4.4 CONCLUSION

The clarification given in the discussion on conjunctivism and disjunctivism indicates that if the spoken language form was a norm in Northern Sotho writing, most of the words would have been written conjunctively. Northern Sotho also shows resemblances of being an agglutinative type of language, which also goes hand in glove with the conjunctive method of writing; hence Herbert (1993:185) indicates that scholars such as Doke recommended that African languages must use conjunctive method as they are agglutinating in type. On this, Doke (1954:129) concludes that word division in African languages should be based on pronunciation.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

The main objective of this chapter is to give a summary, recommendations and findings of this research paper.

In Chapter 1, the researcher defines orthography and history of spoken African languages in the Republic of South Africa. The chapter indicates the different authors' views about the methods of writing African languages, the types of languages and the relationship between, for example, the old and the present orthography.

In Chapter 2, the historical background of Northern Sotho is outlined. The researcher indicates how the history of the Northern Sotho language was grounded in Sepedi and Sekopa dialects, which also played a considerable role in shaping the present standard form of Northern Sotho. The early attempts of codifying Northern Sotho as a standard language presented huge challenges which give rise to other new dimensions. As such, the focus dwelt much on the spoken and written forms of Northern Sotho as a standard language; the existence of other dialects within Northern Sotho; and their impact on its historical development, which also necessitated a fresh outlook on the alignment procedure. The same can be said of other languages that also had an influence on the development of the spoken and written Northern Sotho language and its relationship with other Sotho languages, that is, Setswana and Sesotho. The chapter shows evidence that the present standard orthography is born out of

some of the Northern Sotho dialects that had representatives (authors) in the circulation.

The different language committees and language boards that were involved in the standardization of the Sotho languages, the relationship (similarities and differences) in the Nguni and Sotho language groups, have also been attended to.

Chapter 3 looks into the principles and rules that govern the languages at large and Northern Sotho in particular. The focus dwelt much on the Northern Sotho orthography, as per *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography Number 4* of 1988, and the problems that are encountered by Northern Sotho language speakers in the Northern Sotho written language, and how this affects learners. The different types of spelling the same sounds are also indicated. It is evident from the aforegiven explanations on the Northern Sotho orthography, that the significance of an indepth research study on the principles of writing Northern Sotho orthography, and the grammatical rules and problems encountered cannot be overemphasized.

In **Chapter 4**, the researcher explains different types of languages and how Northern Sotho features in some types. The conjunctive and disjunctive methods of writing are also discussed. The researcher indicates how, in Northern Sotho, the spoken language differs from the written language, where the spoken seem to be more conjunctive than the disjunctive written language. All in all, the above grammatical and spelling imperatives necessitate an ardent analysis of the

Northern Sotho orthography, as well as designing new ways to improve on its present usage.

RECOMMENDATION

- The researcher recommends that all Northern Sotho dialects be embraced in compiling the standard orthography, as failure to embrace all the dialects will continue to present problems to the dialects which are excluded or omitted.
- To convey any rules pertaining to orthography at large, all words that conform to approved general grammatical rules from all known dialects in Northern Sotho should be considered. This approach is partly supported by Haas (1982:60) who states that what is important in choosing an orthography system is to take full account of correspondences between the phonological system dialects to be covered.
- Before standardization is done, it is also necessary, as Haas (1982:60) indicates, to understand the ways in which the phonological system of dialects of one language may differ from each other. Therefore, people could start by doing a research.
- The present Northern Sotho orthography be scrutinized in order to make changes where necessary.
- The Northern Sotho names of months be considered and a research be done pertaining to their meaning and be reinstated in the Northern Sotho language, instead of using Sothoized English names.

- Similar speech sounds that differ in spelling be revisited in order to consider uniformity in the Northern Sotho language itself and other languages like Sesotho and English.
- The orthography used in the early years of schooling be considered to minimize the confusion caused by changes, for example, in similar speech sounds whereby for instance, a learner in the foundation phase might be confused in the later stage when her name might have to change from:

Refilwe to Refiloe

Tšhokwe to Chokoe.

- The use of capital letters in the places named after people is looked into, to do away with the problem of using capital letters in the middle of the words. The present form of writing, for example, GaMphahlele with a capital /M/ after /Ga-/ changed to a small letter /m/ and be Gamphahlele.

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