

**SOCIOLINGUISTIC VARIATION IN SPOKEN AND WRITTEN SESOTHO:  
A CASE STUDY OF SPEECH VARIETIES IN QWAQWA**

by

**NTAOLENG BELINA SEKERE**

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**SUPERVISOR: PROF R FINLAYSON**

**JOINT SUPERVISOR: PROF RMH MOEKETSI**

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## **DECLARATION**

I declare that SOCIOLINGUISTIC VARIATION IN SPOKEN AND WRITTEN SESOTHO: A CASE STUDY IN QWAQWA, is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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NB Sekere

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## SUMMARY

This work has taken the region of Qwaqwa as a case study. Through this study, the researcher attempted to join in the debate around language varieties that occur as a result of contact between different language groups. To achieve this objective, the factors that have an impact on Sesotho spoken in the Qwaqwa area and, in particular, in schools, have been assessed.

The researcher provides a broad and general picture of the language situation and patterns of language use in the Qwaqwa area. A brief overview of the geographical description, historical background and economic development of Qwaqwa is given. Some of the linguistic phenomena that play a role in language variation in this area fall under the spotlight.

Language contact, i.e. language and dialect, regional and social dialect, the use of language and the impact of language contact between languages is discussed. Patterns and the extent of language contact and the resultant effects of interference, codeswitching and borrowing as well as the processes and points at which these processes occur are identified.

The major similarities and relationships between spoken and written Sesotho, as used by learners in Qwaqwa schools, is highlighted with the discussion focussing on the linguistic description of the similarities and relationships between the two forms.

**Key words:** language contact, language variation, Sesotho, regional and social dialects, interference, codeswitching, borrowing, spoken and written language.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Overview

This study broadly explores language variation in Qwaqwa. It looks specifically at issues such as the Sesotho language varieties spoken in Qwaqwa and their application in linguistic situations. It also examines the extent to which these language varieties have influenced the standard form of Sesotho.

Qwaqwa has a population of approximately three million people, unevenly scattered throughout its districts. This region was by and large a monolingual Sesotho-speaking area. However, several Sesotho varieties now exist. The language varieties of Qwaqwa, for analytical purposes could be displayed along a language continuum ranging from isolated rural-standard vernaculars on the one extreme to urban varieties which are non-standard on the other. The varieties are spoken by tribal groups who live in villages and who, in the majority of cases, have rural backgrounds. The non-standard varieties are also spoken by the population living in semi-urban areas of Qwaqwa.

Qwaqwa is struggling to combine the revered values of a largely traditional rural way of life with the demand for modernisation and economic development to support its rapidly growing population. The social and technological changes have been dramatic. Population growth has accelerated at an unprecedented rate and in the process the complexity of a multilingual society has developed in Qwaqwa.

### 1.1 Aim of study

The aim of this study is to investigate varieties of Sesotho spoken in Qwaqwa and to examine how these varieties differ from the standard form. Furthermore, the study intends

to investigate the extent to which the written form of Sesotho is influenced by the spoken varieties.

This study has been prompted by an outcry among some of the Basotho that the current Sesotho usage in Qwaqwa deviates markedly from the generally accepted standard language. The so-called “poor” form of Sesotho is what is perceived as being heard everywhere: in the work place, in taxis, on buses, on the streets, as well as on school premises. Codeswitching and borrowing are also identified as common features in modern Sesotho and can be regarded as some of the features which could have contributed to the so-called poor form of Sesotho. Another feature which appears to be a general tendency among the youth is the negligence of the mother tongue. The reason for this apparent situation is that these speakers seem to adopt the attitude that Sesotho is no longer important since it has no viability. A common expression is often heard that, **Sesotho ha se jese** (literally: Sesotho doesn't feed anybody), because those who advocate the use of the mother tongue are regarded as less educated and backward.

There is little, and often inaccurate, information on the number of language varieties spoken in the Qwaqwa area. There is also little information on the distribution of the varieties and the way they are used in the various domains in Qwaqwa, some of this information also appears unreliable. The present study intends addressing this situation.

Another aspect that those who study language variation steadfastly stress is that social context is important, if not central, to this type of study. Very often students of linguistic variation are inclined to ignore the historical and social forces that have brought their field of speciality to its current situation. Some have never thought about this issue, perhaps taking for granted that it is the linguists who have always focussed on language variation or they consider that such concerns have arisen outside the usual social, political, economic or personal forces that are at work on any topic (cf Shuy, in Walsh, 1989: 293).

According to Shuy (in Walsh, 1989:293), a great deal of information is found on the political, social and economic history of various areas of the world, but the facts about

settlement history where people came from and moved to is sketchy at best. The movement of people from farms and nearby towns to Qwaqwa contributed to the development of different language varieties. Since language is open-ended and adaptable, it changes according to the changing social circumstances, the changing needs of speakers, as well as the changing conditions in general. As with other languages throughout the world, changes have also taken place with regard to the Sesotho language used in Qwaqwa.

## **1.2 Research scope and methodology**

Sesotho is spoken in Qwaqwa and other parts of the Free State, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, KwaZulu Natal and the Eastern Cape. It is also spoken in the neighbouring country, Lesotho. Because of its large geographical dispersion and the resultant interaction with other languages, Sesotho has developed different varieties. Although Sesotho is spoken in this large geographical area, the present study intends focussing the investigation on Sesotho language variation specifically in Qwaqwa.

Qwaqwa is the most densely populated area in the Free State Province (see Maps 1 and 2) and it is a place where the interaction of languages of people living in close proximity in the villages, townships and suburbs is great. Another reason why Qwaqwa is seen to be an appropriate area for a study on Sesotho language variation is the influence of Afrikaans, English and isiZulu which have been in contact with Sesotho for a long time in this area.

This study also considers the phonological, morphological, lexical and syntactic differences between Sesotho and some of its varieties. Although Sesotho has various dialects, this study has chosen only two dialects which are Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa because these are the most prevalent in Qwaqwa.

The difference between the spoken and the written forms of Sesotho is also considered in this study. In the identification of sociolinguistic variations in spoken and written Sesotho

and the description of the language situation in the Qwaqwa area, both the qualitative and quantitative research approaches to the research are relevant.

Ray and Rist, (1977, in Taylor & Bodgan 1998:3), define qualitative methodology as more than a set of data-gathering techniques. It is a way of approaching the empirical world. The phrase 'qualitative methodology' in the broadest sense refers to research that produces descriptive data, in other words, the people's own spoken and written words and observable behaviour.

For the benefit of this study, the qualitative method has been used as a natural approach because I had to be present in the field to observe participants as well as the phenomena that occurred in that setting. I also had the opportunity of interviewing people in Qwaqwa. The quantitative research method on the other hand was critical to my investigation because I had to construct through direct personal observation of the social behaviour of the people of Qwaqwa, a theory regarding the use of the language in that particular community. This had to be done as closely as possible to the way the Basotho themselves view the universe and organise their lives within it.

In the process of conducting interviews, it was possible that I would experience the following shortcomings as identified by Becker and Geer (1957, in Taylor & Bodgan 1998:82),

interviewers are likely to misunderstand informants' language since they do not have opportunities to study it in common usage;  
informants are unwilling or unable to articulate many important things; and  
only by observing these people in their daily lives can the researcher learn about those things.

However, my being Mosotho and having grown up in the area, misunderstandings and misinterpretations were very limited.

Adler (1979:28) states that there is certain vital information which we cannot obtain by merely reading primary or secondary texts, therefore, the use of the ethnographic approach

is convenient in observing and recording the data without systematic observation. The aim of using an ethnographic approach is that people are recorded in their natural milieu without they themselves knowing that they are being evaluated.

Wilson (1977, in Tuckman 1994:366), supports the view brought forward by Becker and Geer by stating that the ethnographic method is based on the fundamental belief that:

events must be studied in natural settings, that is, be field based and events cannot be understood unless one understands how they are perceived and interpreted by the people who participate in them.

No method is however equally suited for all purposes. The choice of a research method is therefore determined by the research interests, the circumstances of the setting or people to be studied, and practical constraints faced by the researcher. However, this study used the following research tools: spontaneous interviews; formal questionnaires; site visits and ethnographic observation as well as the study of related documents.

### **1.3 The research site and research tools**

The research was conducted in Qwaqwa, an area located 43 kilometres from Harrismith in the eastern Free State (see Maps 1 and 2). Qwaqwa may be described as a peri-urban slum in the middle of nowhere.

The method of data collection from adult respondents started with light conversations which aimed at securing personal information about age, marital status, number of children, educational standard, place of employment, interests, hobbies and so on. These interviews took place mainly in their homes among family or friends. The interviews would then develop into a more formal discussion on selected topics. The topic that most informants seemed to be comfortable with, was that of traditional practices surrounding marriage, divorce, childbirth, initiation and death. Each interview lasted a minimum of one hour, with some stretching up to three hours.

My main concern when entering the Qwaqwa community was to be dissociated from the image of a university lecturer and to be accepted as a friend. The purpose was to reduce the social distance between the researcher and the informants. I realised that the quality of the sociolinguistic data as well as an accurate comprehension of the social and linguistic phenomena under study would ultimately depend on the establishment of a good rapport with the local people. The task was facilitated to a great extent by the informants' tremendous cordiality and disposition to collaborate. They were very pleasant and concerned with my welfare and with the fulfilment of the research goals.

It was explained to them that the data were for research purposes and such explanation was sufficient in most cases, and only in rare cases did I have to provide further details on the research project. No explicit reference was made to the actual details and aim of my research. Thus, concepts such as language variants, codeswitching and borrowing were not mentioned at all, since this would have contributed the feelings of linguistic insecurity that were initially noticeable in their behaviour and discourse. I wanted to distract their attention from the tape recorder. Beyond these semi-formal interviews, more information was gathered through listening to people talking to one another when going about their daily activities in villages.

Most of the fieldwork in Qwaqwa was carried out between October 1998 and December 2001. The first contact was made with the two Tribal Councils, facilitated by a friend. A few visits to the Council offices followed and some pilot recordings were made with 60 Council members, who had rural backgrounds and were resident in the villages of Qwaqwa.

The initial contact was with the Batlokwa Tribal Council in Tsheseng (Qwaqwa) through an elderly woman who was also a member of the Tribal Council. She introduced me to the Batlokwa Tribal Council with the help of the Council Secretary. Two visits were made and the visits were preceded by the fieldworker contacting the Council Secretary before the Council meetings. Most recordings were done after the Council meetings.

The first time, when the fieldworker began to carry out interviews with the Council members, a few informants, not acquainted with the fieldworker, were very suspicious and refused to receive the interviewer or to let her record the conversation. They gave the following three reasons for refusing to give the information:

- they did not give out information to outsiders
- people who wanted their information must give them something in return
- people who collected information earlier had not returned to show them what they had done with the given information.

In such cases, a more detailed explanation about the research project was offered to them that included reference to many local people with whom the fieldworker was connected. After the explanation was provided, all the reluctant informants agreed to be interviewed. Council members were asked about their dialect, Setlokwa. They stated that Setlokwa is still spoken by the older people in the community. They said if I wanted to understand their language well, I should attend their tribal festivals where many people would be gathering. I noticed that in their conversation Setlokwa did not differ much from Sekgolokwe because they also used words such as:

**ho bolela** instead of **ho bua** (to speak) and  
**ho fora** instead of **ho kgora** (to be full).

Another visit made was to the Makgolokwe Tribal Council in Phuthaditjhaba, known as Makgolokwe One Ubane (RSA). They call themselves MAUBANE because their totem is an Eagle (Leubane). On the wall in their conference room is a picture of an eagle.

The first interviewee was Molope Lekgolokwe, who holds a leadership position in the Council. He introduced me to the other members of the Council: Theko Maphale, Tadime Maphale, Komako, Abele Mahlale Moloji and Lenono Lekgolokwe. After the members of the Council were introduced to me I then introduced myself as a fieldworker. Every effort was made to emphasise my status as a friend who, in fact, needed their co-operation. During the course of the fieldwork, I had the opportunity of returning their favour as I compiled the history of the Makgolokwe from different sources.



It was also part of the fieldworker's commitment to fulfil some social obligations, such as to visit the Council meetings. Communicative observations were also made throughout the conversations.

Throughout most of the fieldwork I had the assistance of Makgolokwe Tribal Council members who were born and raised in Qwaqwa. Many of them were acquainted with Makgolokwe history and their struggles to be recognised as one of the ethnic groups in Qwaqwa. Informants were willing to co-operate and they provided more information relevant for the research viz. their relationship with the Batlokwa, Basia, Bapedi and Baphuthing. The basic strategy for achieving a smooth flowing conversation was to discover and explore the informants' main interest, such as the struggle between the Makgolokwe and the Free State Boers who drove them (the Makgolokwe) out of Qwaqwa.

Some informants showed great interest in listening to their recorded voices. As the fieldwork progressed and friendship ties established between the parties, informants volunteered to give factual information and also indulged themselves in gossip. The conversations with these members of the Makgolokwe Tribal Council indicated that even if these people were not recognised as an ethnic group, they have left their mark in Qwaqwa because the central post office is still called Wetsieshoek Post Office, named after their leader, Wetsi. They also mentioned proudly that "Lehaha la Wetsi" (Wetsi's cavern) still exists today.

It emerged from the interviews that there are no other ethnic groups who use **hlonepha** words more than the Makgolokwe women. Examples used by the Makgolokwe women were given, among which one was cited indicating that young married women do not call their fathers-in-law by their proper names. Interviewees also mentioned that their language resulted from contact with various other ethnic groups such as the Zulu. The fact that there were also intermarriages between the Makgolokwe and Zulu/Xhosa-speaking people was also mentioned.

This group of Makgolokwe mentioned that they wanted their children to learn their language, Sekgolokwe, but faced the problem that the language does not have a written form and there was no formal way of teaching it to them. They stated that the educated Makgolokwe were taught Sesotho, not Sekgolokwe. They only spoke Sekgolokwe when they were with the elders at home or in ethnic gatherings. The other point they made was that the majority of Sekgolokwe-speaking people were those residing in Tsheseng and at the foot of the Qwaqwa mountain. They said that they were not even aware that what they spoke was not standard Sesotho.

One of the council members said that the Makgolokwe are descendants of Tabane and Mmathulare, and that the Batlokwa are, therefore, their cousins. He argued that they are not part of the Basotho because they broke away from the Bakgatla in the nineteenth century.

In their conversations I picked up expressions such as:

**ho konana** instead of **ho timana** (to be stingy);

**ho ba tootse** instead of **ho ba haufi** (to be near);

**re kopa Modimo hore a re phe** instead of **re kopa Modimo hore a re fe matla** (we ask God to give us strength); and

**ke utlwa ba mo bua** instead of **ke utlwa ba mmolela**

(I hear them speak of him/her).

The conversation with the men was freer than that with the women. Having done the interviews with the community and the two different councils, the next interviews were conducted in some selected schools in Qwaqwa.

Qwaqwa is a broad and complex region. In order to limit and define the area of research, five high schools were chosen: three from the capital of Qwaqwa, Phuthaditjhaba, and two from surrounding villages. The five high schools were: Reahola, Sekgutlong, Mohato, Kgolathuto and Beacon. The research sample comprised learners selected randomly,

irrespective of age and gender. The teachers who were responsible for teaching Sesotho as a subject were also interviewed.

The nature of the research for this project was predominantly empirical because it was based on observations. The research was primarily concerned with a descriptive analysis of how Qwaqwa high school learners use the Sesotho language in their different social settings.

The data for this research was obtained through interviews and questionnaires from schools. Teachers and learners were interviewed at schools during free periods.

In order to describe the language varieties spoken in Qwaqwa schools, the following goals were set:

- a) to identify the varieties that are spoken in Qwaqwa;
- b) to describe each variety as recorded during conversations between:
  - i) principals and teachers,
  - ii) teachers and teachers,
  - iii) teachers and learners, and
  - iv) learners and learners;
- c) to establish the function of the particular language variety in different contexts;
- d) to describe the attitudes towards each variety by the various speakers; and
- e) to identify problems in spoken and written Sesotho.

To cover the whole spectrum of language variation at Qwaqwa schools, a sample of learners from each school was interviewed. The essential follow-up to such interviews was often compounded by difficult circumstances where Grade 12 learners would pass at the

end of the year and then leave for another area. In some cases learners who failed Grade 12, would not be allowed to repeat the class at the same school and the researcher would not know where to find them.

**TABLE 1     Distribution of sample**

The table below indicates the distribution of school informants according to gender.

Location	Occupation	Male	Female	Total	Average Age	Years of Experience
Reahola	Learners	10	15	25	17.5	-
	Teachers	1	1	2	-	10
Sekgutlong	Learners	8	17	25	17.4	-
	Teachers	1	2	3	-	11
Mohato	Learners	11	14	25	17.5	-
	Teachers	1	1	2	-	8
Kgolathuto	Learners	14	10	24	-	-
	Teachers	1	1	2	-	12
Beacon	Learners	0	0	0	-	
	Teachers	1	0	1	-	
Total:	Learners	43	56	99		
	Teachers	5	5	10		

More girls than boys participated.

Initially a Sanyo tape recorder was used to collect data from the interviews. Informants were informed before hand that it might be difficult for the interviewer to remember all the information since there were many schools to be visited. The individual informant's response was generally positive towards the use of the tape recorder. Learners collected the data themselves by running a tape recorder during their conversations during break and in their classrooms during free periods.

Secondly, as the essay is the commonest format in which learners are required to communicate their knowledge to show their critical abilities and analytical skills, data was

gathered in this form. Composition topics were first given to Grade 12 learners but as time went on, it was decided to extend this to Grade 11 learners as well. The topics were personally given to teachers involved in the teaching of Sesotho.

The teachers concerned were familiarised with the study and its objectives and were requested to instruct their learners to write the compositions. Their responsibility was to supervise the writing of these compositions without aiding the learners in any way. Most of the teachers kept the scripts for the researcher to collect personally.

### **1.3.1 Questionnaires in schools**

For ease of distribution and systematic analysis, five schools were used as research sites. The schools were designated according to what had been deemed to be the central schools for this type of research in that particular geographical area of the district. Four of the schools were schools which the researcher was unable to reach for interview purposes.

The questionnaire (see Appendix 1), with 39 questions, was designed to elicit various degrees of language usage in formal and informal situations. The fundamental principle underlying the structural composition of the questionnaire was to ensure statistical validity for the analysis of the data.

Research assistants were assigned schools in which to distribute the questionnaires. In most cases the assistant researchers lived in those particular areas where the schools were located. The advantage of this was that the questionnaire distributors were familiar with the physical and social environment.

The questionnaires were delivered by hand and respondents were allowed to complete them in their own time before the researcher collected them. Learners who experienced difficulties with the questionnaires were able to clarify the matter with the researcher on her return.

In order to get the required information, a pilot study was conducted and a sample of learners from each school was interviewed. One of these schools was Reahola High School, which is situated in Phuthaditjhaba. The statistics supplied by the Free State Department of Education (*Data on Magisterial District Schools, 1998*), indicate that the total enrolment of learners at Reahola was 740, including 242 Grade 11 learners and 107 in Grade 12. The age group of these learners ranged from 16 years to 18 years.

Thirty Grade 12 learners were gathered in the school hall. After I had explained the purpose of the research, they showed great interest and explained that it was the first time they were encouraged to speak Sesotho. They said they speak whatever language they wanted to speak in class and on the school campus and no one had ever tried to correct them. They even speak Tsotsitaal with their teachers at school as well as off the school campus. As they spoke to me, I noticed that there was a lot of codeswitching in their speech.

The second school was Sekgutlong High School which is situated in the Monontsha village and is 20km from Reahola. Initially this school was a boarding school for girls only. The school had recently changed to be a day school and now accommodates both boys and girls. The enrolment at this school was 469 learners, of which 191 were in Grade 11 and 275 in Grade 12. The ages of the learners in Grades 11 and 12 ranged from 16-18 years. The interviews were recorded in two ways, individual interviews and in group sessions. Two Sesotho teachers were interviewed.

Part of the research was also done at Mohato High School which is 10km from Sekgutlong. From the statistics of the Department of Education, Free State Province, the enrolment at Mohato School was 656 of which 235 were Grade 11 learners and 168 learners in Grade 12. The ages of these learners ranged from 16-18 years. One of the Sesotho teachers was interviewed. The interview with learners at Mohato proved to be productive because learners were able to talk about their experiences regarding language use. Some learners refused to be interviewed because they did not speak Sesotho at home.

Further interviews were done at Kgolathuto High School which is one kilometre from Setsing Shopping Centre, the main shopping complex of Phuthaditjhaba. The total learner enrolment at this school was 845 according to statistics of the Free State Department of Education. There were 339 learners in Grade 11 and 184 in Grade 12. The ages for these learners ranged from 16-18 years. Most of the senior-phase learners attend school in Phuthaditjhaba. The school is considered multi-dialectal because all the learners are speakers of various dialects. The research project at this school was not as successful as was expected, since it was done in October 1999 when most Grade 12 learners were preparing for examinations. Although it was difficult to conduct the interviews with learners, one Sesotho teacher was available to be interviewed.

The next group of interviews was done at Beacon, which is a multi-racial and multicultural school with a total enrolment of 568 learners, of which 126 were in Grade 11 and 93 in Grade 12. The ages of these learners ranged from 15-19 years. Most of the learners attending this school are from Phuthaditjhaba. The information obtained from the school was that Sesotho was not taken by learners as a subject. It was only taught in Grade 12 where Grade 12 learners could choose Sesotho as a second language. The grade 12 learners had made arrangements with Sesotho teachers who came only after school hours to assist them with Sesotho. Learners were not allowed to speak their home languages on the school campus. If a learner was found speaking a language other than English, he/she was punished in several ways including fines. The data obtained from the questionnaires and interviews indicated clearly that English plays an important role in Qwaqwa schools.

Data were collected by tape-recording naturally occurring everyday conversation among learners within different schools in the Qwaqwa area. Learners were asked to collect the data themselves by running a tape recorder during their conversation during break and in their classrooms during free periods.

The reliability of this research is based on the fact that the same procedure of collecting and analysing data has been repeated and has produced the same results. The

techniques used for interviewing have been consistent and have generated the same results when used for different subjects at different points in time.

The written texts were collected in the following manner. As essays are the most common format in which learners were required to communicate their knowledge, critical abilities and analytical skills, this format was used. Topics for compositions were given to Grade 12 teachers, involved in the teaching of Sesotho, to distribute to learners and the same topics were subsequently given to Grade 11 learners. The teachers concerned had been familiarised with the study and its objectives and were requested to instruct their learners to write compositions. The teachers were requested to keep the scripts for the researcher to collect

The nature of the research for this project was predominantly empirical because it was based on observations. The research was primarily concerned with a descriptive analysis of how the community of Qwaqwa as well as school learners use language in their different social settings.

#### **1.4 Organisation of the study**

Chapter One is an introductory chapter which focuses on the aim of the study, research sites, methods, scope as well as research tools. Chapter Two focuses on the geographical description of Qwaqwa, as well as the historical background from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The economic development of Qwaqwa is also touched upon.

Chapter Three provides a scenario whereby language variation becomes particularly manifest and is concerned with language contact, language variation, language and regional and social dialects.

Against a background of language contact, Chapter Four considers interference, codeswitching and borrowing as related phenomena among Sesotho speakers in schools



of Qwaqwa, because when people are in contact with speakers of other languages or dialects these linguistic phenomena are bound to occur.

Chapter Five deals with spoken and written Sesotho. The similarities and differences between spoken and written language have been indicated. In this chapter the identification of the language used by learners in Qwaqwa schools as well as the factors which influence spoken and written Sesotho are highlighted. Different types of influences and the manner in which they manifest themselves in spoken and written Sesotho are also discussed. Some inconsistencies in word-division and the impact this has on learners' written work also come under discussion.

Chapter Six presents general conclusions. It highlights some of the observations and the findings of the study and then recommendations and possible future research directions in this field are given.

## CHAPTER 2

### GEOGRAPHICAL, HISTORICAL AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF QWAQWA

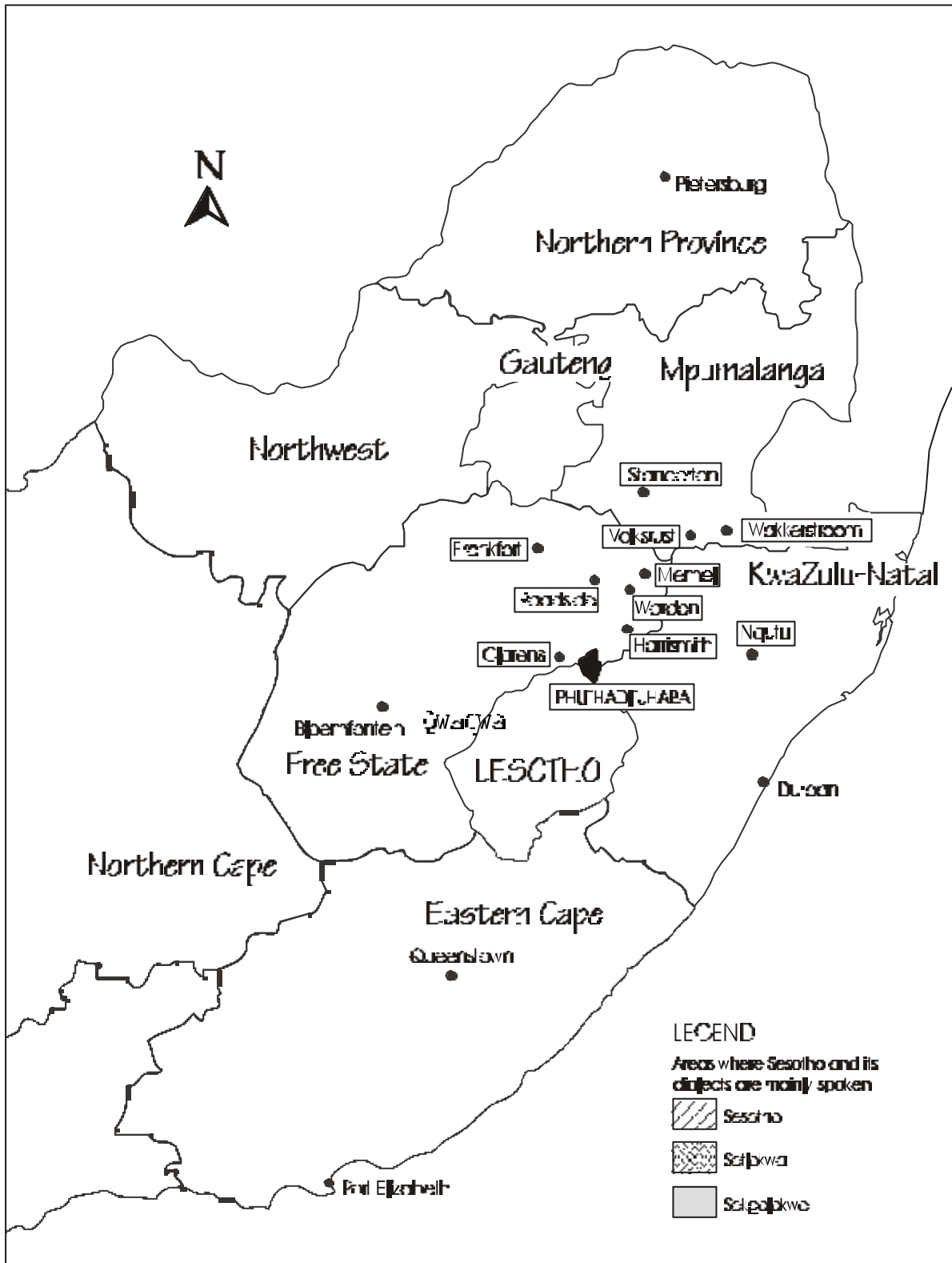
#### 2.0 Background information

This chapter provides a broad, general picture of the language situation and patterns of language use in the Qwaqwa area. It offers a brief overview of the geographical description, as well as a historical background and economic development of Qwaqwa. This is done considering that all factors have an impact on the language varieties spoken. The focus will also be on some linguistic phenomena that play a role in language variation in this area.

#### 2.1 Geographical description

A brief geographical description of Qwaqwa is necessary at this stage in order to contextualise the history of this area as well as the languages spoken there.

Qwaqwa is situated in the south-eastern corner of the Free State Province of South Africa (see Map 1). It is bounded in the east by the Bergville district of KwaZulu-Natal and in the south-west by the Kingdom of Lesotho. In the south-eastern corner lies the Drakensberg mountain range with its well-known Mont-Aux-Sources. The Sesotho name for Mont-Aux-Sources is *Phofung*, however, the inhabitants of Qwaqwa call it *Thaba-di-mahlwa* (mountains covered with snow) because of the snow that lingers there for several months during winter. However according to Booysen, (1996:71) the San named this mountain *Qwaqwa*, meaning “whiter than white”, because it is coloured by the droppings of vultures which, from time immemorial, have used it as a nesting area. Dominating the glen to the north is this magnificent specimen of a flat-topped sandstone mountain known as Qwaqwa, after which this area may also have been named.



Map 1

Qwaqwa is one of the smallest and most densely populated of the former so-called Bantustans established during the apartheid era, and was designated as the homeland of the Basotho people in South Africa. According to the Qwaqwa baseline study (1997:6), it is assumed, on the basis of the data from the 1996 census, that the Qwaqwa population is growing significantly faster than that of the Free State as a whole. A population growth rate of between 2,6% and 5,4% has been estimated.

## 2.2 Historical background

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the area under discussion, formally known as Wetsieshoek, was inhabited by the San people. According to Tselanyane (1989:1), these people were organised into small communities of hunters and gatherers who slept in temporary shelters and in caves. This is evidenced by their rock paintings which are still found in this area. These nomads were ultimately either driven out or absorbed by the Basotho groups. However, evidence points to a reasonably amicable co-existence between the San and the black farmers (Tselanyane 1989:1). According to Thompson (1975:19), while the Bantu-speaking farmers were relatively small in number, they lived peacefully alongside the indigenous hunters. There was room for all and each profited from the other's special talents such as rock painting, hunting and knowledge of medicinal herbs. The farmers were influenced linguistically by the hunters. The San speech sounds such as the clicks **q**, **qh**, **nq**, and **nc** were incorporated into the Sesotho vocabulary and the Basotho adopted many of the San place names. Some of the place names contained click sounds which had not previously occurred in Sesotho, e.g. Qwaqwa [!wa!wa], Quthing [!uthiç], Qachas'nek [!atʃas'nek] and Qoqolosing [!o!olosiç]. Thomson (ibid), further explains that although these two groups were apparently living peacefully together, there were occasional conflicts reported between the farmers and the hunters, consequently some San withdrew from the Maloti and Drakensberg ranges in the south-east and moved into the arid country to the west.

Another group residing in the area were the Makgolokwe, an ethnic group which was first heard of at Thaba Kgolokwe, an isolated mountain near Standerton. They seem to have

regarded this as their birthplace, because during all their wanderings and difficulties they often tried to return to the place. In approximately 1839, a group of Makgolokwe, led by Chief Wetsi, occupied the Qwaqwa territory (Booyesen 1996:71).

In 1856 there were complaints of cattle rustling or encroachment on the land held by the Boer Republic of the Orange Free State. Wetsi was soon accused of stock theft by the surrounding Free State farmers and was forced to retreat. Two commandos were sent to drive him out of this area. His last hideout was a shoe-shaped cavern about 107 metres long, 35 metres deep and approximately 121 metres high, with boulders at the entrance. This cavern is still known among the Basotho as *Lehaha la Wetsi* (Wetsi's cavern). The commandos then surrounded the area with the aim of starving Wetsi out (Tselanyane 1989:2). Wetsi, with a few headmen, somehow sneaked out of the cave and fled.

After being driven out by the Boer Commandos in 1856-57, the Makgolokwe of Wetsi moved to different parts of the Free State such as Thaba-Kgolo near Bethlehem, Dimapane (Vrede), Ntswanatsatsi (Cornelia) and to Lesotho in places such as Serutle, Setlakalleng, Ha Titedi and Manamela. Although Wetsi's power was broken, his name remained among the Boers of the Free State who called his former territory Wetsi se Hoek (Wetsi's corner). Eventually the territory became known as Wetsieshoek.

The Free State Volksraad decided to retain Wetsi's territory as government property. From 1856 to 1861 this territory remained unoccupied. However, in 1861 a group of Zulu-speaking people settled there. These people, consisting probably of a series of small groups, which detached themselves from the Zulu chiefdoms in the Tugela Valley and crossed the watershed to the north of the Drakensberg. In 1856, the second Boer- Basotho war broke out. The Zulus fought alongside the Basotho against the Boer commandos. Forces of the neighbouring Boer republic, [South African Republic] supported those of the Orange Free State, and the Zulus were driven out of Wetsieshoek (Tselanyane 1989:2).

Earlier, in 1854, Paulus Mopeli had broken away from Moshoeshoe in Lesotho and regarded himself as an independent chief. In August 1867, the government of the Orange

Free State allocated an area in Wetsieshoek, known today as Mabilela, to the friendly Chief Mopeli, leader of the Bakwena tribe.

Subsequent to Mopeli's settlement in Wetsieshoek, the Free State government allowed another ethnic group to settle there. In 1854 President Boshoff gave the Batlokwa a portion of land on the south-eastern part of Wetsieshoek as a token of appreciation for their help in the wars of Seqiti (Marokane & Ntlole 1985:12). The Batlokwa then named this area Matsoakeng after Letsoaka, one of their elder chiefs. Others call this place Tsheseng because when the Batlokwa arrived there they found **ditshese** (old and torn grain baskets) inside the cavern. Letsoaka's brother, Leana positioned himself near the big rock called Lefika la Patso or Fika-Patso (split rock). Today Fikapatso is a holiday resort situated next to Fikapatso Dam (Marokane & Ntlole 1985:12).

Koos Mota, chief of the Batlokwa, was the first in South Africa to establish a tribal authority for his people in terms of the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951. The Batlokwa became the first in South Africa to be granted tribal authority of a homeland, and this was the first step towards self government.

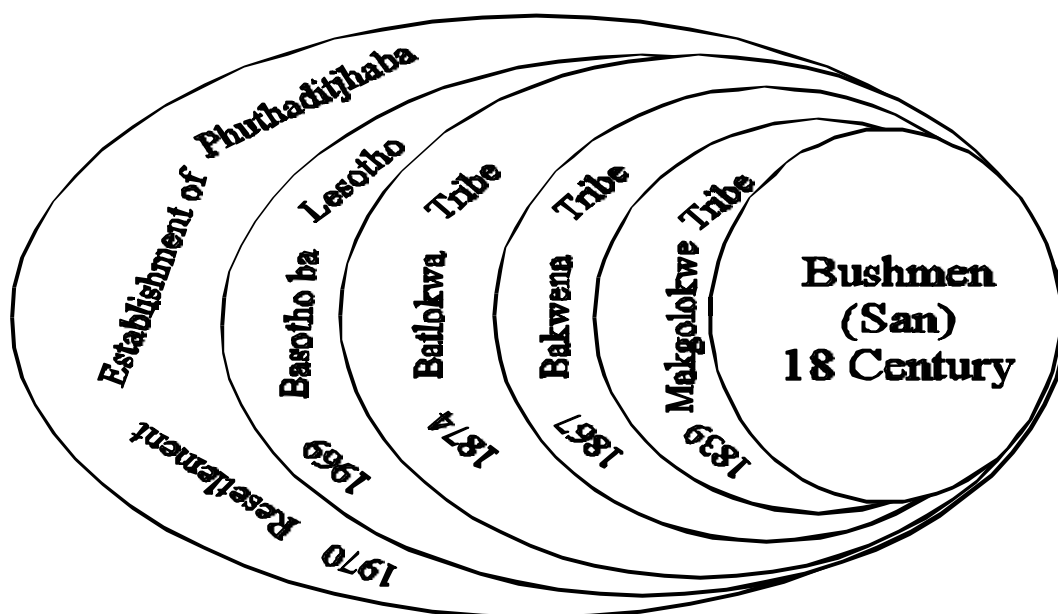
The Bakwena obtained tribal authority soon afterwards. From 1969 Wetsieshoek became Qwaqwa, the official homeland of the **Basotho ba Borwa** (Sotho people of the south), where territorial authority was exercised and an administrative centre known as Phuthaditjhaba was established (Booyesen 1996:72). In 1970 the South African government passed the Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act which relegated all the indigenous people of South Africa to the Bantustan homelands.

After the resettlement, which took place from 1970-1980, Qwaqwa was renamed Basotho Qwaqwa – a homeland for all Sesotho-speaking people. However, to the inhabitants, this area is known as Qwaqwa after the flat-topped hill which dominates the region.

In 1970, as one of the consequences of the apartheid policy, many Sesotho-speaking people, mainly from white-owned farms, towns and villages were evacuated and settled

in Qwaqwa. Access of the farm migrants to the rural Qwaqwa was also fostered through many institutional measures, among which formal education played a relevant role. In order to attract people to this area, the South African government had built many schools in Qwaqwa. Almost all adults interviewed in Qwaqwa stated that one of their main motivations for migration was to provide their children with education. Indeed almost all the children in Qwaqwa still attend school regularly and a few adults attend evening classes under Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET). However, most of these people who migrated as adults are still illiterate or semi-literate.

The arrival of different tribes speaking different Sesotho varieties is indicated as follows:



**Diagram 1**

Perhaps the strongest underlying motive that helps to explain the farm migrants' adjustment, is the psychological predisposition towards assimilation. Such predisposition should be understood in relation to a common feeling shared by most migrants, namely, the aspiration for an easier and more comfortable life than the one they led on farms.

Another dimension which contributed to the migration to Qwaqwa was the coming of the Basotho Congress Party members. According to Jean Le May (Political Reporter, Sunday

Express 5/9/1982), during 1969-70 members of the Basotho Congress Party, which was banned in Lesotho, fled from Lesotho and sought refuge in Qwaqwa. The estimated number of refugees was 1 000. Since then, the massive inflow of people to Qwaqwa has shown no sign of abating. Qwaqwa has become densely populated with people from the Sotho and Nguni linguistic groups. The capital town, Phuthaditjhaba, (**phutha** = gather, **ditjhaba** = nations) as the name suggests, accommodates a variety of ethnic groups each with their own dialects and languages.

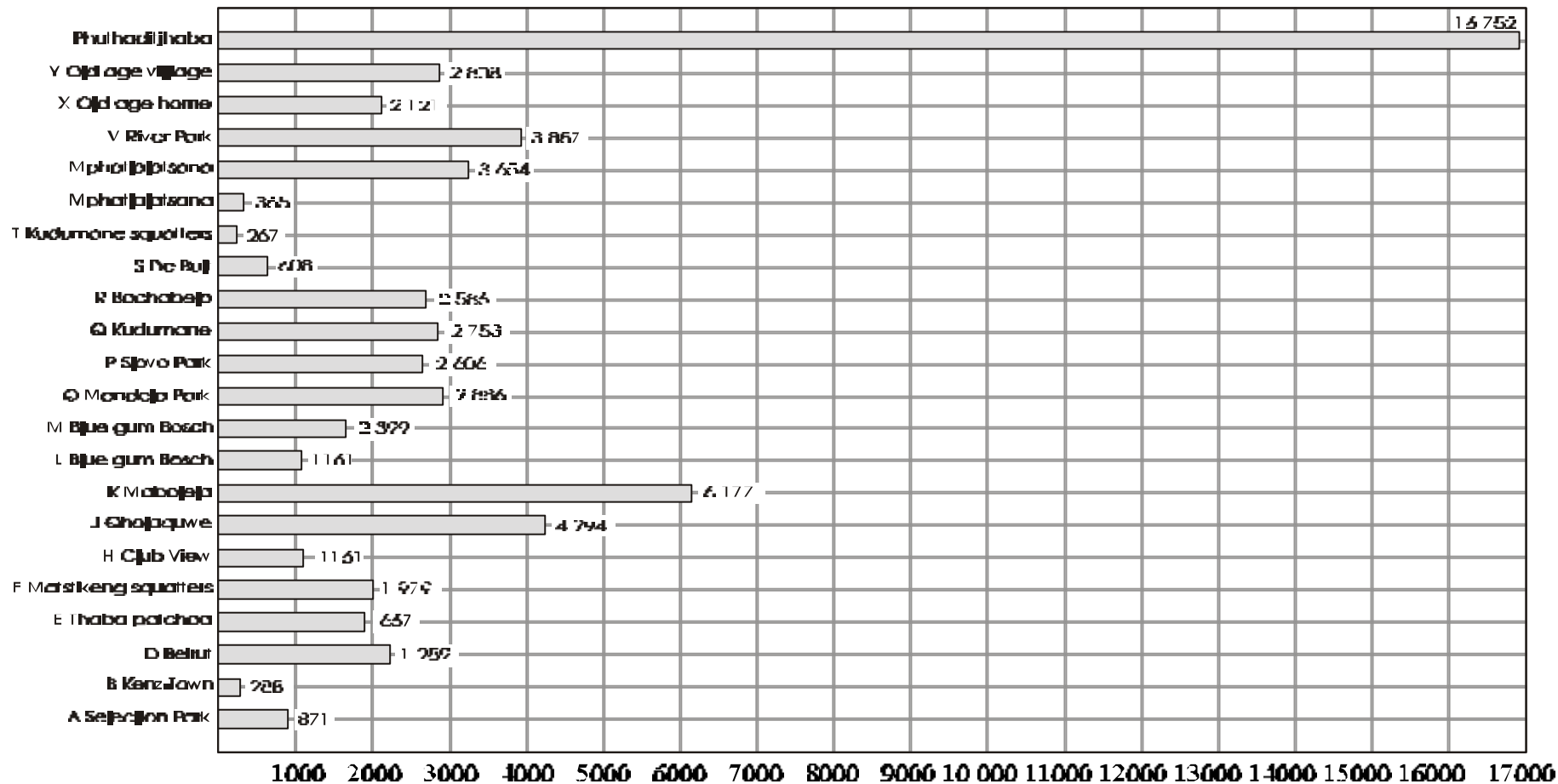
The self-government of Qwaqwa lasted until 1994 when the first general democratic elections for South Africa were held. Qwaqwa was incorporated into the rest of South Africa when the Government of National Unity came to power.

The Qwaqwa Transitional Rural area consists of the rural settlements within the Magisterial District of Qwaqwa, and it is subdivided into nine wards as indicated below.

Ward Number	Rural village	Estimated Population
Ward 1	Monontsha, Dithotaneng, Hlatseng, Makgalaneng, Paballong, Poelong, Tseki, Matebeleng, Marallaneng, Mantsubise, Leratong, SehlaJaneng	24743
Ward 2	Namahadi, Kgatleng, Ouplaas, Boiketlo, Ha-Rankopane, Mangaung, Ha-Sethunya/Maqhweleng, Marakong, Letsha-le-Maduke, Winnie Park	22394
Ward 3	Comet, Pereng, Makwane/ Lusaka, Tebang, Patryskamp/ Matshekgeng, Phahameng, Metsimatsho, Patrickdale, Masimong/ Sekgutlong, Hanniville, Molapo	23963
Ward 4	Bolata, Masaleng, Ha-Ntjhabeng,/Semporwaneng, Theosane, Phahameng, Phamong	15800
Ward 5	Matsieng, Makong, Naledi/Mantshebo, Thabong, Sebokeng, Tshirela, Phahameng, Sekgutlong, Thabana-Tshoana	10068
Ward 6	Thaba-Tshweu, Lejwaneng, Makeneng, Thabang	5700
Ward 7	Thaba-Bosiu, Jwalaboholo, Qoqolosing, Metsi-Matsho	4069
Ward 8	Thibella	3451
Ward 9	Dinkweng/Rietpan, Ha-Polane, Mafikeng, Mankeng, Matsopaneng, Phomolong, Makgemeng, Mmalekunututu, Masianokeng, Moeding, Sejwalejwale, Sobeja, Sefikaneng/Setlabotjha, Matswakeng, Phokeng, Pitseng.	7050
TOTAL		117238

**Table 2: Magisterial District of Qwaqwa**





**Table 3:** Source – Phuthaditjhaba TLC (1998) and V3 Engineers (1998).

### 2.3 Economic development

From the late 1970s onwards, Qwaqwa underwent a number of important internal economic changes which were to have a significant impact on the position of its inhabitants. By 1977, the industrial decentralisation programme in Qwaqwa had attracted many factories. The infrastructure for industrial developments had been established with great success in Phuthaditjhaba, providing job opportunities to the inhabitants of Qwaqwa in a wide variety of sectors. Many of the factories had been squeezed out of the bigger cities because of rising land values and the costs of labour unionisation. In factories already established in Qwaqwa, more than 9 000 Qwaqwa residents operated a wide range of machinery, manufacturing clothing and knitted garments, weaving intricate designs on wool and karakul carpets, and even moulding hand painted pottery, amongst others. In the last few years, industrialisation has led to a major trend towards urbanisation throughout the area. This trend has resulted in extensive social development, the entry of technology into the area, the mass exodus from rural areas, diffusion of the mass media, improvement of the means of transportation and the relative integration of village communities in national society.

The introduction of manufactured goods into the area has changed the pattern of the population's minimal consumption needs and its closed economy has had to be gradually integrated into the regional or general economy through increasing trade relations. In view of this state of affairs Qwaqwa has been forced into some sort of adjustment.

By the end of the 1980s the world-wide enthusiasm for deregulation that had swept across South Africa, had reached Qwaqwa. Petty trading, even shebeens and the hitherto pirate taxi association, known as Majakathata (strugglers), in Qwaqwa were suddenly seen as the main sources of future *self-help* development. Many young women flocked to Phuthaditjhaba to seek work as domestic servants and to gain access to urban social networks which could provide them with information about the job market and a way of escaping the poverty of the villages.

From the early 1990s, Qwaqwa proliferated in informal housing known as Mashatara (shelters). Such areas have been named after political leaders, for example Winnie Park, Joe Slovo Park and Mandela Park, Kudumane squatters, and Matsikeng squatters.

Phuthaditjhaba, the capital of Qwaqwa, has the fastest growing industrial and residential areas, with a resident population of approximately 60169. Phuthaditjhaba offers a wide range of modern consumer goods, as well as health and educational services. Most factory workers live within easy distance of their jobs in rented accommodation at Phuthaditjhaba or in their homes in the surrounding villages.

In fact, Qwaqwa developed so rapidly that the life of the people was profoundly affected. The industrial revolution in Phuthaditjhaba brought about important population changes. Grandchildren of the earlier inhabitants moved from the villages into suburbs where they formed new friendship and kinship ties. They all but turned their backs on their parents' lifestyle and language, so that few signs of the old ethnic character remains.

## **2.4 Summary**

In this chapter we have discussed the geographical situation of Qwaqwa, an area in the Free State Province. The discussion has revealed that this area is the most densely populated in this Province and that this situation has had an impact on the lives and languages of the people.

The historical background has revealed that as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Qwaqwa has been inhabited by different ethnic groups which affected the varieties of the languages spoken here. However, the Sesotho language and its varieties dominate this area.

The following sections will demonstrate how the foregoing discussion of the historical background and economical development of Qwaqwa, had an impact on language development and use.

## CHAPTER 3

### LANGUAGE CONTACT AND LANGUAGE VARIETIES IN QWAQWA

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter investigates the effects of language contact, looking at language and dialect, regional and social dialects as well as the use of language. The focus is on language variation between Sesotho and its dialects, Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa, as a result of language contact.

#### 3.1 Language contact and varieties

Language contact takes place between speakers of different languages in contact situations. For several reasons the speakers of any given language are always in some kind of contact with the speakers of one or more languages. In such cases, speakers of one language may, deliberately or unconsciously, introduce into their language features of another language to which they have been exposed, and we therefore speak of language contact or simply contact. Trask (1999:150) states that,

when two different languages are spoken in adjacent areas, speakers on both sides of the boundary will be exposed to the other language and many often gain some fluency in that other language.

The situation described by Trask accurately reflects what has happened in Qwaqwa where speakers of Sesotho are exposed to the Zulu language that is spoken in adjacent towns such as Harrismith, Warden, and Clarens.

Language contact often brings about new language varieties, for instance the Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa dialects are the result of contact between the Basotho and the Zulus. It is a matter of common knowledge that contact between different languages and different

dialects has led to the relatively straightforward influence of one variety on another. The phenomena resulting from such influence are typically described by labels such as interference, transfer and borrowing.

Whenever people speaking different languages or dialects are in frequent contact, their speech is affected. According to tradition, the Basotho, Batlokwa, Makgolokwe and Nguni-speaking people have had extensive contact since the 18<sup>th</sup> century through migration and intermarriages. This kind of contact has left its mark on the Sesotho language as spoken in Qwaqwa.

One of the outstanding features of modern Qwaqwa is the impact which it has experienced from contact with the outside world. The opportunity for people to move from one place to another has been promoted by developments in industrialisation. This, in turn, has brought residents into contact with other people who, in different circumstances, they would never have met. In addition to this phenomenon, the resettlement, especially of people from neighbouring and remote towns such as Harrismith, Warden, Kroonstad, Bloemfontein and Bergville has also had some impact on the modern Sesotho language. As a result, the speech of the people residing in Qwaqwa and their habits have changed because they have wanted to be accepted by the other language groups. For instance, the younger generation living in Qwaqwa villages acquire the township norms of social relations, adopt the typically urban fashion of clothing and manners as well as striving as best they can to urbanise their speech. For instance, most Qwaqwa youth use expressions such as:

**re tla kopana skele**

instead of

**re tla kopana sekolong**

(we will meet at school)

**ho moja/ho grand/ho sharp**

instead of

**ho lokile**

(it's all right)

empa **meneer** o a **nkhawatha**

instead of

empa **titjhere** o a **mphoqa**

(but teacher you you disappoint me)

Thato ke **authi** e **grand**.

instead of

Thato ke **moshanyana** ya **lokileng**.

(Thato is a good boy.)

**My laiti** o **bari** e fetang **dibari** tse ding.

instead of

**Ngwaneso** o **sephoqo** se fetang **diphoqo** tse ding.

(My boy you are stupid more than other stupids.)

Ke hobane dintho tsa ka ha di tsamaye **moja** ka moo ke neng ke lebeletse ka teng.

instead of

Ke hobane dintho tsa ka ha di tsamaye **hantle** ka moo ke neng ke lebeletse ka teng.

(It is because my things are not according to my expectations.)

### 3.1.1 Language variation

Language variation refers to the existence of observable differences in the way a language is used in a speech community. According to Trask (1999:333) variation is

a common place observation that a single language is not used in a totally homogeneous manner within a single community.

For instance, in particular social contexts stock brokers do not speak like plumbers, neither do men speak like women, older people like younger people, etc. Trask (ibid) adds that variation often shows strong correlation with social variables such as social class, gender, and the social stratification of language which is now a prominent feature of sociolinguistic investigation. We find diversity within languages at all levels - phonological, grammatical, lexical and syntactic. Such diversity can be studied along three synchronic dimensions – geographical, social and stylistic.

The geographical dimension is the main one which has been presented in dialect atlases and which has occupied the attention of dialectologists. The social dimension of linguistic variation is correlated with the socially established identity of the speaker or the addressee. On the one hand, Bright and Ramanujan (in Pride & Holmes 1972:151), state that sociolinguistic variation may also be applied to cases where linguistic variation is correlated with other factors in the social context that are called stylistic, including formal and informal styles of speaking.

Trudgill (in Saville Troike 1982:82-84), on the other hand, says that these differences within a given language are related to such external variables as geographic factors, education level, social class, gender and age differences.

Regional variation may take place within the same country or even between different countries. For instance, native speakers of Sesotho from Lesotho and South Africa will exhibit significant differences from each other with respect to the vocabulary of the Sesotho language and lesser differences with regard to its syntax. The border between Free State and Lesotho actually divides the Sesotho-speaking people, so that many people regard the current border as a legalistic inconvenience dividing kith and kin (Muller 1991:803). One small example of this state of affairs concerns the different terms used either side of the border for the following lexical concepts:

<b>Sesotho (South Africa)</b>	<b>Sesotho (Lesotho)</b>	<b>English</b>
<u>lebitso</u>	<b>lereo</b>	<i>noun</i>
<u>leetsisa</u>	<b>sere</b>	<i>ideophone</i>
<u>lelahlelwa</u>	<b>lekhotsa</b>	<i>interjective</i>
<u>sehlongwanthao</u>	<b>mohatlana</b>	<i>suffix</i>
<u>ho kenya</u>	<b>ho nokela</b>	<i>to put in</i>

According to Bright and Ramanujan (in Pride & Holmes 1972:151), sociolinguistic studies may also be applied to cases where linguistic variation is correlated with identity of other factors called stylistic. According to Bright *et al* (ibid), the term 'style' refers to the variation that occurs in the speech of a single speaker in different situational contexts. This implies that speakers adapt their style of speech, the kinds of expressions they use and their vocabulary in order to be accepted in an environment where the conversation is taking place. Variations which occur because of the adaptability of speakers are an indication that language exhibits a great deal of internal variation.

Lyons (1981:295) refers to the study of stylistic variation in languages and the way in which this is exploited by the user. He further explains that there is much more to stylistic variation because whenever people speak or write in their native language, they do so in one style rather than another. They speak or write according to the situation, the relations that hold between them and the person to whom they are speaking or writing to, the purpose and nature of what they have to communicate and several other factors. Whether the stylistic choices that they make are conscious or unconscious, they nonetheless form an important part of using a language correctly and effectively.

People do not speak consistently but use different styles for different situations. Individuals therefore control more than one style of a language. Every time they speak they are not only communicating their thoughts to others, but they are also making language choices that indicate who they are. In any interaction a person may speak very formally or very informally depending on the circumstances of his or her audience.



In stylistic variation, speakers tend to speak more casually and in a more relaxed way when conversing with people they know better. For instance, a school boy whose brother is a teacher may greet his brother in Tsotsitaal by saying, "*Eitha my bra*", regardless of his status as being his teacher in the same school.

### **3.1.2 Language and dialect**

Although the majority of the people of Qwaqwa speak the same language, Sesotho, there are small groups who speak their own particular speech variety. In such a case, we refer to the variety that differs from the accepted standard form as a dialect. A dialect is characterised by a particular set of linguistic items, grammatical structures and pronunciation patterns.

According to Allen and Corder (1973:94),

a language consists of all the varieties which share a single superimposed variety having substantial similarity in phonology and grammar with the included varieties or which are either mutually intelligible or are connected by a series of mutually intelligible varieties.

They further explain that a given set of varieties must meet certain minimum linguistic conditions, such as sociological conditions, where the speakers feel that they belong to that speech community.

Allen and Corder (1973:95), define a dialect as

any set of one or more varieties of a language which share at least one feature or combination of features setting them apart from other varieties of the language, and which may appropriately be treated as a unit on linguistic or non-linguistic grounds.

The concept dialect is usually associated with regional varieties as well as with sociolinguistic variation. Richards et al (1992:107) confirm this dichotomy by defining

dialect as:

a variety of language, spoken in one part of a country (regional dialect), or by people belonging to a particular social class (social dialect), which is different in some words, grammar and pronunciation from other forms of the same language.

The line of demarcation between language and dialect is however not well defined and no satisfactory set of criteria has yet been devised to distinguish clearly between the two. Calteaux (1996:31) maintains that the distinction between “language and dialect” is complicated within African languages in South Africa, where one of the regional dialects of each of the language groups, has been elevated to the level of a standard language. In other words, this regional dialect has been taken through a process of standardisation whereby it has become codified and used for higher functions, and in the process its use has become prestigious. In this case, mutual intelligibility may not necessarily serve as a criterion to distinguish between “language and dialect”. In this respect, the findings are that Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa are typical dialects of Sesotho which show a great deal of structural overlap in their own morphological, syntactical and lexical system. The two varieties are also mutually intelligible with each other and with their standard form, Sesotho. Hudson (1980:35) maintains that:

If the speakers of two varieties can understand each other, then the varieties concerned are instances of the same language; otherwise if the speakers cannot understand each other, their varieties belong to different languages, or may be different languages themselves.

Hudson’s assertion may not necessarily be applicable in cases where certain African languages are concerned, even though they may be mutually intelligible. Hudson’s definition of language versus dialect tends to fail with regard to African Languages, in cases where some varieties of a language, especially Northern Sotho, cannot be spoken nor understood by the speakers of the other varieties of the same language. For instance, the Sotho languages, viz Sesotho, Setswana and Sesotho sa Leboa, are mutually intelligible and could have been regarded as dialects of the same “Sotho” language.

Although the Sotho languages mentioned above share a lot of linguistic similarities, their status as different languages stems largely from non-linguistic factors which are political, historical, geographical, social and cultural. The same applies to the Nguni languages where isiZulu, isiXhosa, SiSwati and isiNdebele also tend to be mutually intelligible. Sekgolokwe, for instance, is a mixed bag of three languages, Sesotho, Sepedi and isiZulu, but has always been regarded as a dialect of Sesotho and as a result, it has never enjoyed the status of being an official language. At primary schools, in lower grades, where the policy of home language instruction applies, Makgolokwe children are grouped together with Sesotho-speaking children and are taught through the medium of Sesotho. Sekgolokwe remains only as a spoken variety without a written literature or a dictionary. The same applies to all the other regional dialects which are not the standard variety.

### **3.1.3 Regional dialects and the standardisation of Sesotho**

It is common knowledge that language can never be the same for all speakers at all times. People who speak the same language do not necessarily live in the same area and they therefore speak different varieties of their main language (Moeketsi 2001:1). Language varieties which are found in specific geographical locations are referred to as regional dialects. According to Fishman (1968:143),

the variety of a language you use, is determined by who you are, that is each speaker has learned a particular variety of the language of his/her language community. This variety may differ at any level at all levels from other varieties of the same language learnt by other speakers as their first language.

Fishman (ibid), goes on to add that “who you are” for this purpose means “where you come from”. In most language communities, it is the region of origin which determines the dialectal variety of the language used by a speaker.

Among Sesotho speakers, for instance, geographical boundaries have brought about marked differences between the speakers of the Sesotho varieties of Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa. Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa are regional dialects. They are spoken at Moeding,

Thibella, Matswakeng, Tshirela, Lejwaneng and Pitseng in Qwaqwa.

If we consider the fact that people speaking the same language do not all live in the same area, we will appreciate that a group of people already sets itself off from other groups by living in a particular place. For instance, if we compare a group of Sesotho speakers from Warden in the Free State Province with a group from Standerton in the Mpumalanga Province and a group from Qwaqwa, the varieties of Sesotho spoken by these three groups will differ with regard to vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation, (Moeketsi & Swanepoel, 1997:107).

Sesotho is, however, regarded as a form of language with few regional dialects. The uniformity of Sesotho was stimulated by the following factors:

- a) the danger of being wiped out by the Difaqane warriors of Chaka and Mzilikazi that compelled the Basotho to find refuge in Moshoeshe's government.
- b) the work of the Paris missionaries, who based their first translation from the scriptures on Moshoeshe's Kwena dialect, and
- c) the geographical isolation of the rugged country of Lesotho, (cf. Swanepoel et al 1991:108).

According to Baucom (1969:1), during the period when Sesotho was first written, the spoken form of the language appears to have been in a position of rapid change. Members of various Sotho-Tswana tribes, speaking closely related dialects, and even members of Nguni tribes speaking languages quite distinct from Sesotho-Tswana had fled from the armies of the Zulu leader, Chaka, to seek protection under Moshoeshe. As a means of political unity Moshoeshe promoted a single dialect, Sekwena, which as time went on was elevated and accepted by the Basotho nation as their language, Sesotho sa Moshoeshe (Sesotho of Moshoeshe). Having become standardised, Sesotho has eventually become the language which is used in the media, official documents and in schools.

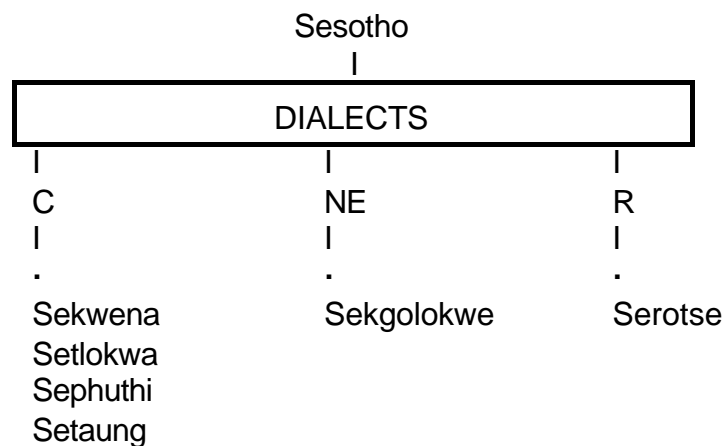
The standardisation of a particular variety does not mean that one variety is superior to others, but it is purely a measure of convenience. The reducing to writing of Sesotho by the

missionaries has undoubtedly assisted in standardising Sesotho to the extent that all the other regional dialects, namely, Sephuthi, Serotse, Setaung, Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa survive as separate spoken dialects only.

Linguists purport that individual dialects themselves may be grouped together in a dialect cluster on the grounds of linguistic similarities, as well as the geographical location where each dialect is spoken. However, Sesotho does not show this dialect cluster since it does not have many dialects as compared to its sister languages, Setswana and Sesotho sa Leboa.

The Sesotho regional dialects may be shown as follows:

**Diagram 2**



- C: Central
- NE: North Eastern.
- R: Remote

Source: *Only Study Guide for SSE301-4 (1997:129)* by Swanepoel, CF; JM Lenake & GE Mischke.

### 3.1.4 Social dialects

According to Bright (1982:3), speakers express their identity, as well as reflect their background through language. Just as individuals are unified by a common language and are distinguished by it from other language groups, so dialects can unify and separate groups within a language.

Every society exhibits some form of social stratification. In a normal society, people do not belong to the same social class because of factors such as occupation, educational standard and economic status (Moeketsi 2001:1). As a result they speak language varieties that are different from those used by other social groups. Allen and Corder (1973:96) assert that any group of speakers of a language, which regards itself as a close social unit will tend to express its group solidarity by favouring those linguistic innovations which set it apart from other speakers who are not part of the group.

A social dialect therefore provides an indication of the relations between members of a speech community. Every job has a certain amount of jargon which those not involved in a similar occupation find it difficult to understand. For instance, in the Basotho community, the language which is used by the herbal practitioners is not the same as that which is used by boys from an initiation school. Their speech differs with regard to the vocabulary they use. The language which is used by people from initiation schools is shrouded with secret words which are not used in everyday speech.

In the case of Sesotho, there are different linguistic innovations that are used with regard to the different situations a person may find himself/herself in. For instance, women and young girls from an initiation school use different linguistic innovations when they are among those who have not gone to initiation school. Adults may use a language that will exclude children. On the other hand, teenagers may use words in their conversation that will be difficult for the parents to understand.

According to oral history, the language usages and customs of the Batlokwa were originally

more or less the same as those of the Makgolokwe. This situation changed over time through geographical separation and other aspects such as the introduction of new words and idioms by immigrants. The most influential people were the Baphuthi of Moorosi.

With reference to Qwaqwa, the Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa are the main dialects of Sesotho, which, however, have features of vocabulary and pronunciation that distinguish them from Sesotho. These two dialects are regional dialects because they are mostly spoken in rural areas of Qwaqwa by old people, who are usually not highly educated.

An intensive investigation into the speech of each individual group reveals countless differences characterised by a particular set of linguistic items, as will be illustrated below under their morphological, phonological and syntactical structures.

### **3.2 Sesotho vs Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa**

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate some linguistic variations between Sesotho and these two dialects, Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa. This will first be illustrated with a discussion of some phonological variations.

#### **3.2.1 Phonological variations between Sesotho and Sekgolokwe/Setlokwa.**

Phonology involves the way language sounds and the way words are pronounced in a particular language. Where there are variations in vocabulary and grammar, these are normally accompanied by phonological variations. For instance, speakers of Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa often pronounce voiceless word initial fricatives as voiced. Examples:

<b>Sesotho</b>	<b>Sekgolokwe/Setlokwa</b>	
<b>fatshe</b>	<b>vaatshe</b>	(on the ground)
<b>fooma</b>	<b>voma</b>	(a sheep slaughtered for the son-in-law).

In addition there are variations between the Sekgolokwe voiced fricative **/v/** and the

Sesotho voiced glottal fricative /h/.

Compare the following:

<b>Sesotho</b>	<b>Sekgolokwe/Setlokwa</b>	
<b>mohatla</b>	<b>/moyatla/</b>	(tail)
<b>mofumahadi</b>	<b>/mofumayadi/</b>	(madam)
<b>ho baleha</b>	<b>/yo baleya/</b>	(to run away)
<b>ho pheha</b>	<b>/yo pheya/</b>	(to cook)
<b>heso</b>	<b>/yeso/</b>	(at my place)
<b>ha hae</b>	<b>/yaye/</b>	(at his/her place)

The above examples show that certain Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa sounds differ from those of Sesotho. There are phonological differences but no semantic differences between Sesotho and its dialects. Phonological rules in these dialects are not documented since there are no grammar books for either dialect. Speakers rely on the spoken form not on the written form.

### 3.2.1.1 Juxtaposed vowels

Juxtaposed vowels in Sekgolokwe/Setlokwa are pronounced separately, and each constitutes a separate syllable in the following examples:

<b>Sesotho</b>	<b>Sekgolokwe/Setlokwa</b>	
<b>metsi</b>	<b>meetsi</b>	(water)
<b>pedi</b>	<b>peedi</b>	(two)
<b>jwalo</b>	<b>tjaalo</b>	(like that)
<b>jwang</b>	<b>tjaane</b>	(how)
<b>madi</b>	<b>maadi</b>	(blood)
<b>fatshe</b>	<b>vaatshe</b>	(on the ground)



**ngwana**

**ngwaana** (child)

The above examples of vowel juxtaposition were also noted in learners' written work in Qwaqwa schools.

### 3.2.1.2 Plosivation

In Sesotho plosivation is caused by the reflexive morpheme and by the object concord first person singular when juxtaposed to certain consonants. The absence of plosivation rules in the case of Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa, when the first person singular object concord occurs next to /b/,/d/,/f/,/h/,/l/,/r/,/hl/, for example in words such as nbona, ndula, nfa stands in opposition to Sesotho where such rules do occur.

Note the following:

<b>Verb stem</b>	<b>Sesotho</b>	<b>Sekgolokwe/Setlokwa</b>
<b>-bona</b>	<b>/mpona/</b>	<b>/mbona/</b> (see me)
<b>-fetola</b>	<b>/mphetola/</b>	<b>/mfetola/</b> (answer me)
<b>-ruta</b>	<b>/nthuta/</b>	<b>/nruta/</b> (teach me)
<b>-hanela</b>	<b>/nkganela/</b>	<b>/nhanela/</b> (refuse me to)

It is observed from the above examples that Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa speakers do not apply plosivation rules when the object concord is used with the verb stem.

In Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa the causative suffix -is, is used in the regular form of verbs.

Examples:

botsa > botsisa  
bona > bonisa > bontsha

### 3.2.1.3 Elision

In Sesotho vowel elision takes place between two lateral consonants, in which case the first becomes syllabic. In Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa such elision does not take place.

Examples:

<b>Sesotho</b>	<b>Sekgolokwe/Setlokwa</b>	
<b>/-timella/</b>	<b>/-timelela/</b>	(forgotten)
<b>/-tswella/</b>	<b>/-tswelela/</b>	(continue)
<b>/-tella/</b>	<b>/-telela/</b>	(look down upon)
<b>/-lla/</b>	<b>/-lela/</b>	(cry)

The above examples show that in Sekgolokwe/Setlokwa, the vowels between the two laterals are retained.

### 3.2.1.4 Pronunciation

Another interesting variation between Sesotho and its dialects Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa is that there are some Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa words which are similar to those of Sesotho in meaning but are spelt and pronounced differently for no apparent reason. This is illustrated in the following examples:

<b>Sesotho</b>	<b>Sekgolokwe /Setlokwa</b>		
<b><u>tlama</u></b>	<b><u>tlema</u></b>	<b><u>tlema</u></b>	(fasten)
<b><u>rona</u></b>	<b><u>rune</u></b>	<b><u>rune</u></b>	(us)
<b><u>lona</u></b>	<b><u>lune</u></b>	<b><u>lune</u></b>	(you [plural])
<b><u>hodimo</u></b>	<b><u>hedimo</u></b>	<b><u>hedimo</u></b>	(up)

The mid-high back vowel /o/ tends to occur in Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa as a high back vowel identical to the Sesotho /u/.

Sometimes the /a/ may change to /e/ as in:

<u>tlama</u>	>	<u>tlema</u>	(fasten)
<u>mmaruna</u>	>	<u>mmarune</u>	(our mother)
<u>maharona</u>	>	<u>maharune</u>	(our homes)

### 3.2.1.5 Assimilation

Progressive assimilation which takes place in Sesotho when the deverbative nouns of class1 mo- are derived from verb stems beginning with /b/, is not found in Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa. Compare the following:

<u>Sesotho</u>		<u>Sekgolokwe/Setlokwa</u>	
mo+bona	>	<u>mmoni</u>	<u>moboni</u> (one who sees)
mo+bua	>	<u>mmui</u>	<u>mobui</u> (speaker)
mo+batla	>	<u>mmatli</u>	<u>mobatli</u> (seeker)
mo+bolela	>	<u>mmoledi</u>	<u>moboledi</u> (speaker)

The variations we have considered thus far are at the phonological and morphological levels between Sesotho and Sekgolokwe/Setlokwa. However, variation is also pervasive at other levels of language structure, for instance, syntactically and lexically.

### 3.3 Morphological variations between Sesotho, Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa.

Morphology, as the term is used in linguistics, is the science and study of the forms and formation of words, in all their aspects. Morphology deals with grammatical elements which make up words. All such elements have some meaning or grammatical function. Morphological variation involves the irregular structures and sequence of formation of words deviating from the norm structure. Sesotho, Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa show morphological variations, especially in irregular verbs. Examples of such morphological variation occur in the formation of reflexive verbs, demonstrative pronouns and causative

forms of the verb.

### 3.3.1 Reflexive verbs

In Sesotho the reflexive is formed by prefixing *i-* to verb stems as in bona > ipona. Although the prefixing of *i-* in Sesotho verb stems results in the plosivation of the initial sound, the Sekgolokwe speakers have simplified the system so that all reflexive verbs retain their initial voiced consonant in words such as:

<u>bona</u>	>	<u>ipona</u>	cf Sesotho
<u>beha</u>	>	<u>ipeha</u>	cf Sesotho
<u>dumela</u>	>	<u>itumela</u>	cf Sesotho

Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa speakers have simplified the system so that all their reflexive verbs do not undergo strengthening when the reflexive prefix *-i* precedes the verb stem. This morphological simplification has brought those irregular verbs in line with regular verbs like:

Verb stem	Sesotho	Sekgolokwe/Setlokwa	
<b>-rata</b>	<b>/ithata/</b>	<b>/irata/</b>	(love oneself)
<b>-lokisa</b>	<b>/itokisa/</b>	<b>/ilokisa/</b>	(prepare oneself)
<b>-dulela</b>	<b>/itulela/</b>	<b>/idulela/</b>	(sit for oneself)

These irregular structures that occur in Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa may be brought about by simplification or generalisation of language.

### 3.3.2 The demonstrative

The demonstrative in Sesotho locates an object/referent in relation to the speech participants, that is the speaker and addressee. Sesotho has three positional types of the demonstrative corresponding to each of the noun classes. An interesting feature in

Sesotho is that each of these positions has two forms. This means there is an alternative for each of the positions.

Sesotho examples:

**1<sup>st</sup> position**      **Motho eo / enwa**      (this person)

**2<sup>nd</sup> position**      **Motho eo / eno**      (that person)

**3<sup>rd</sup> position**      **Motho yane / elwa**      (that person)

**1<sup>st</sup> position**      **Batho baa / bana**      (these people)

**2<sup>nd</sup> position**      **Batho bao / bano**      (those people)

**3<sup>rd</sup> position**      **Batho bane / bale**      (those people)

In Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa, however, there is just one form for each position. The Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa demonstrative differs from that of Sesotho in that the first position occurs in Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa without the suffix **-na**.

1. The first position occurs without the suffix **-na**

1<sup>st</sup> position

**Motho jo**      (this person)

**Batho baa**      (these people)

2. The 2<sup>nd</sup> position takes the following forms:

i) stems with **ba** or **a** in the 1<sup>st</sup> position take **ba** or **a** plus the suffix **-ane** and coalescence takes place, eg.

**Batho ba + ane > bane**      (those people)

**Marena a + ane > ane**      (those kings)

ii) Stems with [jo] and [wo] in the 1<sup>st</sup> position also take **-ane** but consonantalise to [**jwane**]; and [**wo**] + [**ane**] becomes [**wane**]. Examples:

**Motho jo > Motho jwane** (that person)

**Motse wo > Motse wane** (that village)

iii) Stems with [**je**], [**se**], [**tse**], [**be**], and [**bo**] in the 1<sup>st</sup> position take the suffix **-la**.

Examples:

**mebila jela** (those roads)

**sefate sela** (that tree)

**dikgomo tsela** (those cows)

**bohobe bola** (yonder bread)

3. The 3<sup>rd</sup> position is the same as in Sesotho but the suffix **-ne** is reduplicated.

Examples:

**Motho jwanene** (that person yonder)

**Batho banene** (those people yonder)

### 3.3.3 Passive forms

In Sesotho, the passive is mainly formed by **-w-**, although many variants occur, such as **-uw-** in fa (to give) **fuwa** (to be given), **tsamaya** (walk) **tsamauwa** (being walked). The passive-perfect ending **-uwe**, has a high frequency in the spoken language together with **-ilwe**, for instance **-fuwe** (has been given); **-rekuwe** (has been bought) and **-ratuwe** (has been loved) alongside **-filwe**, **-rekilwe**, **-ratilwe**. In Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa one form of passive is used, that is **-uw**.

For instance in sentences such as

1. **Ebe saa a botsuwa hore Thabo Moloi o a mo tseba.**

(Then she is asked whether she knows Thabo Moloi.)

2. **Ngwananyana eo saa jwetsuwe hore batho ba ke ba hokae.**

(The girl has been told where these people came from.)

3. **Selelekela ho thuwa ke sa mme.**

(The first cow of the dowry is for the mother.)

Since Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa are dialects of Sesotho, they do not have grammatical rules that govern them. Their speakers rely only on the spoken form.

### 3.3.4 Causative variants

The general function of the causative form in Sesotho is to express or to denote causation - “to cause to do”, “make to act” or “to cause to be”. The regular form of the causative suffix is **-is-**, in examples such as kgā > kgisa (draw water) and bolaya > bolaisa (cause to kill).

The Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa use **-es-** in words such as wa (fall) wesa, **shwa** (die) shwesa, where Sesotho cannot even use the regular **-is-**. An irregular causative is used in Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa, as in **ho tswisa** instead of **ho ntsha** in sentences such as the following:

1. **Lerapo le a e wesa kgomo.** (Sekgolokwe)

2. **Lerapo le a e diha kgomo.** (Sesotho)

(A strap does make a cow fall.)

3. **Maburu a ne a batla ho re shwesa kaofela.** (Sekgolokwe)

4. **Maburu a ne a batla ho re bolaya kaofela.** (Sesotho)

(Boers wanted to kill all of us.)

5. **Meetsi a masha a tswisa a madala.** (Sekgolokwe)

6. **Metsi a matjha a ntsha a kgale.** (Sesotho)

(Lit: New water takes out old water.)

The causative form of **wesa** may be the influence of the Zulu **wisa** (to let fall).

### 3.4 Lexical Variation between Sesotho, Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa

The word lexicon refers to the vocabulary of language. Most Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa words are similar to those used in Zulu. Frequently words and pronunciation are changed or added as a result of external influence, such as adoption of new words that are found in the culture of an invader or the politically powerful ethnic groups. Sometimes the original vocabulary falls away when new adopted words are taken into use. This may have happened in Sesotho, as well as in Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa during the period of their separation. Both the Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa groups communicate easily with each other as they share most of the vocabulary and the pronunciation is the same. The following examples illustrate this point:

#### **ho lefa** (to pay)

1. Mona Qwaqwa re *lefa* tekesi e sa *eme*. (Sesotho)  
(Here in Qwaqwa we pay whilst the taxi is still waiting.)
2. Mona re *khokha* tekesi e sa *emme*. (Sekgolokwe)

#### **meno** (teeth)

3. Re ka be re reka diapole jwale *meno* ha a sa leyo. (Sesotho)  
(We would buy some apples but we do not have teeth.)
4. Re ka be re reka diapole jwale *maino* ha sa le tenge. (Sekgolokwe)

#### **ho tjho** (to say)

5. Ha ke a *tjho* hore o *ntefelle*. (Sesotho)  
(I don't mean you should pay for me.)
6. Ha ke *shongo* hore o *nkhokhele*. (Sekgolokwe)

#### **tjhelete** (money)

7. Ho nna mona ke tshwere *tjhelete* e nyane. (Sesotho)  
(I have little money with me.)
8. Ho nna mona ke tshwere *tjhega* e *sesane*. (Sekgolokwe)



The above examples show some differences of pronunciation in the vocabulary as well as lexical differences between Sesotho and Sekgolokwe.

### 3.5 Syntactic variations between Sesotho and Sekgolokwe/Setlokwa

Syntax is the level of language in which words are put together to make sentences. It involves sentence structures and the way in which words are arranged in sentences. Sesotho and its dialects, Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa, have more or less the same word order in sentences except that in Sekgolokwe/Setlokwa the demonstrative element and the past auxiliary verb are often left out in sentences such as

1. **batho bao ke neng ke bua le bona** (the people with whom I was talking)  
(lit. the people those I was talking with them)
2. **batho ne ke bua le bona** (Sekgolokwe)  
(lit. the people was I talking with them)
3. **ditaba tseo ke neng ke o jwetsa tsona** (the news that I was telling you)
4. **ditaba ne ke o jwetsa tsona** (Sekgolokwe)

In Sesotho and Sekgolokwe/Setlokwa it is observed that there are variations with regard to morphology. On the grammatical and phonological level Sekgolokwe/Setlokwa does not consider the grammatical rules and sound changes which come about as a result of reflexivation.

In the light of the above discussion, it is safe to say that the Sesotho varieties spoken in Qwaqwa are a result of language contact between Sesotho and other languages over a period of time. These varieties are evident in the phonetic, phonological and morphological variations which exist between Sesotho and its dialects.



### **3.6 Summary**

This chapter was concerned with the discussion of language contact between different ethnic groups that lived in Qwaqwa as well as those who migrated from other regions and came to live there. This situation has contributed to language variation in different situational contexts. It has been illustrated that the two Sesotho dialects, known as Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa, show some differences from Sesotho in structure as well as in pronunciation. The differences are revealed in the morphological, phonological, lexical and syntactic variations.

## CHAPTER 4

### INTERFERENCE, CODESWITCHING AND BORROWING IN SESOTHO

#### 4.0 Introduction

According to Lehiste (1988:1), “two or more languages can be said to be in contact when they are used alternately by the same persons.”

There are several social and linguistic processes and consequences that accrue from the contact of two or more languages. Language contact results in several attitudinal and linguistic behaviours such as penetration of one language into the other, alternation of language in communication and linguistic borrowing.

In this chapter the effects of language contact, whereby elements are transferred from one language to another, will be examined. The focus will be on interference, codeswitching and borrowing and the role they play in language variation. The discussion will be on the patterns and extent of language contact and the result of interference, codeswitching, and borrowing involving Sesotho and other languages spoken by Sesotho speakers in the Qwaqwa area.

This chapter will also identify these processes and the points at which they occur. The reasons why these processes occur are also examined. Furthermore, the three processes will be discussed together as related concepts because they exist as a result of language contact.

#### 4.1 Language interference

According to Weinreich (1953:1), the term interference implies the “rearrangement of patterns that result from the introduction of foreign elements into the more highly structured

domains of language, such as the bulk of phonemic system, a large part of morphology and syntax and some areas of vocabulary such as kinship, colour, weather etc.” Weinreich (ibid) distinguishes three types of interference, viz. phonic interference, grammatical interference and lexical interference. The following discussion of grammatical and lexical interference will include that of phonic interference because sound changes take place within the lexical and grammatical contexts.

#### 4.1.1 Grammatical interference

Lehiste (1988:2) describes grammatical interference as when elements of the first language enter the second language and are gradually grammatically integrated, or when a first language speaker starts to speak a second language and carries over elements of the first language into the second language. According to Lehiste (ibid), in grammatical integration, a word brought into the second language from the donor language must be assigned grammatical categories that are characteristic of the first language.

Regarding the grammatical adaptation of verbs: borrowed verbs are integrated with the verbal system of Sesotho. Derivations are made as if they are original verb stems. Profile examples often used by learners in Qwaqwa schools are as follows:

ho **phusha** (to push)

ho **khorekta** (to correct)

ho **tlelina** (to clean).

From the above examples it is noted that all three verbs end with the vowel **-a**. In the case of **ho tlelina** (to clean), it is noted that in Sesotho, a sound sequence such as **cl** does not exist, therefore, the English **cl** is changed to **tle**.

With regard to the above examples, morphological adjustment is made because Sesotho has a different morphological structure from that of the English language. These morphological adjustments often interfere with the structure of the original English words

such as in the following:

push  
correct  
clean.

On the grammatical adaptation of nouns and verbs, in Sesotho, adapted nouns are accommodated into Sesotho system generally following the CVC rule. For instance, nouns such as the Afrikaans *straat* (street) and *skool* (school) are adopted in Sesotho as **seterata** and **sekolo** respectively, with an epenthetic vowel inserted between the consonants, hence **se** (prefix) **tr > ter**.

It is noted that if the Afrikaans or English borrowed noun begins with **s** followed by another consonant, the **s** is converted into a consonant vowel (CV) type syllable by placing a vowel after it, changing the **s** to the class 7 noun prefix **se-**. Examples:

<i>skool</i>	school	<b>sekolo</b>
<i>sker</i>	scissors	<b>sekere.</b>

The final **-er** of the English word teacher, is pronounced with an almost silent **r**. In the Sesothoized form, the sound of the **r** is articulated and a terminative vowel **-e** is inserted, as in **titjhere**.

It will have become clear from the analysis of the sound substitutions made above, that in most situations the substituted Sesotho sound comprises the nearest Sesotho phoneme to the corresponding English or Afrikaans one. In the case of vowels, any consonant repetition after the last Sesothoized vowel is achieved by using the last vowel over again. For instance in the Sesotho:

<i>skool</i>	school	<b>sekolo</b>
<i>sker</i>	scissors	<b>sekere.</b>

Most verb stems in Sesotho end in **-a** in their infinitive form. It is therefore noted that when verb stems are borrowed from English or Afrikaans, one of the changes effected on them is the suffixing of this terminative **-a**, a tense suffix which may be shifted forward when the various verb end suffixes are attached to the stem, or replaced altogether as in the formation of the perfect. Examples:

push > phusha > phushana (reciprocal) phushitse (perfect)  
pass > pasa > pasaka (reciprocal) pasitse (perfect)

#### 4.1.2 Lexical interference

As with other kinds of interference, lexical interference may result from contact between the vocabularies of speakers of two or more languages. According to Weinreich (1953:47), interference may take various forms. Morphemes may, for instance be transferred from one language into another, while morphemes from the receiving language may be used with a meaning derived from the lending language.

Weinreich further explains that the most common type of interference is the outright transfer of the phonemic sequence from one language to another.

Another view, which is brought by Khati (in Herbert 1992:181-182), also explains that, if one language borrows from another, or expressions of one language are “sandwiched” in the utterances of another, we talk about interference having taken place. For instance, in the sentence: **O tla i-identif-aya jwang?**, the prefix **i-** is sandwiched with the English *identif-* and the Sesotho suffix **-aya**. In this case, the morphemes from the receiving language (Sesotho) have been used with a meaning from the lending language (English).

In this section we have discussed different kinds of interference as they are observed from the learners responses to questionnaires. The observation is that interference may take place in different forms, viz. grammatical, lexical and syntactical in Sesotho.

## 4.2 Codeswitching

Codeswitching has been defined by several linguists. According to Mutasa (1993:84), codeswitching constitutes one of the many forms of language contact phenomena and can best be understood by placing it in the double context of speech economy of a multilingual community.

On the other hand, Myers-Scotton (1993a:3) defines it as “the selection by bilinguals or multi-linguals of forms from an embedded variety in utterances of the matrix variety during the same conversation.” According to Myers-Scotton (1993a), the term matrix refers to the language in which the majority of morphemes in a given conversation occur (ie the recipient language). The languages from which material enters a matrix language are referred to as embedded (ie the donor language). She further mentions that codeswitching may be either intersentential or intrasentential.

### 4.2.1 Intersentential codeswitching

This involves switches from one language to the other between sentences, that is the whole sentence is produced entirely in one language before there is a switch to the other language. In intersentential switching a speaker has the ability of alternating between two or more languages.

According to Gumperz (in Downes 1998:80), intersentential switching can also take place between participants' turns, so that one speaker speaks in one code, but the reply comes in another. Gumperz's explanation applies to the situation under investigation because the learner may speak in Sesotho but the teacher's reply could be in English, as illustrated in the following conversation from Appendix 3:

Learner: **Ha re sa bua Sesotho hantle re tсамaya re se kopanya le dipuo tse ding.**

(We do not speak Sesotho correctly anymore, we are mixing it with other



languages).

Teacher: **...charity begins at home. The home is the place where you live, where you learn everything from your mother, from your father, from your siblings, then the community outside, they are just going to support you.....**

The teacher also uses intersentential codeswitching in sentences such as in the following extract from Appendix 3:

1. ...moo e leng hore makgowa a ruta **dilanguage tsa rona and in South Africa it is even worse because we have 11 official languages.**  
(... where the white people teach our languages ...)
2. Ngwanaka ha a kena sekolo makgoweng, ha a kena ka tlung **it is my duty as a parent** hore ke bone hore ngwana o bua puo ya lapeng.  
(When my child attends a white (English medium) school, when he/she arrives home .... I make sure that he/she speaks the home language.)
3. Le ya **ko** ditoropong **where you are going to mix the languages, where you must communicate...**  
(You are going to cities ...)

The above examples show intersentential codeswitching. The speaker begins with a Sesotho sentence then switches over to English and in example 2, switches back to Sesotho.

#### **4.2.2 Intrасentential codeswitching**

This occurs within the same sentence. It involves the mixing of morphemes of two languages in a single word. Such switches produce more than one type of constituent: those with material from two languages occurring within the same constituent, those entirely in the matrix language or those entirely in the embedded language. The following Sesotho examples illustrate this type:

1. Makgowa a ruta **di**language tsa rona.  
(White people teach our languages.)
2. O tla i- **identifaya** jwang?  
(How will you identify yourself?)
3. Ke lona ba tshwanelang ho **rectifaya** mistake oo.  
(It is you who are supposed to rectify that mistake).
4. Bona ba tla o **suppota** ka ntho eo o e rutilweng ka lapeng.  
(They will support you with what you have been taught in the family.)

In example 1 above, the word **di-language** is made up of two morphemes from two different languages that is, Sesotho prefix **di-** and English noun **language**. Similarly in example 2, the word **i-identifaya** is made up of morphemes from two different languages that is, the Sesotho reflexive **i-**, the English **identify** and the Sesotho verbal suffix **-a**.

Poplack and Weeler (1987) as quoted by Herbert (1992:184), refer to intrasentential switching as nonce borrowing, implying that it is temporary or meant for certain specific occasions and purpose and also add another type of switching which they call tag switching. According to Poplack and Weeler, tag switching involves the insertion of tags from one language into another. Tags can also appear in monolingual utterances such as those in the following Sesotho examples:

1. Kwala monyako **tog**.
2. Ba sebetsa **net** bashanyana.

Note also the following examples excerpted from Appendix 3:

1. Re tla le ruta, **if ever** wena o sa se bue heno.  
(We will teach you, if you never speak it at home.)
2. ...ho le kgothaletsa **not to speak** Sesotho **only**.  
(...to encourage you not to speak Sesotho only.)
3. Mosotho ya apereng kobo, o bitswa "lejapere" **as if** wena ha o e je.

(A Mosotho wearing a blanket is called “lejapere” (horse-eater) as if you do not eat it.)

In the above examples, the following words, “if ever”, “not to speak”, and “as if “ have been used as tags from English to a Sesotho conversation.

In discussing intersentential and intrasentential codeswitching, it is observed that intersentential codeswitching involves the switching between two or more sentences from different languages whereas the intrasentential codeswitching involves the mixing of morphemes and words from two or more different languages.

From the example used from the data in Appendix 3, we note that it is only the teacher who codeswitches in her speech, however, students and ordinary people were also often observed to codeswitch in their speech.

#### **4.2.3 Social motivation for codeswitching**

Different approaches have been used to find the underlying motivation for the shift from one language to another. Linguists have formulated the following hypotheses as motivations for codeswitching:

- that the bilingual may have forgotten the term for something in the language(s) he/she is currently speaking, and uses the other language’s term instead; or
- the other language being spoken may not have a term for a particular concept the speaker wants to refer to; and
- codeswitching can also be used to express emotion, close personal relationships and solidarity and to exclude a third person from part of a conversation.

However, Myers-Scotton (1979:71) is of the opinion that codeswitching takes place because the switcher recognises that the use of one of the two languages has its values in terms of the reward and costs which accrue to the user. The switcher chooses a middle

road in terms of the possible reward and decides to use both languages in a single conversation. Codeswitching is motivated by social consequences and whilst the motivation of the speaker is an important consideration in the choice of code, such motivation may not be at all conscious.

Myers-Scotton (1993a), as cited by Kieswetter (1995:15), proposes two models for the explanation of both the social motivations and social functions of codeswitching, and the structural constraints placed upon codeswitching within a conversation, viz. the Markedness Model and the Matrix Language Frame Model (MLF).

The Markedness Model is concerned with analysing the social function of codeswitching. In the Markedness Model, Myers-Scotton differentiates between unmarked and marked forms of codeswitching.

The unmarked form of codeswitching occurs when speakers use code choice in a conventional way thereby conforming to the normal speech behaviour of his/her community.

Examples of the unmarked form of codeswitching are as follows:

*Le ha rona sekolong mona re ka re re ruta **formal education**.*

(Even if here at school we can say that we are teaching formal education.)

*Bona ba tla o **suppota** ka ntho eo o e rutilweng ka lapeng.*

(They will support you with what you were taught at home.)

The marked form of codeswitching occurs when speakers deviate from the conventional way of speech behaviour or when the type of code choice reveals the unexpected to demonstrate the social functionality of such a choice.

This can be illustrated in the following example:

Ha ho thwe **charity begins at home, language** eo o e buang ka tlung ke

**language** eo o tshwanetseng ho e bua.

(When we say ..., the language that you speak at home is the language that you are supposed to speak.)

An extra social meaning has been given to these examples because the speaker has used an English idiomatic expression to emphasise her point of view. The literal interpretation for this may be if there is an opportunity, one extends that closer to him/her before extending it outside.

The MLF model considers the interaction between the social motivations for codeswitching and structural constraints that account for the place in a sentence where a switch between languages is made possible. For this model Myers-Scotton regards the traditionally spoken languages (home language) as the Matrix Language (ML) whereas languages acquired as a result of social influence and interaction as the Embedded Language (EL) (Kalane 1996:15).

The MLF model defines codeswitching as “the selection by bilinguals or multilinguals of forms from an embedded variety in utterances of a matrix variety during the same conversation” (Myers-Scotton1993:4). This implies that the speaker has two or more parallel languages to draw from. The matrix language is the main language and plays the more dominant role, while the embedded language is any language other than the language being used in the codeswitching to a lesser degree. Examples:

**Ngwana wa ka o kena sekolo makgoweng, ha a kena ka tlung it is my duty as a parent, hore ke bone hore ngwana o bua puo ya lapeng.**

(My child attends a white school, when he/she arrives home ... that he/she speaks the home language.)

**Le ya ko ditropong where you are going to mix the languages, where you must communicate...**

(You are going to cities ...)

From the examples above it is evident that communication is often not only facilitated by means of a common medium of communication, but also through the use of two or more different languages by the speakers engaged in conversation with each other. The teacher speaks English and the learner speaks Sesotho, and yet they are able to understand each other. The dominant or ML language is Sesotho whilst the EL tends to be English. The conversation contains common phrases that are switched such as

**it is my duty as a parent** and

le ya **ko** ditoropong

of which **ko** demonstrates another language, which is Setswana rather than the Sesotho adverb of place **kwana**.

The Matrix Language which, in the examples above is Sesotho, is the main language and plays the more dominant role, while the EL which is any language other than the language being used in the codeswitching to a lesser degree. In other words, the embedded utterances are framed within the matrix language.

Our observation concerning the phenomenon of codeswitching from Sesotho to English is that it is apparent that intrasentential codeswitching is governed by the consistent structural rule: Sesotho prefix plus English stem plus Sesotho suffix, which can be summarised and formalised as:

<b>prefix</b>	<b>plus stem</b>	<b>plus suffix</b>
<b>di</b>	<b>language</b>	<b>-∅</b>
<b>o tla</b>	<b>identify</b>	<b>-a</b>
<b>ho</b>	<b>rectify</b>	<b>-a</b>
<b>ba tla o</b>	<b>support</b>	<b>-a.</b>

Unlike in intrasentential codeswitching, intersentential codeswitching is not governed by the consistent structural rule because a whole sentence or phrase is switched on to the

other language. For example: **Ngwana ka o kena sekolo makgoweng, ha a kena ka tlung**, *it is my duty as a parent*.

### 4.3 Borrowing

Language contact breeds, among other things, bilingualism which in turn results in borrowing, that is the integration of foreign words and phrases from a base language into that of a recipient language. Integration depends on social acceptance of these foreign words and phrases by host language speakers (Kalane 1996:117).

Borrowing is defined by Calteaux (1994:26), as “the process by which linguistic elements are taken over from one language or dialect into another.”

The most common elements that are borrowed are words and in the receiving language they are known as loan words. However, some linguists prefer to call this phenomenon adoption since the loaned items are rarely returned to the donor languages.

According to Lesoetsa (1997:116), linguistic borrowing is seen as an integral part of the cross-linguistic influences such as transference and codeswitching. Linguistic borrowing should, therefore, be sought among transference and codeswitching processes. Borrowing is also one of the primary forces behind changes in the lexicon of a language.

Sesotho, like most languages of the world, has undergone linguistic changes because it is constantly in contact with other African languages, which are genetically related, as well as with English and Afrikaans, which are typologically related.

Due to the continual development in the field of science, technology and culture, there is constantly a need for language to create new terms to name and describe new concepts. Words are also borrowed in various situations where two or more cultures coexist and begin to influence each other within the broader society.

Borrowed words are usually integrated into the language, taking the phonological form and affixes of the borrowing language. The principle of adjustment is employed to change the morphological make-up of the borrowed item into the phonological make-up of Sesotho. Hence as Kroch (1978 :28) says:

when words are borrowed into one language from another, the phonologically simplest way for this borrowing to occur is for the words to be assimilated to the native sound pattern... this assimilation enables the speaker to use already learned articulations and rules on the borrowed words instead of having to learn new patterns for the sake of a few lexical items.

For instance, most verb stems in Sesotho end in **-a** in their infinitive form, such as **ho bona** (to see). When verb stems are borrowed from Afrikaans or English, one of the changes effected on them is the suffixing of terminative **-a**, a tense -suffix which may be shifted forward when the various suffixes are attached to the stem or replaced altogether as in the formation of the perfect.

Examples of verb stems derived from English:

'push'	> -phusha	> -phushaka
'pass'	> -pasa	> -pasitse.

The above examples are characterised by morphological adaptation of features of English to those of Sesotho. That is, these words take on a morphological form typical of Sesotho words. The adapted words are converted to verb stems and as a result they have the terminative **-a**, and can use several other Sesotho affixes.

With changing conditions and contact with western civilisation, Sesotho-speaking learners in Qwaqwa came into contact with Nguni, Afrikaans, and English speaking people. As a result, many words derived from these languages are incorporated into Sesotho. This is noticeable from the large number of loan words from these languages in Sesotho. Many of these loan words denote unknown items in the culture of the Basotho, although many



others are often used instead of the native word. These loan words form an integral part of Sesotho vocabulary. It is, therefore, possible that Sesotho-speaking learners adapt to these new words/expressions in order to cope with new situations. Their language has to undergo suitable changes so that the users are able to uphold and express themselves in this new environment.

The influence of Afrikaans and English, as well as other different cultures, has led to the creation of new words and expressions in Sesotho. Many foreign items take the form of codeswitching phrases or borrowings which are only slightly assimilated to Sesotho patterns.

From the learners' responses to the questionnaires, the following words borrowed from Afrikaans and English were observed:

tshwaetso e tswa <b>setoring</b> sa Masakaneng (the influence comes from the <b>story</b> of Masakaneng)	[from story (E)]
puo eo re e sebedisang ka hara <b>jarete</b> ya sekolo (the language that we use in the school <b>premises</b> )	[from yard (E)]
puo e buuwang <b>seterateng</b> (the language spoken <b>in the street</b> )	[from straat (A)]
<b>diteisheneng</b> tsa <b>radio</b> ( <b>on radio stations</b> )	[from <b>stations/radio</b> (E)]
ha motho a hola dintho di a <b>tjhentjha</b> (when a person grows, things <b>change</b> )	[from change (E)]
dipuo di a ananelwa <b>dishopong</b> tsa rona (languages are appreciated in our <b>shops</b> )	[from shops (E)]

Sesotho se buuwa <b>ditoropong</b> (Sesotho is spoken in <b>towns</b> )	[from dorps (A)]
le ho rata <b>boclever</b> (and to like <b>cleverness</b> )	[from clever (E)]
ho ruteha le ho <b>tjhentjha</b> leleme (to be educated and to <b>change</b> the language)	[from change (E)]
puo e sa le <b>betere</b> ka hara Qwaqwa (language is still <b>better</b> in Qwaqwa)	[from better (E)]

Recently, the relative importance of English as the language of instruction has increased as learners move from primary through secondary to tertiary levels, and it is assumed that this has some effect on the distribution of borrowing and codeswitching among learners and students at various levels. From the written responses of questionnaires the following examples of borrowed words were observed:

ha re buisana le <b>matitjhere</b> (when we communicate with <b>teachers</b> )	[from teachers (E)]
dithuto tseo re di etsang re ka di <b>pasa</b> (the subjects we study we can <b>pass</b> )	[from pass (E)]
ha motho a hola dintho di a <b>tjhentjha</b> (when a person grows things <b>change</b> ).	[from change (E)]

The above examples indicate that borrowing is one of the primary forces behind changes in the lexicon of many languages. Sesotho affixal formatives are used to make words such as **seterateng**, **diteisheneng**, **dishopong** and **ditoropong** conform to the Sesotho grammar. In Sesotho, most locatives derived from a noun end in **-ng**.

Sesotho has also borrowed several words from Afrikaans and English and several hundred words have been brought to the language to express aspects of the social, economic and educational spheres. These borrowings are also evident in the language spoken by learners in Qwaqwa schools.

#### 4.3.1 Motivation for borrowing

According to Weinreich (1953:56), lexical borrowing is beyond question the domain of borrowing because the vocabulary of a language is considerably more loosely structured than its phonemics and its grammar.

Weinreich (ibid) further notes a number of tentative statements that can be made with regard to the reasons for lexical innovation in general as:

1. The need to designate new things, persons, places and concepts.

With regard to cultural borrowing, speakers of a language accept loanword designations of new items because through their familiarity with another culture, they are aware of their important nature. One of the reasons of cultural borrowing from Afrikaans and English into Sesotho was because the Basotho were particularly sensitive to the newness of the techniques and tools.

For instance, Sesotho-speakers learned the following domestic and agricultural techniques from Afrikaans:

Domestic:	<b>sekotlolo</b>	( <i>skottel</i> )	(dish)
	<b>fereko</b>	( <i>vrk</i> )	(fork)
	<b>senotlolo</b>	( <i>sleutel</i> )	(key)
Agriculture:	<b>polasi</b>	( <i>plaas</i> )	(farm)
	<b>terekere</b>	( <i>trekker</i> )	(tractor)

Words are not adopted only for foreign cultural concepts. Often a word already exists in Sesotho for a particular concept, and another, with the same basic meaning, is adopted. The overtones are strictly cultural. The adoptives refer to Western culture and are used within this context, and the Sesotho words maintain their original significance within the traditional cultural frame. Examples:

<b>heisi</b>	> <b>huis</b>	(house)
<b>mmeleke</b>	> <b>melk</b>	(milk)
<b>poto</b>	> <b>pot (pot)</b>	(iron pot)
<b>bereka</b>	> <b>werk</b>	(work)

Furthermore, Sesotho has imported English designations mostly in the sphere of education, technology and science. Examples:

<b>setifikeiti</b>	(certificate)
<b>titjhere</b>	(teacher)
<b>ho porinta</b>	(to print)
<b>mmetse</b>	(mathematics)
<b>ho pasa</b>	(to pass)
<b>ho feila</b>	(to fail)
<b>ho repita</b>	(to repeat)
<b>wekeshopo</b>	(workshop)

Lexical borrowing of this type can be described as a result of the fact that using ready-made designations is more economical than describing a thing afresh (cf. Weinreich 1953:57).

2. A language can also satisfy its ever-present need for euphemisms and slang by borrowing. For instance, the English word “period” as often used by school learners became welcome euphemism for “menstruation” instead of **ho ya matsatsing** (to have your days). The word “pregnant” is also often used by school learners for “**ho ima**”.

3. Weinreich (1953:59) also mentions that one consideration affecting the bilingual in particular, is the symbolic association of the source language in a contact situation with social values, either positive or negative. If one language is endowed with prestige, the bilingual is likely to use what are identifiable loanwords from it as a means of displaying the social status which its knowledge symbolises. For example, students in tertiary institutions often speak of “dikhoso” (courses), “di-asainmente” (assignments), “accommodation” and “ma-lectur-a” (lecturers) instead of **dithuto**, **mosebetsi**, **sebaka sa bodulo** and **barupedi** respectively.
4. One other factor which prompts lexical borrowing on the part of bilinguals is that a comparison with the other language to which a person is exposed, may lead him/her to feel that some of his/her semantic fields are insufficiently differentiated.

In this study it was noted that learners in Qwaqwa high schools seem to have forgotten the words **mosuwe/mosuwetsana** to denote a male or female teacher, but as a result of contact with English and Afrikaans-speaking people, they have felt the need to differentiate and borrowed the English word **titjhere** (teacher) and **mmisi** (mistress) or the Afrikaans word *meneer* as a designation for **mosuwe**.

5. Sesotho-speakers borrow many words from Afrikaans and English into Sesotho because some Sesotho words are perceived not to be expressive enough to denote meaning. For instance, learners often use the following English words: boyfriend or girlfriend more freely than their Sesotho counterparts, **kgarebe** and **mohlankana**, specifically for romantic love.

### 4.3.2 Types of borrowing

There are many ways in which borrowing between languages can take place. The way in which vocabulary from one language can interfere with another are briefly discussed below. One of the ways in which a language acquires terms or words for concepts hitherto unknown to its speakers is through the adoption of vocabulary from the language of the people who have introduced the new cultural elements.

Earlier research on borrowing by scholars such as Mathumba (1993), recognises that there are various forms of borrowing such as: cultural and lexical borrowing.

#### 4.3.2.1 Cultural borrowing

According to Mathumba (1993:177), cultural borrowing refers to the adoption of features from a different language and usually involves the introduction of new elements of culture into the adopting language. The borrowing language may incorporate some cultural item or idea and the name along with it from some external source, for instance learners in Qwaqwa schools often use English words such as *forms*, *certificate* and *bursaries* as **diforomo**, **setifikeiti** and **dibasari** in their speech. These words denote elements which are new in the Basotho culture.

In the case of a loan word, both sound and meaning are imported from another language. The word may be adapted to follow the sound patterns of the new language. For instance in Qwaqwa schools learners use the above words in the educational sphere which are new to the culture of the Basotho.

The examples given indicate that this linguistic adaptation does not disturb the phonemic structure of Sesotho by introducing new sounds and sound combinations from the source language but rather distorts these sounds so that they conform to its phonological and morphological pattern.

#### 4.3.2.2 Lexical borrowing

Lexical borrowing is the most common type of interaction between languages. The vocabulary or lexicon is the most unstable part of any language, and words may be picked up or discarded as a given community feels the need.

Examples of borrowed words often used by learners in Qwaqwa schools from Afrikaans and English into Sesotho vocabulary are the following nouns:

<u>Afrikaans</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Sesotho</u>
<b>dorp</b>	<b>town</b>	<b>toropo</b>
<b>straat</b>	<b>street</b>	<b>seterata</b>
<b>jaart</b>	<b>yard</b>	<b>jarete</b>
<b>skool</b>	<b>school</b>	<b>sekolo</b>
<b>stasie</b>	<b>station</b>	<b>seteishene</b>
<b>winkels</b>	<b>shops</b>	<b>dishopo</b>

In the case of a loanword, both sound and meaning are imported from another language. The word may be adapted to follow the sound patterns of the new language. For instance the loan word **seteishene** in Sesotho, English *station* has been adapted so that a consonant cluster is avoided and a word ends on a vowel.

An interesting aspect of borrowing is the prevalence of borrowed forms even in cases where Sesotho words exist. Examples from learners in Qwaqwa schools are given below. All these words are frequently used in their speech but not yet found in written work:

<u>English</u>	<u>Loan word</u>	<u>Original Sesotho</u>
<b>transport</b>	<b>teranseporoto</b>	<b>dipalangwang</b>
<b>clean</b>	<b>tlelina</b>	<b>hlwekisa</b>
<b>study</b>	<b>setadise</b>	<b>boithuto</b>

The above examples indicate a number of consonant clusters foreign to Sesotho which occur in adoptives. Such consonant clusters do not occur in Sesotho words, yet in words of English and Afrikaans they do. Because the sound combinations like **tr**, **cl**, **st**, are not part of Sesotho sound system, epenthetic vowels have to be inserted between the consonants.

### **4.3.3 Similarities and differences between codeswitching and borrowing**

#### **4.3.3.1 Similarities**

According to Myers-Scotton (1993a:206), a continuum of relationship exists between borrowing and all forms of codeswitching material so that codeswitching and borrowing are not distinct phenomena. In comparing codeswitching and borrowing, Myers-Scotton argues that codeswitching and borrowing need to be seen universally as related processes:

- Codeswitching and borrowing are possible between any two languages, one language being the matrix language and the other being an embedded language.
- MLF model posits structural constraints which account for both borrowing and codeswitching.
- Both borrowed and codeswitched forms behave the same way morphosyntactically in the matrix language.
- The relationship between codeswitching and borrowing is problematic since the presently observable borrowings and codeswitches are the product of decades of language contact involving a complete range between fluent bilingual and completely monolingual speakers.

In many situations of cultural contact between speakers of different languages in Qwaqwa schools, borrowing forms from other languages such as Afrikaans or English appear readily in conversations. The same conversations also include sentences showing codeswitching.



#### 4.3.3.2 Differences

According to Weinreich (1953:59), interference implies the rearrangement of patterns that result from the introduction of foreign elements into the more highly structured domains of language such as the phonemic system, morphology and syntax and some areas of the vocabulary.

Codeswitching is defined as “the use of two or more linguistic varieties in the same conversation, without prominent phonological assimilation of one variety to the other: such alternation use of two or more linguistic varieties differs from what is called borrowing in that the items introduced by the bilingual are unassimilated” (cf Myers-Scotton 1993:21).

To differentiate codeswitching from borrowing we may say that codeswitching refers to the use of two or more linguistic varieties without prominent assimilation of one variety to the other. This phenomena can also be observed among learners in Qwaqwa schools, who used some of the following expressions in response to the questionnaire:

- **Sometimes** re sebedisa puo ya Sezulu.  
(Sometimes we use the Zulu language.)
- Tsotsitaal ke puo e tswakileng Afrikaans **somewhere**.  
(Tsotsitaal is a language mixed with Afrikaans somewhere.)
- Hape ebile re tshwere **style**.  
(We are also in style.)
- Le ho rata **botleleva**.  
(And to like cleverness.)

From the foregoing examples, it is apparent that words such as **sometimes**, **somewhere**, **style** can and do occur in their entire Afrikaans or English form within utterances that are basically Sesotho. On the other hand, the word **bo clever** occurs in a sentence that is almost entirely in Sesotho, it is made to conform to the Sesotho grammar through the use of Sesotho prefix **bo-**. However adverbs such as **somewhere** and **sometimes** that

express location and time have not been adapted morphologically or phonologically to Sesotho and, therefore, not formally accepted.

Borrowing can be described as the process in which a word is taken over from a foreign language and adapted as far as possible to become an integral part of the language that is, phonologically, morphologically, phonetically, tonally and conforming to the syllabic system of the borrowing language.

Borrowing is the incorporation of foreign features into a group's native language by speakers of that language: the native language is maintained but is changed by the addition of the incorporated features (cf Thomason and Kaufman 1988:37):

- Borrowing serves primarily referential functions, providing labels for concepts, objects and ideas that have no antecedents in the borrowing language culture whereas codeswitching serves primarily socio-pragmatic functions.
- The difference between borrowing and codeswitching is that borrowing can occur in the speech of both monolinguals and bilinguals as long as the monolingual speaker has at least a smattering command of the embedded code.
- Codeswitching and borrowing differ in that even monolingual speakers may use borrowed items, but codeswitching requires a bilingual speaker.
- While codeswitching may occur on a one-off basis, for instance when a speaker forgets a word and uses an equivalent from another language, borrowed terms are usually accepted into the language and can be found in dictionaries, sometimes even replacing native words.

#### **4.4 Summary**

In this chapter we have discussed the three concepts viz, interference, codeswitching and borrowing as related social phenomena occurring in Sesotho spoken by learners in Qwaqwa schools. Linguists define interference, codeswitching and borrowing as separate processes. However the observation is that practically it is not easy to separate them because interference is seen as an umbrella concept embracing codeswitching and borrowing. It has also been observed that interference, codeswitching and borrowing are always possible between any two or more languages, one language being the matrix language and the other being an embedded language.

The discussion of the social motivation for codeswitching and borrowing adds clarity to the phenomenon; and the claim that interference, codeswitching and borrowing are everyday phenomena in bilingual situations such as in Qwaqwa schools becomes justified. The marked and unmarked models and the application to codeswitching in Sesotho and examples illustrating their realisation have also been discussed.

## CHAPTER 5

### SPOKEN SESOTHO VERSUS WRITTEN SESOTHO

#### 5.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the major similarities and the relationships between spoken and written Sesotho as used by learners in Qwaqwa high schools. The discussion will be about the linguistic description of the similarities and the relationships between the two forms. Although the focus is on each of the two forms as independent modes, one should be aware that there are important links between them and that the learning that occurs in one benefits the other. The examples that will be used come from the research conducted at the five Qwaqwa high schools.

In order to place this investigation in its proper context, it is important to consider the basic definitions of spoken and written forms of language.

According to Bing (1982:10), the spoken form of language is

a system of phonetically manifestable language elements whose function is to react to a given stimulus in a dynamic way, that is in a ready and immediate manner, duly expressing not only the purely communicative but also the emotional aspect of the approach of the reacting language user. The written form of language is a system of graphically manifestable language elements whose function is to react to a given stimulus in a static way, that is in a preservable and easily surveyable, concentrating particularly on the purely communicative aspect of the approach of the reacting language user.

From the above explanation, it is evident that the most obvious difference between the spoken and written forms of language is that of physical form: the substance of speech is “phonic”, whereas the substance of the written form is “graphic”.

The written form of language involves the generation of ideas and the ability to reproduce these ideas in an acceptable written style, so that words are correctly spelt, sentences constructed and arranged in such a way that what is read is correctly interpreted.

Halliday (1990:100) defines spoken and written language as, “both forms of a language, with the same linguistic system underlying both but they exploit different features of a system, and gain their power in different ways.”

Several writers have argued that written language is not simply spoken language presented in written form, but is, rather, functionally distinct from spoken language. Halliday (1990:44) makes the following statement in support of the differences between spoken and written language:

there is one very general principle which ensures that spoken and written language will never be totally alike; that is the principle of functional variation or register in language, and this variation is of two kinds, viz. social and functional.

Pursuing the same argument, Stubbs (1980:161), states that:

the most general formal difference between spoken and written language is that spoken language is open to several different kinds of variation, whereas written language is relatively much more uniform.

Stubbs (1980:161), further indicates that all languages show stylistic differentiation according to social function and context, and all languages with writing systems show differentiation between spoken and written forms.

From the above definitions we understand that spoken language refers to the language which is spoken, that is, in which oral communication takes place, whereas written language is language presented in a written form which is functionally distinct from spoken language.

## 5.1 Distinction between the spoken and written language

For some time linguists have disagreed on the nature of spoken versus written forms of language. We live in what is called a “literate society”; which means that a reasonably large proportion of older children and adults in the community use language in a written as well as in spoken form. Writing and speaking are not just alternative ways of doing the same thing; rather, they are ways of doing different things (Halliday 1985:xv). Writing evolves when language has to take on new functions in society.

Linguists such as Biber (1988:7), hold that in theory, writing is disregarded as secondary and derivative from speech. In practice however, speech is also disregarded as unsystematic and not representative of the true linguistic structure of a language.

According to Biber (1988:7), “this view is especially prominent within the generative transformationalist paradigm, where grammatical intuitions are the primary data to be analysed”. Biber (ibid) further maintains that

although these intuitions are typically collected by means of verbal elicitation, they are in many respects more like writing than speech. The data for analysis within this paradigm deliberately exclude performance errors of actual speech, dialect, and register variation and any linguistic features that depend on a discourse or situational context for interpretation.

The fact that there is a distinction between spoken and written language seems to be obvious and can be assumed to be a case in language development. Much as it may seem to be a logical development, it turns out to be one of the most problematic areas in language study.

It is an indisputable fact that we do not write the way we speak. It is this difference between the spoken language and the written language that creates problems in the teaching and learning situations. When we look closely at any language, we are almost certain to find that there will be considerable variation in the actual choices of words and phrases that people make on different occasions. Of interest will be the extent of such variation and the

possibility that discrete, identifiable sub-varieties of the language exist.

On the other hand, Stockwell (1988:11) mentions that spoken language is syntactically less restricted in general, besides having also certain syntactic patterns that are not used in written language. In speech, people normally accept this freedom from a strict notion of syntactic correctness, except in situations where it would hinder understanding and in teaching situations. In the teaching situations, even when communication works well with unregulated constructions, parents and teachers usually correct children and language learners so that they can learn the syntax needed for written language and for communication about unknown events.

Stockwell (1988:11), continues to say that:

motivation for learning syntax depends on several factors such as, the prestige of the people providing the models of correct speech, the wish to please them and to avoid and neglect other penalties, and the drive to get to know parts of the world that are next door and farther away.

Since our main concern here is the observable features of differences with regard to spoken and written Sesotho, differences concerning the form, phonetic, phonological, morphological and syntactic will be considered.

### **5.1.1 Differences in form**

Spoken language is considered primary since it existed before written language and everyone learns to speak the language before learning how to write it. However, we should not view linguistic differences as a historical priority, but rather a complementary feature.

The main formal difference between spoken and written language is that spoken language is open to several kinds of variation, whereas written language is relatively more uniform.

Spoken language tends to be more fragmentary and sociable. When you talk to someone

you tend to invite or reject him/her. The spoken language is mainly a face-to-face interaction; however the conversation may take place telephonically. In this manner, the speaker can also observe the immediate reactions to the speech delivered and, if there is a misunderstanding, the speaker can immediately correct it. For instance a greeting exchange between two of my research subjects went as follows: “**Dumela wena**”, (Hallo you); the immediate answer was “**Ke wena, ke hloka lebitso?**” (Am I “you”, do I have no name?). In this regard, Tannen (1987:45) says

the truth and reality that we expect in face to face conversation is different from what we expect in writing.

In a written interaction where the parties are not physically together, the writer cannot use the context to clarify what he/she has to say. The written form of language has no immediate feedback. I am aware, though, that the internet and e-mail are closing the gap.

### 5.1.2 Phonetic differences

The spoken language is characteristic of an individual’s cultural background and individual way of speaking. For instance, learners in Qwaqwa schools who speak dialects such as Sekgolokwe or Setlokwa, when reading aloud tend to attach different pronunciations to certain sounds because they read according to the way they have learnt to speak.

Example: In **Mofumahadi** (Mrs), the [h] may be rewritten phonetically as a glottal sound such as in [Mofumafadi] but for the Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa, the sound is produced as a velar voiced fricative [ɣ] as in [Mofumayadi]. Compare the following phonetical form with that of the written word:

<b>Spoken Sesotho</b>	<b>Spoken Sekgolokwe/Setlokwa</b>	<b>Written</b>
Mofumafadi	Mofumayadi	Mofumahadi
Mohatla	Moyatla	Mohatla



1. Re rutwa ke **Mofumahadi** Mofokeng.  
(We are taught by Mrs Mofokeng.)
2. Kwala monyako se ka iketsa **mohatla**.  
(Close the door. [or: Do not make yourself a tail.]

The written language is not suitable to reflect such differences in spoken language, especially because Sekgolokwe is typically not written.

### **5.1.3 Phonological differences**

Phonological knowledge permits a speaker to produce sounds that form meaningful utterances, to recognise a foreign accent, to recognise what is or is not a sound in the language.

#### **5.1.3.1 Pronunciation**

Pronunciation means articulating sounds in a correct manner. A spoken sentence can be meaningful only when the speaker combines correct pronunciation, stress, intonation and sound. These features are vital to the meaning of a sentence.

#### **5.1.3.2 Intonation**

Halliday (1985:48) defines intonation as

the melodic movement, the rise and fall of pitch. [...] intonation has a lexical function because the choice of tone is as much part of the phonetic shape of a word as is the choice of vowels and consonants so that if the speaker varies tone he/she may get a different word.

In written languages, all sentences have equivalent value and force in that they are all flat, with no intonation patterns or associated non-linguistic features. Sesotho is a tonal language, the relative pitch of syllables in a sentence plays a semantic role in the spoken

sentence. In Sesotho tone is used in two particular ways. Firstly, it is used to differentiate or distinguish the meanings of words that contain the same combination of vowels and consonants which when written, would appear to be spelt alike but pronounced differently. Learners in Qwaqwa schools often pronounce words such as **mmè** (mother) and **ntatè** (father) differently to the norm:

1. **Mmé** ke Mozulu.  
(My mother is Zulu.)
2. **Ntáté** ke Mosotho.  
(My father is Sotho.)

In writing, tone, grammatical construction and meaning are conveyed by means of punctuation marks. It is essential that careful attention be given to this aspect of written communication to avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation.

Although it may be said that the Basotho in Qwaqwa speak Sesotho, this does not imply that all the Basotho speak the same form of Sesotho or pronounce individual sounds identically or even carry melody over phrases in a similar manner. There are a number of foreign sound combinations in the learners speech as against written Sesotho. These foreign sound sequences have resulted from the exposure to foreign cultural influences and experiences. In that respect learners' spoken language seems to be more exposed to such influences than the written mode.

### **5.1.3.3 Elision**

Elision is another aspect which is common to spoken Sesotho. It takes place between vowels or between consonants. For example, elision of a glottal fricative /h/ is common in spoken language and written Sesotho.

In learners' responses to questionnaires the following sentences involving elision occur:

**in written**

ke sa **siye** morao radio  
(not leaving out the radio)

thuto e o **beha** maamong a hodimo  
(education put you in high position)

titjhere o re **neha** nako e lekaneng ya  
ho bua  
(teacher gives us enough time to speak)

kopanyo ya dipuo e **diha** boemo ba  
Sesotho  
(codeswitching lowers the status of Sesotho)

**in spoken**

ke sa **sie** morao radio

thuto e o **bea** maamong a hodimo

kopanyo ya dipuo e **dia** boemo ba Sesotho

This free elision of the glottal fricative is a phonological process which has its roots in the concepts of weakening. That is the weak consonant /h/ is easier to be elided.

The phenomenon of optional syntactic elision also occurs in learners' speech and it is not recognised in written language. In learners' spoken language forms the following examples occur:

1. Ka **mokgo** ke o hopotseng ka teng.

instead of

Ka **mokgwa oo** ke o hopotseng ka teng.

(The way I have been longing for you.)

In the learners' spoken Sesotho, voluntary elision of vowels in speech often results in the temporary existence of combinations comprising voiceless alveolar fricative **s** followed by an explosive consonant such as in the following:

2. Sekolo ke **s'kena** Kgotsong.

instead of

Sekolo ke **se kena** Kgotsong.

(I attend school at Kgotsong.)

3. Nna Sesotho ke a **s'tseba**, ke tseba le ho **s'buwa**.

instead of

Nna Sesotho ke a **se tseba**, ke tseba le ho **se bua**.

(I know Sesotho, I even know how to speak it.)

4. Re **s'buwa skolong** le matitjhere.

instead of

Re **se bua sekolong** le matitjhere.

(We speak it in school with the teachers.)

5. Ke tseba le ho **s'ngola**.

instead of

Ke tseba le ho **se ngola**.

(I even know to write it.)

Kunene (1963:362) states that

the important thing in respect of this omission of consonant-separation is that, through contact with Afrikaans and English, Sesotho is in the process of incorporating into its phonological structure sound combinations which are eventually going to become part and parcel of this structure.

The above examples clearly demonstrate that combinations comprising voiceless alveolar fricatives followed by a plosive consonant appear to be less difficult in spoken Sesotho.

#### 5.1.4 Morphological differences

In every language there are rules that relate to the formation of words. Rules of grammar determine how morphemes and words can combine to express a specific meaning. There are obvious differences between spoken and written language, when we look at the ways in which grammatical structures are used. The written language is more conservative than spoken language because when we write we are apt to obey the prescriptive rules taught in school or to use more formal style, than we are to use the rules of our everyday grammar. The reason being that when we use spoken language to communicate with others, we do not bother much about the structure of sentences we utter. This view is supported by Garton and Pratt (1989:126), who say that,

in speaking we move directly from the idea we wish to communicate, to the production of the speech to represent that idea without any conscious awareness of the structure of the speech we have used.

In most cases spoken language is not bound by grammatical and orthographical rules of the language as much as written language is. This fact may very well contribute to the difficulties learners experience in writing. The written language reflects, to a certain extent, the elements and rules that together constitute the grammar of the language. The system of phonemes is represented by the letters of the alphabet, although not necessarily in a direct way.

In schools, spoken language has always been criticised and corrected against the written language. While at school, learners are expected to learn a form of Sesotho that differs from the everyday spoken language. Learners are expected to use expressions which are uncommon in everyday spoken language when writing compositions and letters. For instance, expressions such as the following occur in the learners' written work:

**Ntate wa ka**

(My father)

and

**Mme wa ka ya ratehang**

(My loving mother)

used in the salutation in written letters, and

**Ke nna ngwana wa hao**

(I am your child)

used in concluding letters.

These are forms of address uncommon in spoken language. Speakers simply say, **Ntate** (father), **Mme** (mother), **mora** (son), **moradi** (daughter).

The above examples show that learners use more formal style taught in school for written texts. These resulted from direct translation from English, (My dear mother, My dear father, or Dear dad).

### **5.1.5 Syntactic differences**

Knowing a language also means being able to put words together to form phrases and sentences that express our thoughts. Syntax is the part of grammar that concerns the structure of phrases and sentences. It is important for the language speaker to know which combinations or strings of morphemes are permitted by the syntactic rules and which are not. Those strings that conform to the syntactic rules are called the sentence or grammatical sentences of the language, and strings of morphemes that do not are called ungrammatical.

Spoken and written language differ in that in written language, the independence of words is revealed by the spaces in the written string. In languages where words are composed of more than one morpheme, the writing usually does not show the individual morphemes, even though speakers know what they are. In spoken language, phrases and sentences are put together in a haphazard manner to express our thoughts.

In learners' written responses to questionnaires, the ungrammatical sentences such as the following were found:

1. **Ke nahana hore ha phano ya dibuka e le teng hore di ka balwa.**  
(Lit: I think that if the giving of books is available that they can be read.)

instead of

2. **Ke nahana hore ha ho ka fanwa ka dibuka, di ka balwa.**  
(I think that, if books can be supplied, they can be read.)

3. **Ke sa siye morao radio.**  
(Not leaving behind the radio.)

instead of

4. **Ke sa siye radio morao.**  
(Not leaving the radio behind.)

Literal translations from English to Sesotho are also common in learners' speech. Note the following:

1. **E ba le letsatsi le monate.**  
instead of

**Natefelwa ke letsatsi lena.**  
(Have a nice day.)

2. **Sekolo se nka karolo phehisanong ya mmino.**  
instead of

**Sekolo se na le seabo phehisanong ya mmino.**  
(The school takes part in music competitions.)

3. **E ba le mafelo a beke a monate.**  
instead of

**Natefelwa ke mafelo a beke.**  
(Have a nice week-end.)

#### **5.1.6 Differences in the manner of presentation**

Written language can use typographical features such as capital letters, subheadings and paragraphing to indicate the structure and organisation of the material. In spoken language such structures cannot be conveyed as clearly. The volume of the voice, expression and emphasis as well as pauses can help to get the spoken message across, but may not necessarily be precise.

### **5.1.7 Differences in function**

The differences in the form of spoken and written language produce differences in function. The functional differences relate to situational differences in when and where it is appropriate to use either spoken or written language (Garton & Pratt, 1989: 4).

In view of the explanation given by Garton and Pratt, what is appropriate depends on various social or situational factors.

The functions of speech and writing usually complement each other because we do not write to each other when we have the opportunity to speak nor can we speak to each other at a distance except in special cases involving technical equipment.

Stubbs (1980:161) identifies the following factors which are responsible for the differences in the kind of language a person may use:

- the context of language use
- the purpose of the speaker
- the subject matter of what is being spoken or written about.

Taking the above mentioned factors into consideration, the context refers to the social relations among participants, that is, their relations in terms of relative social power, status etc. Viewed in this light, whenever we speak or write in our first language, we are governed by the situation, that is, the relationship that holds between us and the person to whom we are speaking or writing. The situation in which one finds oneself, has a strong impact on



determining the difference between spoken and written language. For instance, in response to question 29 (see Appendix 1), one learner indicated that when they speak to their teachers or parents they use a different form of language from the one they use when they are with friends as follows:

1. **Puo eo re e buang seterateng ha e ame dikamano tseo re nang le tsona ho batho ba seng ba boletswe hobane re etsa matsapa hore re bue puo eo seterateng eseng ho batho ba hlomphehileng kapa dibakeng tse hlomphehileng. Re sebedisa puo e itlhomphileng ha re le dibakeng tseo kapa ho batho bao.**

(The language we use in the street does not affect the relationships we have with the people mentioned because we make sure that we use that language in the street and not to respectable people or in respectable places. We use respectable language when we are at those places or with those people.)

2. **Puo eo re e buang seterateng ha e tshwane le eo re e buang le batswadi, matitjhere le baruti. Bathong bana ba latelang re tlamehile maoto le matsoho hore re kgethe mantswe ha re bua le bona haholoholo mantswe a hlompho.**

(The language we speak in the street is not similar to the one we use when we speak to our parents, teachers and ministers. To these people we are forced to choose our words when speaking to them, especially words which show respect.)

The purpose of the speaker refers to the outcomes that participants hope for, expect or intend from the communicative event. For instance, a scene set out in a formal debate at school calls for formal speech, but the same speakers when they get home will relax and use freer language. Whether the stylistic choices that we make are conscious or unconscious, they are nonetheless both systematic and identifiable, and to make an appropriate stylistic choice is therefore an important part of using language correctly.

The subject matter of what is being spoken simply refers to what the message is about. The subject matter is closer to the purpose, meaning that as purpose and subject matter shift

within a given context, the perception of speech activity also shifts. For instance, the teacher and learners can sit in a classroom before the class begins having an informal conversation. As time for class passes, the teacher can begin to teach, causing the perception of communicative activity to shift from an informal conversation to a more formal class discussion.

Written language is also the measure that is incorporated in the notion of correctness for the spoken language. The acceptance of the correctness notions for written language does not mean that everyday spoken language conforms to the standard of language; tolerance of deviance from these standards of correctness is greater or lesser, depending on the social position and type of situation. Examples from learners' response to the questionnaire were as follows:

3. **Sesotho se buuwang se fapana le se ngolwang hobane ho na le mantswa a siko puong ya Sesotho empa...**

(Spoken Sesotho is different from the written Sesotho because there are words which do not exist in Sesotho but...)

4. **Labohlano le Moqebelo mantsibua...**

(Friday and Saturday afternoon)

5. **Ho tla tshwanela ... letsatsi la setso le atometse ...**

(It should be ... when cultural day is near ...)

Words of this nature are usually uttered in everyday language. Nevertheless, we do not usually regard them as being incorrectly used because we understand language as a medium of expression which changes according to the various situations in which the speaker finds himself/herself. What was noted was that learners express themselves in that fashion in written form as well. Learners usually speak without paying any attention to word structure as well as to the rules of that particular language. What is important to them is the message to be conveyed to the hearer or audience.

Despite the differences, there is ample theoretical and empirical evidence that many of the strategies used in the accomplishment of literacy are sufficiently similar for us to begin to explore the relationship between spoken and written language.

## **5.2 The relationship between spoken and written language**

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, informed statements have been made by linguists such as Olson (1996), Garton and Pratt (1989) amongst others, with regard to the structural relationship between written and spoken language. Modern linguists have tried to readdress the imbalance by paying attention to spoken language as well as written language. Tannen (1982) argues that there is a great deal of overlapping between speaking and writing in the sense that some kind of spoken language may be very written-like and some kinds of written language very spoken-like. Garton and Pratt (1989:2) also see the development of written language linked to the development of spoken language as the development of written language skills influences spoken language ability, as new language structures and functions are learned for writing and which, in turn, are adopted for speaking.

We have looked at spoken and written language as separate modes. The reason for this was to show that written language can be viewed as a separate form without referring to it as a substitute of spoken language. Spoken and written language are, in practice, used in different contexts, for different purposes to convey different subject matter even though there is a certain amount of overlap between them.

Although linguists indicate that there is a structural relationship between the spoken and the written language, little can be said specifically about such relationship between the two forms of any particular African language. This is so because relatively few studies have been conducted to investigate the similarities and dissimilarities of the spoken and written language.

## **5.3 Problems of spoken and written Sesotho among learners in Qwaqwa schools**

In analysing learners' spoken and written work, it was discovered that the following common patterns of errors emerged.

One of the most frequent mistakes made in spoken and written language is the violation of grammatical rules of agreement between the subject and predicate. The rule is that the predicate must agree with its nominative in number and person, but this is often forgotten and learners are frequently heard saying

1. **ba a o bitsa, ke titjhere**  
(they are calling you, it is teacher)

instead of

2. **titjhere o a o bitsa / o a bitswa, ke titjhere**  
(the teacher is calling you) / (you are called by the teacher).

The following Sesotho sentence occurred in learners' written work:

3. Re tlameha ho hlompha **puo** ya dihlotshwana tseo le ho ithuta **tsona**.  
(We are forced to study the language of those groups and learn about them.)

In this case we are not sure about what **tsona** refers to, is it the groups or the languages?

In written language, learners have some difficulties in reproducing information in a grammatically correct way and in an acceptable style, as is expected. The following sentences show that words are often spelt incorrectly, sentences are not constructed according to the fixed language rules, and ideas are often poorly structured and arranged. Examples:

1. **Ke nahana hore ha phano ya dibuka e le teng di ka balwa.**

(I think that if books are supplied, they can be read.)

2. **Matitjhere aka abuwa puo yaka ya Sesotho hobane aya etseba.**

(My teachers speak my language of Sesotho because they know it.)

3. **Ha ba buwa keya utlwisisa haba tswake ka puo tseding.**

(When they speak I understand, they do not mix it with other languages.)

Pronunciation also creates problems and it cannot be over emphasised that clear pronunciation is absolutely essential for intelligible utterances and smooth verbal communication. Sometimes even the spelling weaknesses in written work are the result of faulty pronunciation, for example, some learners in Qwaqwa schools have difficulty in pronouncing words correctly. In one instance, in conversation one of the learners said:

1. **Bothatha** boo re nang le bona ke ba matitjhere a sa tsebeng Sesotho ...

(The problem that we have is that of teachers who do not know Sesotho ...)

in this case, the word bothat**a** is pronounced as bothat**ha**. An alveolar plosive [t] is pronounced as an alveolar aspirated plove [th], which is marked by the letter [h].

2. ... a tlileng mona **CwaCwa** ho tla batla mosebetsi yaba ba dumellwa ho se ruta.

(... who come here in Qwaqwa to seek jobs and yet they were allowed to teach it.)

and the apico-palatal click [!] is pronounced as an apico-dental click [!].

Learners should use pronunciation in such a way that it enables them to transpose the written utterance to the corresponding spoken form.

Dialectal influence shows that spoken Sesotho has an influence on dialects such as Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa. This is also prevalent in cases such as the change that is brought about by the reflexive prefix **-i-** which occurs in both Sesotho and its dialects. In

cases of the above mentioned dialects the verb stem remains unchanged, because the sandhi rules are simply disregarded. Examples:

1. -rata: **irata** instead of **ithata**
2. -roma: **iroma** instead of **ithoma**.

Learners fail to recognise the differences between dialects of Sesotho and formal written Sesotho. This could be seen in some of the learners' choice of vocabulary unsuited to particular contexts in written work. There are many words that are unacceptable in a formal essay. Furthermore, the influence of dialects has been observed in many examples of badly constructed sentences. Learners seemed to have written down their thoughts as they occurred to them, without any organisation, and therefore failing to achieve unity. Examples:

1. **Batswadi ba kopuwa ho ba teng ho tla tshohla mathata a kopanang le bona.**  
(Lit.: Parents are asked to be present in order to discuss the problems that face them.)

Instead of:

**... mathata ao ba kopanang le ona.**

(... in order to discuss the problems they are faced with.)

2. **Ho ile ha batlwa dibese tse tharo tsa ho tsamaya ka tsona.**  
(Lit.: Three busses were wanted by which to go.)

Instead of:

**... bakeng sa leeto.**

(Three busses were wanted for the journey.)

### 5.3.1 Word division

There is still confusion about word division because of the influences of the conjunctive manner of writing the Nguni languages although the trend is that words must be distinguished according to the different functions they perform in sentences. The Sesotho

mode of writing is disjunctive.

The conventions of the Sesotho writing system impose a particular segmentation and analysis of language. Words are divided by spaces in writing but not in speech, and sentences are similarly divided off unambiguously by the conventions of the writing system, but not clearly definable units in speech. In the disjunctive method of word-division these are written as separate words, elements which cannot be pronounced alone with any separable meaning.

In producing the written language there is frequently hesitation by learners at word division, which does not correspond precisely to anything in spoken language and yet learners do not see any difference between spoken and written Sesotho.

The convention taught in schools is that individual words are represented by leaving spaces between them; this presents difficulties for many learners because they do not have a clear understanding of what constitutes a word. Thus, even when learners have learned the general principle that it is necessary to leave spaces between words when writing, they often continue to run some words together simply because they do not regard them as separate words or leave spaces at incorrect places. For instance in sentences such as the following, the segments marked in bold are wrongly conjoined:

1. Matitjhere **aka abua** puo **yaka** ya Sesotho hobane **aya etseba**.

instead of

Matitjhere **a ka a bua** puo **ya ka** ya Sesotho hobane **a a e tseba**.

(My teachers speak my language Sesotho because they know it.)

2. Ha ba bua **keya** utlwisisa **haba** tswake ka puo **tseding**.

instead of

Ha ba bua **ke a** utlwisisa **ha ba** tswake ka puo **tse ding**.

(When they speak I understand they do not mix it with other languages.)

On the other hand, learners know that they are expected to divide words somewhere but do not know where. For instance, the following sentences occur in their written work:

3. Ke hore dipuo tsena di buuwe **dia le moyeng**.

instead of

Ke hore dipuo tsena di buuwe diyalemoyeng.

(That these languages should be spoken on radios.)

4. Dipuo tse ding di a...empa **eseng ka ofeela**.

instead of

Dipuo tse ding di a...empa e seng kaofela.

(Other languages are... but not all of them.)

5. Re di bua ha ho na le **dikganye tsano**.

instead of

Re di bua ha ho na le dikganyetsano.

(We speak them when there are debates.)

In the above sentences the only possible separable words, which have the power to stand alone and to convey a definite concept, are **diyalemoyeng** (on radios), **kaofela** (all of them), **dikganyetsano** (debates). All the other elements **dia, le, moyeng, ka, ofeela, dikganye, tsano**, are incapable of functioning semantically when isolated. The sentences should be written as

...**di buuwe diyalemoyeng**

...**empa eseng kaofela**

...**dikganyetsano**.

The rules applying to how words are written together or separately are called word division rules. The way in which these rules apply can be explained using the basis of grammar and meaning in the written language. Learners must understand the correspondence rules so



that these can be applied to their written work. The description of the ways in which learners develop an understanding of these rules is not easy.

According to Bing (1982:11), orthography is,

a set of rules enabling the language user to transpose the spoken utterances into the corresponding written ones, in another words, it is a kind of bridge leading from spoken norm of language to the written.

Speaking a language goes hand in hand with writing a language. If the orthography in which the language is written appears to be inconsistent, this may cause confusion for learners. For instance words such as the following occur in learners' written work:

<b>atometse</b>	instead of	<b>atametse</b>	(become near).
<b>siko</b>	instead of	<b>siyo</b>	(absent).
<b>mantsibua</b>	instead of	<b>mantsiboya</b>	(afternoon).

The above examples indicate clearly that learners still have a problem in pronouncing and writing some words correctly.

## **5.4 Contributing factors to the influence on spoken and written Sesotho**

### **5.4.1 Types of Influences**

It has been observed that there are several types of social influences, such as Tsotsitaal, dialect influence, foreign media, peer group, etc., that affect language usage.

### **5.4.2 Tsotsitaal**

In most cities of South Africa, an Afrikaans-based pidgin, "Tsotsitaal", has developed among the speakers of African languages. Tsotsitaal is an in-group language for teenagers and young adults whose mother tongues are African languages. Although it is used by some

sections of speakers, Tsotsitaal has lexical influences on the Sesotho spoken in Qwaqwa schools.

Note the following sentences:

1. Ha ke bua le Mme ke re **oulady**.  
(When I speak to my mother I say “old lady”.)
2. Ha ke bua le Ntate ke re **thaema**.  
(When I speak to my father I say “timer”.)
3. Re e bua hore metswalle e utlwe hore o tseba **sqamtho** sa **majitha**.  
(We speak like this so that our friends can hear that we know boys’ language.)
4. Ke tla o **qava** hosane.  
(I will see you tomorrow.)
5. Ke puo ya rona **maauthi**.  
(It is the language of us boys.)
6. Re e bua le **dibra** tsa rona.  
(We speak it with our brothers.)

In the above examples there are Sesotho equivalents to the Tsotsitaal which could have been used as follows:

<u>Tsotsitaal</u>	<u>Sesotho</u>
thaema	Ntate
scamtho	puo
majitha	mathaka
qava	bona

maauthi

methaka

dibra

bana beso.

The rationale for substituting these words with the new Tsotsitaal language is not always clear. It is impossible to trace for example, why the word **scamtho** is used instead of **puo**. This is often only understood by the speakers themselves.

### 5.4.3 Dialectal influence

According to Coulmas (1997: 400):

for many children there is a mismatch between the language spoken at home and the language used at school. At home learners may speak a dialect or a language variety associated with gender, social class or ethnicity.

The Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa varieties spoken in the Qwaqwa area have a great influence on spoken and written Sesotho. Learners are often not aware that their home dialects differ from the standard Sesotho taught at school.

The following sentences show that they are written by a learner whose home language is Sekgolokwe because Sekgolokwe-speakers often double the vowels in their speech as well as adapt the conjunctive style of writing from Zulu:

1. Ke tseba ho se **buuwa** empa **hose** ngola **hona** le mantswa **anang** le tlhaku tse ngata jwale **rebese re e foosa** hona **moofeela**.  
(I know to speak it but in writing, there are words having many letters then it is where we make a mistake.)
2. Tshwaetso e qala moo ebang re **buuwa** Sesotho. (Instead of **bua**.)  
(The influence begins where we speak Sesotho.)
3. Dipuo tseo ke kgonang ho di **buuwa** di nne feela. (Instead of **bua**.)

(The languages that I am able to speak are only four.)

4. Sesotho ke **ya** se rata.

instead of

Sesotho ke **a** se rata.

(I like Sesotho).

It is clear that without a proper knowledge of differentiating Sesotho and its dialects, learners use dialectal forms indiscriminately in their writing at school.

#### 5.4.4 Colloquial influence

Colloquial language is spoken daily in informal situations. It is the least monitored, the most unrestricted, form of the language. Sometimes phrases, especially from foreign languages, are used or added on to a sentence for emphasis, for an agreement or for posing a question.

It is common to find learners using colloquial language in their speech at school. Some examples of colloquial language taken from the learners' speech in Qwaqwa schools are:

1. Ke mo rata ho ya **kwana le kwana**.

An interesting coinage emphasising the love one has for another. It literally means "I love him/her up to very far and even further". The standard version would be

Ke mo rata haholo

or

Haholoholo

(I love/like him/her very much.)

2. Ke mo rata **to come nice**. (E)

instead of

Ke mo rata haholo.

(I love him/her so much.)

3. Ke sa **kenella**. (Literally meaning “I’m getting into the bush/maze, i.e. I’m getting lost.)

instead of

Ke sa tsamaya.

(I am going.)

4. O a re **sukela**. (From Zulu)

instead of

O a re tsunyatsunya.

(You are provoking us.)

5. O ntlwaela **blind**. (E)

instead of

O ntlwaela hampe.

(You take me for granted.)

6. A fela **plekeng**. (Lit.: It was the end of him/her at that place.)

instead of

A baleha.

(He/She ran away.)

7. Ke a o **tjhaela**.

instead of

Ke a o jwetsa / Ke a o bolella.

(I am telling you.)

8. Ke sa **shaya round**. (Probably from the English expression “taking a turn”.)

instead of

Ho sa na le moo ke yang.

(I am going somewhere.)

The above examples show that the colloquial language does not have its own vocabulary but its speakers use words from a number of different languages. The above expressions are characterised by informal speech, typically containing words and forms which would not be used in formal speech or in formal writing. This indicates that learners in Qwaqwa adopt the style of speaking typical to the one used in urban areas. The examples above illustrate how the varieties such as Tsotsitaal and colloquial forms usually used in informal situations, are mixed with written forms in formal school settings.

#### 5.4.5 Influence from European languages

The increasing contact of the Basotho with speakers of European languages took place during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The Europeans who settled in the Free State and other areas adjacent to Qwaqwa had a strong linguistic influence on the Sesotho spoken in Qwaqwa. Learners in Qwaqwa schools often know borrowed terms better than the more original Sesotho ones. From the learners' responses to questionnaires the following expressions occur:

1. Mefuta e mengata e tletse ka hara Qwaqwa e siile **dipoleke** tsa bona.  
(Different groups left **their places** and are all over in Qwaqwa.)

**Dipoleke** comes from the Afrikaans plek meaning place. The acceptable Sesotho word is **dibaka**.

2. Ke hore ho **hirwe** batho ba tsebang Sesotho hore ba se rute.  
(This means that people who know Sesotho **should be employed** in order to teach it.)

**Hirwe** comes from the Afrikaans huur, meaning to hire/employ. The correct Sesotho word is **thola**.

3. Ha ho matsapa **neks** ... re rata puo ya rona.  
(There are **no** efforts whatsoever ... we love our language.)

**Neks** comes from the Afrikaans niks, meaning nothing or not at all. The correct Sesotho is **a letho**.

A very noticeable form of the above sentences is the combination of words from different languages in one sentence.

#### 5.4.6 Media

The written press, radio and television all pursue the same goal, namely to provide information for the rural and urban population on local, regional and national affairs and sometimes on important events that have occurred internationally. As far as the radio is concerned, Mathumba, (in Calteaux 1996:166) states that

it is a very powerful medium of language use, and that it should therefore be seen as a priority that the language used in this medium is exemplary and in accordance with the guidelines of the codifying body (the language Board). Unacceptable words used in the media can become ingrained in the language use of the listeners or viewers especially among the younger generation.

According to Calteaux (1996:165), the media form a barometer for measuring language changes and acceptability of changes in the speech community. They also serve as a role model for correct and acceptable language use.

Children pick up words and expressions from the media because they are not able to distinguish between standard and non-standard varieties. Most learners are exposed to more than one variety on television programmes. This may influence learners' language

acquisition positively or negatively since the varieties are mixed on television. Evidently the varieties heard in the media typify, for many listeners, the population of the particular area. We, therefore, are inclined to accept that the variety used in the media is correct. Mathumba (in Calteaux 1996:166), emphasises that the school and the radio are two domains which have an important role to play in the formulation of language, and which need urgent attention.

The interviews conducted with the learners showed that most of the youth who listen to a Sesotho radio station, Lesedi, programmes such as 'Re a kubeletsa' from 15:00 to 16:00, use the variety that is used in that programme among themselves. The additional unusual suffixes on certain standard and non-standard roots characterise their speech. The additional suffix which is common in all these words is **-ere** as can be observed in the examples below. Expressions such as the following are common in the conversation of the learners interviewed in the schools:

<b>ho monand -ere</b>	instead of	<b>ho monate</b>	(it is fine).
<b>ho motswembu -ere</b>	instead of	<b>ho lokile</b>	(it is okay).

When greeting each other, learners often use the following expressions:

**Hola magents-ere!**  
(I greet you gentlemen.)

**Hol -ere ban-ere!**  
(I greet you friends.)

These examples show that learners are more exposed to tsotsitaal and colloquial language through the media and this exposure has a negative impact on their spoken language.

The media, especially radio and television, unconsciously promote non-standard varieties and this, in turn, interferes with the standard language because the public believe that the



Sesotho spoken on television and radio is in fact the standard form.

#### **5.4.7 Peer group influence**

Within the life history of an individual there are behavioural patterns that are considered appropriate for various stages. Romaine (1984:84) has noted that adolescent peer group influence on language acquisition cannot be underestimated, since it is at this stage that features of the local neighbourhood variety become established in the everyday speech patterns of the child and the previously dominant parent influence is submerged under that of the peer group.

Romaine (1984:183) says, *inter alia*:

one of the most important influences in the development of communicative competence is the style of speaking used in peer group interaction and the continuous monitoring from peers to which members are subjected.

La Page (1978), as quoted by Romaine (1984:183), has formulated a sociolinguistic theory based on the notion of identity and he attaches great significance to the process by which the individual creates patterns of linguistic behaviour to resemble those of the groups with which he/she wishes to identify. When an individual reaches the adolescent stage, he/she actively and almost suddenly learns to speak the additional languages to which he/she has been exposed and his/her linguistic repertoire is elaborated.

During the teenage years, language engineering is much less in the power of parents, and much more in the hands of the teenagers. Romaine (1984:187) has noted that some peer groups exert powerful influences on group norms which are at odds with those expressed by family and school.

In interviews held with learners, some learners in Qwaqwa schools mentioned the following to support what has been said by Romaine:

1. **-ke hore nna jwalo ka motjha ha ke bua Sesotho metswalle e tlo re ke sephoqo, lathalatha e ratang Sesotho.**  
(this is because when I, as a teenager, speak Sesotho, my friends will say that I am a fool that likes Sesotho).
  
2. **-ke ka lebaka la ho kgema le dinako, ho leka ho amoheleha tikolohong e itseng.**  
(it is because of changing with the times, trying to be accommodated in a certain environment).
  
3. **-hobane re se re hodile. E mong le e mong o batla hore metswalle ya hae e mo utlwe hore o se a qhwetswe ka sqamtho sa majita, o kene majiteng ha bonolo o bontshe le hlalefo e itseng metswalleng ya hae.**  
(because we are old. Each of us wants his/her friends to hear that he/she knows the language of the group, he/she has entered easily into the group, to show them that he/she is advanced).
  
4. **ke iphumana ke se ke bua puo ya seterateng hobane hangata ke qeta nako e telele ke le seterateng ke na le metswalle ya ka.**  
(I find myself speaking street language because most of the time I am with my friends in the street).

From the above examples the observation is that socialisation and extensive interaction in peer group is a crucial source of use of language found among peers and also that teenagers always want to conform to the status-giving behaviour of the peer group.

#### **5.4.8 Lack of motivation**

One contributing factor to the lack of motivation to speak correctly, is that in many schools, and especially in Qwaqwa secondary schools, there is a heterogeneous mixture of tribes. This is due to the fact that most learners are from largely urban areas where the population

is inevitably very mixed. In some farm schools, where educational facilities are limited, learners who wish to go beyond primary school, have to go to schools in Qwaqwa. There are also learners from neighbouring small towns such as Kestell, Clarence, Afrikaskop, etc., and also from distant places, such as Matatiele and Lesotho (cf Map1, p. 18).

On the other hand, some parents in Qwaqwa opt for English medium schools for their children because this is seen as a status symbol. These parents feel that English is the only language that matters and that the study of Sesotho is not worthwhile. Some learners also regard Sesotho as unimportant. From a learners' point of view, some learners say that:

1. **Ha ho hlokahale hore re ithute Sesotho hobane re a se tseba.**  
(It is unnecessary to study Sesotho because we already know it.)
2. **Ha ho motho ya re kgothaletsang ho ithuta Sesotho.**  
(Nobody motivates us to learn Sesotho.)

## **5.5 Observations**

Some learners in Qwaqwa attend Model C schools where the medium of education is English and African languages are only taught as a second or third language. This, in turn, denies them the opportunity to learn more about their language and culture. Learners from urban areas are more proficient in English, and seem to regard themselves as superior to others and are inclined to elevate themselves above the rest of the learners in school. A non-standard variety enjoys popular prestige among such youth and the usage of the standard variety is regarded as solely for rural people (cf Finlayson & Slabbert, 1997b: 381-419).

## **5.6 Summary**

In our discussion, we have indicated a sharp contrast between the spoken and written forms of Sesotho language. The distinction was based on the linguistic description of similarities and relationships between the two forms. Although the focus was on each of the two modes of speech as independent modes, it was noted that there are relationships between the two.

Spoken language may influence the written language positively or negatively, depending on how much communicative or linguistic competence a person has. The most important point, however, is to note that the spoken and written language differs and therefore, we should not encourage learners to write exactly the way they speak. However, it was found that in the learners' written responses to the questionnaires, these learners tend to write the way they speak, without using the writing conventions.

In analysing the learners' written work it was discovered that in producing the written language, these learners do not seem to know where to divide words in accordance with their functions because the spoken language does not precisely correspond with the written language.

Language variations that exist in learners' spoken language have been highlighted, and this will assist in explaining to both learners and teachers involved in the study and teaching of Sesotho, why sometimes we do not write the way we speak. Teachers and learners should also note that the spoken language and the written language have different functions with regard to the different situations in which they are used.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a general conclusion of the previous chapters, as well as the issues arising from the entire dissertation. In addition to the conclusion, the chapter provides observations/findings of the study, as well as recommendations for future research on the language varieties that occur in Sesotho and the variations which occur between spoken and written Sesotho.

The aim of this study was to investigate varieties of Sesotho spoken in Qwaqwa and to examine how these varieties differ from the standard form. The aim was also to compare spoken with written language, especially among learners. The perceived need for such an investigation was the observation that the form of Sesotho that is spoken in Qwaqwa has changed considerably, as compared with the standard norm of Sesotho. The varieties that exist in Qwaqwa are spoken by ethnic groups who live in villages and, in the majority of cases, have a rural background. These varieties show a strong correlation between Sesotho and its dialects, both regional and social, which are prominent features of sociolinguistic investigation.

The second aim of the study was to consider the correlation between interference, codeswitching and borrowing in the Sesotho spoken in Qwaqwa schools. The investigation attempted to indicate how the three phenomena interfere with the standard Sesotho in different contexts as well as in a school situation.

The study indicates that codeswitching and borrowing are often used by teachers and learners in Qwaqwa schools due to the language varieties spoken in this area. Teachers often codeswitched in Afrikaans or English when communicating amongst themselves.

Some teachers and learners are from neighbouring areas such as Bergville, Escort and as far south as Matatiele. The languages they use are isiZulu and isiXhosa.

In many cases it was observed that teachers are not conversant in Sesotho. Some only came to Qwaqwa to study at the University of Qwaqwa and after the completion of their studies, they remained in Qwaqwa to teach in local schools. In order for these teachers and the learners to understand one another, they codeswitched between Sesotho and other languages.

It is known that children learn by imitation. Therefore, to learners, codeswitching is a norm for communication when speaking to their peer groups as well as to some teachers.

Codeswitching and borrowing were discussed in relation to Myers-Scotton's MLF (matrix language framework model). The social motivation and social function of codeswitching and borrowing were also taken into account.

Furthermore, the similarities and relationships between spoken and written Sesotho, as used by learners in Qwaqwa schools, were also considered. The general conclusion to be drawn from this study, is that contact with many languages has a great influence on the spoken and written Sesotho in Qwaqwa schools.

Although written and spoken forms of language are different in some respects and are, to some extent, independent of each other, they are primarily different realisations of the same underlying language system.

## **6.1 Observations**

It is observed that most of the Sesotho spoken in Qwaqwa is not the standard one because of the migration of different ethnic groups to Qwaqwa as well as the socio-economic and technological changes that have brought about the addition of new terms and new styles of living. The study acknowledges that Qwaqwa is the most densely populated area in the Free

State Province. The historical background has shown that as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Qwaqwa was inhabited by different ethnic groups which affected the varieties of the language spoken in this area.

From the study, it has emerged that the Sesotho spoken in Qwaqwa has a long and interesting history. The language has undergone and still undergoes a great deal of change from interactions with many other languages. The Sesotho spoken in Qwaqwa has current problems and constraints which need to be addressed urgently and effectively to ensure unity and communicative effectiveness. The Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa dialects of Sesotho are considered important in the study because the number of people speaking these dialects in Qwaqwa is growing rapidly, mainly because many younger Makgolokwe and Batlokwa integrate freely with the Sesotho speakers.

Other issues were also noted: Generally, the native speakers of Sesotho appear to despise their language, as well as their culture. In villages close to the capital city and business centres, where contacts and interaction between people from different backgrounds are more prolific, Sesotho tends to be weaker than in more distant rural villages. The Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa dialects flourish in isolated villages populated either entirely or predominantly by mother tongue speakers of these dialects.

It has also been observed that economic development has attracted many people from farms and adjacent areas and these people have also brought with them their various cultures and languages which have also had an impact on the existing cultures and languages in Qwaqwa.

While it is true that people of Qwaqwa speak Sesotho, research has found that there are groups which have their own speech varieties which are either regional or social dialects. It is also observed that the schools in Qwaqwa have a mixture of learners from various ethnic groups whose home language is not Sesotho. The study further reveals that learners speaking different dialects such as Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa in a particular school, often end up speaking the language which is not their home language. It is also possible to find



a Sesotho learner speaking Sekgolokwe or Setlokwa.

It is also observed from the study that interference, codeswitching and borrowing as well as the associated language attitudes that have emanated in the Qwaqwa schools are largely due to language contact situations. Sesotho learners often use various code choices from Afrikaans or English as well as from other African languages, such as the Nguni group, within their own group boundaries when they are alone. The study has shown that these conversations in general show patterns of interference, codeswitching and borrowing among learners from various high schools in Qwaqwa.

It is also noted from the study that interference, codeswitching and borrowing are generally of a nature where Sesotho is the matrix language and Afrikaans or English are the embedded language(s). However, the observation is that practically it is not easy to separate interference, codeswitching and borrowing because interference is seen as an umbrella concept embracing both codeswitching and borrowing.

The findings show that codeswitching can be used as a strategy to demonstrate the socio-economic status of the speaker and the level of education as demonstrated in the study in Appendix 3. The conversation switches from one language to another showing that in Qwaqwa participants have a knowledge of, at the least, not fewer than two to three languages.

English is a medium of instruction and learners are exposed to it at an earlier stage in their education. Some learners acquire their knowledge of English through interpersonal relationships and interaction with mother-tongue speakers in different situations, such as their friendship with English-speakers. English is used to teach most subjects in school and the text books are in English from Grade 9 to 12 levels.

Afrikaans is also acquired through social influence and language contact between Afrikaans and Sesotho speakers. Afrikaans is taught in schools as a second language only.

Some learners in Qwaqwa attend Model C schools where African languages are taught as a second or third language. Some learners receive their instruction in a language other than their mother-tongue. Not only does this retard the learner's education as a whole, but their knowledge of their own language suffers, and its culturisation is neglected.

Learners master new words that do not feature in the vocabulary of their parents. Children who live in Qwaqwa, represent an urban generation. For many Sesotho speaking learners, who were born and raised in urban contexts, the national language of the region is in actual practice the mother-tongue. However, the language these learners acquire is a variant marked by profuse codeswitching. It is replete with words and structures from other languages and, therefore, in general the learners do not acquire the standard form of Sesotho.

The language of these learners actually shows some notable difference from that of their parents. The learners interviewed in this study made frequent visits to their relatives in urban areas and had considerable contact with the language of their peer group, so much so that one may expect a mixture of different languages. However, the fact that being in a situation where varieties of a language prevails, provides scope for some language peculiarities. The peculiarities characterising the speech of learners living in Qwaqwa are likely to increase. We can confidently state that the urban areas are the main sources of the varieties spoken in Qwaqwa schools.

Last but not least, the study shows that although spoken and written Sesotho are forms of the same language and share a vast bulk in their vocabulary and grammar, there is a large number of formal differences between them in phonetics, phonology, morphology and syntax. Many of these differences stem from the functional differences between spoken and written language. The most general formal difference between the two modes would appear to be that spoken language is open to different kinds of variation, whereas written language is relatively uniform. These variations manifest themselves in learners' speech as well as in the written work.



## 6.2 Recommendations

We have pointed out in the introduction to this study that an important sociolinguistic issue to be investigated concerns language varieties spoken in Qwaqwa and their implication in linguistic situations. The study of language contact, language and dialect, regional dialects, social dialects as well as language interference, codeswitching and borrowing focussing on speech community of Qwaqwa should necessarily include an assessment of the extent to which the learners themselves are aware of sociolinguistic variations.

The information on language variation, as well as language interference which includes codeswitching and borrowing, is an aid for a country to establish a democratic educational policy that may consider other varieties of language in school situations. Investigating regional and social dialects is indeed another fruitful area for study in Qwaqwa society.

The field of Qwaqwa's sociolinguistic variation in spoken and written Sesotho also offers, in fact, a huge number of possibilities for investigation. These are relevant, not only for geographical and economic reasons, but also because sociolinguistic research can certainly perform academic functions. Viewing dialect investigation as a kind of scientific study of language, learners should be encouraged to see how dialect study merges with the social sciences and humanities. This study can be approached from the perspective of geography, history or sociology. It can also be linked with ethnic or gender studies.

Researchers interested in history may thus carry out independent research to determine the contributions of various historical groups to a particular locale by searching the migratory routes of the original settlers of the area and showing how they are reflected in the dialect.

Similarly scholars interested in sociology may examine status differences in a community as manifested in language or may probe the linguistic manifestations of in-group behaviour by examining the way new vocabulary items are formed in some special interest groups.

It is hoped that this research has paved the way for further studies in sociolinguistic variations.



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## APPENDIX 1

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LEARNERS

1. Surname and name of respondent:
2. Age:
3. Sex:
4. Grade:
5. Ethnic Group:
6. Home Language:
7. Sesotho: Ke puo efe eo le e buang lapeng? Etsa letshwao la X pela puo eo o e buang lapeng.  
English: What is your home language? Make a mark X next to your home language.  
  
Setswana:  
Sesotho:  
Sepedi:  
Sexhosa:  
Sezulu:  
Seswati:  
  
(S) Tse ding (di bolele)  
(E) Others (name them)

8. (S) Ke puo efe eo le e sebedisang haholo sekolong?

(E) Which language do you mostly use at school?

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9. (S) Ha o na le metswalle ya hao le bua puo efe?

(E) What language do you use when you are with your friends?

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10. (S) Ha o bua le matitjhere sekolong o sebedisa puo efe?

(E) When addressing teachers at school, what language do you use?

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11. (S) Na matitjhere a hao a tseba puo ya Sesotho hantle? Hobaneng o realo?

(E) Do your teachers have a good command of the Sesotho language? Why do you say so?

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- (E) Give three examples of expressions which you and your friends use when greeting one another.

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15. (S) Se etsang hore le dumedisane ka mokgwa ona ke sefe?

(E) What makes you greet one another in this fashion?

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16. (S) Ke mananeo afe a thelebishene ao o nahanang hore a ama tsela eo le buisanang ka yona. Hobaneng o realo?

(E) Which television programmes do you think influence the manner in which you greet one another? Why do you say so?

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17. (S) Puo e sebediswang radiong e fapana jwang le e buuang thelebisheneng?

(E) How does the language spoken on radio differ from the one spoken on television?

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18. (S) Ke puo efe eo o nahanang hore e loketse ho sebediswa thutong ya lona dikolong? Hobaneng o nahana jwalo?

(E) Which language do you think should be used as a medium of instruction in your schools? Motivate.

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19. (S) Puo eo le e sebedisang seterateng e ama jwang dikamano tsa lona le batho ba latelang:

(E) How does a common language spoken on the streets affect your relationship with the following people:

Batswadi ba lona  
Your parents

Matitjhere a lona  
Your teachers

Baruti  
Religious leaders

Bahwebi  
Business people

Explain:

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20. (S) Ke ka mabaka afe le iphumanang le se le hahlametswe ke dipuo tse ding ntle le ho puo eo le e buang?
- (E) Which reasons are responsible for your language being adversely influenced by other languages?

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21. (S) Fana ka mabaka a etsang hore puo ya Sesotho e thunthetswe ke dipuo tse ding haholo ka hare ho Qwaqwa?

(E) Give reasons why Sesotho language, especially in Qwaqwa, is adversely influenced by other languages.

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22. (S) Ke dipuwana dife tse buuwang ka hare ho Qwaqwa?

(E) Which dialects are spoken in Qwaqwa?

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23. (S) Dipuana tsena di buuwa haholo dibakeng dife (metseng) ka hare ho Qwaqwa?

(E) At which areas (villages) in Qwaqwa are these dialects largely spoken?

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24. (S) Ekaba batho ba bakae ka palo ba buwang dipuana tsena? Lekanya feela.  
(E) How many people do really speak these dialects? Estimate the number.

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25. (S) Ke dibakeng dife moo dipuwana tsena di buuwang haholo teng? Mohlala: sekolong, lapeng, mabaleng a dipapadi?  
(E) At which areas are these dialects mostly spoken? For instance, at school, at home, play grounds?

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26. (S) Na dipuwana tsena di a ananelwa dibakeng tsa phedisano?  
(E) Are these dialects socially accepted in areas where people live and interact?

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27. (S) Ke matsapa afe a ka etswang mabapi le ho phahamisa boemo ba puo ya Sesotho ka hare ho Qwaqwa?  
(E) What measures can be taken to ensure that the standard of Sesotho is

enhanced in Qwaqwa?

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28. (S) Dipuana tse buuwang ke dihlotshwana tse nyenyane, mohlala (Sekgolokwe) di ka phahamiswa ka mokgwa ofe hore di ananelwe dikolong le hore di kgone ho sebediswa dibakeng tse kang sepetlele, dibakeng tsa kgwebo, posong, makgotleng a dinyewe ekasitana le seyalemoyeng.

(E) In what way can the dialects (e.g. Sekgolokwe) be enhanced, be regarded as important in schools, and be used in places such as hospitals, business areas, post offices, magistrate courts as well as on radio stations?

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29. (S) Na Sesotho se buuwang se fapane le se ngolwang? Haeba o re E, hlalosa hore se fapana jwang?

(E) Is spoken Sesotho different from the written one? If your answer is yes, explain this difference.

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30. (S) Setsotsi o a se tseba? Ke puo e jwang?  
(E) Do you know tsotsitaal? What kind of language is it?

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31. (S) Na setsotsi se a buuwa ka hare ho Qwaqwa? Haeba o re E, se buuwa ke bomang? Neng?  
(E) Is tsotsitaal spoken in Qwaqwa? If you say Yes, who are the speakers of this language? When do they speak it?

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32. (S) Ke dipuo tse kae tseo o kgonang ho di bua? Di bolele.  
(E) How many languages are you able to speak? Mention them.

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33. (S) Bolela dipuo tse buuwang sekolong seo o kenang ho sona.

(E) Mention the languages spoken at your school.

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34. (S) Na ho na le phapang mahareng a Sesotho seo o se buang le se buuwang ke batswadi ba hao/ kapa batho bao o phelang le bona? Hlalosa phapang e teng.

(E) Is there any difference between the Sesotho spoken by yourself and that spoken by your parents or people in your community. Explain the difference.

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35. (S) Sesotho se buuwang Afrika Borwa se fapana jwang le se buuwang Lesotho?

(E) How does the Sesotho spoken in the Republic of South Africa differ from that spoken in Lesotho?

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## APPENDIX 2

What follows here comprises a summary of answers to the research questionnaire. The questionnaire has a total of 35 questions. These questions can be divided into two types. The first type comprises those questions aimed at getting information on Sesotho and its dialects that are spoken in Qwaqwa. The second type of question sought information on respondents' attitude towards Sesotho in general. Questions 7, 13, 14, 16, 17, 26, 28, 31 and 35 belong to the former and questions 13,15, 18, 19, 20 ,21, 27, 29, and 30 belong to the latter.

The summary of answers to the above mentioned types is as follows:

### Question 7

This question aimed at getting information on learners' home language. Most learners indicate that they are Sesotho speakers in Qwaqwa.

### Question 8

The question aimed at getting information about the language mostly used in schools. For this question English is the language mostly used in schools.

### Question 11

The question aimed at getting information about how much knowledge of Sesotho the teachers who teach the language have.

Different views are given to this question. Some learners believe that their teachers know Sesotho because they speak it without mixing it with other languages; when teachers talk, learners can understand what they say. Some learners mentioned that their teachers do not know Sesotho well. Example answers are as follows:

1. **Matitjhere a ka a bua puo ya Sesotho hobane a ya e tseba.**  
(My teachers speak the language Sesotho because they know it.)
2. **Ha ba bua ke ya utlwisisa, ha ba tswake ka puo tse ding.**  
(When they speak I understand, they do not mix with other languages.)
3. **Bothata boo re nang le bona ke ba matitjhere a sa tsebeng Sesotho, a tlileng mona Qwaqwa ho tla batla mosebetsi mme ba dumellwa ho se ruta.**  
(The problem we have is of teachers who do not know Sesotho, who came here in Qwaqwa to seek jobs and were allowed to teach it.)
4. **Ke hore ho hirwe batho ba tsebang Sesotho hore ba se rute.**  
(It means that people who know Sesotho should be hired so that they can teach it.)

#### Question 22

This question sought to get information on the number of dialects spoken in Qwaqwa. Most learners chose Sesotho, Sezulu, Sexhosa and other languages. Some chose Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa. The choice of Sesotho and other languages is an indication that learners still do not know the difference between a dialect and a language. The choice of Sesotho, Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa indicates that learners have no knowledge that Sekgolokwe and Setlokwa are Sesotho dialects.

#### Question 13

This question sought information on learners' views on Sesotho as language taught in school. Most learners showed that they like Sesotho as their L1, they understand it, know how to write it and they can speak Sesotho as the following answer states:

**Nna Sesotho ke a *srata*, kea *stseba* ebile ke tseba le ho *sngola*.**

(I like Sesotho, I know it and I can write it.)

#### Question 15

The question aimed at getting information of the reasons why learners found themselves greeting each other the way they do.

The general view is that they spend most of their time with their friends, they do this to please their friends, and everybody needs to be accepted by the peer group. It is a show off that one understands their language.

Example answers:

1. **E mong le e mong o batla hore metswalle ya hae e mo utlwe hore o se a qhwetswe ke scamtho sa majita, o kene majiteng ha bonolo o bontshe hlalefo e itseng metswalleng ya hao.**

(Everyone wants to show his/her friends that he/she knows the language of the group, he/she has entered easily into the group, to show them that he/she is advanced.)

2. **Ke iphumana ke se ke bua puo ya seterateng hobane hangata ke qeta nako e telele ke le seterateng ke na le metswalle ya ka.**

(I find myself speaking street language because most of the time I am with my friends on the street.)

#### Question 19

The question sought information on how the street language affects learners' relationships with their parents, teachers, religious leaders and other adults.

From the learners' point of view, they are so used to this language that they cannot live

without it. The street language does not have any negative impact on their relations with the above mentioned adults because they only speak the language when they are with their peers.

Examples of responses to question 9:

1. **Puo eo re e buang seterateng ha e ame dikamano tseo re nang le tsona ho batho ba seng ba boletswe hobane re etsa matsapa hore re bue puo eo seterateng eseng ho batho ba hlomphehileng kapa dibakeng tse hlomphehileng, re sebedisa puo e itlhomphileng ha re le dibakeng tseo kapa ho batho bao.**

(The language we use in the street does not affect the relationships we have with the people mentioned because we make sure that we use that language in street, not to respectable people or in places we respect, we use respectable language when we are in those places or to those people.)

2. **Puo eo re e buang seterateng ha e tshwane le eo re e buang le batswadi, matitjhere le baruti. Bathong bana ba latelang re tlamehile maoto le matsoho hore re kgethe mantswa ha re bua le bona haholoholo mantswa a hlompho.**

(The language we speak in the street is not similar to the one we use when we speaking to our parents, teachers and ministers. When speaking to these people, we are forced by the situation to choose words especially words which show respect.)

## Question 20

This question is aimed at getting learners views about the reasons why they find themselves in situations of being influenced by other languages.

Most learners indicated that they found themselves adversely influenced by other languages because they live with people of different languages and cultures, they attend school together, and spend a lot of time with speakers of other languages.

Example answer:

1. **Ke ka mabaka a hore re kopane le merabe e mengata Batswana, Bapedi, Maxhosa, Mazulu, Makgolokwe, Batlokwa; ke ka hoo re iphumanang re hahlamelwa ke dipuo tse ding ntle le puo eo re e buang.**

(It is because we mix with different cultures, Batswana, Bapedi, Maxhosa, Mazulu, Makgolokwe, Batlokwa that is why we find ourselves influenced by other languages.)

Question 27

The question aimed at getting learners views about measures that can be taken to ensure an improved standard of Sesotho in Qwaqwa. Learners responses are as follows:

1. **Ke nahana hore ha phano ya dibuka e le teng hore di ka balwa, ...**
2. **Ha ho ka bulwa mekgatlo ya batjha mme e etellwe pele ke batho ba phahameng ba tsebang Sesotho haholo kapa ho etswe diboka ho ruta batho ka bohlokwa ba Sesotho.**

(I think that if books can be provided so that they can be read, ...)  
(Youth organisations led by people knowledgeable in Sesotho should be established or conferences be held to teach people the importance of Sesotho.)

## Question 29

This question sought to get information about how spoken language differs from the written language.

The general opinion of the learners is that the language taught in schools differ from the everyday spoken Sesotho.

Example answers:

1. **Sesotho se buuwang se fapane le se ngolwang hobane ho na le mantswe a siko puong ya Sesotho empa....**

(Spoken Sesotho is different from the written one because there are words which do not exist in Sesotho but...)

## APPENDIX 3

### LENGTHY CONVERSATIONS

The following conventional rules will be followed in discussing codeswitching and borrowing:

1. English or Afrikaans codeswitching = **bold**
2. Sesotho words or sentences = underlined
3. Translation ( )
4. i) Afrikaans data is marked by **A**  
ii) English data is marked by **E**

#### Setting: Mohato School

In order to identify the factors determining codeswitching, examples of different interactions will be presented.

The following data were collected in real situations by Mohato High School learners in Qwaqwa. The conversation is between a teacher and learner and have been selected to exemplify particular but typical phenomena.

Learner: Le ruta Sesotho bomme?

(Do you teach Sesotho ladies?)

Teacher: Keng jwale?

(What now?)

Learner: Hobaneng le sa re kgothaletse Sesotho, re tlohele ho nna re se kopanya le dipuo tse ding?

(Why do you not encourage us to learn Sesotho, so that we must not mix Sesotho with other languages?)

Teacher: Le se rutwe ke bomang?

(Who must teach you Sesotho?)



Learner: Ha re sa bua Sesotho hantle re tsamaya re se kopanya le dipuo tse ding.  
(We no longer speak Sesotho correctly, we mix it with other languages.)

Teacher: Ke taba ya lona eo, tsamayang le yo botsa batswadi ba lona, ereng batswadi ba le rute **primary education, basic education.** Ha ho thwe **charity begins at home, language eo le e buwang ka tlung ke language eo o tshwanetseng ho e bua, le ha rona sekolong mona re ka re re ruta **formal language.****

(It is your own responsibility, go and ask your parents, tell them to teach you primary education, basic education. When it is said charity begins at home, the language you speak at home is the language you should speak, even if here at school, we can say that we teach formal language.)

Learner: Re tla se tseba jwang le sa re rute sona?

(How will we know it without you teaching it to us?)

Teacher: Re tla le ruta **if ever wena o sa e buwe heno and as teachers re tshwanetse ho le kgothaletsa not to speak Sesotho only hobane le ya ko ditoropong where you are going to mix the languages, where you must communicate, this is the era moo e leng hore makgowa a ruta dilanguage tsa rona and in South Africa it is even worse because we have eleven official languages.**

(We will teach you if ever you do not speak it at home and as teachers, we must encourage you not to speak Sesotho only because you are going to towns where you are going to mix the languages, where you must communicate, this is the era were Europeans teach our languages and in South Africa it is even worse because we have eleven official languages.)

Teacher: Basotho ba a somana. Mosotho ya apereng kobo o bitswa lejapere **as if wena ha o e je.**

(The Basotho like to tease each other. A Mosotho having a blanket on is called a "horse eater" as if you do not eat it.)

Teacher: **Charity begins at home, the home is the place where you live, where you learn everything from your mother, from your father, from your siblings. The community outside, they are just going to support you,**

bona ba tla o **supporta** ka ntho eo o e rutilweng ka lapeng. Ngwana wa ka o kena sekolo makgoweng, ha a kena ka tlung it is my duty as a parent, hore ke bone hore ngwana o bua puo ya lapeng. Sekolong a ka nna a bua sekgowa empa o lokela ho tseba sehahabo. Ho ruteha ha se hore o lokela ho lahla sehaeno, sehaeno ke **identity** ya hao, ha ho thwe **identify yourself** ditjhabeng tse ding o tla **i identifaya** jwang? Lona ke lona ba tshwanelang ho **rectifaya mistake** oo. If le o bona o **rectifayeng**.

(Charity begins at home, the home is the place where you live, where you learn everything from your mother, from your father, from your siblings. The community outside, they are just going to support you, they will support you with something that you are taught by your family. My child attends an English-medium school but when she/he arrives home, it is my duty as a parent, to make sure that she/he speaks the home language. At school there is no problem of using another language but at home she/he must know her/his culture. To be educated does not mean to neglect your culture, your culture is your identity, when it is said that you must identify yourself to other nations how will you identify yourself? You are the people who must rectify this mistake as you are quite aware of such a mistake.)

Teacher: Lona Basotho le majakane, le jaka ka leleme. Ha ho thwe motho ke lejakane, ke motho ya jakang ka leleme. Basotho ba **secrifice-a** ka puo ya bona. Le swabela puo ya lona. Bojakane ha bo bolele bokreste. Mosotho o tjhakela Gauteng beke feela, ha a kgutla o bua mehlolo. Mohlomong ke kopana le wena ke re, **nginenkinga manje ngicela ukuthi unigsize instead of saying, ke o thuse kang, a Mosotho will say nkeka** ya hao ke eng hona o batla ke o **sitse** jwang?

(You Basotho – you behave like foreigners because you make your language to be foreign. When somebody is called a foreigner, it is because he/she makes his/her language foreign. Basotho sacrifice their language. You are ashamed of your language. To be a foreigner does not mean you are a Christian. A Mosotho can visit in Gauteng for only one week, coming back he/she will be speaking wonders.)

Learner: Ho lokile bomme, salang hantle.

(Okay mothers, bye.)

Teacher: **Thanks for going.**