

# **ADJECTIVES IN NORTHERN SOTHO**

by

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## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this assignment is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted to any university for a degree.

**Signature:**

**DATE:**



## ABSTRACT

This research investigates the adjective in Northern Sotho. The entire research indicates that adjectives form a closed system and are morphologically marked with a noun class prefix in Northern Sotho. Three semantic categories of adjectives which may be recognized are **descriptive**, **quantitative** and **colour** adjectives.

**Chapter One** is the introduction of the research. The introductory sections which appear in it are purpose and aim of study, method of research, organization of the study, definitions of the concepts and derivation of adjectives.

**Chapter Two** concentrates on the semantic adjective. Semantics deals with the study of words origins, changes and meanings. Attributive (prenominal) adjectives tend to denote fairly permanent properties, while predicative ones denote the corresponding transient properties as in the following examples:

- (1) a. The shirt is loose (not buttoned)  
b. The loose shirt (not fitting properly)
  
- (2) a. The apparatus are handy (conveniently at hand)  
b. Handy apparatus (useful apparatus)

Adjectives can occur in comparative and exclamatory constructions. Two types of adjectives may also differ from one another in that the one involving conversion does not take degree modifier or comparative, whereas the one not involving conversion can have either of them occurring with them:

- (3) a. The strong should help the weak  
b. The very strong should help the weak

- (4) a. The cup is big  
b. The cup is too big

**Chapter Three** evolves on the formation and structure of adjectives in Northern Sotho. This chapter introduces a wide range of word building elements used to create the adjective structure. Emphasis is put on the adjectival prefixes, adjectival stems and adjectival suffixes which are the constituent elements of the adjective. Only the adjectival stems are reduplicable and have usually an intensified meaning. This implies that the adjectival prefixes and adjectival suffixes, in terms of their position and function, cannot be reduplicated. There are also some restrictions in the use of adjectives. The main concerns are the nature of word-formation processes and the ways in which word-formation interacts with syntax, semantics and lexicon.

**Chapter Four** exemplifies the descriptive possessive in full. As a matter of clarification, no possessives have been discussed in this chapter. Descriptive possessives and possessives are two different aspects. In this chapter, various aspects which make up the descriptive possessives are also discussed in detail.

**Chapter Five** deals with the nominal relative clause. The head is always the noun in all the nominal relative clauses. The matrix and the relative clauses are given under **physical features, psychological features, habits, skills, taste and natural phenomena**. The distribution of a relative is also indicated. Attention is based on the **complement of a noun and position in a clause**.

**Chapter Six** is the concluding chapter which gives the summary of all the previous chapters.



## OPSOMMING

Hierdie navorsing het as doelstelling die ondersoek van die adjektief in Noord-Sotho. Die bevindinge van die navorsing dui daarop dat adjektiewe in Noord-Sotho 'n geslote klas vorm wat morfologies gemerk word deur 'n naamwoordklasprefiks. Die drie semantiese kategorieë van adjektiewe wat in die studie erken word sluit in **deskriptiewe, kwantitatiewe en kleur adjektiewe**.

**Hoofstuk Een** vorm die inleiding van die studie. Die verskillende sub-afdelings van die hoofstuk gee die doelstelling van die studie, asook 'n oorsig van die navorsingsmetode, organisasie van die studie, belangrike definisies en konsepte en behandel die afleiding van adjektiewe in Noord-Sotho.

**Hoofstuk Twee** fokus op die semantiese adjektiewe. Semantiek hou verband met die studie van woorde se oorsprong, veranderinge en betekenis. Attributiewe (preminale) adjektiewe neig om redelik permanente eienskappe aan te dui, terwyl predikatiewe adjektiewe die korresponderende tydelike eienskappe aandui, soos getoon in die volgende voorbeelde in Engels:

- (1) a. The shirt is loose (not buttoned)  
b. The loose shirt (not fitting properly)
  
- (2) a. The apparatus are handy (conveniently at hand)  
b. Handy apparatus (useful apparatus)

Adjektiewe kan in vergelykende en uitroepkonstruksies verskyn. Twee tipes adjektiewe kan ook verskil van mekaar in die opsig dat die een tipe wat verandering behels nie 'n graad bepaler of vergelykende bepaler neem nie, terwyl die ander wat nie verandering behels nie met enige van hierdie bepalers kan verskyn. Beskou die volgende voorbeelde in Engels:

- (3) a. The strong should help the weak  
b. The very strong should help the weak
- (4) a. The cup is big  
b. The cup is too big

**Hoofstuk Drie** hou verband met die vorming en struktuur van adjektiewe in Noord-Sotho. Hierdie hoofstuk stel 'n wye reeks woordbou-elemente bekend wat gebruik word om die adjektiefstruktuur te skep. Besondere aandag word gegee aan die adjektief-prefikse, adjektiefstamme en adjektiefsuffikse wat die konstituent elemente van die adjektief is. Slegs adjektiefstamme is dupliseerbaar, en het gewoonlik 'n geïntensifieerde betekenis. Dit volg dat die adjektiefprefikse en -suffikse in terme van hulle posisie en funksie nie geredupliseer kan word nie. Daar word ook ondersoek ingestel na die beperkings ten opsigte van die gebruik van adjektiewe. Die hoofoorwegings is die aard van woordvormingsprosesse en die wyse waarop woordvorming in interaksie is met die sintaksis, semantiek en die leksikon.

**Hoofstuk Vier** ondersoek die deskriptiewe possessief in Noord-Sotho volledig. Ter wille van duidelikheid: geen possessiewe wat letterlike semantiese besit aandui word in hierdie hoofstuk as relevant beskou nie aangesien deskriptiewe possessiewe, maar nie letterlike besitaanduidende possessiewe nie, as kategorie van semantiese adjektiewe beskou word. In hierdie hoofstuk word ook verskillende aspekte bespreek wat die semantiese adjektief karakteriseer.

**Hoofstuk Vyf** ondersoek die nominale relatief klous. Die kern is altyd 'n naamwoord in al die nominale relatiefklouse. Die matriks- en die relatiefklouse word bespreek onder die klasse van **fisiese kenmerke, sielkundige kenmerke, gewoontes, vaardighede, smake, en natuurlike verskynsels**. Die verspreiding van 'n relatief word ook aangedui. Aandag word gevestig op die **komplement van 'n naamwoord en posisie in die klous**.

**Hoofstuk Ses** is die samevatting van die studie waarin die belangrikste bevindings aan die orde gestel word.



## DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the following people:

- ☞ My late father : Ramomedi Abiel
- ☞ My mother : Setishi Albina
- ☞ My sister : Moyahabo Priscilla
- ☞ My wife : Tshifuralo Idah
- ☞ Our children : Phophi, Moyahabo Priscilla and Ramomedi Abigail
- ☞ Our nephews : Madjadji Catherine and Thothobela Rachel

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 PURPOSE AND AIM OF STUDY**

This study will explore the concept which is i.a. indicated as the adjective in some languages like English. Some of the scholars who previously investigated the morphological adjective in Northern Sotho include Lombard, et. al. (1985), Nokaneng (1975), Poulos and Louwrens (1994), Ziervogel, et. al. (1969), and Du Plessis and Visser (1996).

Further investigations led to the classification and form of adjectives as discussed by the scholars. The study also indicates that adjectives may be developed from other word categories.

It is therefore, the main aim of this study to determine the semantic adjective in Northern Sotho which may consist of various categories such as nominal relatives, adjectives, descriptive possessives, and others.

#### **1.2 METHOD OF RESEARCH**

Various approaches will be employed in carrying out this research. These approaches will incorporate textual (consultative), structuralist, comparative and contextual.

##### **1.2.1 Textual (consultative) approach**

This approach deals with the information collected from previous books. Musehane (1995:1) goes on to say that textual approach is a



collection of data in published and unpublished works. In addition to this, data will be collected verbally from speakers of the language.

The quotation above indicates that this approach has something to do with the train of thought or argument in a written or printed work as distinguished from footnotes, commentaries, etc. or subject matter of a speech (as written down or not).

This implies that a book or a person with special information or knowledge can be consulted. The spoken data are mostly collected from professional or authoritative people who have the information about the subject matter. This involves indigenous speakers of the Northern Sotho language or non-speakers of the language who learnt it and made its study in depth.

### 1.2.2 **Structuralist approach**

The concept 'structuralist' is derived from the word 'structure' which means the way in which the constituent parts are fitted or joined together, or arranged to give something its peculiar nature or character.

From the linguistic point of view, this approach is concerned mainly with organization of lexical categories and sentences. In this research, particular attention is based on the structure of semantic adjectives as above and clauses or sentences with adjectives and the relationship between these adjectives and other words which form clauses or sentences more especially with the adjective distribution.

In the case of adjectives, structural similarity with verbs occurs only when the lexical categories concerned are employed in the predicative position and not in the attributive (prenominal) position. This employment represents only their extended use in the function of predication which is actually a verbal function.

### 1.2.3 Comparative approach

In this approach, two or more things can be compared in order to discover their similarities or dissimilarities. Watson (1976:222) describes the word comparative as:

The form of an adjective or adverb expressing a greater degree of the attribute denoted by it than the simple form, e.g. 'fast' has as its comparative degree 'faster' and 'slowly' has as its comparative degree 'more slowly'.

Diaches (1981:251) also agrees with Watson (1976) when asserting that comparative method is used to affirm the excellence of (one thing) by usually setting it beside another of known excellence.

The deduction made by the two linguists above shows that adjectives, but not nouns and verbs, may occur with degree modifiers or in comparative (and superlative) constructions in languages in which adjectives form a distinct category. In general, comparative is a natural operation on adjectives in English and other African languages, including Northern Sotho, but it is of relative importance on nouns, and on verbs it is virtually non-existent:

- (1) a. This is more a chair than that.
- b. This is more attractive than that.

The restriction of comparatives to adjectives is accounted by the fact that degrees of comparison necessarily deal with one quality at a time. Adjectives can have intensive forms derived through the addition of other words:

- (2) a. Dry \_\_\_\_\_ completely dry
- b. Clean \_\_\_\_\_ very clean
- c. Tall \_\_\_\_\_ extremely tall



There are other sets of degree modifiers which can occur in adjectival phrases:

- (3) a. He is running too quickly for me to be able to keep up with him.  
b. He had to walk slowly enough for them to keep up with him.

Adjectives occurring in nominal compounds in English cannot take degree modifiers like very, while the ones occurring in noun phrases can. It is, therefore, important to realize that the word blacks, for instance, in the phrase black bird can be modified by very, but not the compound-member black in blackbird:

	<u>Compound</u>	<u>Noun phrase</u>
(4) a.	*Very blackbirds	Very black birds
b.	*Very redcoat	Very red coat

#### 1.2.4 Contextual approach

This refers to parts of a speech, book, etc. which precede or follow a word or passage and affect its significance.

Adjectives can be used in different contexts. They depend upon their relationships with other words which form sentences:

- (5) a. His heart is white.  
b. Their eyes were red.

In (5) above, colour adjectives are white and red. These do not mean that his heart is really white and their eyes were red in colour. White in this context implies that he is happy while red implies that they were angry.



### 1.3 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This study has been organized as follows:

**Chapter One** gives an introduction to the research, incorporating the purpose and the aim, method of research, definitions of important concepts and derivation of adjectives.

**Chapter Two** deals with the semantic adjective. What is important here is the meanings of adjectives and especially the development and change in these meanings. Adjectives, as it has been mentioned in 1.2.3 in the comparative approach, emphasize the properties that they denote. In this chapter, the traditional definition of adjectives as words which denote properties correctly describes some distinct semantic prototypes which are represented by, for instance, nouns and verbs in the case of languages in which the two form distinct categories.

The chapter indicates that some of the languages in which adjectives are distinguishable from nouns appear to use somewhat different strategies for encoding the relevant concepts. In this chapter, 'comparative' occurs predominantly with adjectives, even though it can qualify a noun as in the following examples:

(6) More of a woman

The characteristics of adjectives which have been generally used in this chapter indicate that they can be used predicatively and attributively. They also have nominalizing, adjectivalizing and adverbializing processes for referential and modifying uses.

**Chapter Three** examines the morphological structure of the adjective in Northern Sotho i.e. adjectives formed by adjectival prefixes, adjectival stems and adjectival suffixes. Many of the adjectival stems can be reduplicated. Reduplication, however, depends on the type of the noun class prefix which is used with it. Adjectival prefixes are not reduplicated.

In addition to this, adjectival stems are arranged according to their meanings. There are also occurrences of certain constraints in the use of adjectives.

**Chapter Four** explores the descriptive possessive and in this way, it is differentiated from possessives. Different aspects which constitute the descriptive possessives are also analysed in this chapter.

**Chapter Five** focuses on the nominal relative clauses in Northern Sotho. In general terms, this chapter will show that the relative clause is a nominal modifier with a nominal relative stem.

**Chapter Six** is the concluding chapter of the research which summarises the findings of the preceding chapters.

#### 1.4 DEFINITIONS OF THE CONCEPTS

The following concepts will be defined for the purpose of this study:

a. **Adjective**

It is a part of speech that modifies a noun or pronoun by describing, limiting, or qualifying it.

b. **Semantics**

This deals with the meanings of words and other linguistic forms and expressions.

c. **Morphology**

It is the branch of grammar or linguistics that deals with forms of words and their formation, as by inflection or derivation.

d. **Predicate**

The word or words in the sentence which tells what is said about the subject.

e. **Relative clause**

A relative clause is a clause which is introduced by a relative pronoun, or a relative adverb, or by neither (an asyndetic clause).

f. **Matrix clause**

This is a clause within which another clause is embedded.

g. **Attribute**

This is a characteristic or quality considered as belonging to a person or a thing.

h. **Complement**

Complement is a word or group of words completing a predicate.

i. **Determiner**

This is a limiting adjective or modifier which continually accompanies and normally precedes a noun or noun phrase.

j. **Object**

A person or thing toward which action, feeling, or thought is directed.



k. **Subject**

It is usually the performer of the action of an active verb, or the receiver of the action of a passive verb.

1.5 **DERIVATION OF ADJECTIVES**

Due to the functional difference between nouns and adjectives, the latter do not usually make use of the process of compounding in the manner in which the former (nouns) make use of the process. The property of “meaning particularization”, for instance, which is generally considered as the hall-mark of nominal compounds, is on the whole exceptional in the case of the so-called “compound adjectives”.

Adjectives do not indicate the kind of irregularities in their derivation that are found to occur in the derivation of nominals. The irregularities which usually occur in the use of the suffix -able or -ible for deriving adjectives are quite predictable and statable in the form of certain broad generalizations.

Some adjectives derived from nouns such as economic, parental, national, etc. in English do not have the defining properties of adjectives. They, however, function as modifiers of nouns, but are generally associated with deverbal nouns which form a close-knit semantic unit with them like in the following examples:

- (7) a. Economic lift \_\_\_\_\_ lift the economy  
b. Parental refusal \_\_\_\_\_ parents refuse  
c. National leader \_\_\_\_\_ lead the nation.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE SEMANTIC ADJECTIVE

#### 2.1 AIM

The aim of this chapter is to analyse and give an exposition of the semantic adjective in different languages, including Northern Sotho. In order to achieve this aim, various scholars will be consulted. In this regard, one can mention a few scholars like Bhat (1994), Crystal (1991), Fellbaum (1990), Jones (1996) and Quirk (1972). The semantic adjective as a category is at present hardly treated in Northern Sotho books. The authors that are there in Northern Sotho books, for example, Lombard, et. al.(1985), Ziervogel, et. al. (1969), to mention but a few authors, treat the adjective without classifying it into various aspects. It behoves this chapter, therefore, to classify the adjective accordingly. This will be an endeavour to avoid confusion as regards the classification of the adjectives in Northern Sotho.

#### 2.2 CRITERIA FOR ADJECTIVES

##### 2.2.1 Introduction

It is an undisputed fact that there are many languages such as English and Northern Sotho in which adjectives are quite different from nouns and verbs. However, there is no agreement when it comes to the criteria that can be employed for defining or explaining them. Traditionally, adjectives are regarded as words which denote properties, and are differentiated from nouns and verbs on the basis that nouns denote persons, places and things, while verbs denote actions or events. The definition of the adjectives above has been widely considered to be inadequate, because there are nouns such as whiteness or height which denote properties, and verbs such as like which are not very semantically different from adjectives like fond.



An alternative approach, which is very important, is to differentiate adjectives from nouns and verbs on the basis of their morphosyntactic properties. In languages like English and Northern Sotho, for example, it is possible to use degree modifiers with adjectives, but not with nouns and verbs. In this case, nouns indicate number distinctions and take the possessive marker, while verbs indicate tense, aspect and mood distinctions. Generally, adjectives do not indicate either of these two sets of characteristics. They generally tend to neutralise the number distinctions. While the adjectives occur as predicates, they need an auxiliary support in order to get associated with tense, aspect and mood distinctions.

The morphosyntactic qualities are not shown uniformly by all the lexical items which belong to the adjectival category; degree modification, for instance, is not allowed by all of them; moreover, some of these qualities may not be available in some languages, and hence, classifications based upon them would never be helpful in the establishment of cross-linguistic generalizations.

The linguists have proposed the third approach so as to differentiate between adjectives and some of the categories like nouns and verbs which is to make use of their functions in syntax or discourse. In languages like English and Northern Sotho, for instance, the adjectives occur primarily as modifiers of nouns in noun phrases, while nouns and verbs occur basically as heads of noun phrases and predicates of sentences or clauses respectively. According to Bhat (1994:12), the lexical items which belong to all these categories may be employed in all the three functions with varying degrees of freedom (either as they are or through affixation), but it is widely considered to be possible to differentiate between primary (basic) and secondary uses in the case of most of them.

It is interesting to note that the lexical items do not uniformly indicate the similar tendencies of occurrence in the three functions mentioned above. There are some which are highly restricted to only one of them, while others are free to take place in two or all three of them. In this case, there is a problem, as in the case of languages such as English and Northern Sotho, of lexical items which need to be regarded as "adjectives", but which do not really take place in the primary function of modifying a head noun in a noun phrase.



From the discussion above, it is an obvious case that the different attempts to define adjectives as a distinct category and to differentiate them from other categories have been jeopardized by two main types of problems. The first problem is their failure to account for variations inside word classes (the occurrence of subgroups and borderline cases). The second problem is their failure to be general enough to apply to all languages. This implies that there are various ways to resolve both these problems which have just been mentioned above as some scholars have proposed.

### 2.2.2 **Prototype**

This deals with how the first problem, which has been mentioned above, can be resolved. In order to resolve this problem, quite a number of linguists have been arguing that the classical theory of categorization needs to be rejected. In accordance with this type of a theory, qualities which define a category are mostly considered to be shared by all its members, and accordingly, all the members are considered to have equal status as category members. This has been also acknowledged by Lakoff (1989:39), when stating that all the members are considered to have same value as category members. The lexical categories such as nouns, verbs and adjectives do not appear to support such a claim. They normally appear to indicate internal variations concerning the type of meanings they express, the type of morphosyntactic characteristics they manifest, and also the type of characteristic activities (functions) in which they occur.

Rosch, et. al. (1978), in cognitive psychology, developed an alternative theory of categorization called "Prototype Theory". According to the linguists such as Croft (1991), Dixon (1982), Givón (1979), Hopper and Thompson (1991), and Lakoff (1987), this type of a theory of categorization can be more relevant than the classical one for explaining and characterizing lexical categories in language. According to such a theory, human categorization proceeds from the central right to peripheral instances with the central instances of a given category being "prototypical" for only that category.



In connection with the notion of prototypicality, Rosch (1978:37) clearly asserts that the more prototypical it is rated, the more attributes it has in common with some members of the category, and fewer attributes in common with members of contrasting categories. This idea has been displayed for natural language categories. In other words, the category was negatively correlated with the extent to which they have attributes belonging to members of contrast categories. According to the proposal made by Rosch (1978), this is the portion of the form of real-world categories. Rosch (1978) and her partners successfully came up with another important finding which deals with the notion of categories at the “basic level” as against those at the superordinate and subordinate levels. For instance, the lexical items such as dog and cat can be considered as basic, as compared to other lexical items such as furniture and vehicle, which are regarded as superordinates, and retriever and sports car which are considered to be subordinates respectively. In relation with the level, Lakoff (1989:51) states that this distinction in the “level” of lexical items solely relies upon the manner in which human beings interact with objects, the manner they perceive them, imagine them, arrange facts about them, and behave towards them with their bodies. There is a view that if the subjects are requested to list attributes of categories, they mention very few attributes of category members at the superordinate level, but most of what they know at the basic level. It is very interesting to note that at the subordinate level, there is absolutely no increase in knowledge over the basic level which has been the centre of attraction for many linguists.

The suitability of the notion of prototypes for a characterization of adjectives may be inferred from Dixon (1982), a study of adjectives based upon the data from seventeen various languages. According to Dixon (1982), the adjectives are divided into seven various semantic types, and out of these seven, the linguist points out that four of them, namely; Dimension, Age, Value and Color, are always associated with an adjectival category. In this case, the languages which have only a very limited class of adjectives are likely to include at least these four kinds of concepts. However, other semantic types such as Physical Property, Human Propensity and Speed seem to be incorporated in other categories such as verbs and adverbs respectively, meaning that they are less prototypical than the former.



In another contribution, Croft (1991:272) postulates that an approach of this type would never be available for a formalist approach to language. The main reason is that a formalist approach would be depending upon criterial definitions for grammatical terms, that is, terms with sharp boundaries. Croft (1991) also maintains that only a functional approach can be in a position to make use of the Prototype Theory.

The problem of internal variability of word classes which has been stated above has, according to McCawley (1982:177), led to various approaches in generative grammar. The “interpretive semanticists” such as Jackendoff (1972) point out that the first one is merely to take items which are treated differently by a transformation as belonging to various categories. The other “generative semanticists” such as Ross (1969) put forth the second one which is to make items which are treated alike by a transformation as belonging to the same category. Ross (1969) goes on to assert that the first approach leads to a profusion of categories, while the second approach leads to a paucity (smallness in number) of categories. According to McCawley (1982), these two approaches are not convincing.

### 2.2.3 Multiple criteria

The employment of many criteria deals with the second problem, namely that none of the different criteria which have been suggested by various linguists for characterizing the adjectival category appear to be general enough to apply to all languages. This type of a problem can be resolved by making use of a few criteria at the same time in the characterization of adjectives. A closer examination of the different criteria clearly indicates that most of them are intertwined as they form a unified system of description.

The necessity of employing two or more criteria for a proper characterization of categories has been recognised by few linguistics. Lakoff(1987), as one of them, points out that categorization does not solely rely upon the nature of the entities which are being categorized, but also upon the needs, experiences and motivations of people who found the categories. In contrast to the classical “objective realism”, Lakoff (1987:268) regards it as “experiential realism”.



Besides Lakoff (1989), Hopper and Thompson (1984:708) also take into consideration the semantic features themselves to be not capable of fulfilling the requirements for the purpose of categorization. According to them, prototypicality in linguistic categories relies not only on independently verifiable semantic properties, but also on linguistic function in discourse. Both linguists also assert that there are contexts in which the two notions disagree with one another, and in such contexts, languages appear to favour the second one (sentential function) against the first one (lexical context).

## 2.3 SEMANTIC PROTOTYPE

The semantic prototypes that will be analyzed in this study are based on the works of the following scholars: Bhat (1994), Miller (1989), Quirk (1972) and Jones (1996).

### 2.3.1 Dixon

Dixon (1982) examines in depth the possibility of considering adjectives as having a distinct semantic prototype. The linguist establishes seven semantic types under which the adjectives can be grouped on the basis of both semantic and morphosyntactic criteria. On top of seven different semantic types, the linguist adds three others in a later work, bringing the total to the following ten adjectival semantic types:

Semantic types	Examples
(1) a. Dimension	Big, great, short, thin
b. Physical Property	Hard, strong, clean, sick
c. Speed	Quick, fast, slow, sudden
d. Age	New, old, young, modern
e. Color	White, black, red, crimson
f. Value	Good, bad, odd, strange
g. Difficult	Easy, difficult, tough, simple
h. Qualification	Define, possible, normal, correct
i. Human Propensity	Angry, happy, eager, clever
j. Similarity	Like, unlike, similar, different



From the adjectival semantic types which have been written above, Dixon (1991) points out that for languages which have the principal class of adjectives, the semantic content of the class is constant from one language to the other. In the case of languages which have a limited class of adjectives, there is a remarkable resemblance in the terms which are expressed through these adjectives. The items belonging to Age, Dimension, Value and Color are likely to be incorporated in the class of adjectives even in the case of languages in which there are extremely few members in the adjective class. For instance, Igbo, which has the class of adjectives, has two each of Age (old, new), Color (black, white), Dimension (large, small) and Value (good, bad). The fact is that there is a general tendency to connect words denoting Human Propensity with the class of nouns and of Physical Property (and Speed) with that of verbs in such languages. This notion has been mentioned by Dixon (1982:46).

According to Jespersen (1924:74), the existence of such a semantic constancy brings about the distribution of words which is always essentially the same in the case of languages in which a formal distinction is made between substantives and adjectives. In this case, the words advocating such idea as stone, knife, and tree are everywhere substantives while the words for big, old, bright and gray are everywhere adjectives. In the situation such as this, the agreement makes it likely that the distinction cannot be merely accidental. This implies that it should have some psychological or logical foundation and essential reason.

### 2.3.2 WordNet

Miller (1989:47), in WordNet, defines adjectives as words which modify nouns (e.g.; big and comfortable in big sofa, and a comfortable sofa).

It is important, in the first place, to know what is contained in the WordNet. WordNet consists of 16,428 adjective synsets and synonym sets which include many nouns, particles and prepositional phrases which always function as modifiers (e.g.; home as in cooking home or home office).



The adjectives in WordNet are loosely divided into two main categories. The first category is known as the descriptive adjectives (e.g.; possible, married, big, beautiful and interesting). It constitutes a very large category. The second one is known as the relational adjectives due to the fact that they are closely related by derivation to nouns. The word electrical in electrical engineer, for instance, is closely related to the noun electricity. In this case, each class of adjectives, descriptive and relational, indicates typical semantic and syntactic features, but the fact of the matter is that the distinctions are not always clear-cut and in WordNet the categories tend to overlap.

### 2.3.2.1 Descriptive adjectives

In simple terms, a descriptive adjective typically ascribes to a noun a value of an attribute. This implies that  $x$  is adjective presupposes that there is an attribute  $A$  in such a way that  $A(x) = \text{adjective}$ . Just to say :The package is heavy, presupposes that there is an attribute WEIGHT in such a manner that  $\text{WEIGHT}(\text{package}) = \text{heavy}$ . In this way, heavy and light are values for the attribute WEIGHT. It is important to note that WordNet consists pointers of between descriptive adjectives and the nouns by which appropriate attributes are lexicalized. Descriptive adjectives can be classified into several types:

#### 2.3.2.1.1 Antonymy

Antonymy is the word which means the exact contrary of another. Watson (1976:45) states that:

Words/stems that have opposite meanings are referred to as antonyms in semantic studies.

Generally, the semantic organization of descriptive adjectives is unique to them and completely different from that of the other major categories. The main semantic relation among descriptive adjectives is antonymy. The significance of antonymy first became



obvious from the results obtained with word association test. In cases where the probe is a familiar adjective, the response usually given by the matured speaker is its antonym. For instance, to the probe long, the common response is short, while to short, the most frequent response is long. This implies that the mutuality of association is a salient feature of the data for descriptive adjectives. It seems to be gained as a result of these pairs being used together in the same phrases and sentences.

The significance of antonymy in the organization of descriptive adjectives is quite understandable when one acknowledges that the function of these adjectives is to express values of attributes and that attributes tend to be bipolar. As it has been stated above, antonymous adjectives express opposing values of an attribute. For instance, heavy is the antonym of light, and this expresses all values at the opposite pole of the WEIGHT attribute. This type of a binary opposition in WordNet is represented by reciprocal labeled pointers meaning 'IS ANTONYMOUS TO' and is clearly shown to the WordNet user as heavy versus light and light versus heavy.

It is interesting to know that this account proposes two closely related questions which can serve to organize the following arguments. Firstly, when two adjectives have closely similar meanings, why then do they not have the same antonym? For instance, why do heavy and weighty which are closely similar in meaning have different antonyms such as light and weighty respectively? Secondly, why do many descriptive adjectives seem to have no antonyms if ever antonymy is so important? For instance, continuing with WEIGHT, what is the antonym of ponderous? To the proposition that light is the antonym of ponderous, the reply must obviously be that the antonym of light in the most suitable sense is heavy.

There were very serious problems which were caused by the first question for WordNet, which was basically conceived as using labeled pointers between synsets so as to represent semantic relations between lexical concepts. It is not genuine, however, to introduce antonymy by labeled pointers between the synsets, for instance, between (heavy, weighty and ponderous) and (light, weightless and airy). These concepts are



opposite even though the word forms are not similar antonym pairs. Miller (1989:49) contributes by asserting that:

... saying that antonym is a relation between word forms implies that a word form with two different meanings is two different word forms.

One of the main problems is that the antonymy relation between word forms is not the same as conceptual opposition between word meanings. It is important to realise that the morphological rules apply to word forms, but not to word meanings. They have a semantic reflex. In the case of antonymy, the semantic reflex is so effective that it makes the attention to bend away from the underlying morphological process.

The second question comes to the fore when the familiar semantic relation of antonymy holds only between selected pairs of words such as heavy and light, and weighty and weightless. What is it that can be done with ponderous, massive and airy which seem to have no appropriate antonyms? The easy answer to this question is to insert a similarity pointer and use it to show that the adjectives lacking antonymy are similar in meanings to adjectives which have antonyms.

The linguists such as Gross, Ficher and Miller (1989) suggested that adjectives are arranged in clusters of synsets associated by semantic similarity to a focal adjective which relates the cluster to a contrasting cluster at the opposite pole of the attribute. For this reason, ponderous is similar to heavy and heavy is the antonym of light. In this case, a conceptual opposition of ponderous and light is mediated by heavy. The linguists mentioned above went on to differentiate direct antonyms such as heavy and light which are, of course, conceptual opposites that are also lexical pairs from incorrect antonyms such as heavy and airy which are conceptual opposites that are not lexically paired. In this arrangement all descriptive adjectives have antonyms. Those which lack direct antonyms have indirect antonyms, i.e., are similar in meaning to adjectives which have direct antonyms.



What emerges in the WordNet is that the direct antonyms are represented by the antonymy pointer  $\downarrow$ , whereas the indirect antonyms are inherited through similarity which is indicated by the similarity pointer and meaning 'IS SIMILAR TO'. Among the adjectives which have no satisfactory antonyms are few of the powerful and most colourful in the language. An example is angry. The related attribute ANGER is gradable from no anger to extreme fury, but unlike most attributes it does not really appear to be bipolar. There are many concepts which are similar in meaning to angry. These terms are furious, irate, enraged, wrathful and incensed. From these terms, none of them has a direct antonym. The usual strategy for such adjectives is to find out a related antonym pair and to code it as similar in meaning to a member of that pair. In the case of angry, the best related pairs appear to be pleased and displeased but coding angry as similar to displeased fails to hit the passion inherent in its meaning. The solution adopted for angry was to use not angry for unangry (a form of a word which is not attested in many dictionaries) to indicate the zero point on a monopolar continuum.

The realization that there are expectations to the predominating bipolar antonymy in which descriptive adjectives are arranged is not really avoidable. Specifically, certain "non" antonyms are chief candidates as zero point indicators-which does not make them any less meaningful or useful in the languages. In this case, antonyms such as noncombustible versus combustible and nonaddictive versus addictive are taken into account. In addition to what has been mentioned, the case of angry calls attention to the fact that for other pairs in which the antonym is formed by a negative prefix, it is possible that the apparent bipolarity can represent two opposing monopolar continua conjoined.

The WordNet consists of adjectives which are organized into bipolar cluster. Basically, out of over 1,732 of these clusters, one for each pair of antonyms, there are 3,464 half cluster of closely similar senses. For instance, the cluster for fast and slow which defines the attribute SPEED consists of two half cluster, one for the sense of fast while the other one for the sense of slow. What should be realised is that each and every



half-cluster is headed by what is known as head synset, in this case fast and its antonym slow, along with a parenthetical gloss or example phrases. The head synset comes after what are regarded as satellite synsets, which represent senses which are similar to the sense of the head adjective. The other half cluster is headed by the reverse antonymous pair, slow and fast, followed by satellite synsets for senses of slow.

The problem which arouses attention was posed by antonymous pairs expressing the similar senses and representing values of the same attribute. In the circumstances such as these, the same set of satellite synsets may be in one way or the other, related to the two various antonym pairs. For instance, antonyms such as big and little, and large and small are equally salient as antonyms defining the attribute SIZE. Many synsets can also be coded as similar to big as to large. To make sure that unnecessary redundancy is avoided, a single cluster was produced headed by both pairs and exhibited to the WordNet user as large versus small, big versus little for the half cluster and by small versus large, little versus big for the other half cluster.

Even though the concept large is undoubtedly opposed to the concept little, the pair large and little are not in anyway accepted as antonyms. Generally, association data and occurrence data show that big and little are regarded a pair while large and small are also considered a pair. The two pairs prove clearly that antonymy is a semantic relation between words rather than between terms.

#### 2.3.2.1.2 Gradation

There are many explanations of antonymy which differentiate between contradictory and contrary terms. The point is that this terminology originated in logic, where two propositions are said to be inconsistent if and only if the truth of one suggests the falsity of the other and are said to be contrary if one proposition can be truth but both cannot be true. In this way, alive and dead are said to be contradictory terms on the basis that the truth of James is dead implies the falsity of James is alive and vice versa. Fat



and thin are also said to be contrary concepts for the reason that James is fat and James is thin can never both be true even though both can be false if James is of average weight. The definition of contrary concept is unlimited to opposites, but can be implied so widely as to be almost meaningless. For instance, James is a tree and James is a dog can never both be true, but both can be false, so tree and dog must be contraries.

Gradation should be regarded as a semantic relation organizing lexical memory for adjectives. Lyons (1997:277-278) puts it clearly that gradability, not truth functions, offers the better description of the differences of such adjectives which have been mentioned above and continues to assert that:

Although gradable and ungradable opposites may be distinguished in terms of their logical properties, it must also be borne in mind that gradable antonyms are frequently employed in everyday language-behaviour as contradictions rather than contraries.

The quotation implies that contraries are gradable adjectives whereas contradictories are not. It is important to note that in certain attributes gradation can be expressed by ordered strings of adjectives. Most gradation is performed by morphological principles for the comparative and superlative degrees, which can be extended if less and least are employed to complement more and most. Since this conceptually important relation of gradation does not play a significant part in the arrangement of adjectives, it has not been coded in WordNet.

### 2.3.2.1.3 **Markedness**

Many attributes have an orientation. By means of distinctions, it is quite natural to meditate of them as dimensions in a hyperspace, where one end of each dimension is firmly fixed at the point of origin of the space. Thus, the point of origin is the expected or default value.



The antonyms like deep and shallow portray this general linguistic phenomenon called markedness. Leech (1974:113) also says that:

Binary opposition frequently have a MARKED term.

The previous investigations of markedness are focussed on the overt morphological or lexical marking. According to Bierwisch (1967), only the unmarked spatial adjectives can take measure phrases. For instance, the hole is ten feet deep, is acceptable. Here, the measure phrase, ten feet, explains the DEPTH of the hole. When the antonym is used as in, the hole is ten feet shallow, the result is not acceptable. For this reason, this chief member, deep, is the unmarked concept while the secondary member, shallow, is marked and does not take measure phrases, except in special conditions.

Clark and Clark (1977:455-456) have experienced that human beings respond more quickly to unmarked than to marked terms. People tend to look on the bright side of life, which would describe a tendency of words with 'good' evaluations to be unmarked, and those with 'bad' evaluations to be marked. The measure phrases are not appropriate with many attributes, yet markedness is a general phenomenon which features nearly all direct antonyms. In almost every case, one member of a pair of antonyms is primary because it is generally accepted, more frequently used, less remarkable or morphologically related to the name of the attribute. The unmarked or primary concept is the default value of the attribute which is the value that would be adopted in the absence of the information to the contrary.

In few instances like wet versus dry and easy versus difficult, it can be arguable which concept should be considered as primary, but for the very large majority of pairs the marker is morphologically explicit in the form of a negative prefix. The words such as dis-+-similar, il-+-legal, un-+-pleasant, im-+-patient, in-+-decent and ir-+-resolute have negative prefixes.



In WordNet, markedness has not been explicitly coded. The adjectives which express values of the attribute DEPTH, as in the case of deep versus shallow and easy versus difficult, are not in anyway linked in WordNet by a pointer.

#### 2.3.2.1.4 Polysemy and selection preferences

Various senses of polysemous adjectives such as old, right and short occur with specific nouns. For instance, the sense of old meaning ‘not young’ often modifies hyponyms of person- nouns like man - while old meaning ‘not new’ often modifies hyponyms of artifact. This is according to Justeson and Katz (1993), who also maintain that the noun context in most cases serve to disambiguate polysemous adjectives.

Murphy and Andrew (1993) have an alternative idea that adjectives are monosemous, but have various extensions. The two linguists also mention that speakers compute the appropriate meanings in combination with the meanings of the nouns which the adjectives modify. They also go on to argue against the claim that antonymy is a relation between two word forms on the fact that speakers generated various antonyms for an adjectives like fresh which depends on whether it modifies shirt or bread. WordNet holds the position that these facts point to the polysemy of adjectives like fresh. This idea is also supported by Justeson and Karz (1993), who also assert that various antonyms can assist to disambiguate adjectives. Various senses of an ambiguous word often have various antonyms in WordNet. For instance, old versus new for an old house and old versus young for old people. The sense in fresh bread has the direct antonym stale in the case of fresh. The sense in a fresh shirt is also similar to clean and so has the indirect antonym dirty in the pair clean and dirty.

Hudson (1984:40) maintains that “family resemblances” are not just a special or a particular case of what is traditionally known as polysemy. Description of polysemy by Leech (1969:252) says:

Ambiguity ( of single words or lexical items).



There are no doubts that adjectives are selective about the nouns they modify. The general principle is that if the referent signified by a noun does not have the attribute whose value is expressed by the adjective, then that adjective-noun combination needs a figurative or idiomatic explanation. For instance, a tree or a person can be tall simply because trees and persons have HEIGHT as an attribute, but stories and streets do not have HEIGHT. In other words, tall street and tall story do not allow literal readings. Tall as in tall story is usually compared with short as in short story. Short story, in this case, is correct when the adjective short is combined with the noun story. Adjectives vary widely in their breadth of application. Any noun can be modified by the adjectives which express evaluations. For instance, desirable and undesirable, and also good and bad are applicable in this case. There are also other adjectives like active and passive, and fast and slow which express activity while others like strong and weak, and intense and mild express potency. Certain adjectives such as abridged and unabridged, edible and inedible and pious and unpious are strictly limited with respect to the range of nouns they can modify.

According to Sapir (1944), quite a number of adjectives take various meanings when they modify various nouns. In this way, tall denotes one range of heights for a building, another for a tree and for a person. It seems as if portion of the meaning of each of the nouns like tree, person and building is a range of expected values for the attribute HEIGHT. The adjective tall is interpreted relative to the expected height of object of the type signified by the head noun. In this case, a tall tree is something which is tall for a tree. Even if both buildings and persons have the attribute HEIGHT, the height of a building is greater than the height of a person. Tellbaum (1990) quotes Miller and Johnson- Laird (1976:358) when they say:

The nominal information must be given priority; the adjectival information is then evaluated within the range allowed by the nominal information.



### 2.3.2.1.5 Color adjectives

The color terms are, somehow, exceptional in different ways. They can satisfy the requirement of either nouns or adjectives, yet they are not nominal adjectives (i.e. nouns used as adjectives). It is of great significance to note that they can be graded, nominalised and joined with other descriptive adjectives.

It is quite interesting to realize that only one color attribute is described by direct antonyms .i.e., LIGHTNESS. Those who know much about color vision may bring forward evidence of opposition between red and green, and between yellow and blue, but those are not regarded as direct antonyms in lay speech. The arrangement of color concepts is given by the dimensions of color perception, i.e., lightness, hue and saturation, which interpret the well known color solid. The names of hues in WordNet are usually coded as similar to colored in the opposition colored and colorless. The names for the shades of gray from white to black are coded to white, gray or black in tripartite cluster cross-referenced to achromatic. It goes without saying that it might be advantageous and definitely more systematic to code the hues chromatic rather than to colored and the grays to achromatic rather than to colorless.

It is generally accepted that the elaborate color terminology obtained in the languages of the industrialized countries is a result of technological progress, but not a natural linguistic development. According to Berlin and Key (1969), the possibilities about the evolution of color terminology suggests that it starts with one conventional attribute, LIGHTNESS. Certain languages possess only two color terms which express values of that attribute, and it has been clearly indicated that this lexical limitation is not a result of perceptual deficits. As it is a known fact that technology develops daily and makes possible the manipulation of color, the need for terminological precision expands and more colour terms appear in the language. Their increment is always made along the lines determined by innate mechanisms of color perception rather than by the established styles of linguistic modification.



### 2.3.2.1.6 Quantifiers

Quantifier is the concept which is lent from logic, where it refers to an operator that states explicitly the quantity of the term. In linguistics the concept is applied to an ill-defined class of words like all, some, few, less, both, etc., which also specify quantities. Two of these concepts, all and some, are in many of their uses essentially linguistic equivalents of, respectively, the universal quantifier  $\forall x f(x)$ , which indicate for all  $x$ ,  $f(x)$ ; and the existential quantifier  $\exists x f(x)$ , which indicate 'for some  $x$ ,  $f(x)$ '. For instance, in the expressions; all doctors drink tea and some doctors drink tea, both all and some function exactly the way logical quantifiers function.

In the explanation of qualities, Bachman (1990:19) says:

Quantification involves the assigning of numbers, and this distinguishes measures from qualitative descriptions such as verbal accounts or nonverbal, visual representations.

The explanation of the concept quantifier differs from one linguist to the other. Certain linguists incorporate quantifiers in the class of determiners such as the, this, their, etc., whose duty is to find out the reference of a noun phrase. Quantifiers also assist to determine the reference of a noun phrase. For instance, if the expression some doctors is used in contrast with other doctors, some functions much as a determiner does. Quantifiers share other features with determiners. From the syntactical point of view, they present themselves in a prenominal position as in some books and the books, and even in preadjectival position like in some large books and the large books. According to Lyons (1977:455), a determiner relates to us which member of a set of entities is being referred to, whereas a quantifier relates to us how many entities or how much substance is being referred to. In WordNet, quantifiers are differentiated from determiners.



Quantifiers usually look like descriptive adjectives. Just like adjectives, quantifiers distinctively have antonyms like much and little, and many and few. Some and all enter into a three- way contrast with no. Many quantifiers, just like adjectives, are gradable by degree verbs like very much food and very many books, and in certain instances by inflection for comparative and superlative degrees like much, more 1, most 2 and many, more 1, most 2. It is of great significance to realise that for these gradable quantifiers, the antonyms are also gradable as in little, less, least, and few, fewer, fewest.

One distinctive feature of many quantifiers is that they can modify only one of the two major classes of nouns. These two major classes are “count nouns” like orange, books and town, and “mass or noncount nouns ” like sugar, traffic and furniture. For instance, many modifies only count nouns as in many oranges but not many sugar, while much modifies only mass nouns as in much sugar but not much apples. But for the reason that the difference between these two noun classes is not always clear-cut, neither the noun categories nor the limitation on quantities is not coded in the WordNet.

WordNet follows the practice of regarding quantifiers a subclass of adjectives and incorporates them in the descriptive adjectives file. This is because that quantifiers look like adjectives. Quantifiers also have antonyms and readily form themselves into bipolar cluster.

#### 2.3.2.1.7 Participial adjectives

Participial adjectives occur in a prenominal position and have stative meanings. Many of this type of adjectives do not fit properly into the cluster structure of descriptive adjectives on the basis that they lack antonyms, either direct or indirect. For this reason, WordNet keeps up a separate file of such adjectives. In this file, each and every adjective is entered individually rather than as portion of a cluster. In order to recount them semantically to other words in the language, each adjective is cross-referenced to the suitable verb by means of a pointer meaning ‘PRINCIPAL PART OF’: The entry for breaking ,for example, has a pointer to the proper sense of the verb break, and elapsed has a pointer to the verb elapse.



Quite a large number of participial adjectives have direct or indirect antonyms. The adjectives in, for instance, boiling water (indirect antonym, cold), laughing people (indirect antonym, unhappy), retired nurses (indirect antonym, active) and married couples (direct antonym, unmarried) are relevant. For the reason that adjectives such as these are completely comfortable in the cluster structure of descriptive adjectives, they are incorporated in that category in WordNet rather than being cross-referenced to verbs.

### 2.3.2.2 Relational adjectives

These are the adjectives which are semantically and morphologically related to nouns, even though the morphological relation is not always direct. They modify the nouns and function as classifiers. For instance, musical in musical instrument is closely related to music and dental in dental hygiene is closely related to tooth, and they also serve to identify kinds of instruments and hygiene, respectively. In actual fact, a noun can be modified by both the relational adjective and the noun from which it is derived as in atomic bomb and atom bomb. To add more, tooth hygiene can be acceptable as an informal expression for dental hygiene.

In relational adjectives, there is also a semantic relation between the adjective and the noun it modifies, and this relation may vary with various head nouns. Agricultural equipment, for instance, means 'equipment used in agriculture', while agricultural college means 'a college teaching the science of agriculture'.

In certain instances, a noun gives rise to two homonymous adjectives, one a relational adjective, the other descriptive. The adjective in criminal law, for example, is not the same as that in criminal behaviour as reflected on the basis that only in the second case can the adjective be used predicatively. One example can be found in the sentence such as his behaviour is criminal, but not the law is criminal.

Basically, relational adjectives vary from descriptive adjectives in different ways.



These adjectives do not refer to a property of the nouns they modify, and so do not relate to an attribute. They are not gradable. One of their characteristic is that they occur only in attributive position, as modifying nouns do. Another feature is that they lack direct antonyms even if it is not always the case. Actually, many of these adjectives do not fit comfortably into the cluster arrangement of descriptive adjectives. When a relational adjective lacks an antonym, and especially if the antonym is direct and the pair can serve as a bipolar focus for related senses such as physical and mental, then they are definitely put in the descriptive adjective file. For those which do not borrow themselves to the cluster arrangement, WordNet preserves a separate file, with pointers to the corresponding nouns.

### 2.3.3 Quirk

According to Quirk (1972:233), an adjective has traditionally been regarded as part of speech which modifies the noun.

#### **Characteristics of the adjectives**

There are some suffixes which are only found with adjectives, for example, -ous, but many common adjectives are like round because they have no identifying shape as in the words like good, little, hot, fat and young. It is also true that many adjectives inflect for the comparative and superlative, for instance, great, greater, greatest. One notable characteristic of adjectives is that many of them provide the base from which adverbs are derived by means of an -ly suffix, for example; adjective happy and adverb happily. In certain occasions, adjectives are themselves derived from an adjective base, for example; kindly. Kindly is an item which also functions as an adverb.

The following four features are generally regarded to be characteristics of adjectives:

- (2)
- a. They can, without any restrictions, occur in attributive positions. In other words, they can premodify a noun, for example; happy in the happy boys.
  - b. They can freely occur in the predicate position. In other words, they can function as subject complement, for instance ; old in the woman seemed old, or as object complement, for instance; ugly in he thought the painting ugly.
  - c. The adjectives can also be premodified by the intensifier very, for example; the girls are very happy.
  - d. They can also take comparative and superlative forms whether inflectionally, for example; the gentlemen are happier now and they are the happiest people I know, or by the addition of the modifiers more and most, for instance; these pupils are more intelligent and they are the most beautiful paintings I have ever seen.

It is important to realize that not all words that are traditionally regarded as adjectives possess all of these four features. Some of these features apply to words which are generally considered to belong to other classes. Eight words have been selected, and since these words may belong to more than one class, they may be placed in the context of a sentence, so that it should be clear which use of the words is being tested.

- (3)
- a. Charles is hungry
  - b. The universe is finite
  - c. Mavis is an utter fool
  - d. Her reply was tantamount to an ultimatum
  - e. Their house is ablaze
  - f. James is abroad
  - g. The meeting is soon
  - h. Her favourite meat is lamb



The following table shows the criteria for establishing adjective classes:

	<u>Attribute</u>	<u>Predicative with SEEM</u>	<u>VERY</u>	<u>Comparison</u>	<u>Direct Object</u>
(4) a. Hungry	+	+	+	+	-
b. Infinite	+	+	-	-	-
c. Utter	+	-	-	-	-
d. Tantamount	-	+	-	-	-
e. Ablaze	-	+	-	-	-
f. Abroad	-	-	-	-	-
g. Soon	-	-	+	+	-
h. Lamb	+	-	-	-	+

In the table displayed above, the first four words in the leftmost column would be considered by all grammarians as adjectives. They are hungry, infinite, utter and tantamount. Abroad and soon would be, without any doubt, assigned to the adverb class while lamb to the noun class. The word ablaze is on the borderline between the adjective and the adverb classes.

Many adjectives are gradable, just as many adverbs are. In this case, these two classes employ the same features to realise the gradability of an item, in particular premodification by very and comparison. These two features do not differentiate adjectives from verbs, and are not found in all adjectives. Adjectives are also distinguished positively by their ability to function attributively and/or their ability to function predicatively after intensive verbs which include SEEM. It is proposed that those which function both attributively and predicatively are central to the class of adjectives, whereas those which are limited to one or other function are peripheral adjectives. In this way, hungry and finite are central adjectives while utter, tantamount and blaze are peripheral adjectives.

## The adjective and other word-classes

There are three relevant word-classes. They are adverbs, nouns and participles.

### a. Adjective and adverb

It has been already stated that the word ablaze is on the borderline between the adjective and the verb classes. Certain words beginning with a- have constituted a very serious problem in classifications for grammarians, some assigning them to the adjective class, while others to the adverb class. These a- words are used predicatively, but only a few can be freely used attributively. Adverbs such as abroad and soon can as well be used predicatively. These adverbs are used predicatively only after BE, while adjectives can be used with other intensive verbs in which SEEM is included. With respect to their ability to be used predicatively with both BE and another intensive verb like SEEM, it is easy to contrast the a- adjective asleep and the adjective subject on the one hand, with the a- adverb abroad and the adverb there on the other:

- (5) a. The patient was            { asleep  
     { subject to fits  
     { abroad  
     { there
- b. The patient seemed        { asleep  
     { subject to fits  
     { \*abroad  
     { \*there

Certain items which function as adjectives are also used to define, in some way, the process denoted by the verb which is, of course, a typical use of adverbs. An example is quick as in she came back quick. If in its adverbial use the item is not restricted to a position after the verb or (if present) the object, it undoubtedly belongs to both the adjective and the adverb classes. For instance, long and still, which usually function as adjectives, are in pre-verb position in the following sentences and must therefore be adverbs:



- (6) a. Such animals have long had to defend themselves  
b. He still can't make up his mind whether to go or not

In certain instances, the adjective form and a corresponding -ly adverb form can be used interchangeably, with little or no semantic difference, except that some people prefer the adverb form:

- (7) a. He spoke {loud and clear  
{loudly and clearly  
b. They buy their clothes { cheap  
{ cheaply  
c. She came back {quick  
{quickly  
d. He drove the car { slow  
{slowly

b. **Adjective and noun**

There are some items which can be both adjectives and nouns. For instance, criminal is an adjective because

- (8) a. it can function attributively: A criminal attack,  
b. it can also function predicatively: The attack seemed criminal to us.

The same word, criminal also has all the characteristics of a noun, since it can be

- (9) a. subject of a clause: The criminal pleaded guilty to all charges,  
b. subject complement: He is probably a criminal,  
c. object: They have arrested a criminal,  
d. inflected for number: One criminal, several criminals,  
e. inflected for the genitive case: The criminal's sentence, the criminal's view,

- f. preceded by articles and other determiners: A criminal, that criminal,
- g. premodified by an adjective: A violent criminal.

It is reasonable, therefore, to say that criminal is both an adjective and a noun, and the relationship between the adjective criminal and the noun criminal is that of conversion.

The different nouns in the following sentence are like criminal in this respect, since they often function as adjectives:

- (10) a. There was only one black in the aeroplane.
- b. He is investigating the ancients' conception of the universe.
- c. The Almighty's ways are often strange.
- d. The king greeted his nobles.
- e. You won't get many classics in their library.

### c. **Adjective and particle**

There are many adjectives which have the same form as particles in -ing or -ed (or the variations of -ed):

- (11) a. Their actions were very surprising.
- b. The gentleman seemed very offended.

They also include forms which have no corresponding verbs:

- (12) a. The results were unexpected.
- b. My children must be downhearted.
- c. All our friends are talented.
- d. Their intestines are diseased.



These adjectives can as well be attributive:

- (13) a. Their surprising actions.  
b. The offended gentleman.  
c. The unexpected results.  
d. My downhearted children.  
e. Our talented friends.  
f. Their diseased intestines.

Sometimes the particle reaches the full adjective status when it is compounded with another element which occasionally results in a sharp difference of meaning:

- (14) a. (i) She is looking (at a painting).  
(ii) She is (very) good-looking.  
  
b. (i) The eggs are boiled hard.  
(ii) The eggs are very hard-boiled.  
  
c. (i) They were bitten (by a snake).  
(ii) They were (very) frost-bitten.  
  
d. (i) It is breaking (his heart).  
(ii) It is (very) heart-breaking.

Even if there are some differences between the adjectives and the three word-classes, which are adverbs, nouns and particles, this research put more emphasis on the word-classes which also act as the adjectives.

## Syntactic functions of adjectives

### a. Attributive and predicative

Attributive and predicative are the main syntactic functions of adjectives. These are termed the chief syntactic functions, since a word which cannot function either attributively or predicatively is not recognized as an adjective.

It is quite true to say that adjectives are attributive when they premodify the nouns. Attributive adjectives always appear between the determiner and the head of the noun phrase:

- (15) a. The beautiful painting.  
b. A mere spoon.  
c. Their main argument.

Predicate adjectives can be

- (16) a. subject complement; there is co-reference between subject and subject complement, the two being in an intensive relationship:
- (i) My daughter is pretty.
  - (ii) He is careless.
- b. object complement; there is co-reference between direct object and object complement, the two being in an intensive relationship:
- (i) I consider her foolish.
  - (ii) She made her husband happy.

Adjectives are not only subject complement to noun phrases, but also to clauses. In this case, they can be complement when the subject is a finite clause:



- (17) a. That we need it is obvious.  
b. Whether they will resign is uncertain.  
or non-finite clause:

- (18) a. To drive a car is dangerous.  
b. To play so hard is foolish.

Similarly, many adjectives can be object complement to clauses:

- (19) a. I consider {what he did } foolish.  
b. They consider {playing so hard} foolish.

The adjective which functions as object complement always expresses the result of the process denoted by the verb:

- (20) a. He pulled his belt tight.  
b. She pushed the window open.  
c. She writes her letters large.

The result of the process can be clearly stated for each sentence:

- (21) a. His belt is tight.  
b. The window is open.  
c. Her letters are large.

b. **Positive**

There are times where the adjectives can be postpositive. In other words, they can sometimes follow the noun or pronoun they modify. A postposed adjective, together with any complementation it may have, can usually be considered as a reduced relative clause.

The important fact is that complex indefinite pronouns ending in -body, -one, -thing and -where can be modified only postpositively:

- (22) a. Anyone (who is) intelligent can do it.  
b. She wants to try on something (that is) larger.

Postposition is obligatory for a few adjectives which have a different sense when they occur attributively or predicatively. The most popular are probably elect ('soon to take office') and proper ('as strictly defined') as in;

- (23) a. the president elect.  
b. the city of London proper.

In several compounds (mostly legal or quasi-legal) the adjective is postposed, the most common being heir apparent, court martial, body politic, attorney general and postmaster general.

In certain cases, postposition (in preference to attribute position) is usual for a few adjectives beginning with a- and for the four adjectives absent, present, concerned and involved, which normally do not occur attributively in the relevant sense:

- (24) a. The car (which is) ablaze is mine.  
b. The boats (which were ) afloat were not seen by the bandits.  
c. The women (who were) present were her supporters.  
d. The people (who were) involved were not found.

For most adjectives, postposition is quite possible when there is complementation of the adjective:

- (25) a. The girls (who were) easiest to teach were in my class.  
b. We have a house (which is) larger than yours.



The adjective of an adjective phrase can always be preposed, leaving its complementation in postposition. The sentences which have just been mentioned above are equivalent to the following sentences:

- (26) a. The easiest girls to teach were in my class.  
b. We have a larger house than yours.

If there is no complementation of the adjective, and the adjective is modified by some adverbs like enough and too, the adjective with its modifier may be preposed:

- (27) a. Brave enough students deserve to pass the examinations.  
b. A brave enough student deserves to pass the examinations.  
c. Too timid students do not deserve to succeed.  
d. A too timid student does not deserve to succeed.

### c. Head of a noun phrase

Adjectives can serve as heads of noun phrases, and can be subject of the sentence, complement, object and complement of a preposition. Adjectives as noun-phrase heads do not inflect for number or for the genitive case, and they should take a definite determiner. There are three types of adjectives which function as noun-phrase heads.

- (28) a. All adjectives qualifying personal nouns can be noun-phrase heads:  
(i) The poor are causing the nations' leaders great concern.  
(ii) The innocent are often deceived by the unscrupulous.  
(iii) The young in spirit enjoy life.

The adjectives mentioned above have generic reference and take plural concord. Here, the poor cannot denote one person.

- b. Some adjectives denoting nationalities can also be noun-phrase heads:

- (i) You British and you French ought to be allies.
- (ii) The clever Swiss have preserved their neutrality for centuries.
- (iii) The industrious Dutch are admired by their neighbours.

The adjectives mentioned above are virtually restricted to words ending in -ish (British and Irish), -ch (French and Dutch), with Swiss as an exception in not belonging to any of these groups. The adjectives refer to the nations.

- c. There are some adjectives which have an abstract references when they serve as noun-phrase heads. They include superlatives in which thing can sometimes be inserted in its abstract sense:

- (i) The latest (thing, news) is that he is not going to run for election.
- (ii) The very best (thing ) is yet to come.
- (iii) We ventured into the unknown.

d. **Supplementive adjective clause**

Under certain circumstances, adjectives can serve as the sole realization of a verbless clause or as the head of an adjective phrase realizing the clause. One such type of verbless clause is the supplementive adjective clause:

- (29) a. Nervous, the girl opened the letter.
- b. The girl, nervous, opened the letter.
- c. The girl opened the letter, nervous.

The examples mentioned above openly and clearly indicate that the supplementive adjective clause is mobile, though (partly to avoid ambiguity) it normally precedes or { less usually } follows the subject of the superordinate clause. When it follows the subject, as in (29b.), it is in some respects like a non-restrictive relative clause as in the following sentences:



(30) The girl, who was nervous, opened the letter.

The adjective clause suggests that the girl's nervousness was shown, while the relative clause does not convey that implication. The difference is mainly because the adjective clause is related to the predication as well as to the subject as in the following example:

(31) Nervously, the girl opened the letter.

The implied subject of a supplementive adjective clause can be the whole of the superordinate clause:

- (32) a. Most important, her report offered prospects of a great profit.  
b. More remarkable still, he is in charge of the national soccer team.

#### e. **Contingent adjective clause**

A remarkable type of supplementive adjective clause is the contingent adjective clause which always expresses the circumstance or condition under which what is said in the superordinate clause applies:

- (33) a. Whether right or wrong, she always comes off worst in an argument because of her inability to speak coherently.  
b. When ripe, these mangos are sweet.

As with the supplementive adjective clause which has been described already in (4), the implied subject of the contingent adjective clause is normally the subject of the superordinate clause, but the clause is not equivalent to a non-restrictive relative clause.

Sometimes the implied subject of the contingent clause can also be the object of the superordinate clause even though only a few adjectives are available for this use:

- (34) a. We sell them new.  
b. I can drink it hot.  
c. They must eat it when fresh.

f. **Exclamatory adjective sentences**

The adjectives which can be complement when the subject is finite clause can alone or as head of an adjective phrase be exclamations:

- (35) a. How good of you!  
b. How wonderful!  
c. Excellent!

**Subclassification of adjectives**

a. **According to syntactic function**

One of the most important way in which adjectives can be subclassified is according to the syntactic function they can perform. The two major syntactic functions of adjectives are their use as attributives and as predicatives. In this way, adjectives can be subclassified according to whether they can function as;

- (36) a. both attributive and predicative, e.g. ;  
a hungry man ~ the man is hungry;
- b. attributive only, e.g. ;  
an utter fool;
- c. predictive only, e.g. ;  
the woman is loath to admit it.



**b. Attributive only**

Generally, adjectives which are restricted to attributive position or which occur predominantly in attributive position do not characterize the referent of the noun directly. For instance, old can be either a central adjective or an adjective restricted to attributive position. In that old man ( the opposite of that young man), old is a central adjective. It is also relevant to say; that man is old. It is also appropriate to state that in the usual sense of an old friend of mine ( a longstanding friend), old is quite restricted to attributive position and cannot be related to my friend is old. Here, the person referred to is not being identified as old, but it is his friendship which is old.

**c. Types of adjectives restricted to attributive position**

**Intensifying adjectives**

Certain types of adjectives have a heightening effect on the noun they modify or the reverse, a lowering effect. There are at least three semantic subclasses of intensifying adjectives which can be distinguished:

- (37) a. Emphasizers.  
b. Ampifiers.  
c. Downtoners.

Emphasizers have a general heightening effect and are attributive only. They include examples such as;

- (i) a certain winner,
- (ii) an outright lie,
- (iii) the simple truth, and
- (iv) sheer ignorance.

Amplifiers scale upwards from an assumed norm. The situation is more complicated for them. They are central adjectives when they are inherent and denote a high or extreme degree:

- (i) A complete victory ~ the victory was complete.
- (ii) Great construction ~ the construction was great.

Some examples of adjectives as amplifiers that are only attributive are the following:

- (i) A great supporter.
- (ii) An extreme enemy.
- (iii) A strong opponent.

Downtoners have a lowering effect, usually scaling downwards from an assumed norm. They are relatively few, for instance, slight in a slight effort and feeble in a feeble joke. Generally, they are central adjectives.

### **Restrictive adjectives**

As they describe themselves, they restrict the reference of the noun exclusively, particularly or chiefly. Some examples, within noun phrases, are the following:

- (38) a. A certain person.
- b. The main reason.
- c. The same student.

### **Related to adverbials**

Certain adjectives which are only attributive can be related to adverbials but do not fall within the two types which have been described. These non-inherent adjectives include;



- (39) a. (i) my former friend ~formerly my friend,  
(ii) the present king ~ the king at present, and  
(iii) an occasional visitor ~ occasionally a visitor.

There are some adjectives which require implications additional to the adverbial:

- b. (i) The late president ~ till lately the president (now dead).  
(ii) The former reason ~ the reason stated formerly.

If the adjectives premodify agentive nouns, usually the latter suggest as well a relationship to the verb base or to an associated verb:

- c. (i) A hard worker ~ someone who works hard.  
(ii) A good speaker ~ someone who speaks well.

Many adjectives have a temporal meaning. One of them acting ('for the time being') as in the acting principal.

### **Denominal adjectives**

Few adjectives derived from nouns are restricted to attributive position. The examples of such adjectives are the following:

- (40) a. An atomic scientist ~ a scientist specializing in atomic science.  
b. A woollen dress ~ a dress made of wool.

The first example contains agentive noun with a denominal adjective (non-inherent) referring to the activity of the agent, whereas the second example contains an adjective denoting material.

### c. **Predicative only**

Adjectives which are restricted or virtually restricted to predicative position are most like verbs and adverbs. The noticeable fact is that they tend to refer to a (possibly temporary) condition than to characterize. The most common are those referring to the health or lack of health of an animate. Well and unwell serve as examples.

A large group comprises adjectives which can take complementation. Among them are able (to), fond (of) and glad (that, to, about, of). There are number of adjectives which closely resemble verbs semantically. The following examples are important:

- (41) a. He is afraid to do it ~ he fears to do it.  
b. They are fond of her ~ they like her.

### d. **Semantic subclassification**

There are three semantic scales which are applicable to adjectives. In this case, it is more important to deal with scales rather than with a feature which is present or absent.

#### **Stative/dynamic**

Adjectives are characteristically stative. Many adjectives which are susceptible to subjective measurement are capable of being dynamic. Stative and dynamic adjectives, however, differ in a number of ways. For instance, a stative adjective such as tall cannot be used with the progressive aspect or with the imperative such as \*he's being tall and \*be tall. Careful can be used as a dynamic adjective as in he's being careful and be careful. Adjectives which can be used dynamically include abusive, adorable, ambitious, calm, brave, awkward and many others.

#### **Gradable/non- gradable**

Many adjectives are gradable. This implies that they can be modified by adverbs which convey the degree of intensity of the adjective. Gradability includes comparison:



- (42) a. Tall taller tallest,  
 b. Beautiful more beautiful most beautiful,  
 and other forms of intensification:

- (43) a. Very young.  
 b. So plain.  
 c. Extremely useful.

Dynamic adjectives are all gradable. Most of the stative adjectives like tall and old are gradable. Some principally ‘technical adjectives’ such as atomic scientist and hydrochloric acid and adjectives denoting provenance like Spanish are non - gradable.

### Inherent/non- inherent

Adjectives which characterize the referent of the noun directly are called inherent, while those which do not are called non- inherent. Most adjectives are inherent simply because they characterize the referent of the noun directly. For instance, the inherent adjective in a wooden cross applies to the referent of the object directly. A wooden cross is also a wooden object. On the other side, in a wooden actor the adjective is non- inherent. Here, a wooden actor is not (presumably) a wooden man.

It is important to realize that gradable adjectives are either inherent, as in a white coat, or non-inherent, as in a new friend. Dynamic adjectives are usually inherent even though there are some exceptions; for instance, wooden in the actor is being wooden is both dynamic and non-inherent.

### Semantic subclassification of adjectives

(44) stative	gradable	inherent	
-	+	+	brave (man)
+	+	+	white (coat) NORMAL ADJECTIVE TYPE
+	+	-	new (friend)
+	-	+	Spanish ( citizen)

The table illustrated above gives examples of adjectives which indicate the different possibilities with respect to the three semantic distinctions which have been discussed.

### **Semantic sets and adjectival order**

The following semantic sets have been suggested to account for the usual order of adjectives and for their co- occurrence:

- (45) a. Intensifying adjectives, e.g.; a real hero, a perfect idiot.
- b. Post-determiners, including restrictive adjectives, e.g.; the seventh student, the only occasion.
- c. General adjectives susceptible to subjective measure, e.g.; lovely, careful, naughty.
- d. General adjectives susceptible to objective measure, including those denoting size or shape, e.g.; wealthy, large, square.
- e. Adjectives denoting age, e.g.; young, old, new.
- f. Adjectives denoting colour, e.g.; white, red, black.
- g. Denominal adjectives denoting material, e.g.; a silken handkerchief, a metallic substance, and denoting resemblance to a material, e.g.; metallic voice, silken hair, cat-like stealth.
- h. Denominal adjectives denoting provenance or style, e.g.; a British ship, a Perisian dress.



### 2.3.4 Jones

Jones (1996:310), like other linguists such as Miller (1989) and Quirk (1972), acknowledges that adjectives are used to modify nouns.

#### 2.3.4.1 Adnominal and predicative uses

Adjectives can be used in two basic ways. They can be used as modifiers of a noun, as in (46a.), or as complements of copular verbs, as in (46b.), of the following examples:

- (46) a. (i) Un livre intéressant.  
(ii) Le petit chat.
- b. (i) Ce livre est intéressant.  
(ii) Ce chat est petit.

The concept adnominal (i.e. 'occurring with the noun') is used to refer to the uses illustrated in (46a.) and predicative (i.e. 'forming part of the predicate (or VP)') for the cases in (46b.). The uses in (46a. (i)) and (46a. (ii)) are distinguished as postnominal ('after the noun') and prenominal ('before the noun'). Adjectives in 'small clause' constructions of the type in (46c.) are also classified as predicative:

- c. (i) Je trouve cela intéressant.  
(ii) Ce vin a rendu Gaston malade.

If an adjective is used adnominally, it normally provides information which assists the hearer to identify the particular entity which the speaker has in mind, while adjectives used predicatively say something about an entity which has already been identified .

#### 2.3.4.2 Gradability

Many adjectives are gradable because they describe the properties which can be possessed to varying degrees. These adjectives can be accompanied by degree modifiers like trop and assez, and by the comparative items such as plus and aussi. In this case, intéressant, intelligent, petit, etc., are all gradable while hexagonal, légal, possible, etc.; are non - gradable, or at least not easily gradable.

Adjectives such as petit, grand, gros, etc.; represent a subclass of gradable adjectives which are called relative on the basis that they express a property relative to some norm which varies according to the noun which they modify. For instance, the degree of 'smallness' implied in petit chat is different from that in petit éléphant or petit bâtiment, and a petit éléphant is likely to be much larger than a gros chat.

Excellent and atroce, for example, are regarded as intrinsically superlative adjectives because they describe extremes of a gradable property.

#### 2.3.4.3 Classificatory and argumental adjectives

There are many non-gradable adjectives which belong to a class called classificatory. The following examples are important:

- (47) a. Un problème (\*assez) financier.  
b. Un phénomène (\*tres) social.

The adjectives mentioned above are typically derived from nouns by suffixes like -ique or -al and are defined in dictionaries by formulae of the type 'pertaining to' (e.g.; financier 'pertaining to money/finance'; social 'pertaining to society'; etc.).

Another class of adjectives which have a rather similar noun-like status is illustrated below, where the adjectives have an argumental function, denoting participants in the event or action:



- (48) a. La victoire gaulliste.  
b. Le bombardement américain de Hanoï.

The interpretation of the adjectives above is similar to that of the subject NPs in Les Gaullistes ont gagné and Les Américains ont bombardé Hanoï.

#### 2.3.4.4 'Intensional' adjectives

These adjectives represent a very special class which is known as intensional adjectives:

- (49) a. Un ancien étudiant.  
b. Un problème éventuel .

The notable fact, here, is that these adjectives do not explain properties of the person or thing denoted by the noun, but they modify the meaning of the noun in some way. For instance, if étudiant means 'someone who studies', ancien étudiant means 'someone who used to study'. Similarly, problème éventuel means 'something which might be a problem'.

#### 2.3.4.5 'Attitudinal' adjectives

There are very few French adjectives which can be used as attitudinal adjectives. They can be used in addition to their literal 'property' uses where the remarks in parentheses indicate, roughly, the type of attitude involved:

- (50) a. Un sacré mensonge (outrage).  
b. Ma petite amie (affection).  
c. La pauvre victime (pity).

These adjectives are, in their attitudinal use, non-gradable.

#### 2.3.4.6 **Specificational adjectives**

Specificational adjectives have similar functions to determiners (and indeed quite a number of them can also be used as determiners). They can be divided into two main subtypes. There are those which express quantity, as in (51a.), and those which help to identify which member of the class described by the noun is being referred to, as in (51b.) of the following examples:

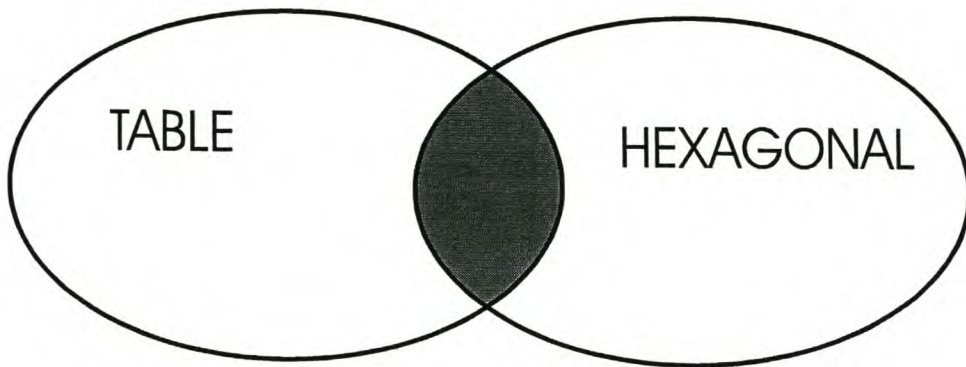
- (51) a. (i) Une seule question.  
(ii) De nombreux étudiants.
- b. (i) Une autre question  
(ii) Son propre stylo.

#### 2.3.4.7 **How adjectives modify nouns**

A distinction is drawn between the extension of an expression and its intension. The extension of a noun such as table is the class of things which this noun can refer to (the class of tables), while its intension is the set of properties or characteristics which define this class (e.g.; ‘artefact with a flat upper surface suitable for eating/working on’, etc.). Similarly, the extension of the adjective hexagonal is also the class of hexagonal objects, while its intension is the property of having six sides.

Basically, the real meaning of an expression like table hexagonale can be characterized in purely extensional terms. In this case, the extension of the entire expression is the intersection of the classes of ‘tables’ and ‘hexagonal objects’, indicated by the shaded zone in the figure below:





The addition of an adjective has the effect of restricting the extension of the noun. Moreover, the adjective usually describes a property of the entity referred to by the NP. This is not the case with the expressions such as ancien étudiant, problème éventuel and gros buveur, just to mention a few. Here, the adjective does not, in anyway, operate on the extension of the noun, but modifies part of the intension of the noun—hence the use of the concept ‘intensional’. For this reason, gros in gros buveur does not describe the person, but the way he drinks. In certain cases, the addition of the adjective does not simply restrict the extension of the noun, but yields a different extension. For instance, ancien étudiant is not a member of the class of ‘students’.

The extensional approach, which has been illustrated in the figure above, is not appropriate for the other types of adjectives which have been differentiated already, since they do not describe properties which define classes of entities. Specificational adjectives demonstrate the manner in which the referent of the NP is to be picked out from the class described by the noun, whereas argument adjectives fulfil a theta-role which is selected by the noun.

#### 2.3.4.8 Positions of adjectives

##### Restrictions on predicative use

Not all adjectives can be used predicatively. Thus, the adjectives which permit a predicative use most readily are those which partition the extension of the noun in terms of a property (gradable or non-gradable):

- (52) a. Cette table est hexagonale.  
b. Ce livre est intéressant.  
c. Ce repas est excellent.

It must be noted here that gradable adjectives of the relative type can as well be used predicatively:

- (53) a. Cette table est grande.  
b. Cette maison est petite.  
c. Ce piano est (très) lourd.

The adjectives, in these cases, still express a property relative to some norm (e.g.; petit in (53b.) indicates a greater size than grand in (53a.), but this norm appears to be determined pragmatically rather than by the subject noun. For instance, (53c.) could be asserted of a piano which is very much light as pianos go, the norm being established relative to a wider class (e.g.; if (53c.) is uttered while carrying the piano up a flight of stairs ). What must be borne in mind is that such an interpretation is not readily available in the adnominal construction C'est un piano (très ) lourd.

### **Prenominal and postnominal adjectives**

The general observation that can be made is that the factors which determine whether an adjective (or AP) precedes or follows the noun are rather complicated. Adjectives may follow the nouns and this occurrence in the prenominal position is indicative of a rather 'special use'.

Typically, phrases of the form D+N+AP can clearly be paraphrased by expressions of the type D+N qui est AP (where the AP occurs predicatively within a relative clause ). If this paraphrase relation were absolute, it would predict that the class of postnominal adjectives should coincide exactly with the range of adjectives which can be employed predicatively. However, this prediction is not accurate, but it is sufficiently near the



mark to serve as a useful starting point. The following working hypothesis is advanced as a basis for discussion:

On the whole, an adjective may follow the noun in an adnominal construction only if it can be used predicatively with the same meaning.

Here, the correlation between postnominal and predicative use can be observed most clearly with adjectives whose meaning differs according to whether they precede or follow the noun. In all the (54(i)) examples below, the postnominal adjectives describe properties which can also be expressed by the adjective in predicative position, while the prenominal adjectives are incompatible with the predicative use:

- (54) a. (i) Un document ancien.  
(ii) L'ancien président 'the former president' (intensional).
- b. (i) Une preuve certaine.  
(ii) Un certain individu 'a particular individual' (specificational).
- c. (i) Les mains sales.  
(ii) Un sale types 'a rotten fellow' (attitudinal).

According to the working assumption, specificational adjectives usually precede the noun. There are many apparent counterexamples which actually involve a 'property' use. In this way, seul should precede the noun when it has a restrictive function (meaning 'only'), but follows the noun with the meaning 'alone, unaccompanied'; for instance, une seule femme s'est présentée aux élections 'only one woman stood for election' versus ce quartier est dangereux pour une femme seule 'this district is dangerous for a woman on her own'.

Certain constructions with the ‘ordinal’ adjectives prochain and dernier constitute genuine counterexample to our generalization. The adjectives such as these follow the noun when referring to time in relation to the present: La semaine {derniere/prochaine} ‘{last/next} week’, jeudi {dernier/prochain} ‘{last/next} Thursday’.

The undisputable fact is that all ‘attitudinal’ adjectives precede the noun, even though it is sometimes very difficult to differentiate genuine ‘attitudinal’ uses from cases where an adjective suggests a particular attitude by virtue of the property which it describes. For instance, un film terrible (‘a terrific film’) looks like a counterexample to our claim-terrible follows the noun, but it seems to convey an attitude. Nevertheless, terrible behaves more like an ‘intransitively superlative’ adjective (like excellent) than a genuine ‘attitudinal’ adjective. This adjective (terrible), in a ‘special’ way, can occur predicatively with the same meaning ( Ce film est terrible) - cf. Ce sacré film # ce film sacré; N.B. Ce film est sacré can only mean ‘this film is sacred’.

With intensional adjectives, there are several genuine counterexamples to the suggested generalization. For instance, éventuel and actuel usually follow the noun as in un problème éventuel and le président actuel.

### **Adjectives which systematically follow the noun:**

- (55) a. Classifactory adjectives.  
b. Adjectives derived from proper nouns, regardless of their function ( anglais, parisien, marxiste, etc.).  
c. Past participles which function as adjectives: Une porte ouverte, les feuilles mortes,... (Exceptions are all ‘non-property’ adjectives: Le prétendu assassin ‘the alleged murderer’ (intensional), ce {sacré/maudit} garçon ‘that {blessed/damned} boy’ (attitudinal)).  
d. Colour adjectives (except as a stylistic device, in poetry).  
e. Adjectives of shape: Rond, carré, hexagonal,...

In the modern usage, the adjectives listed above always follow the noun.



## Characteristics of prenominal and postnominal adjectives

<b>Prenominal</b>	<b>Postnominal</b>
(56) a. 'Non-property' interpretation	'independent property' interpretation.
b. Subjective property	objective property.
c. Abstract/figurative property	concrete property.
d. Gradable property	specific property.
e. Basic/wide-ranging property	distinctive property.
g. Short adjectives	long adjectives
h. Literary/affected style	'normal' style.

The different factors which determine the position of the adjective relative to the noun are roughly summarized above. The characteristics listed under each column, many of which are related, must be taken as favouring one position or the other, but none of them is decisive in itself. The widely accepted notion is that the more characteristics an adjective shares with those listed in a given column, the more likely the adjective is to occur in the position indicated for that column.

### 2.3.4.9 Syntactic restrictions on the position of adnominal adjectives

Adjectives which usually precede the noun may occur after the noun when they are modified by degree items like très, assez, plus, si, etc.:

(57) a. Un très bon résultat	un résultat très bon.
b. Un assez beau tableau	un tableau assez beau.
c. Une plus grande maison	une maison plus grande.
d. Une si jolie fille	une fille si jolie.

### 2.3.4.10 Order of adjectives

The order of adjectives before the noun is clearly indicated in the table below. It is important to note that the order of ‘quantity’ and ‘identifying’ adjectives is just the opposite to that found in English.

#### Order of prenominal adjectives

(58) D	Specificational		Attitudinal	Property		Noun
	‘quantity’	‘identifying’				
Les	trois	autres		bonnes		questions
Les	quelques	derniers				mois
Le		deuxième	sacré			livre
Ce			pauvre	jeune		garçon
Un	seul	autre		grand		problème
Ses	nombreux	autres				intérêts

Another usual order of postnominal adjectives is shown in the table below. This order is totally different from the order indicated above.

#### Order of postnominal adjectives

(59) D	Noun	Classification	Argumental	Property		International
				objective	subjective	
	Une situation	économique			difficile	
	Une intervention	militaire	américaine		décisive	éventuelle
	Une émeute				violente	éventuelle
	Une victoire		gaulliste		spectaculaire	imminente
	Une maison			blanche	pittoresque	
	Une table			ronde	élégante	



In instances where more than one 'property' adjective precedes the noun, the general tendency seems to be that adjectives which denote basic, concrete properties occur closest to the noun, while those which describe more distinctive or subjective qualities occupy a more peripheral position. Some manifestations of this tendency are clearly listed below.

### Order of 'property' adjectives before the noun

- (60) a. Meilleur precedes other 'property' adjectives: Le meilleur jeune acteur.
- b. Adjectives modified by très, etc., precede other 'property' adjectives; Un très gros vieux chat.
- c. Adjectives which typically follow the noun precede adjectives which regularly precede the noun: Un excellent jeune acteur, un énorme vieux chat.
- d. Within the provisos above, adjective of 'size' usually occur closest to the noun: Un joli petit enfant, un vieux gros chat.

#### 2.3.4.11 Some problems of agreement

In both adnominal and predicative uses, adjectives normally agree in number and gender with the noun which they modify (except for some invariable adjectives such as numerals and few colour adjectives derived from nouns; for instance, marron and orange also qualified colour adjectives such as bleu and clair). There are some serious complications involving conjoined NPs or adjectives.

It is quite important to state that where two or more singular NPs are conjoined, an adjective which is construed as modifying all of the NPs takes the plural form (and the feminine if all the NPs are feminine):

- (61) a. J'ai acheté une voiture et une moto nouvelles.

If the adjective precedes the noun, it must be repeated (in the singular form, with the appropriate gender) before the noun:

- b. J'ai acheté une grande voiture et une grande moto.

In certain cases where a plural noun is modified by two or more conjoined adjectives which describe various individual members of the set denoted by the noun, each adjective takes the singular form :

- c. Les partis socialiste et communiste ont signé un pacte électoral.

In (61c.) the subject NPs means le parti socialiste et le parti communiste, while the plural form les partis socialistes et communistes would mean les parties socialistes et les parties communistes. The construction is also possible with prenominal adjectives:

- d. Cette ville s'est développée pendant les dix-neuvième et vingtième siècles.

Adjectives used as complements of certain verbs (e.g.; of measurement) are, of course, invariably masculine singular:

- e. (i) Cette valise pèse lourd.  
(ii) Cette femme chante faux.

#### 2.3.4.12 Adjectives as nouns

In this aspect, there are many different cases where what looks like an adjective (or AP) can occur with a determiner to form an AP, but without a head noun, as in the following examples where the relevant phrases are enclosed in brackets:



- (62) a. [Ces jeunes] apprennent [le français].  
b. La marquise a appelé [la bonne]  
c. Jules a épousé [une Anglaise]

#### 2.3.4.13 Complements of adjectives

##### 'Object-gap' constructions

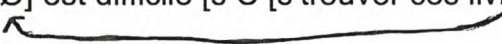
Some adjectives permit an infinitival construction which is reminiscent of passive constructions:

- (63) a. Ces livres sont difficiles à trouver.

Even if ces livres is the syntactic subject, determining the agreement inflection of the verb, from a semantic viewpoint, difficile describes the action 'finding the books' rather than books themselves. For this reason, (63a.) is roughly synonymous with the impersonal construction of (63b.) below:

- b. Il est difficile de trouver ces livres.

It is of great significance to emphasize that in the early transformational rules, this relationship was captured by deriving sentences like (63a.) from structures underlying sentences like (63b.) by a rule which raises the direct object of the infinitive to the subject position in the main clause, roughly as in (63c.):

- c. [s [NP Ø] est difficile [s C [s'trouver ces livres]]].
- 

##### Construction with 'trop' and 'assez'

In the English language, the adjectives modified by too or enough may be accompanied by infinitival clauses of the following types:

- (64) a. (i) John is {too young/old enough} to go to school.  
(ii) John is {too young/old enough} to send to school.  
(iii) John is {too young/old enough} for you to send to school.

The corresponding French constructions are:

- b. (i) John est {trop petit / assez grand} pour aller à l' école.  
(ii) John est {trop petit / assez grand} pour l' envoyer à l' école.  
(iii) John est {trop petit / assez grand} pour que vous l' envoyiez à l' école.

The phrases which follow the adjectives in (64a.) and (64b.) are absolutely not the complements of the adjectives themselves (they do not usually occur without the degree items). Their main function is to define a criterion by which the degree of the property is judged to be excessive or sufficient. For instance, the meanings of (64a.(i)) and (64b.(ii)) can be glossed as 'John is young to such an extent that he should not go to school' and 'John is old to such an extent that he should go to school'. The criterion of this sort is normally implicit with these degree items except when assez means 'quite or rather'.

The criterion phrases are introduced by pour in French. Usually when the entity modified the adjective which corresponds to an object of the 'criterion phrase', it must be represented by a pronoun as in examples (64b. (ii) and (iii)), while English permits it to be simply omitted as in examples (64a. (ii) and (iii)), even though a pronoun can be used; {too young / old enough} (for you) to send him to school. It is very important to note that if the subject of the 'criterion phrase' is specified, French requires a que clause in the subjunctive as in example (64b.(iii)).

## 2.4 SEMANTIC TYPES IN NORTHERN SOTHO

The aim of this section is to discuss and establish which categories in Northern Sotho may appear with the meaning of an adjective, i.e., as a semantic adjective. In order to



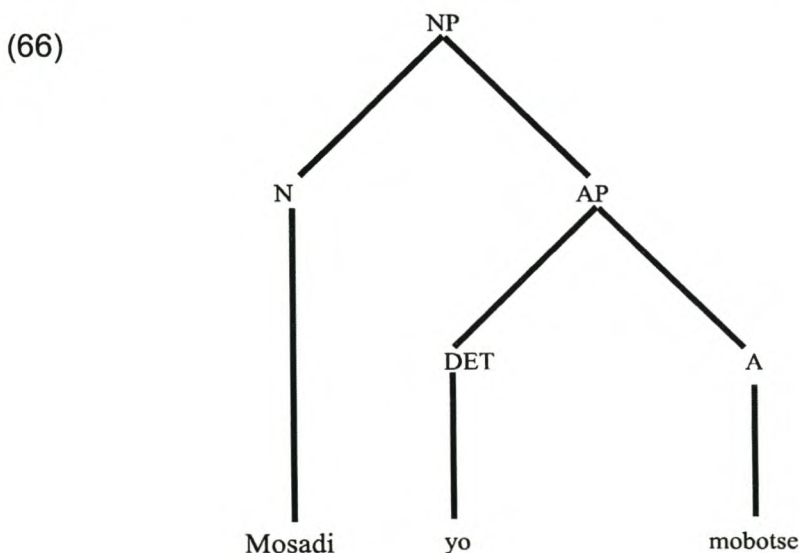
achieve this aim, the section will focus on the following constructions: the **morphological adjective, descriptive possessive and relative clauses**.

### 2.4.1 Morphological adjective

The morphological adjectives in Northern Sotho are few in number. In fact, they form a closed class. Nevertheless, this subsection will treat their structure and meaning that they generate. Before their structure and semantics are treated, it is befitting that a few examples of such adjectives be given:

- |      |    |                        |                     |
|------|----|------------------------|---------------------|
| (65) | a. | Mosadi yo mobotse      | (A beautiful woman) |
|      | b. | Mošemane yo motelele   | (A tall boy)        |
|      | c. | Sefatanaga se sennyane | (A small car)       |
|      | d. | Sefane se sekopana     | (A short surname)   |
|      | e. | Menwana ye mehlano     | (Five fingers)      |
|      | f. | Lebati le lešweu       | (A white door)      |
|      | g. | Molomo wo mohubedu     | (Red mouth)         |

From the examples given in (64) above, it is evident that the morphological adjective appears with a head noun in a NP. In a tree diagram, they will have the same structure. [Mosadi yo mobotse] ‘A beautiful woman’ will be taken as an example:



The morphological adjectives can appear attributively and predicatively: In other words, they give predicational information about the referent:

**Attributive:**

- (67) [Mosadi yo mobotse] o a ratega.  
'A beautiful woman is lovable'.

**Predicative:**

[Kgomo e kgolo].  
'A big cow'.

The morphological adjectives that appear attributively and predicatively are very few in number. They also form a closed class. For additional information, morphological adjectives will be dealt with in more detail in chapter 3.

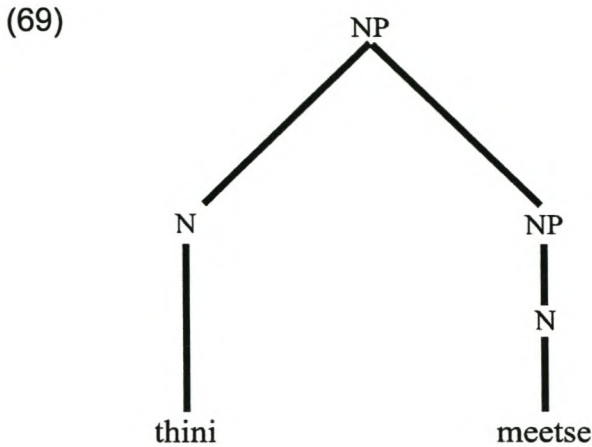
#### 2.4.2 Descriptive possessives

The descriptive possessives in Northern Sotho are divided into two sections. They are descriptive nouns + nouns and nouns + descriptive nouns. It is important to note that descriptive possessives are different from possessives. Before their structure can be illustrated, a few examples are given below:

- |         |                       |                    |
|---------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| (68) a. | Thini ya meetse       | (A tin of water)   |
| b.      | Sehlopha sa mahodu    | (Group of thieves) |
| c.      | Mohlape wa dinku      | (Flock of sheep)   |
| d.      | Lesome la metsotswana | (10 seconds)       |
| e.      | Mosadi wa ditšhila    | (Dirty woman)      |
| f.      | Mohlare wa moperekisi | (Peach tree)       |
| g.      | Batho ba Mašišing     | (Lydenburg people) |
| h.      | Ditaba tša maabane    | (Yesterday's news) |



The structure of the examples mentioned above will also look the same. [Thini ya meetse] 'A tin of water' will be taken as an example:



This section, however, will be dealt with in detail in chapter 4.

### 2.4.3 Relative clauses

There are various relative clauses which may appear as complements of noun phrases but which have the interpretation of semantic adjectives. The following relative clauses may have these functions:

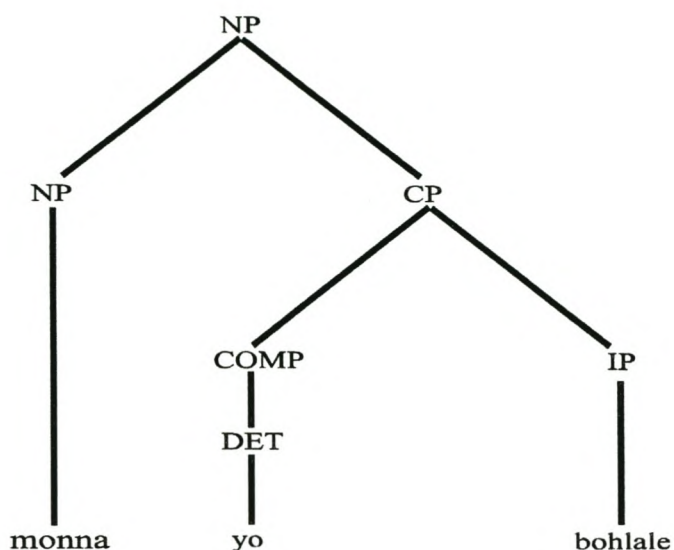
#### 2.4.3.1 Nominal relative clauses

Nominal relatives are clearly distinguished from adjectives even though they have the interpretation of semantic adjectives. A few examples are the following:

- |                              |                 |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| (70) a. Monna [yo [bohlale ] | (A clever man)  |
| b. Nama [ye [bose ]          | (A nice meat)   |
| c. Leswika [le [boima]       | (A heavy stone) |
| d. Moya [wo boima]           | (A cold wind)   |
| e. Mošemane [yo [boleta]     | (A soft boy)    |

All the examples of the nominal relative clauses have the same structure. The clause [monna yo bohlale] 'a clever man' will be used as an example:

(71)



For a more detailed discussion of the nominal relative clauses, see chapter 5.

#### 2.4.3.2 Verbal relative clauses

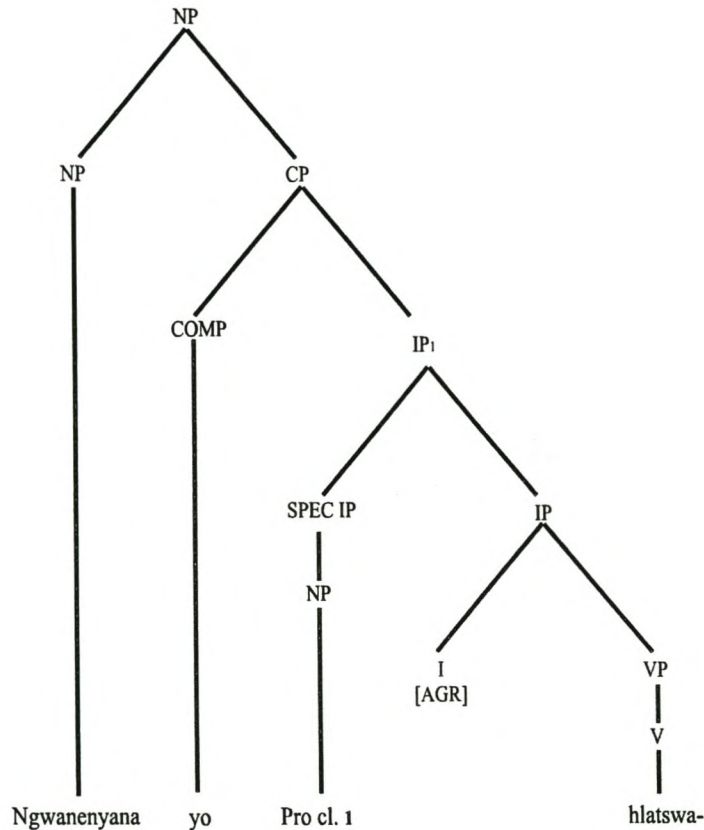
In these relatives the verb in the clause is a stative verb. Some examples of relative clauses are the following:

- (72) a. Ngwanenyana [yo [a hlatswago]  
 'The girl who is washing'
- b. Ngwana [yo [a llago]  
 'The child who is crying'
- c. Mpša [ye [e sepelago]  
 'The dog which is walking'
- d. Mmutla [wo [o lwalago]  
 'The hare which is ill'
- e. Dipudi [tše [di kitimago]  
 'The goats which are running'



In the examples of clauses, which have been mentioned above, [hlatswa] ‘wash’, [lla] ‘cry’, [sepela] ‘walk’, [lwala] ‘ill’ and [kitima] ‘run’ are verbs appearing in the relative clauses but the constructions do not have the meaning of adjectives. All these clauses have the same structure. The clause [ngwanenyana yo a hlatswago] ‘the girl who is washing’ will be treated as an example:

(73)



The structure of nominal relative clause in (71) is the same as that of the verbal relative clause in (73). The only distinction between them is the verb. Nominal relatives only appear with copulative verbs.

Stative verbs can appear with the meaning of semantic adjectives. These verbs may be divided into two categories and appear with NPs in the following subcategories:

## Humans and non-humans

### a. Stative verbs which appear in the perfect tense

There are stative verbs which usually appear in the perfect tense as there are no restrictions in it, i.e. if one uses some stative verbs in the perfect tense in Northern Sotho, then one is expressing a present state, even if the perfect tense is usually used for past actions.

#### (74) A. Physical features

1. Old (Tšofala) : Motho yo a tšofetšego  
'The person who is old'
2. Old, sickly (Gwahlafala) : Mosadi yo a gwahlafetšego  
'The woman who is old and sickly'
3. Blind (Foufala) : Ngwanenyana yo a foufetšego  
'The girl who is blind'
4. Cripple (Golofala) : Bana ba ba golofetšego  
'The children who are crippled'
5. Slender (Sesefala) : Katse ye e sesefetšego  
'The cat which is slender'
6. Well-built (Natlafala) : Monna yo a natlafetšego  
'The man who is well-built'
7. Strong (Maatlafala) : Mašole ao a maatlafetšego  
'The soldiers who are strong'



8. Tall (Telefala) : Bjang bjo bo telefetšego  
'The grass which is tall'
9. Healthy (Itekanela) : Ngwana yo a itekanetšego  
'A child who is healthy'
10. Lean (Ota) : Mpša ye e otilego  
'The dog which is lean'
11. Fat (Nona) : Dikgomo tše di nonnego  
'The cattle which are fat'
12. Sick (Lwala) : Mošemane yo a lwetšego  
'The boy who is sick'
13. Pitch-black (Ntshofala) : Molomo wo o ntshofetšego  
'The mouth which is pitch-black'
14. Weakness (Fokola) : Mmele wo o fokotšego  
'The body which is weak'

## **B. Psychological features**

1. Alertness ( Hlokomela) : Ngwana yo a hlokometšego  
'The child who is on the alert'
2. Cleverness (Hlalefa) : Mmutla wo o hlalefilego  
'The hare which is clever'
3. Angriiness (Befelwa) : Tau ye e befetšwego  
'The lion which is angry'

4. Happiness (Thaba) : Basadi ba ba thabilego  
'The women who are happy'
5. Stupidness (Šilofala) : Motho yo a šilofetšego  
'The person who is stupid'
6. Meekness (Nolofala) : Morutiši yo a nolofetšego  
'The teacher who is meek'
7. Braveness (Bogale) : Dimpša tše di galefilego  
'The dogs which are brave'
8. Industriousness (Tšweletša) : Bahlami ba ba tšweleditšego  
'The composers who have produced'
9. Thriftiness (Seketša) : Molemi yo a sekeditšego  
'The farmer who is thrifty'
10. Self –centredness (Ikgopola) : Mošemane yo a ikgotšego  
'The boy who is self – centred'
11. Quarrelsomeness (Ngangabala) : Bagolegwa ba ba ngangabetšego  
'The prisoners who are quarrelsome'
12. Dirtiness (Šilafala) : Sefatanaga se se šilafetšego  
'The car which is dirty'

### **C. Skills**

1. Experience (Lemoga) : Motho yo a itemogetšego  
'The person who is experienced'



- |                        |   |  |
|------------------------|---|--|
| 2. Unskilled (Palelwa) | : | Moraloki yo a paletšwego<br>'The player who is unskilled'  |
| 3. Skilled (Kgona)     | : | Mokgekolo yo a kgonnegoo<br>'The old woman who is skilled' |

#### **D Wealth**

- |                 |   |   |
|-----------------|---|---|
| 1. Poor (Diila) | : | Ngwana yo a diitšego<br>'The child who is poor' |
| 2. Rich (Huma)  | : | Monna yo a humilego<br>'The man who is rich'    |

#### **E. Professional**

- |                      |   |  |
|----------------------|---|--|
| 1. Teach (Ruta)      | : | Morutiši yo a rutilego<br>'The teacher who has taught' |
| 2. Stand for (Emela) | : | Moemedi yo a emetšego<br>'The advocate who stood for'  |

From the examples mentioned above, it is evident that stative verbs can be used with nouns in five subcategories, namely: **physical features, psychological features, skills, wealth and professional.**

#### **b. Stative verbs which appear in the present tense**

There are a very few of them which will only appear in the present tense because the perfect tense will change their meaning:

- (75) a. Be lazy (Tšwafa) : Ngwana yo o a tšwafa  
'This child is lazy'
- b. Know (Tseba) : Batho ba a tseba  
'People know'
- c. Hate (Hloya) : Ga ke rate go hloya motho  
'I do not want to hate anybody'
- d. Fear/be afraid (Boifa) : O boifa go dula a nnoši  
'He/She is afraid to stay alone'
- e. Be cold (Tonya) : Meetse a a tonya  
'The water is cold'
- f. Be hot (Fiša) : Letšatši le a fiša  
'The sun is hot'
- g. Resemble/look like (Swana ) : Ngwana o swana le mmagwe  
'The child resembles/looks like the mother'
- h. Be ill (Lwala) : Mošemane o a lwala  
'The boy is ill'
- i. Be equal (Lekana) : Mosadi o lekana le tafola  
'The woman is equal to the table'
- j. Love/like (Rata) : Katse e rata maswi kudu  
'The cat likes the milk very much'
- k. Be mad (Gafa) : Lesogana lela le a gafa  
'That young man is mad'



The examples indicated above are written in the present (imperfect) tense in order to show a present state. These verbs are not found in the perfect tense. If one perhaps wants to express the past state of being mad, one should then make use one of the compound tenses as in the following case:

(76) Lesogana lela le be le gafa

'That young man was mad' (Past + Present)

A future tense can also be used if one wants to express a state in the future:

(77) Lesogana lela le tla gafa ge le ka tšhaba komeng

'That young man will be mad if he escapes from the initiation school'

(Future + Present)

### c. Definition of statives

Statives include verbs and sometimes adjectives.

Stative verbs are defined as verbs which express some or other state, be it mental or physical. In their basic form, these verbs do not indicate any process or entrance into a state. The verb thaba (be happy), for instance, refers to the state of being happy, but not of becoming or getting happy ( Poulos and Louwrens, 1994: 160).

Two types of stative predicates can be distinguished. They are **individual-level** predicates and **stage-level** predicates. Predicates such as **tall**, **intelligent** and **overweight** are thought to be attributes which an individual retains and can be identified with the individual directly. They are, therefore, referred to as **individual-level** predicates. **Hungry**, **sick** and **clean** are properties which are referred to as **stage-level** predicates because they are normally identified with the non-permanent states of individuals. In Northern Sotho, for instance, the adjective **botse** (beautiful) is an **individual-level** predicate while **nonne** (become fat) is the **stage-level** predicate.

### 2.4.3.3 Copulative relative clauses

#### 2.4.3.3.1 The complement of the copulative verb is a noun phrase

The relative clause should have the meaning of an adjective. The copulative verb [le] is important in this regard. It normally appears with one type of relativized sentence. Nouns which denote humans can be used in various subcategories as in the following examples:

#### Humans

##### (78) a. Psychological features

###### (i) Retarded

Ngwanenyana yo [ e lego [ setseketseke ]] (The girl who is an idiot)

Mošemane yo [ e lego [ sethotho ]] (The boy who is retarded)

Moagi yo [ e lego [ setlaela ]] (The builder who is stupid)

Mosadi yo [ e lego [ segaswi ]] (The woman who is mad)

###### (ii) Timid

Mohlologadi yo [ e lego [ lefšega ]] (The widow who is timid)

Kgoši ye [ e lego [ lefeela ]] (The chief who is useless)

###### (iii) Good behaviour

Moopedi yo [ e lego [ motšweletši ]] (The singer who is industrious)

Mookamedi yo [ e lego [ moseketši ]] (The superintendent who is thrifty)



(iv) **Bad behaviour**

Modulasetulo yo [ e lego [ monyatšegi ]] (The chairman who is despicable)

Lehodu le [ e lego [ moaki ]] (The thief who is a liar)

Moporofeta yo [ e lego [ sehvirihwiri ]] (The prophet who is a cheat/swindler)

Lekgwahla le [ e lego [ sekebeka ]] (The bachelor who is a hardened criminal)

(iv) **Habits**

Mogatiši yo [ e lego [ sebedu ]] (The printer who is lazy)

Mohlakodi yo [ e lego [ setagwa ]] (The robber who is a drunkard)

Monna yo [ e lego [ sejagobe ]] (The man who is gluttonous)

Moreki yo [ e lego [ mmolabodi ]] (The buyer who is talkative)

Ngwanenyana yo [ e lego [ lešaedi ]] (The girl who is untidy)

Moremi yo [ e lego [ modiradibe ]] (The chopper who is a sinner)

Moithuti yo [ e lego [ sehvirihwiri ]] (A student who is a swindler)

Moapei yo [ e lego [ lehodu ]] (The cook who is a thief)

a. **Skills**

Mogale yo [ e lego [ mokitimi ]] (A hero who is a sprinter)

c. **Wealth**

Mmegi yo [ e lego [ modiidi ]] (The plaintiff who is poor)

Moreri yo [ e lego [ mohumi ]] (The preacher who is rich)

d. **Professional**

Mmadi yo [ e lego [ morutiši ]] (The reader who is a teacher)

Molwetši yo [ e lego [ ngaka ]] (The patient who is a doctor)

Monna yo [ e lego [ moemedi ]] (The man who is an advocate)  
Motho yo [ e lego [ moreri ]] (The person who is a preacher)  
Mmolai yo [ e lego [ mongwaledi ]] (The murderer who is a secretary)  
Mogami yo [ e lego [ moagi ]] (The milker who is a builder)  
Mosadi yo [ e lego [ mooki ]] (The woman who is a nurse)  
Mohlalobi yo [ e lego [ motšweletši ]] (The inspector who is a composer)  
Ngwanenyana yo [ e lego [ mošomi ]] (The girl who is a worker)

e. **Culture**

(i) **Circumcision**

Mošemane yo [ e lego [ modikana ]] (The boy who is undergoing circumcision)  
Mošemane yo [ e lego [ lešoboro ]] (The uncircumcised youth past the age of  
circumcision)

(ii) **Age – group**

Motho yo [ e lego [ mošemyana ]] (The person who is a young boy)  
Mofetoleli yo [ e lego [ morategi ]] (The interpreter who is a favourite)  
Motho yo [ e lego [ mosetsanyana ]] (The person who is a young girl)  
Motho yo [ e lego [ lesea ]] (The person who is a young baby)  
Ngwana yo [ e lego [ lekolwane ]] (The child who is about four years old)

(iii) **Love affair**

Mosadi yo [ e lego [ nyatsi ]] (The woman who is a concubine)

(iv) **Worker**

Mošemane yo [ e lego [ mošomi wa polasa ]] (The boy who is a farm labourer)



(v) **Diviner, doctor**

Mokgekolo yo [ e lego [ moloji ]] (An old woman who is a witch)

Moagi yo [ e lego [ moporofeta ]] (The builder who is a prophet)

Motho yo [ e lego [ mokome ]] (The person who is a diviner)

(vi) **Dress**

Mosadi yo [ e lego [ motšhephi ]] (The woman who is well – dressed)

2.4.3.3.2 **The complement of the copulative verb is a PP with [le] as head**

The head of the prepositional phrase is the preposition. The preposition [le] may have the following complements where the PP appear with the copulative verb [na]:

**Humans**

(79) a. **Physical features**

(i) **Age**

**Body shape**

**Well-built**

Ngwanenyana yo [ a nago [ le dipopo ]] (The girl who has a shapely body)

Seopedi se [ se nago [ le maatlakgogedi ]] (The accomplished singer who is attractive)

**Strong**

Ramatswele yo [ a nago [ le maatla ]] (The boxer who is powerful)

## **Tall**

Mošemane yo [ a nago [ le leemo ]] (The boy who is tall)

## **Healthy**

Ngwana yo [ a nago [ le boitekanelo]] (The child who is healthy)

### **b. Psychological features**

#### **(i) Intelligent**

Nkgwethe ye [ e nago [ le matšato ]] (The champion who is agile)

Monna yo [ a nago [ le tlhokomelo ]] (The man who is on the alert)

Ngwana yo [ a nago [ le bohlale ]] (The child who is intelligent)

#### **(ii) Retarded**

Lelaeta le [ le nago [ le botseketseke ]] (The barbarian who is the idiot)

Mošemanyana yo [ a nago [ le bothotho ]] (The young boy who is the retarded person)

Setagwa se [ se nago [ le botlaela ]] (The drunkard who is the stupid person)

Mosadi yo [ a nago [ le bogaswi ]] (The woman who is the mad person)

#### **(iii) Timid**

Ngwana yo [ a nago [ le bofokodi ]] (The child who is weak)

#### **(iv) Good behaviour**

Morekiši yo [ a nago [ le bogale ]] (The seller who is brave)



Ngaka ye [ e nago [ le botho ]] (The doctor who is gentle)

Motho yo [ a nago [ le sekgale ]] (The person who is conservative)

(v) **Bad behaviour**

Moloi yo [ a nago [ le boikgopolo ]] (The witch who is self – centred and stubborn)

Motlogolo yo [ a nago [ le hlogothata ]] (The grandchild who is stubborn and obstinate)

Ngwetši ye [ e nago [ le mathata ]] (The bride who has troubles)

Moporofeta yo [ a nago [ le bofori ]] (The prophet who is deceitful)

Mongwadi yo [ a nago [ le bohlale ]] (The author who is cunning)

Sefofu se [ se nago [ le pelwana ]] (The blind who is quick – tempered)

Setlaela se [ se nago [ le megabaru ]] (The stupid person who is greedy)

Bašemane ba [ ba nago [ le dintwa ]] (The boys who are aggressive)

Ngwana yo [ a nago [ le pelompe ]] (The child who is bad – tempered)

Mooki yo [ a nago [ le bobbe ]] (The nurse who has evil)

Mokgalabje yo [ a nago [ le kgang ]] (The old man who is violent)

c. **Skills**

Motho yo [ a nago [ le boitemogelo ]] (The person who has experience)

Moagi yo [ a nago [ le bokgoni ]] (The builder who has skill)

Mošomi yo [ a nago [ le tsebo ]] (The worker who has knowledge)

Note that 2.4.3.2 and 2.4.3.3 will receive no further attention as a broad discussion on them has been made.

## 2.5 CONCLUSION

From the discussion above, the term adjective can be defined as a word which modifies the noun. According to Crystal (1991:14), an adjective can be used in the GRAMMATICAL classification of WORDS to refer to the major set of items which

specify the attributes of NOUNS. Formally, four criteria are invoked to describe the class. Firstly, adjectives may occur within the noun phrase. In other words, they can be used in the 'attributive' position as in , for instance, the big house. Secondly, they can function in a post-verbal or 'predicative' position as in, for instance, the house is big. Thirdly, they can also be PREMODIFIED by an INTENSIFIER like very as in, for instance, the very big house. Lastly, adjectives can be used in a COMPARATIVE and SUPERLATIVE form, either by INFLECTION ( e.g.; small, smaller, smallest ) or PERIPHRASTICALLY ( e.g.; beautiful, more beautiful, most beautiful).

It is important also to note that adjectives can be used as heads of adjectival phrases as in, for example, that is very interesting. Examples of different adjectives and other word classes such as adverbs, nouns and participles have been given to indicate overlapping between them. Syntactic restrictions regarding the position of adjectives have been analyzed. Adjectives have also been systematically treated. Although some of the semantic aspects will be analyzed in more details in the next chapters types of adjectives in different languages, including Northern Sotho, have been used to indicate that they are part and parcel of human speech. Without them, no language would have been complete.



## CHAPTER 3

### THE MORPHOLOGICAL ADJECTIVE

#### 3.1 AIM

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the morphological adjective in Northern Sotho. The analysis will focus on various aspects of the morphological adjective. In this regard, the following aspects will receive attention : Morphology of the determiner and adjective, distribution of adjective, comparison of adjective and exclamation. In order to achieve the aforesaid aim, it will also be necessary to give a brief analysis of previous studies on the morphological adjective in Northern Sotho. Some scholars that seem to be relevant as far as this topic is concerned are Morris (1975), Nokaneng (1975), Lombard, et. al. (1985), Poulos and Louwrens (1994), Ziervogel, et. al. (1969), just to mention a few.

#### 3.2 PREVIOUS STUDIES ON THE ADJECTIVE

##### 3.2.1 Morris (1975)

Generally, an adjective is regarded as a word which qualifies either a noun or a pronoun. In the African languages in general, and in the Northern Sotho language in particular, adjectives form a very closed system and are morphologically marked with a noun class prefix. Morris (1975:16) goes on to define adjectives as:

Any of a class of words used to modify a noun or other substantive by limiting, qualifying or specifying.

- |        |                           |                       |
|--------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| (1) a. | -golo: Monna yo mogolo    | (A big man)           |
| b.     | -telele: Yena yo motelele | (A tall one (he/she)) |

The word **mogolo** (big) in (1a.) is an adjective which qualifies or specifies a noun **monna** (man) while in (1b.) **motelele** (tall) is an adjective which qualifies the pronoun **yena** (he/she).

### 3.2.2 Nokaneng (1975)

Nokaneng (1975:76-77) states that an adjective is a word which qualifies either a noun or a verb. The author sites two examples:

- (2) a. Motho yo moso. (A black person)  
b. O lwala wo o šiišago (He/she is very ill)

In (2a.) an adjective **moso** (black) is used to qualify a noun **motho** (person), whereas in (2b.) **šiišago** (very intensively afraid) qualifies a verb **lwala** (ill).

The concord brings an agreement between a noun and an adjective. Morphologically, **motho yo moso** (a black person), according to the author, can be analysed as follows:

- (3) a. mo- : Class prefix.  
b. -tho : Stem.  
c. yo- : Adjectival concord which is the demonstrative pronoun.  
d. mo- : Adjectival prefix which is similar to class prefix.  
e. -so : Adjectival stem.

### 3.2.3 Lombard, et. al. (1985)

Lombard, et. al. (1985:57-58) write about the adjectival nouns and divide them into class prefixes and adjectival roots:

- (4) a. (Yo) mogolo (mo-+-golo) (Big)  
b. (Se) segolo (se-+-golo) (Big)



The authors grouped together a limited number of adjectival roots according to meaning:

**(5) a. Numeral adjectives**

Root	Class	Example	
-tee	3	Mmutla wo motee	(One hare)
-bedi	4	Mebutla ye mebedi	(Two hares)
-raro	6	Masogana a mararo	(Three young men)
-ne	8	Dieta tše dine or dieta tše nne	(Four shoes)
-hlano	10	Dikomiki tše hlano	(Five cups)

**b. Colour adjectives**

Root	Class	Example	
-hubedu	9	Hempe ye hubedu	(A red shirt)
-sehla	14	Borokgo bjo bosehla	(Yellow/fawn/tawny trousers)
-so	10	Dikgomo tše ntsho	(Black cattle)
-šweu	7	Setena se sešweu	(A white stone)
-tala	3	Mmotoro wo motala	(A green/blue car)
-sotho	7	Seeta se sesotho	(A dark-brown shoe)

**c. Other adjectives**

Root	Class	Example	
-be	5	Letlalo le lebe	(An ugly skin)
-golo	9	Kgomo ye kgolo	(A big head of cattle)

Root	Class	Example	
-telele	5	Leope le letelele	(A long ditch)
-sese	5	Lerumo le lesese	(A thin assegai)
-tala	7	Selepe se setala	(An old axe)
-bjang?	1	Monna yo mobjang?	(What type/kind of a man?)
-fsa	8	Setswalelo se sefsa	(A new gate)
-kae?	10	Dinku tše kae?	(How many sheep?)
-kaka/kaaka?!	9	Tšhelete ye kaka?!	(So much money?!)
-kopana	1	Mošemane yo mokopana	(A short boy)
-ngwe	3	Mohlare wo mongwe	(Another tree)
-ntši	6	Marumo a mantši	(Many assegais)
-nnyane	9	Pere ye nnyane	(A small horse)
-thata	9	Tšhipi ye thata	(A hard (piece of) iron)
-botse	1	Motho yo mobotse	(A good person)
-bose	14	Bogobe bjo bobose	(Tasty porridge)
-šoro	1	Monna yo mošoro	(A cruel man)
-šele	9	Mpša ye šele	(A strange dog)

### 3.2.4 Poulos and Louwrens (1994)

Poulos and Louwrens (1994:91-93) say that an adjective is a word which consists of an adjective prefix and an adjective stem. According to them, the adjective prefix is usually compound in nature. The notable fact is that the first part is similar to the basic demonstrative of position (1a). Just like the prefix which comes after it, it totally agrees in class with the noun to which it refers. According to some linguists, the first part of the adjective prefix in Northern Sotho is sometimes regarded as the qualificative or adjective particle:



(6) **Adjectival concords**

Class	Adjectival particle	Adjectives prefix
1 (1a)	yo	mo-
2 (2a)	ba	ba-
3	wo	mo-
4	ye	me-
5	le	le-
6	a	ma-
7	se	se-
8	tše	N/O
9	ye	N/O
10	tše	N/O
14	bjo	bo-
15	mo	go-
16/17/18	mo	go-

It is relevant to state that classes 1 and 2 use the same concord as classes 1a and 2a respectively. The last three classes use the same concord as well.

The authors also grouped together a limited number of adjectival stems in terms of their meanings as follows:

(7) a. **Size**

-kaaka	(so big/as big as this)
-golo	(big)
-nyane	(small)
-sese	(thin/slender/lean)
-koto	(thick/fat/stout)

## b. Length

-telele	(long/tall)
-kopana	(short)

## c. Age

-tala	(old)
-fsa	(young/new)

## d. Number

-bedi	(two)
-raro	(three)
-ne	(four)
-hlano	(five)
-ngwe	(another/other)

## e. Colours

-tala	(green/blue)
-tsothwa	(brown)
-sehla	(grey)
-so	(black)
-šweu	(white)
-hubedu	(red)

## f. Quantity

-kae?	(how much?/how many?)
-ntši	(many/much)
-nyane	(small amount/little)-this stem may also refer to size as mentioned above.



### g. Character and appearance

-be	(bad/evil/naughty)
-šoro	(cruel)
-šele	(foreign)

### h. Texture or state

-boleta	(soft/tender)
-tala	(raw/unripe)
-kgopo	(crooked)
-bose	(nice)

#### 3.2.5 Ziervogel, et. al. (1969)

According to Ziervogel, et.al. (1969:57-58), an adjective qualifies a noun, as in ‘a beautiful child’ (ngwana yo mobotse) and ‘a large tree’ (sehlare se segolo) in which beautiful (-botse) and large (-golo) are adjectives. According to these linguists, all the verbs, nouns, enumeratives and possessives have the function of the adjectives as in the following examples:

- (8)
- Monna yo a lokilego (A man who is good; a good man) is a verb relative.
  - Ngwanenyana yo bohlale (A clever girl) is a nominal relative.
  - Monna o šele (A strange man) is an enumerative relative.
  - Mosadi wa maatla ( A strong woman) is a possessive construction.

Types of adjectival stems have also been mentioned. They are the following:

**(9) a. Numerals**

-bedi	(two)
-raro	(three)
-ne	(four)
-hlano	(five)

**b. Colours**

-hubedu	(red)
-sehla	(fawn)
-so	(black)
-šweu	(white)
-tala	(green/blue)

**c. Others**

-be	(bad/ugly)
-golo	(big/large)
-telele	(long/high)
-sese	(narrow/thin)
-tala	(old)
-bjang?	(how?)
-fsa	(new/young)
-kae?	(how much?/how many?)
-kaka	(as big as this)
-kopana	(short)
-ngwe	(another)
-ntš(h)i	(much/many)
-nnyane	(small)
-thata	(hard/difficult)



-botse	(beautiful)
-bose	(nice)

The authors assert that the adjective **-tee** (one) is also regarded as enumerative, while others like **-botse** (beautiful) and **-bose** (nice) are referred to as nominal relatives.

The use of adjectives are also stated. In the examples written below (in 10), it becomes very clear that the adjectives (i.e. demonstratives with concords and stems ) may either precede or follow the qualified noun:

(10) a.	Mokgalabje yo mongwe	(Another old man)
b.	Ba bararo bašemanane	(Three boys)
c.	Melete ye mentš(h)i	(Many holes)
d.	Yo mobe monna	(Bad man)

The adjectives may also stand by themselves :

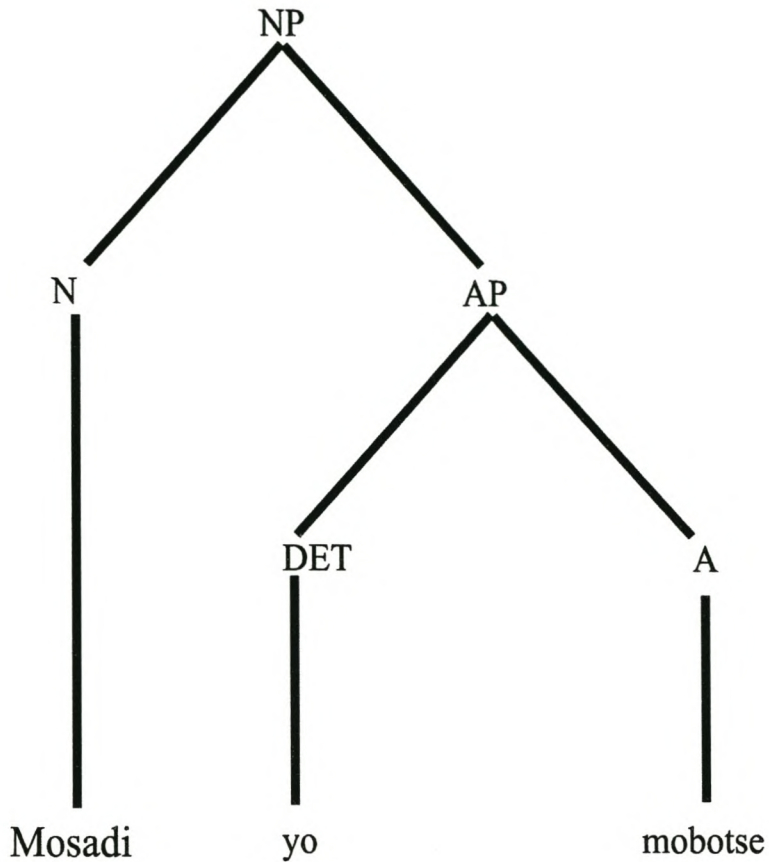
(11) a.	Se sengwe	(Another one)
b.	Ye kgolo	(A big one)
c.	Ba batelele	(The tall ones)

### 3.3. MORPHOLOGY OF THE ADJECTIVE

#### 3.3.1 Aim

The aim of this section is to establish the morphology of the adjective. The Northern Sotho adjectival phrase consists of at least the following categories: a determiner and an adjective. These two categories may appear in a structure such as the following where the noun is the head of the noun phrase:

(12) a.



b. Mosadi yo motelele  
(A tall woman)

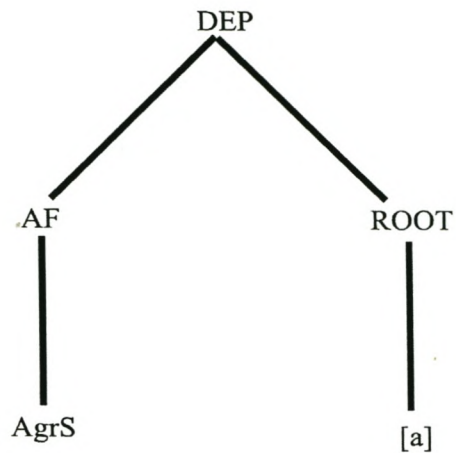
The focus of this section will then be on the determiner and the adjective, specifically to establish the morphological structure of these two categories.

### 3.3.2 The morphology of the determiner

The determiner which has to appear in an adjectival phrase as above, has the same morphological structure as the demonstrative specifically the structure of the first proximity position of the demonstrative. This demonstrative has a demonstrative root [a] which appears after a subjectival agreement:



(13)



The combination of agreement with the root [a] will result in determiners such as the following:

[se+a] → sê

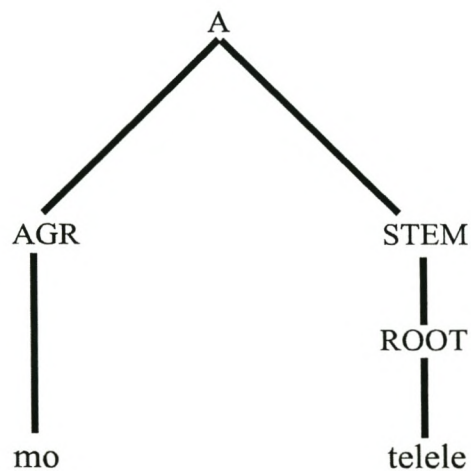
[ba+a] → ba

[o+a] → wô

### 3.3.3 The morphology of the adjective

The morphological structure of the adjective in Northern Sotho must show at least a noun class prefix as an agreement element with a head noun together with an adjectival stem. The adjectival stem must at least consist of one of such stems one may find in Northern Sotho:

(14)



### 3.3.3.1 The noun class prefix

The noun class prefixes are arranged according to the recognized numbers. A class prefix can be regarded as a morpheme which characterizes a certain group of nouns belonging to a certain noun class (Lombard, et. al. 1985:30). In the examples below, a list of the noun class prefixes is supplied:

Class		Example
1	mo-	Mosadi [yo motelele] o letše 'The tall woman has cried'
2	ba-	Basadi [ba batelele] ba letše 'The tall women have cried'
3	mo-	Motse [wo mobotse] šole 'There is the beautiful village'
4	me-	Metse [ye mebotse] šele 'There are the beautiful villages'
5	le-	Leeba [le lennyane] le hwile 'The small dove is dead'
6	ma-	Maeba [a mannyane] a hwile 'The small doves are dead'
7	se-	Serurubele [se segolo] se fofile 'The big butterfly has flown'
8	di-	Dirurubele [tše kgolo] di fofile 'The big butterflies have flown'
9	n-	Nkwe [ye kgolo] e jele 'The big leopard has eaten'
10	din-	Dinkwe [tše kgolo] di jele 'The big leopards have eaten'



14	bo-	Borotho [bjo bošweu] šebo 'Here is the white bread'
15	go-	Go opela [mo gogolo] 'The singing which is big'
16/17/18	go-	Felo [mo gogolo] 'The place which is big'

With regard to these noun class prefixes above, one should note the following:

- a. The locative classes 16,17 and 18 all use the same noun class prefix as agreement morpheme, i.e. [go-].
- b. The agreement morpheme of class 8, i.e. [di-], does not appear with adjectives. Instead of this [di-], one finds that class 8 uses the same noun class prefix as class 9, i.e. [n-]:

(15) Ditulo tše [n-tsho]  
(Black chairs)

- c. The noun class prefix of class 10, i.e. [din-], also does not appear with adjectives. It uses the agreement of class 9 as above with class 8:

(16) Dipudi tše [n-tsho]  
(Black goats)

However, it is possible to use the prefix of class 10 with the adjective. The same alternative may be found with class 8:

(17) Class 8:     Ditulo tše [n-tsho]  
                  Ditulo tše [din-tsho]





(20) <b>Quantifier</b>	<b>Adjective</b>
ofe	yo mofe
o šele	yo mošele
o tee	yo motee
o šoro	yo mošoro

However, in class 8, 9 and 10 these quantifiers will only appear with the morphological structure of a quantifier or of a nominal relative, but not of an adjective:

(21) <b>Quantifier</b>	<b>Relative</b>	<b>Adjective</b>
efe	ye fe	*ye nfe
e šele	ye šele	*ye nšele
e tee	ye tee	*ye ntee
e šoro	ye šoro	*ye nšoro

### 3.3.3.2 The adjectival root

The Northern Sotho language has a very limited number of adjectival stems. Some of the stems can be grouped together in terms of their meanings:

#### 3.3.3.2.1 Semantic classification of stems

##### (22) **Size**

-kaaka	(so big/as big as this)
-golo	(big)
-nyane	(small)
-sese	(thin/slender/lean)
-koto	(thick/fat/stout)

## Length

-telele	(long/tall)
-kopana	(short)

## Age

-tala	(old)
-fsa	(young/new)

## Number

-bedi	(two)
-raro	(three)
-ne	(four)
-hlano	(five)
-ngwe	(another/other)

## Colours

-tala	(green/blue)
-tsothwa	(brown)
-sehla	(grey)
-so	(black)
-šweu	(white)
-hubedu	(red)

## Quantity

-kaka?	(how much?/how many?)
-ntši	(many/much)
-nyane	(small amount/little) - this stem may also refer to size as mentioned above.



## Character and appearance

-be	(bad/evil/naughty)
-šoro	(cruel)
-šele	(foreign)

## Texture/state

-boleta	(soft (of certain materials e.g. skins, foodstuffs like porridge), tender)
-tala	(raw/unripe)
-kgopo	(crooked)
-bose	(nice)

### 3.3.3.2.2 Antonyms

The adjectives as above may also be classified according to their role in antonyms. Antonyms per definition refer to lexemes that are opposite in meaning to other lexemes in the same language:

#### a. Descriptive adjectival stems

(23)	Stem	Class	Example
	-golo/-nnyane	1	Monna [yo mogolo/monnyane] 'A big/small man'
	-telele/-kopana	2	Bašemane [ba batelele/kopana] 'Tall/short boys'
	-fisa/-tala	3	Mphaka [wo mofisa/motala] 'A new/old knife'

Stem	Class	Example
-be/-botse	4	Mekgwa [ye mebe/mebotse] 'Bad/good manners'
-koto/-sese	5	Leoto [le lekoto/lesese] 'A thick/thin foot'

b. **Quantitative adjectival stems**

(24) Stem	Class	Example
-ntši/-nnyane	9	Tšhelete [ye ntši/nnyane] 'Big/small amount of money'

c. **Colour adjectival stems**

(25) Stem	Class	Example
-so/-šweu	6	Maru [a maso/mašweu] 'Black/white clouds'

### 3.3.3.2.3 Individual- level and stage-level adjectives

According to Carlson (1977) and Kratzer (1989), two types of stative predicates can be differentiated. The two stative predicates are **individual-level** and **stage-level**. The **individual-level** and **stage-level** adjectives are identified by particular properties. The most notable fact which must always be borne in mind is that not all adjectives as they are known in either English or Afrikaans are classified as adjectives in Northern Sotho. It is, therefore, very clear that certain English adjectives like "angry", "dry", "strong" and many others are expressed by some of the qualificatives in the Northern Sotho language. It is very important to remember that there is not a one-to-one



correspondence between the adjectives in English and those of Northern Sotho simply because English and Northern Sotho are two different languages (Poulos and Louwrens 1994:93).

Following the contribution made by Carlson (1977) and Kratzer (1989), some predicates such as **tall**, **intelligent** and **overweight** may be regarded as the properties that an individual retains, more or less, throughout its lifetime and can be directly identified with that individual. They are therefore referred to as **individual-level** predicates. The **stage-level** predicates are characterized by various properties such as **clean**, **hungry** and **sick**. It should be pointed out that these properties are usually identified with non-permanent states of individuals:

(26) a. **Individual-level adjectives**

-kaka	(so big/as big as this)
-golo	(big)
-nyane	(small)
-sese	(thin/slender/lean)
-koto	(thick/fat/stout)
-telele	(long/tall)
-kopana	(short)
-tala	(old)
-fsa	(young/new)
-tala	(green/blue)
-tsothwa	(brown)
-sehla	(grey)
-so	(black)
-šweu	(white)
-hubedu	(red)
-kae?	(how much?/how many?)
-ntši	(many/much)
-nyane	(small amount/little)

-be	(bad/evil/naughty)
-šoro	(cruel)
-šele	(foreign)
-boleta	(soft/tender)
-tala	(raw/unripe)
-kgopo	(crooked)
-bose	(nice)

**b. Stage-level adjectives**

-bedi	(two)
-raro	(three)
-ne	(four)
-hlano	(five)
-ngwe	(another/other)

**3.3.3.2.4 Appearance in other categories**

Some of the adjectives in paragraph 3.3.3.2.1 above may appear in more than one category. Firstly, some of them occur as adjectives or as nominal relatives:

(27)	<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>Relatives</b>
	botse : yo mobotse	yo botse
	bose : yo mbose	yo bose
	bjang? : yo mobjang?	yo bjang?
	kaka : yo mokaka	yo kaka

These adjectives above will however never appear with the class prefix of class 9 [n-], i.e. the prefix which appears in class 8, 9 and 10. In such cases one will only find a relative construction:



(28)	<b>Relative</b>	<b>Adjective</b>
	tše botse	*tše n-botse
	tše bose	*tše n-bose

Secondly, some adjectives occur as quantifiers or adjectives:

(29)	<b>Quantifier</b>	<b>Adjective</b>
	ofe	yo mofe
	o šele	yo mošele
	o tee	yo motee
	o šoro	yo mošoro

It has already been stated that in class 8, 9 and 10 these quantifiers will only appear with the morphological structure of a quantifier or of a nominal relative, but not of an adjective:

(30)	<b>Quantifier</b>	<b>Relative</b>	<b>Adjective</b>
	e fe	ye fe	*ye nfe
	e šele	ye šele	*ye nšele
	e tee	ye tee	*ye ntee
	e šoro	ye šoro	*ye nšoro

Adjectives in (31) and (32) appear in more than one category as mentioned above:

(31)	<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>Relatives</b>
	botse : yo mobotse	yo botse
	bose : yo mobose	yo bose
	bjang? : yo mobjang?	yo bjang?
	kaka : yo mokaka	yo kaka

(32)	<b>Relative</b>	<b>Adjective</b>
	tše botse	*tše n-botse
	tše bose	*tše n-bose

### 3.3.3.2.5 Selection restriction

In paragraph 3.3.3.2.1 above, it is possible that some adjectives may only appear with certain nouns.

#### A. Mass nouns:

Generally, the Northern Sotho nouns have characteristic linguistic behaviours. Interestingly enough, these behaviours depend mostly on semantic category. In this analysis, count nouns versus mass nouns. Sugar for instance, is a mass noun simply because it consists of individual grains and refers to undifferentiated stuff in our daily life. A book on the other hand is regarded as a count noun because it is perceivable as an individuated object.

In the Northern Sotho language, mass nouns may accept only few adjectives. Meetse (water), bjalwa (beer), maswi (milk), etc. are some of the mass nouns which will not accept adjectives which refer to size (-golo) or length (-telele) or number (-raro), etc.:

(33)	a. -golo (big)	*Meetse [a magolo] 'Big water'
	b. -telele (long/tall)	*Bjalwa [bjo botelele] 'Long/tall beer'
	c. -raro (three)	*Maswi [a mararo] 'Three milks'



It needs to be mentioned that quantities may appear with noun classes which have either a singular prefix or a plural prefix, but they do not appear with both a singular or plural prefix as other nouns:

(34) a. **Singular prefix:**

Stem	Class	Example
-kopana (short)	3	*Mpholo [wo mokopana] 'Short poison'
-sese (thin/slender/lean)	9	*Phoka [ye sese] 'Thin/slender/lean dew'
-šoro (cruel)	14	*Boya [bjo bošoro] 'Cruel fur'

b. **Plural prefix**

Stem	Class	Example
-so (black)	4	*Meroto/mehlapologo [ye meso] 'Black urines'
-kopana (short)	6	*Meetse [a makopana] 'Short water'
-šoro (cruel)	8	*Dino [tše dišoro] 'Cruel drinks'

Abstract (immaterial) nouns which refer to a quality or concept may be differentiated from concrete (material) nouns which indicate something real or solid:

(35) **Concrete mass nouns**

Maswi (Milk)	*Maswi [a makopana] 'Short milk'
Meetse (Water)	*Meetse [a mabe] 'Bad/evil/naughty water'
Leraga (Mud)	*Leraga [le lešele] 'Foreign mud'
Bogobe (Porridge)	*Bogobe [bjo bošoro] 'Cruel porridge'

b. **Abstract mass nouns**

Kgotlelelo (Patience)	*Kgotlelelo [ye hubedu] 'Red patience'
Bogaswi (Madness )	* Bogaswi [bjo bokoto] 'Thick/fat/stout madness'
Lerato (Love)	* Lerato [le lebotse] 'Beautiful love'
Bohlale (Wisdom )	*Bohlale [bjo bobose] 'Tasty wisdom'

B. Animate nouns:

Animate nouns will not accept adjectives such as **-bose** (tasty), **-tala** (not ripe), etc.

In semantics, the difference related to count and mass is that between individual and group nouns. Some group nouns have particular characteristics of which the most prominent is their appearance in descriptive possessives:



(36) Sehlopha sa batho (group of people)

\*Sehlopha sa batho se sebose : ‘A tasty group of people’

Animate nouns can be divided into categories:

(37) a. **Group of people**

Sehlopha (Group)	*Sehlopha [se setala] ‘An unripe/raw group’
Lešaba (Croud)	*Lešaba [le lesese] ‘A thin/slender/lean crowd’
Lešabašaba (Multitude)	*Lešabašaba [le lešweu] ‘A white multitude’
Mašabašaba (Great number)	*Mašabašaba [a makoto] ‘Thick/fat/stout crowds’
Komiti (Committee)	*Komiti [ye tsothwa] ‘A brown committee’
Molokoloko (Procession)	*Molokoloko [wo montši] ‘Many procession’
Palo (Number)	*Palo [ye šoro] ‘A cruel number’
Khonferense (Conference)	*Khonferense [ye tala] ‘A green/blue conference’

b. **Group of young people**

Bafsa (Youths)	*Bafsa [ba bafsa] ‘Young/new youths’
Masogana (Young men)	*Masogana [a matala] ‘Raw/unripe men’

Makgarebe (Young women)	*Makgarebe [a mahubedu] 'Red young women'
Bannana (Young men)	*Bannana [ba babose] 'Tasty young men'
Basetsanyana (Young girls)	*Basetsanyana [ba basehla] 'Grey young women'
Bašemanyana (Young boys)	*Bašemanyana [ba batee] 'One boys'

**c. Relational nouns**

Mma (Mother)	*Mma [yo montši] 'A many mother'
Mogwera (Friend)	*Mogwera [yo mokae?] 'A how many friend?'
Kgaetšedi (Sister)	*Kgaetšedi [ye tala] 'An unripe/raw sister'
Tate (Father)	*Tate [yo mohubedu] 'A red father'
Moagišane (Neighbour)	*Moagišane [yo mobose] 'A tasty/nice neighbour'

**C. Food:**

Food will not appear with adjectives such as šoro, tee, etc.:

**(38) a. Food**

Legapu (Watermelon)	*Legapu [le lekgopo] 'Crooked watermelon'
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Merogo (Vegetables)	*Merogo [ye mešoro] 'Cruel vegetables'
Bjalwa (Beer)	*Bjalwa [bjo bokopana] 'Short beer'
Sopo (Soup)	*Sopo [ye telele] 'A long soup'
Nama (Meat)	*Nama [ye mpe] 'Bad/evil/naughty meat'
Bogobe (Porridge)	*Bogobe [bjo bofsa] 'A young/new porridge'
Motepa (Soft porridge)	*Motepa [wo mošele] 'A foreign soft porridge'

**b. Liquid : Intoxicating**

Bjalwa (Liquor)	*Bjalwa [bjo bobē] 'Bad/evil/cruel beer'
Beine (Wine)	*Beine [ye boleta] 'Soft wine'
Brandi (Brandy)	*Brandi [ye kgopo] 'Crooked brandy'

**c. Liquid : non-Intoxicating**

Meetse (Water)	*Meetse [a mašele] 'Foreign water'
Senomaphodi (Cold drink)	*Senomaphodi [se sešoro] 'A cruel cold drink'
Maswi (Milk)	*Maswi [a boleta] 'Soft milk'

D. Feelings:

Feelings will accept only a few adjectives :

(39) a. **Good feelings**

Maikutlo (Emotion/feeling)	*Maikutlo [a mabjang?] 'What type (kind) of feeling?'
Kgopolo (Opinion/belief/view)	*Kgopolo [ye botse] 'A good opinion'
Bogwera (Friendship)	*Bogwera [bjo bofsa] 'A new friendship'
Tatso (Taste)	*Tatso [ye tee] 'One taste'
Mabobo (Generosity)	*Mabobo [a mabjalo] 'Such a generosity?'
Pelotelele (Patience)	*Pelotelele [ye kaka?] 'So much patience?'
Lehlogonono (Luck)	*Lehlogonono [le legolo] 'A big luck'
Kgakolo (Taste)	*Kgakolo [ye nngwe] 'Another taste'
Mafolofolo (Diligence)	*Mafolofolo [a mafe?] 'Which diligence?'
Lethabo (Happiness)	*Lethabo [le lekopana] 'A short happiness'
Lerato (Love)	*Lerato [le lentši] 'Much love'
Kganyogo (Desire)	*Kganyogo [ye kgolo] 'A big desire'



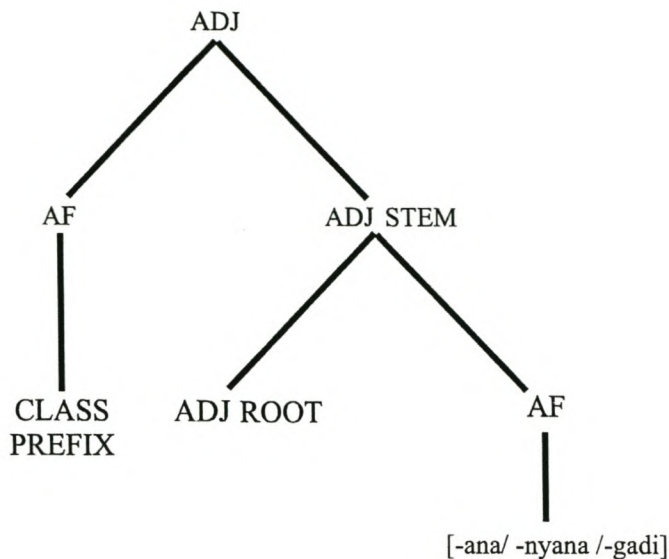
## b. Bad feelings

Pefelo (Anger)	*Pefelo [ye mpe] 'A bad anger'
Madimabe (Misfortune)	*Madimabe [a mangwe] 'Another misfortune'
Lehufa (Jealousy)	*Lehufa [le lebjalo?] 'Such a jealousy?'
Poifo (Fear)	*Poifo [ye kgolo] 'A big fear'
Bodutu (Loneliness)	*Bodutu [bjo bobjang?] 'What type/kind of loneliness?'
Kgaogelo (Pity)	*Kgaogelo [ye kaka] 'So big pity'
Tshwenyo (Worry)	*Tshwenyo [ye tala] 'A raw/unripe worry'
Bothata (Problem)	*Bothata [bjo bogolo] 'A big problem'
Lehloyo (Hate)	*Lehloyo [le lesele] 'A foreign hatred'

### 3.3.4 The adjectival stems

An adjective may be divided into two parts, i.e. the adjective prefix and the adjective stem. The adjectival prefixes, except for classes 16,17 and 18, look exactly the same as the noun class prefixes. The adjective stem is further divided into the adjective root and the suffixes **-ana**, **-nyana** or **-gadi** as in the following structure:

(40)



### 3.3.4.1 The suffixes -ana and -nyana

The diminutive suffix appears with two meanings with adjectives:

a. **Diminution** of the adjectival quality:

In the Northern Sotho language, the meaning of some of the adjectival stems may be modified by the addition of suffixes **-ana** and **-nyana**. Lombard, et.al. (1985:75) go on to say that:

The former expresses ordinary diminutives, whereas the latter expresses intense diminution. The addition of the suffix **-nyana** activates no morphological processes in the word, whereas the suffix **-ana** activates phonological processes in certain cases.

When the suffix **-ana** is used, for instance, with the stem **-telele**, the meaning of **slightly long** or **longish** is conveyed:

- (41) a. Monna yo moteletšana  
 ‘The slightly long, longish man’



- b. Monwana wo mokotwana  
'The slightly thick, thickish finger'
- c. Lebjang le letalana  
'The slightly green, greenish grass'
- d. Moago wo motalana  
'The slightly old, oldish house'
- e. Banna ba bašorwana  
'The slightly cruel, cruellish men'
- f. Molomo wo mohubetšwana  
'The slightly red, reddish mouth'
- g. Nama ye bosana  
'The slightly tasty, tastish meat'
- h. Dieta the disothwana  
'The slightly dark- brown, dark-brownish shoes'

The suffix **-nyana** also conveys the meaning when it is attached to some adjectival stems:

- (42)
- a. Monna yo mokakanyana  
'Such a slightly small, smallish man'
  - b. Molete wo monnyanennyane  
'A slightly small, smallish hole'
  - c. Motho yo mogolonyana  
'A slightly big, biggish person'
  - d. Hlogo ye kgolonyana  
'A slightly big, biggish head'
  - e. Nalete ye sesenyana  
'A slightly thin, thinnish needle'
  - f. Namune ye kotonyana  
'A slightly thick, thickish orange'

- g. Lešela le lešwaanyana  
'A slightly white, whitish cloth'
- h. Mmala wo motalanyana  
'A slightly green, blue, greenish, bluish colour'
- i. Sefatanaga se setalanyana  
'A slightly old, oldish car'
- j. Mosadi yo mokopananyana  
'A slightly short, shortish woman'
- k. Mošemane yo mošoronyana  
'A slightly cruel, cruelish boy'
- l. Pelo ye mpenyana  
'A slightly evil heart'

b. **Feminine**

Besides the examples given above, the suffix **-ana** is also used together with the adjectival stems which denote colour to indicate femininity with regard to animals:

- (43)
- a. Kgomo ye šwaana  
'A white cow'
  - b. Dikgomo tše dikhunwana  
'Red cows or heifers'
  - c. Kgomo ye swana  
'A black cow or heifer'

3.3.4.2 **The suffix -gadi**

The other suffix **-gadi** is augmentative and this may refer to the largeness of the objects:



- (44) a. Tlou ye kgologadi  
'An outstanding elephant cow (e.g. that leads the herd)'
- b. Mehlope ye mentšigadi  
'Very many herds'
- c. Leeto le letelelegadi  
'A very long journey'
- d. Dikutu tše dikotogadi  
'Very thick stems'
- e. Nalete ye sesegadi  
'A very thin needle'
- f. Mokgekolo yo motalagadi  
'A very old woman'
- g. Lebone le letalagadi  
'A very green/blue light'
- h. Mmele wo mosogadi  
'A very black body'
- i. Sehlare se sehubedugadi  
'Very red medicine'
- j. Noga ye šorogadi  
'A very cruel snake'
- k. Pelo ye mpegadi  
'A very bad/evil heart'
- l. Mokgwa wo mokgopogadi  
'A very crooked manner'

### 3.3.4.3 Reduplication

Many adjective stems can be reduplicated twice, thrice or even more, depending on the emphasis:

- (45) a. Ngwanenyana yo mobotsebotse  
'A very beautiful girl'
- b. Nalete ye sesesesesese  
'A very very thin needle'
- c. Tsela ye teleleteleteletelele  
'An extremely long road'
- d. Galase ye kotokoto  
'A very big glass'
- e. Lerothi le lennyannanennyane  
'An extremely small drop'
- f. Sefatanaga se sefsasefsa  
'A very new car'
- g. Monna yo mokakakaka  
'Such a very big man'
- h. Meetse a matalatalatala  
'An extremely green/blue water'
- i. Puku ye talatala  
'A very old book'
- j. Monna yo mošorošorošoro  
'An extremely cruel man'
- k. Mokgekolo yo mokopanakopana  
'A very short old woman'
- l. Malao a mabjangbjang?  
'What type/kind of bedding?'
- m. Moago wo mogologologolo  
'An extremely big building'
- n. Meno a mašweušweu  
'Very white teeth'
- o. Maswi a mantšintši  
'Very much milk'



- p. Tšhipi ye thatathatathatathata  
'An extremely hard (piece of) iron'
- q. Mamapo a mabosebose  
'Very nice honeycomb'
- r. Baki ye tsothwatsothwa  
'A very dark-brown jacket'
- s. Motho yo mobemobe  
'A very cruel person'
- t. Sehlare se sehubeduhubeduhubedu  
'An extremely red medicine'
- u. Borokgo bjo bosehlasehla  
'Very yellow/fawn/tawny trousers'
- v. Motho yo mosomosomoso  
'An extremely black person'
- w. Dikonopi tše kaekae?  
'How many buttons?'
- x. Matsopa a mabjalobjalo?  
'Such and such clays?'
- y. Bofšega bjo bokalokalo?  
'So very much cowardliness?'
- z. Ngwana yo moteetee  
'Only one child'

The adjectival stem in (45a.) has been reduplicated twice, (45b.) thrice and (45c.) four times. The reduplicated adjective stems indicate different intensifications.

There are some adjectival stems which cannot be reduplicated as in the following examples:

- (46) a. \*Ngwana yo mongwemongwe  
 'Only another child'
- b. \*Mafsielo a mabedibedi  
 'Only two brooms'
- c. \*Ditena tše tharotharo  
 'Only three bricks'
- d. \*Dihlapi tše dinedine/nnenne  
 'Only four fish'
- e. \*Marapo a mahlanohlano  
 'Only four bones'

### 3.3.5 Transposition

Transposition is a process whereby new words are formed. The decisive difference in the formation of words solely depends on origin (derivation) rather than affix spelling. There are certain lexical principles which have lexical content, whereas others hardly do. Some grammatical relations like Subject, Object, Instrument, Locus and the alternation of class V→N will be needed, for instance, in the description of the derivational relations below, i.e. (A.), to give an account of their etymology. Only the latter, a rule,  $x \rightarrow y$ , which rearranges the basis is needed in the discussion of the derivation of (B.):

- (47) A. a. Employ → employ-er  
 b. Employ → employ-ee  
 c. Compose → compos-er  
 d. Nurse → nurs-ery
- B. a. Accept → accept-ance (V→N)  
 b. Short → short-ness (Adj.→ N)  
 c. Accept → accept-able (V→Adj.)  
 d. Wet → to wet (Adj.→V)





-botse (beautiful)	:	[Bobotse bja gagwe] bo a nkgafiša 'Her beauty drives me crazy'
-koto (thick/fat/stout)	:	Ke hloile [bokoto bja moraloki] 'I hate the thickness/fatness/stoutness of a player'
-šoro (cruel)	:	[Bošoro bja mašole] ke a bo fšega 'I am afraid of the cruelty of the soldiers'
-bedi (two)	:	[Bobedi bja bona] bo swerwe 'Both of them have been arrested'
-ntši (many)	:	[Bontši bja dipuku] bo ntswitšwe 'Many of the books have been stolen'

### 3.3.6 Compound adjectives

A compound word in Northern Sotho language is formed only when the noun is qualified by an adjective without the presence of the determiner. Adjectives usually appear with compounds as in the following examples:

The noun [pelo] 'heart' can be used with the adjective stems like [-kgolo] 'big/large', [-telele] 'tall/long' [-tee] 'one', [-bedi] 'two', [-be] 'bad/evil', [-thata] 'difficult/hard', [-sehla] 'yellow/fawn/tawny', and [-šwaana] 'white' in (50):

- (50) a. Motho wa pelokgolo  
'A sensitive or magnanimous person'
- b. Mosadi wa pelotelele  
'A patient man'
- c. Batho ba pelotee  
'United people'



- d. Monna wa pelopedi  
‘A hesitant/an uncertain man’
- e. Ngwana wa pelompe  
‘A bad/an evil child’
- f. Lešole la pelothata  
‘A hard -hearted soldier’
- g. Mošemane wa pelosehla  
‘A jealous boy’
- h. Mokgekolo wa pelošwaana  
‘A satisfied old woman’

The adjective stem [-golo] ‘big/large’ may as well accommodate the nouns such as [moahlodi] ‘judge’, [monna] ‘man’, [mosadi] ‘woman’, [motse] ‘city’, [taba] ‘news’ and [tona] ‘Minister/Premier’:

- (51) a. Sefatanaga sa moahlodimogolo  
‘The car of a senior judge’
- b. Ntlo ya monnamogolo  
‘The house of an old man’
- c. Komiki ya mosadimogolo  
‘The cup of an old woman’
- d. Motsemogolo wa Polokwane  
‘Pietersburg city’
- e. Tonakgolo ya Gauteng  
‘Gauteng Premier/Prime minister’
- f. Tabakgolo ya lehono  
‘Today’s important matter’

The other adjectival stem [-šweu] ‘white’ can be used with the noun [meno] ‘teeth’:

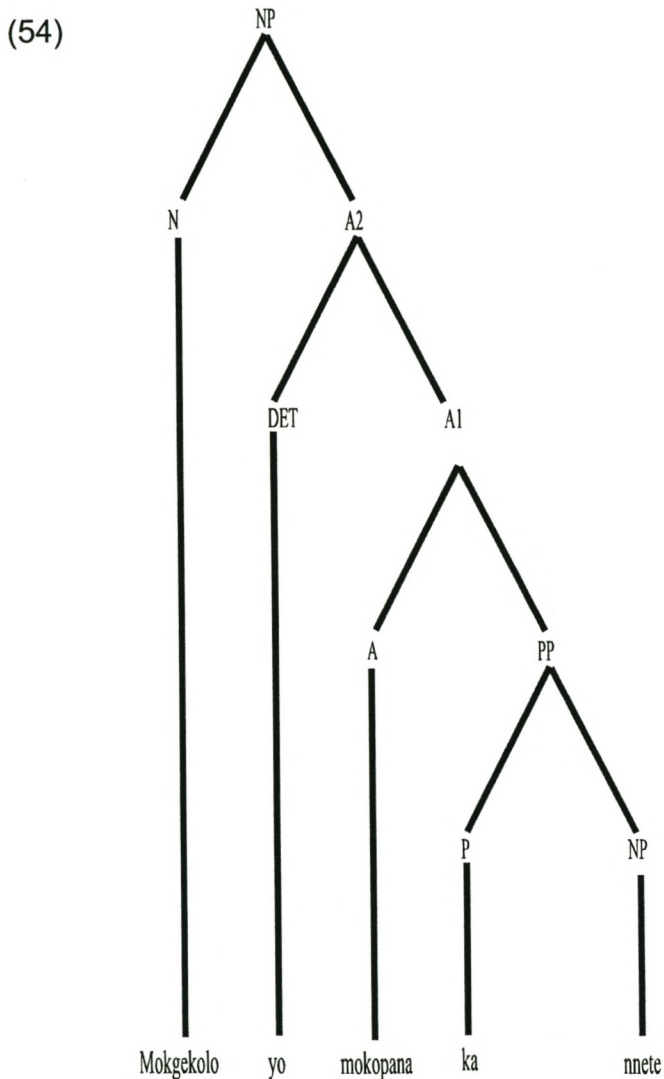
- (52) Motho wa menomašweu  
‘A pretender’

### 3.3.7 The adjective phrase

Any type of the adjective is regarded as the head of the adjectival phrase with an optional adverbial or prepositional phrase.

Generally, the prepositional phrases and adverbs may be employed as complements of the adjective in a sentence as in the examples below:

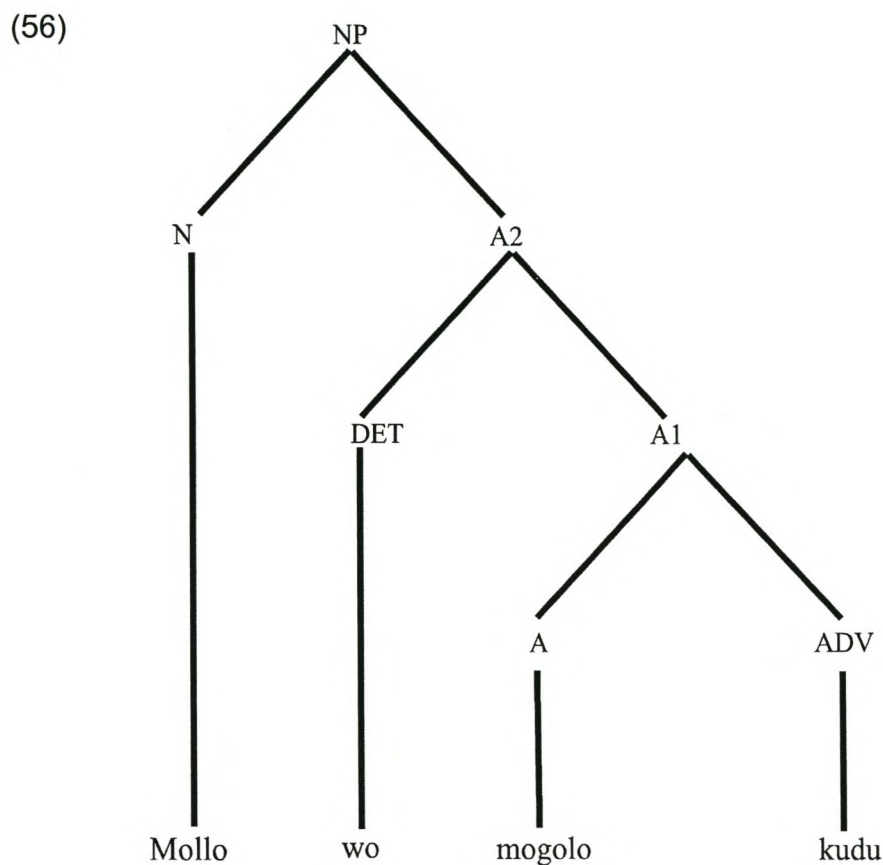
- (53) Mokgekolo [yo mokopana] [ka nnete]  
'A truly short old woman'





As it may be noted above in (53) and (54), the prepositional phrase [ka nnete] ‘truly’ is used as a complement of the adjectives [mokopana] ‘short’ and [mobotse] ‘beautiful’ respectively.

(55) Mollo [wo mogolo][kudu]  
 ‘A very big fire’



In the example mentioned above in (56), the adverb [kudu] ‘very’ is used as a complement of the adjective [mogolo] ‘big’ in the sentence.

### 3.3.8 Distribution of the adjective

The main aim of this subsection is to explore the distribution of the adjective as a phrasal nominal modifier in Northern Sotho by identifying possible positions it can occupy in different sentence structure.

### 3.3.8.1 Complement of a noun

Various adjectives may come after (follow) the noun as in the following examples:

- (57)
- a. Monna [yo motelele] o sepetše  
‘A tall man is gone’
  - b. Mosadi [yo mošoro] o bolailwe  
‘A cruel woman is killed’
  - c. Lešaka [le legolo] le tswaletšwe  
‘A big kraal is closed’
  - d. Ntlanya [ye hubedu] e utswitšwe  
‘A red bicycle is stolen’
  - e. Lepanta [le leso] le timetše  
‘A black belt is lost’
  - f. Setimela [se setala] se fihlile  
‘A green/blue train has arrived’

Although the above appearance of the adjective is more common in the Northern Sotho language, it is, however, possible for the adjective to precede (come before) the noun.

When this happens, emphasis is indicated:

- (58)
- a. [Wo moswa] ngwaga o a thoma  
‘A new year begins’
  - b. [Yo mokopana] monna ke mmone  
‘I saw a short man’
  - c. [Ye bose] nama ba e feditše  
‘They have finished a tasty meat’
  - d. [Tše ditsothwa] dieta ke di apere  
‘I have put on the dark-brown shoes’



- e. [Se sesehla] setulo se robegile  
'A yellow/fawn/tawny chair is broken'
- f. [A mašweu] maeba a timeletše  
'White doves have disappeared'

### 3.3.8.2 Syntactic positions in a clause

There are various positions which the adjective can occupy in a clause.

#### 3.3.8.2.1 The subject position

A point to which attention should be paid is that adjectives as nominal modifiers may be used without any constraints as specifiers or complements in the subject position of a sentence:

- (59) a. [Monna yo mošoro] o a tsebega  
'A cruel man is known'
- b. [Yo mošoro monna] o a tsebega  
'A cruel man is known'
- c. [Yo mošoro] o a tsebega  
'A cruel one is known'

#### 3.3.8.2.2 The object position

Likewise, an adjective as a nominal modifier may be employed as specifier or complement of a noun in the object position:

- (60) a. Ke tseba [monna yo mošoro]  
'I know a cruel man'
- b. Ke tseba [yo mošoro monna]  
'I know a cruel man'

c. Ke tseba [yo mošoro]

‘I know a cruel one’

### 3.3.8.3 Complement of a preposition

An adjective can, without any restrictions, be used as a complement of any preposition:

#### 3.3.8.3.1 Instrumental ka:

- (61) a. O reng [ka [monna yo mošoro?]]  
‘What do you say about a cruel man?’  
b. O reng [ka [yo mošoro?]]  
‘What do you say about a cruel one?’

#### 3.3.8.3.2 Associative le:

- (62) a. Lesiba o opela [le [mosadi yo mokopana]]  
‘Lesiba sings with a short woman’  
b. Lesiba o opela [le [yo mokopana]]  
‘Lesiba sings with a short one’

#### 3.3.8.3.3 Locative go:

- (63) a. Baithuti ba tsena [go [sekolo se sefsa]]  
‘Students attend at a new school’  
b. Baithuti ba tsena [go [se sefsa]]  
‘Students attend at a new one’

#### 3.3.8.3.4 Possessive -a:

- (64) a. Re nyaka pitša [ya [mokgekolo yo moso]]  
‘We want the pot of the black old woman’



- b. Re nyaka pitša [ya [yo moso]]  
'We want the pot of the black one'

#### 3.3.8.3.5 **Passive agent with ke:**

- (65) a. Batho ba kopilwe [ke [mokgopa wo mogolo]]  
'People were bitten by a big mamba'  
b. Batho ba kopilwe [ke [wo mogolo]]  
'People were bitten by a big one'

#### 3.3.8.3.6 **Complement of a verb**

The adjectives or adjectival phrases may be employed as complement of copulative verbs:

The first copulative verb is **le**. It is important to state that the distribution of this copulative verb is very restricted in the Northern Sotho language. This copulative verb may be used in two various ways. Firstly, it can appear in the situative mood in subordinate or embedded sentences as in the following examples in (66):

- (66) a. Dimpšhe tše di be di bonagala [e **le** [tše nnyane]]  
'These ostriches appeared to be small'  
b. Ditulo tše di be [di **le** tala]]  
'These chairs were green/blue'

Secondly, it can as well be used in the main sentences only on the condition that the inflection of the sentence indicates the progressive aspect **sa**:

- (67) a. Batho ba re [o **sa le** [yo mofsa]]  
'People say he is still young'

b. Monna yo [o sa **le šoro**]

‘This man is still cruel’

The second copulative verb can be used in an abstract form in the lexicon as **cop** with a stative meaning:

(68) Ngwanenyana o [botse]

‘The girl is beautiful’

The adjective [botse] ‘beautiful’ in (68) is regarded as a complement of the abstract copulative verb in the sentence.

The third copulative verb is **ke**. It may be found between the noun and the adjective phrase:

(69) Monna [**ke** [yo motelele]]

‘The man is big’

In (69), it is evident that the adjective phrase **yo motelele** appears as a complement of the copulative verb **ke**.

The fourth copulative verb which may possibly be employed with only one type of complement is **na**. This copulative verb is used with the preposition **le** which is sometimes referred to as the associative particle. The availability of **le** has undoubtedly resulted in this copulative being regarded as the associative copulative more especially after the meaning of the preposition mentioned above:

(70) Mpša ye [e **na** [le dimpšanyana tše dintši]]

‘This dog has many puppies’



The negative verb **se** is the fifth copulative verb. It is interesting to note that the negative verb **se** usually takes the place of the copulative verb **le**:

- (71) a. (i) [Ge [monna [a le yo mokopana]]]  
‘If the man is short’  
(ii) Ge [monna [a **se** yo [mokopana]]]  
‘If the man is not short’
- b. (i) [Ge [diapola [di le bose]]]  
‘If the apples are tasty’  
(ii) [Ge [diapola [di **se** bose]]]  
‘If the apples are not tasty’

The undisputable fact that **se** is a copulative verb is realized in relative sentences. The verbs in the relative sentences are used with a relative marker **go** and this marker is employed together with **se**:

- (72) a. Dinamune tše [di **sego** [bose]]  
‘The oranges which are not nice’  
b. Mošemane yo [ke **sego** [yo motelele]]  
‘The boy who is not tall’  
c. Sefofane se [e **sego**] se segolo  
‘The aeroplane which is not big’

The inchoative verb **ba** is the sixth copulative verb which can be used with different adjectives:

- (73) a. Diphoofole tše di tla tlogo letamong [di tla **ba** [tše dintši]]  
‘The animals which will come to the dam will be many’

- b. Dikeletšo tša bona [di **bile** [mpe]]  
‘Their advices were bad’
- c. Leoto la ka le fela le fetoga [le **eba** [le lekoto]]  
‘My foot always changes to becoming thick’

Like any other non-copulative verb, the copulative verb **ba** may be inflected. It only differs from the various examples mentioned in (73) in the type of complement it uses:

- (74) Kgogo ye [e tla ba [le matswiana a mantši]]  
‘This foul will have many chicken’

The copulative verb **ba** may be used with various verbs with adjectives as complements as in the following cases:

- (75) a. [Mosadi yo o itira go **ba** [yo mogolo]]  
‘The woman makes herself big’
- b. [Ngwanenyana o tloiditše manala go **ba** [a mahubedu]]  
‘The girl smeared her nails red’
- c. [Banenyana ba itlhapiša go **ba** [ba babotse]]  
‘Girls wash themselves to be beautiful’
- d. [Bašemane ba ipona go **ba** [ba batala]]  
‘Boys see themselves old’
- e. [Ke ithutile go **ba** [yo mošoro]]  
‘I learnt/trained myself to be cruel’
- f. [Re ripile sehlare go **ba** [se sekopana]]  
‘We cut the tree to be short’

### 3.3.9 Comparison

Comparative words with infinitives in sentences are used with adjectives to differentiate two people or things, i.e., to affirm the excellence of a person or a thing by setting him or it beside another of known excellence:

- (76) a. Mosadi yo mobotse go feta yola  
b. Mosadi yo mobotse go phala yola  
'The beautiful woman than that one'

Sentences (76a. and b.) mean one and the same thing. Different verbs in the present tense have been used with infinitives.

Sometimes the sentence can include the copulative relationship, i.e. the associative relationship (copulative) whereby the subject and the complement are associated with one another:

- (77) Monna yo mošoro go e na le mosadi  
'The cruel man than the woman'

Different comparative words can be used even though they mean one and the same thing:

- (78) a. Monna yola yo mošoro bjalo ka tau  
b. Monna yola yo mošoro ka ka tau  
c. Monna yola yo mošoro go swana le tau  
d. Monna yola yo mošoro boka tau  
e. Monna yola yo mošoro sa tau  
'That cruel man is like a lion'



### 3.3.10 Exclamations

The adjectives may appear in exclamations as in the following cases:

- (79) a. Dipitsi tše dikaka!  
‘So many zebras!’
- b. O yo mobotse bjang!  
‘How beautiful you are!’
- c. Sefatanaga se ga se se sefsa!  
‘Isn’t this car new!’
- d. Meago ye ga se ye metala!  
‘Aren’t these buildings old!’

## 3.4 CONCLUSION

Different adjectives have been morphologically analysed. Various linguists, in their previous studies of adjectives, have something in common. They agree that adjectives qualify the nouns. Each linguist divided the adjectives into three different groups. It is important to note that the basic demonstratives do not only constitute the complements in the NP structure, but they are as well the determiners in the AP structure. All the Northern Sotho adjectives are divided into two main parts, namely adjectival prefixes and adjectival stems. Agreement morphemes play a vital role between noun class prefixes which form part of nouns and adjectival prefixes which are part of adjectives. When some suffixes are added to the adjectival stems, their meaning may be slightly modified. Nouns may also be compounded by adjectives. As it has been indicated, different sentences can be negated by using some negative morphemes. Adjectives also appear as complements of nouns in different semantic categories. They may take different syntactic positions in a clause. Comparative words with adjectives have also been analysed. Exclamations have also been used to utter the stress of sudden thought or emotion of the speaker.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE DESCRIPTIVE POSSESSIVE

#### 4.1 AIM

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the descriptive possessive in Northern Sotho. At present, there seems to be a lot of confusion as regards the structure and the semantics of the descriptive possessive. Sometimes the descriptive possessive is confused with the possessive. This chapter will therefore endeavour to show that the possessive and the descriptive possessive are different entities. In order to achieve this aim, the chapter will concentrate on the aspects that constitute the descriptive possessives. In this regard, one may mention aspects such as the NP (descriptive noun + noun and noun + descriptive noun), the copulative and descriptive possessive.

#### 4.2 THE NOUN PHRASE

The descriptive possessive is a misleading term because of two reasons: in the first place, there is no possessive in such a noun phrase but only the presence of a possessive **-a-** which in this case, has no meaning of possession. It does, however, have a grammatical function as a link in the description of such adjectives. In the second place, the descriptive part or the semantic adjective in the NP is not always a complement of the possessive **-a-**, but it may be the head of the noun phrase. The semantic adjective may also appear in various categories such as NP locative and complementizer phrase.

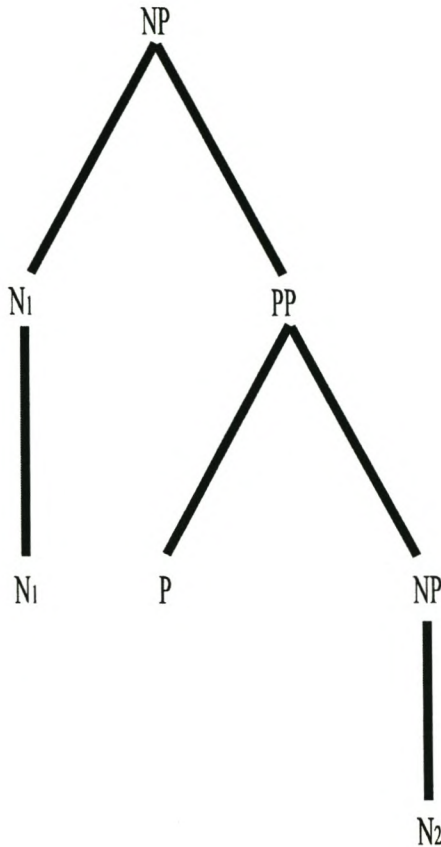
The noun phrase will be dealt with in regard to these two possibilities: the descriptive part is the head of the NP, and the descriptive part is the complement of the preposition **-a-**.



### 4.3 THE DESCRIPTIVE PART IS THE HEAD OF THE NOUN PHRASE

Various possibilities may be discerned in this case and then will conform to an ultimate surface structure such as the following:

(1)



The descriptive part in this NP will be the first N , i.e. N<sub>1</sub> above which is the head of the NP. This head noun may have the following semantic features:

#### Groups

The term **group** refers to a number of people, things or organizations which are placed together or which are connected in a particular way. The following types of groups may be discerned in Northern Sotho.



(i) **Groups of people**

Groups of people may be classified into various subgroups:

a. **Group**

The specific term which refers to a group of people is **sehlopha**. This term may appear with any grouping of people, e.g.:

- (2) Sehlopha sa batho  
(Group of people)

Sehlopha sa baopedi  
(Group of singers)

Sehlopha sa baraloki  
(Team of players)

The head noun above, i.e. **sehlopha** may also appear in the diminutive:

- (3) Sehlotswana sa bana  
(Small group of children)

b. **Crowds**

These are words which refer to a large number of people who are gathering together :

- (4) Lešaba la bagolegwa  
(Group of prisoners)

Lekoko la batho  
(Group of people)

The head nouns, i.e. **lešaba** and **lekoko** may again appear in the diminutive:

(5) Lešabana la baeti  
(Small group of visitors)

Lekokwana la bana  
(Small group of children)

c. **Specific groups**

These are various terms which refer to specific group of people:

(6) Mphato wa mašole  
(Group of soldiers)

Mokgahlo wa barutiši  
(Teacher's organization)

d. **Loan words**

Some loan words appear in Northern Sotho with a reference to specific groups as above:

(7) Komiti ya sekolo  
(School committee)

Boroto ya balaodi  
(Board of directors)

Tšhaene ya batho  
(Chain of people)

Khwaere ya kereke  
(Church choir)

Sosaethe sa polokano  
(Burial society)

(ii) **Groups of animals**

Groups of animals, like groups of people, may also appear with different nouns:

(8) Mohlape wa dikgomo  
(Herd of cattle)

Motšhitšhi wa dinose  
(Swarm of bees)

Boijane bja tšie  
(Swarm of young locusts)

Boraga bja dinonyana  
(Flock of birds)

**Heap**

This term refers to a disorderly pile or mass of things one on top of the other:

(9) Mokgobo wa dibetša  
(Heap of weapons)



Ntololo ya dithaba  
(Heap of mountains)

Thotobolo ya mabu  
(Heap of soil)

Mohlopa wa santa  
(Heap of sand)

## **Bundle**

A bundle refers to a number of articles tied, fastened or held together:

(10) Ngata ya dikgong  
(Bundle of wood)

Sephuthelwana sa tšhelete  
(Small amount of money)

Kgoboko ya dipatla  
(Bundle of sticks)

## **Gathering**

A gathering is in essence a collection or meeting which refers to a gathering of people or things for a purpose:

(11) Kgoboketšo ya ditšhipi  
(Gathering of tins)

Kgobokanyo ya dino  
(Gathering of drinks)

Mohlakano wa mekgahlo  
(Meeting of parties)

Kopano ya magoši  
(Meeting of chiefs)

Tlhopho ya ditena  
(Packing of bricks)

Mašaledi a dijo  
(Remains of food)

Marathana a bogobe  
(Crumbs of porridge)

Mafofora a borotho  
(Dry crumbs/particles of bread)

Pitšo ya setšhaba  
(Call of the nation)

Phuthego ya kereke  
(Congregation of the church)

Pokano ya dibapadi  
(Meeting of players)

Seboka sa boraditaba  
(Press conference)

### **Series**

This term refers to a group of things of the same kind or related in some way, coming one after another or in order:

(12) Tatelano ya ditiragatšo  
(Sequence of events)

Mothaladi wa batho  
(Line of people)

Molokoloko wa dirutegi  
(Academic procession)

### **Quantity**

This term refers to something that is measurable such as an amount or a number:

#### **Nouns denoting quantity**

(13) Bonnyane bja letamo  
(Smallness of a dam)

Bontši bja swikiri  
(Much of sugar)

Bogalo bja diaparo  
(Fade of clothes)



Boima bja sefatanaga  
(Weight of a car)

### Cardinal numbers

(14) Seswai sa dibeke  
(8 weeks)

Lesome la metsotso  
(10 minutes)

Lesomepedi la diiri  
(12 hours)

Lesomehlano la matšatši  
(15 days)

Lesomeseswai la dikgwedi  
(18 months)

Masometharo a metsotswana  
(30 seconds)

Lekgolo la mengwaga  
(100 years)

Sekete sa mengwaga  
(1000 years)

Lekgolo la diranta  
(100 rands)

Sekete sa diranta

(1000 rands)

Milione wa diranta

(1000 000 rands)

## **Partitives**

The term partitive describes a word which expresses a part of a whole. Partitives which refer to a food only such as meat, or seeds of various plants or liquids etc. may be classified into smaller subgroups:

### **Meat**

Meat is the flesh of animals (usually excepting fish and poultry) used for food:

(15) Sephatlo sa nama

(Peace of meat)

Mogwapa wa nama

(Biltong/dried meat)

Ntšhutha ya nama

(Bunch/lot of meat)

Serope sa kgogo

(Thigh of fowl)

Seripa sa nku

(Piece of sheep)

Lehlakore la kgomo  
(Side/flank of beast)

Hlogo ya pudi  
(Head of goat)

### **Sticky substances**

These are greasy or oily substances which are used to smear over the bread:

(16) Thini ya jeme  
(Tin of jam)

Kotikoti ya jeme  
(Can of jam)

Thini ya pinapatha  
(Tin of peanutbutter)

Lebotlelo la pоторо  
(Bottle of butter)

Setena sa matšarini  
(Bar of margarine)

### **Bread**

Bread is a food made by moistening and kneading flour (usually leavened by yeast) or meal and baking it:



(17) Sekgetlo sa borotho  
(Piece of bread)

Selai sa borotho  
(Slice of bread)

Kotara ya borotho  
(Quarter of bread)

Halofa ya borotho  
(Half of bread)

Lofa ya borotho  
(Loaf of bread)

## **Sugar**

It is a sucrose, especially in the white, sometimes brown, crystallized form obtained mainly by processing the juice expressed from sugar-cane or from sliced sugar beet, and refining and evaporating it:

(18) Mokotlana wa swikiri  
(Small bag of sugar)

Komiki ya swikiri  
(Cup of sugar)

Lehwana la swikiri  
(Spoon of sugar)

Lelepola la swikiri  
(Spoon of sugar)

## **Salt**

This is a substance used as a preservation of food:

- (19) Dithoro tša letswai  
(Grains of salt)

Mokotlana wa letswai  
(Small bag of salt)

## **Liquids**

Liquids are consistences like that of water or oil which are neither solid nor gaseous:

- (20) Galase ya branti  
(Glass of brandy)

Lebotlelo la maswi  
(Bottle of milk)

Kgameo ya maswi  
(Bucket of milk)

Komiki ya teye  
(Cup of tea)

Sego sa meetse  
(Calabash of water)

## **Toiletries**

These refer to articles used in making one's toilet, e.g. soap:

- (21) Setena sa sesepe  
(Bar of soap)

## **Seeds of various plants**

These seeds are fertilized ovules of plants and their coverings:

- (22) Thoro ya korong  
(Grain of wheat)

Thoro ya lehea/lefela  
(Grain of mealie)

Thapo ya monamune  
(Pip/seed of orange tree)

Thapo ya moapola  
(Pip/seed of apple tree)

## **Seeds of vegetables**

These are fertilized seeds found in edible plants:

- (23) Thaka ya lerotse  
(Seed of pumpkin)

Thaka ya legapu  
(Seed of watermelon)



Thaka ya leraka  
(Seed of squash)

Thapo ya tamati  
(Seed of tomato)

## **Piece**

Piece is a distinct part of composite whole:

(24) Sephatlo sa legonye  
(Piece of wood)

Seripana sa legonye  
(Small piece of wood)

## **Clothing**

This is the term for clothes in general:

(25) Nkašukašu ya borokgo  
(Wild pair of trousers)

Para ya dieta  
(Pair of shoes)

## **Money**

Anything that serves as a medium of exchange for goods and services, in the form of tokens which have a value established by a commonly recognized authority:

(26) Sešuba sa tšhelete  
(Bundle of money)

Setaka sa tšhelete  
(Stack of money)

Sekhwama sa tšhelete  
(Purse of money)

Kanapa/potla ya tšhelete  
(Pocket of money)

### **Units of measure and mass**

#### **Units of measure**

These are units that are used to determine the size or length of a thing:

(27) Kilomitara ya monabo  
(Kilometre of distance)

Mitara wa lešela  
(Mitre of cloth)

#### **Units of mass**

They refer to large bodies of matters:

(28) Akere ya mafela  
(Acre of mealies)

Kilogramo ya matsapane  
(Kilogram of potatoes)

Kramo ya swikiri  
(Gram of sugar)

Litara ya maswi  
(Litre of milk)

## States

The term **state** refers to a condition in which a person or thing is or a particular way of being, feeling or thinking considered with regard to its most important or noticeable quality:

(29) Bohlale bja monagano  
(Wisdom of mind)

Botebo bja koša  
(Depth of song)

Botlaela bja lehodu  
(Stupidity/foolishness of thief)

Bohlaswa bja bašomi  
(Negligence/carelessness of workers)

Bogale bja thipa  
(Sharpness of knife)

Bofadi bja bagolegwa  
(Roquery/villinary of prisoners)



Bongame bja mohumi  
(Stinginess/miserliness of rich person)

Tshepagalo ya batho  
(Confidence of people)

Bogaswi bja dimpša  
(Madness of dogs)

Tahletšo ya dipolelo  
(Misleadness of talks)

### **Infinitive clause**

Infinitive clause is an uninflected verb form conveying simply the idea of the action of the verb without any limitation of person, number or mood, and used with **[go]**:

(30) Go raloka ga bašemane  
(When the boys play)

Go tsena ga ngwana  
(When the child enters)

Go gana ga batho  
(When the people refuse)

Go tswalelwa ga sekolo  
(When the school closes)

Go thoma ga beke  
(When the week begins)

Go fela ga ngwaga  
(When the year ends)

Go fihla ga baeng  
(When the guests arrive)

Go sobela ga letšatši  
(When the sun sets)

Go šoma ga motšhene  
(When the machine works)

Go lla ga ngwana  
(When the child cries)

Go sega ga mošemane  
(When the boy laughs)

**The descriptive part is the complement of the preposition [-a-]**

### **Description of humans**

Human beings can be described by means of their **physical features, psychological features, skills, wealth and profession:**

#### **Physical features**

##### **Age**

(31) Motho wa motšofadi  
(Old person)

Monna wa magareng  
(Middle- aged man)

Motho wa ngwana  
(Young person)

Mosadi wa segwahla  
(Old and sickly woman)

### **Physical disadvantaged**

(32) Ngwana wa sefowa  
(Deaf child)

Monna wa sefofu  
(Blind man)

Kgoši ya segole  
(Crippled chief)

### **Body shape**

#### **Good shape**

#### **Slender**

(33) Ngwanenyana wa letekana  
(Slender girl)

#### **Well-built**

(34) Lesogana la senatla  
(Well- built young man)



Mosadi wa sekitimpana  
(Well- built and short woman)

Mosadi wa dipopo  
(Woman with shapely body)

Ngwanenyana wa maatlakgogedi  
(Attractive girl)

### **Strong**

(35) Ramatswele wa maatla  
(Strong boxer)

Monna wa kolobata  
(Strong and powerful man)

### **Tall**

(36) Monna wa seemo  
(Tall man)

### **Healthy**

(37) Ngwana wa boitekanelo  
(Healthy child)

### **Bad shape**

### **Lean**

(38) Ngwanenyana wa mogwapa  
(Lean girl)

Ngwana wa segotlane  
(Lean and emaciated child)

**Thin**

(39) Mosadi wa nthathana  
(Thin woman)

**Stout**

(40) Monna wa digoba  
(Stout man)

Mosadi wa morihla  
(Stout and big-bodied woman)

**Fat**

(41) Mokgekolo wa setšutla  
(Fat old woman)

**Tall**

(42) Motho wa ntepetepe  
(Tall and emaciated person)

**Sickly**

(43) Mosadi wa molwetši  
(Female patient)

## **Body part**

- (44) Ngwana wa hlogonkakanana  
(Large-headed child)

Mosadi wa kgara  
(Broad-chested woman)

Ngwanenyana wa lekomokomo  
(Round-shaped girl)

## **Body position**

### **Stooped**

- (45) Monna wa moinami  
(Stooped man)

### **Stiff**

- (46) Motho wa bothata  
(Stiff person)

## **Colour**

- (47) Motho wa lehwefe  
(An albino)

## **Psychological features**

### **Intelligent**

- (48) Moithuti wa matšato  
(Agile student)



Morutiši wa tlhokomelo  
(Alert teacher)

Ngwana wa bohlale  
(Intelligent child)

### **Retarded**

(49) Mosadi wa setseketeke  
(Idiot woman)

Ngwana wa sethotho  
(Retarded child)

Lehodu la setlaela  
(Stupid thief)

Motho wa segaswi  
(Mad person)

### **Timid**

(50) Monna wa bonolo  
(Meek man)

Mošemane wa lefšega  
(Timid boy)

Monna wa lefeela  
(Useless man)

Mosadi wa bofokodi  
(Weak woman)

## **Good behaviour**

(51) Mohlologadi wa bogale  
(Brave widow)

Mošemane wa boleta  
(Gentle boy)

Ngwana wa botho  
(Good child)

Motho wa sekgale  
(Conservative person)

Mosadi wa motšweletši  
(Industrious woman)

Ngwanenyana wa meswaswo  
(Joker)

Mokgekolo wa thušo  
(Helpful old woman)

Moetapele wa moseketši  
(Thrifty leader)

## **Bad behaviour**

(52) Kgoši ya boikgopolo  
(Self-centred and stubborn chief)

Monna wa hlogothata  
(Stubborn and obstinate man)

Motho wa mathata  
(Troublesome person)

Mosadi wa bofori  
(Deceitful woman)

Ngwana wa bohlale  
(Cunning child)

Ngwanenyana wa pelwana  
(Quick-tempered girl)

Mokgekolo wa sehlogo  
(Cruel old woman)

Kgope ya megabaru  
(Greedy bachelor/eunuch)

Mošemane wa sekebeka  
(Hardened criminal boy)

Morutiši wa monyatšegi  
(Despicable teacher)

Ngwana wa dintwa  
(Aggressive child)

Mošemane wa manganga  
(Quarrelsome boy)

Mosadi wa pelompe  
(Bad-tempered woman)



Monna wa bobē  
(Evil man)

Motho wa moaki  
(Liar)

Lesogana la kotsi  
(Dangerous young man)

Mosadi wa kalatšane  
(Cheat/swindler)

Ngwanenyana wa kang  
(Violent girl)

## **Habits**

(53) Seotswa sa ditšhila  
(Dirty prostitute)

Mosadi wa sebody  
(Lazy woman)

Motho wa setagwa  
(Drunk person)

Mokgekolo wa sejagobe  
(Gluttonous woman)

Mosadi wa mmolabodi  
(Talkative woman)

Ngwanenyana wa lešaedi  
(Untidy girl)

Mosadi wa modiradibe  
(Hardened woman sinner)

Motho wa sehvirihwiri  
(Swindler)

Mošemane wa lehodu  
(Thief)

### **Skills**

(54) Mongwadi wa boitemogelo  
(Experienced author)

Motho wa bokgoni  
(Skilled person)

Monna wa tsebo  
(Knowledgeable man)

Mošemane wa mokitimi  
(Sprinter)

### **Wealth**

(55) Monna wa modiidi  
(Poor man)

Mmetli wa mohumi  
(Rich carpenter)

## Professional

(56) Monna wa morutiši  
(Male teacher)

Monna wa ngaka  
(Male doctor)

Mosadi wa moemedi  
(Female advocate)

Monna wa mahlale  
(Male scientist)

Monna wa moreri  
(Male preacher)

Mosetsanyana wa mongwaledi  
(Young female secretary)

Monna wa moagi  
(Male builder)

Lesogana la mooki  
(Young male nurse)

Monna wa motšweletši  
(Male composer)

Mosadi wa mošomi  
(Female worker)



## **Culture**

### **Circumcision**

- (57) Mošemane wa modikana  
(Boy undergoing circumcision)

Mošemane wa lešoboro  
(Uncircumcised youth past the age of circumcision)

### **Age-group**

- (58) Ngwana wa mošemanyana  
(Young boy)

Ngwana wa morategi  
(Favourite child)

Ngwana wa mosetsanyana  
(Young girl)

Moeng wa lesea  
(Newborn baby)

Ngwana wa lesea  
(Young baby)

Ngwana wa lekolwane  
(Child of about four years of age)

### **Love affair**

- (59) Mosadi wa nyatsi  
(Concubine)

Moratiwa wa lehwapeng  
(Secret lover)

**Diviner/doctor**

(60) Ngaka ya setšo  
(Traditional doctor)

Ngaka ya moloi  
(Whitch-doctor)

Mosadi wa moporofeta  
(Female prophet)

Monna wa mokome  
(Male diviner)

**The descriptive part is a natural object**

(61) Lebati la [tšhipi]  
(Door of iron)

Lebje la [thaba]  
(Stone of mountain)

Leswika la [thaba]  
(Stone of mountain)

**The descriptive part is a natural phenomenon**

**Soil**

(62) Tsela ya **mabu**  
(Gravel road)

Morala/mokutwana wa **mabu**

(Cooking hut of soil)

Mmotwana wa **mabu**

(Small wall of soil)

Leru la **lerole**

(Cloud of dust)

Pitša ya **letsopa**

(Pot of clay)

## Mountain

(63) Moropo wa **dithaba**  
(Bridge of mountains)

Molokoloko wa **dithaba**  
(Chain of mountains)

Mmoto wa **dithaba**  
(Hill of mountains)

Lewa la **dithaba**  
(Cave of mountains)

Lengope/leope la **dithaba**  
(Ditch of mountains)

## Water

(64) Sego sa **meetse**  
(Calabash of water)



Sediba sa **meetse**  
(Fountain/well of water)

Bodiba bja **meetse**  
(Pool of water)

Letamo la **meetse**  
(Dam of water)

Noka ya **meetse**  
(River of water)

Molapo wa **meetse**  
(River/valley of water)

Moela wa **meetse**  
(Flow of water)

Mokero wa **meetse**  
(Furrow of water)

Letsha la **meetse**  
(Lake of water)

## **Vegetation**

(65) Mego ya **lesodi**  
(Wild fig trees)

Dihlare tša **sethokgwa**  
(Trees of forest)

**Matšoba a tšhengwana**  
(Flowers of small garden)

## **Light**

(66) Lešoba la **lesedi**  
(Hole of ray of light)

Ngwedi wa **kganya**  
(Brightness of moon)

Lefelo la **seedi**  
(Place of light)

## **Weather**

(67) Jase ya **pula**  
(Rain coat)

Tsoromo ya **pula**  
(Falling in torrents of rain)

Pula ya **mesarasarane**  
(Drizzling rain)

Kgadimo ya **legadima**  
(Shining of lightning)

Lejabatho la **ledimo**  
(Cannibal)

Pilogo ya **maru**  
(Stirring of clouds)

Bošweu bja **lehlwa**  
(Whiteness of snow)

Bokoto bja **sefako**  
(Thickness of hail/hailstorm)

Maatla a **moya**  
(Strongness of wind)

Motonyo wa **phefo**  
(Coldness of wind)

Letšatši la **marega**  
(Sun of winter)

## Noise

(68) Meetse a **lešata**  
(Noisy water)

Pula ya **modumo**  
(Roaring rain)

## Smoke

(69) Leru la **muši**  
(Cloud of smoke)



## Power

(70) Moya wa **maatla**  
(Powerful wind)

Maphoto a **maatla**  
(Strong waves)

Pula ya **maatla**  
(Powerful rain)

Phefo ya **maatla**  
(Strong wind)

## Sky

(71) Botala bja **legodimo**  
(Blueness/greenness of sky)

Phišo ya **letšatši**  
(Hotness of sun)

Seripa sa **ngwedi**  
(Half-moon)

Seetšana sa **naledi**  
(Small light of star)

## The descriptive part is a state

(72) Monna wa **bohlale**  
(Clever man)

Ramatswele wa **bogale**

(Brave boxer)

Mootledi wa **boitemogelo**

(Experienced driver)

Ngwana wa **botho**

(Kind child)

Monwana wa **bohloko**

(Painful finger)

Letlalo la **boleta**

(Soft skin)

Tsela ya **boreledi**

(Smooth road)

Meetse a **borutho**

(Warm water)

Tšhipi ya **boima**

(Heavy iron)

Lepokisi la **bofefo**

(Light box)

Moya wa **botšididi**

(Cold wind)

Borotho bja **monate**

(Tasty bread)

**The descriptive part indicates quantity**

Cardinal numbers: any possibilities:

(73) Dinomoro tše **pedi**

(Two numbers)

Mefaka ye **meraro**

(Three knives)

Maswika a **mahlano**

(Five stones)

Mabati a **šupa**

(Seven doors)

Dikgomo tše **senyane**

(Nine herd of cattle)

Melao ye **lesome**

(Ten commandments)

Banna ba **masomepedihlano**

(Twenty-five men)

Bagolegwa ba **masometharo**

(Thirty prisoners)



**Matšatši a lekgolo**

(Hundred days)

**Diranta tše sekete**

(One thousand rands)

Cardinal numbers with **bo-**:

(74) **Sefatanaga sa bobedi**

(Second car)

**Puku ya boraro**

(Third book)

**Beke ya bone**

(Fourth week)

**Lebotlelo la bohloano**

(Fifth bottle)

**Mphato wa bošeswai**

(Eighth standard)

**Lekga la bolesome**

(Tenth time)

**Saka ya bolesomepedi**

(Twelfth bag)

**Motho wa bolesomesenyane**

(Nineteenth person)

Kgoši ya **bomasomepedi**

(Twentieth chief)

Ngwagakgolo wa **bomasomepeditee**

(Twenty-first century)

Sekolo sa **bomasomehlano**

(Fiftieth school)

Sebjana sa **bomasomesenyane**

(Ninetieth cup)

Moraloko wa **bomakgolotharo**

(Three hundredenth game)

### The descriptive part is an animal

(75) Kgomo ya **pholo**

(An ox)

Kgomo ya **tshadi**

(A cow)

Letlalo la **nkwe**

(Skin of leopard)

Legapi la **khudu**

(Shell of tortoise)

Boya bja **nku**

(Wool of sheep)

Makopo a **tšhwene**  
(Eye ridges of baboon)

Mebala ya **pitsi**  
(Colours of zebra)

Lenaka la **tšhukudu**  
(Horn of rhinoceros)

Mmogo wa **tlou**  
(Snout/proboscis of an elephant)

Makhura a **kolobe**  
(Fat of pig)

Molala wa **thutlwa**  
(Neck of giraffe)

### The descriptive part indicates food

(76) Mphaka wa **borotho**  
(Knife of bread)

Pitša ya **bogobe**  
(Pot of porridge)

Sethepa sa **thophi**  
(Calabash of porridge made from pumpkin)

Boroto bja **dijo**  
(Trade of food)



Kgomo ya **maswi**

(Cow of milk)

Seroto sa **dienywa**

(Basket of fruits)

Sekotlelo sa **nama**

(Dish of meat)

Sekotlelwana sa **morogo**

(Small dish of vegetable)

Pane ya **dikuku**

(Pan of cakes)

Komiki ya **sopo/moro**

(Cup of soup)

Thinyana ya **hlapi**

(Small tin of fish)

Pakete ya **mageu**

(Bucket of light beer made from porridge)

### **The descriptive part is a plant**

(77) Letlakala la **moperekisi**

(Leaf of peach tree)

Tlhaka ya **mabjang**

(Roof of grass)

Mohlare wa **monamune**

(Orange tree)

Tšhengwana ya **matšoba**

(Small flower garden)

Tšhemo ya **mabele**

(Mealie land)

Thapo ya **moapola**

(Seed of apple tree)

Legong la **mohwelere(tšhipi)**

(Wood of red bush-willow tree (Combretum apiculatum))

Kutu ya **mogo**

(Stem of wild fig tree (Ficus capensis))

Kala ya **moterebe**

(Branch of grape tree)

Modu wa **mopšere**

(Root of pear tree)

Thata ya **mopilikomo**

(Pole of bluegum tree)

**The descriptive part is an artefact**

(78) Lephego la **sefofane**

(Wing of an aeroplane)

Letorokisi la **setimela**

(Train truck)

Ntlo ya **setena**

(Brick house)

Kolo ya **sethunya**

(Bullet of gun)

Leotwana la **sefatanaga**

(Wheel of car)

Lethale la **mohlagase**

(Electric wire)

Konopi ya **seaparo**

(Button of cloth)

Ditaba tša **seyalemoya**

(Radio news)

Motheo wa **ntlo**

(Building foundation)

Lešobana la **nalete**

(Small hole of needle)

Pelo ya **lengina**

(Heart of earring)

Sekhurumelo sa **pitša**

(Lid of pot)



**The descriptive part is a locative**

(79) Unibesithi ya **Leboa**  
(University of the North)

Batho ba **Stellenbosch**  
(Stellenbosch people)

Basadi ba **Gauteng**  
(Johannesburg women)

Naga ya **Africa Borwa**  
(South African country)

Kholetšhe ya **Setotolwane**  
(Setotolwane College)

Dithaba tša **Leolo**  
(Lulu Mountains)

Noka ya **Lepelle**  
(Olifants River)

Lewatle la **India**  
(Indian Ocean)

Sehlakahlaka sa **Kalahari**  
(Kalahari Desert)

Sekolo sa **Kgwadu**  
(Kgwadu School)

Baraloki ba **moše**  
(Overseas players)

Seopedi sa **kgole**  
(Singer from far)

Sefatanaga sa **femeng**  
(Car of firm)

**The descriptive part indicates time**

(80) Thapelo ya **bošego**  
(Night's prayer)

Nako ya **mesong**  
(Morning time)

Letšatši la **gosasa**  
(Tomorrow's day)

Bana ba **mosegare**  
(Day children)

Polelo ya **maabane**  
(Yesterday's speech)

Madimabe a **lehono**  
(Today's mishaps)

Dijo tša **matena**  
(Dinner)

Dijo tša **sefihlolo**

(Supper)

Dinamune tša **maloba**

(Day before yesterday's oranges)

Kotsi ya **ngwagola**

(Last year's accident)

Dipolayano tša **ngwagollola**

(Last of last year's killings)

Moraloko wa **mathapama**

(Afternoon's game)

Poloko ya **Mokibelo**

(Saturday's burial)

Letšatši la **Keresemose**

(Christmas day)

**The descriptive part is an Infinitive clause**

(81) Thupa ya go betha bana  
(Stick to beat the children)

Lešela la go hlatswa dibjana  
(Material to wash dishes)

Phapoši ya go robala  
(A sleeping room)



Dikgong tša go beša mollo  
(Wood for making fire)

Letšatši la madimabe la go utswa  
(A bad day to steal)

Nako ya go šoma  
(Time to work)

Mokgekolo wa go timana  
(A stingy old woman)

Ngwaga wa go bala batho  
(Year for census)

Senotlelo sa go notlolla lebati  
(Key to unlock the door)

Tšhelete ya go reka borotheo  
(Money to buy bread)

Komiki ya go nwa teye  
(Cup for drinking tea)

Setimela sa go rwala batho  
(Train for passengers)

Sekepe sa go rea dihlapi  
(Fishing boat)

Puku ya go bala  
(Book for reading)

Ditena tša go aga seteišene sa maphodisa  
(Bricks for building police station)

Pitša ya go swara nama e kae?  
(Where is the pot that holds the meat?)

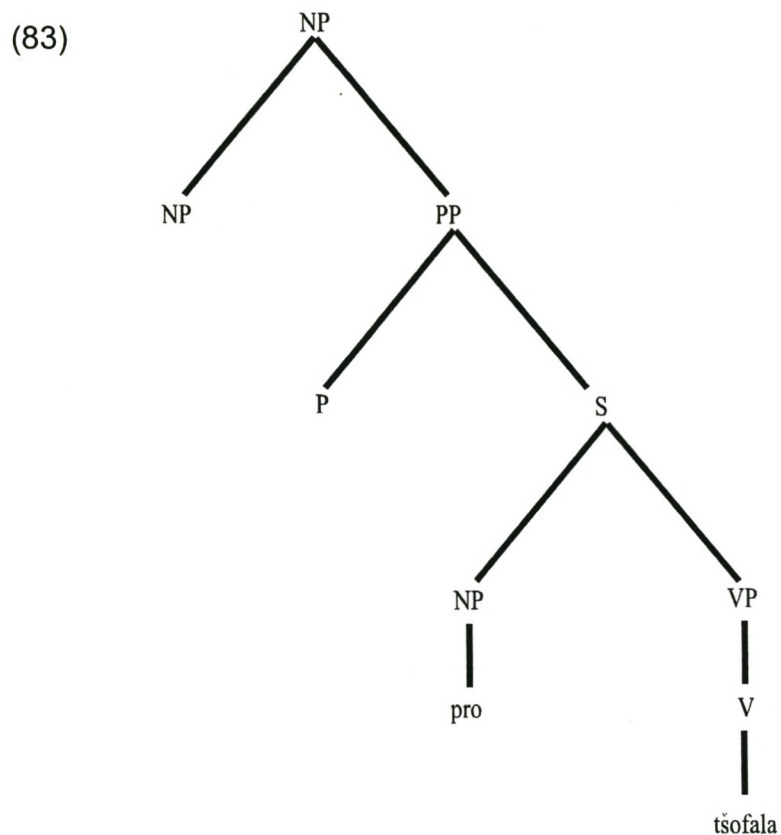
Such infinitival clauses as above may appear in the following semantic subcategories:

### Physical features

### Age

(82) Mohlologadi wa go tšofala  
(An old widow)

The sentence mentioned above has the following structure:



The other sentences below have the same structure:

### **Physical disadvantaged**

(84) Seotswa sa go fofala  
(A blind prostitute)

Molata wa go golofala  
(A crippled follower/subject)

### **Body shape**

#### **Thin**

(85) Lefšega la go ota  
(A lean coward)

#### **Fat**

(86) Kgaka ya go nona  
(A fat guineafowl)

### **Satisfaction**

(87) Kgoši ya go kgotsofala  
(A satisfied chief)

Mpa ya go khora  
(A full stomach)



## **Process**

(88) Ngwana wa go gola  
(A growing child)

Lenala la go gola  
(A growing nail)

## **Psychological features**

### **Intelligent**

(89) Motho wa go hlalefa  
(An intelligent person)

### **Retarded**

(90) Kgope ya go gafa  
(A mad bachelor/eunuch)

### **Good behaviour**

(91) Dingwetši tša go loka  
(Good brides)

### **Bad behaviour**

(92) Tshebi ya go hloya  
(A hate backbiter)

## Habit

- (93) Sehvirihwiri sa go tšwafa  
(A lazy crook)

## Skills

- (94) Moalafi wa go kgona  
(A skillful healer)

Mošomi wa go lemoga  
(An experienced worker)

Lesogana la go tseba  
(A knowledgeable young man)

Mooki wa go kwešiša  
(An understanding nurse)

## Wealth

- (95) Modulasetulo wa go huma  
(A rich chairperson)

Lekgarebe la go diila  
(A poor young woman)

## Weather

- (96) Meetse a go tonya  
(A cold water)

Bogobe bja go fiša

(A hot porridge)

## **Culture**

### **Love affair**

(97) Mošemane wa go rata

(A loving boy)

### **Diviner/doctor**

(98) Ngaka ya go loya

(A witch-doctor)

Moporofeta wa go fodiša

(A healing prophet)

### **The descriptive part is a gore-clause**

(99) Molaetša wa gore o swanetše go ya lehung o mo fihletše

(The message that he/she should go to the funeral reached him)

Sephiri sa gore hlogo ya sekolo sa go phagama sa Lekhureng e gobaditše moahlodi se utolotšwe

(The secret that the principal of Lekhureng High School has injured the judge is revealed)

Ditaba tša gore mosadi o thuntšhitše bahlakodi ba lesome ka pankeng e phatlaletše le lafase

(The news that the woman has shot ten robbers in the bank spread throughout the world)



Mabarebare a gore motseta wa kgoro ya tshoko o tla rakwa motseng a fihletše  
šetshaba

(The rumours that the messenger of court will be expelled from the village  
reached the community)

Maaka ale a gore bana ba ngaka ba bolailwe a timeletše ka ge mang le mang  
a bona gore ba sa phela

(Those lies that the doctor's children have been killed disappeared as everybody  
sees that they are still alive)

Nnete ya gore monna wa mohumi o utswitše tšhelete ba e hweditše kae?

(Where did they get the truth that the rich man stole the money?)

Sebaka sa gore kgoši e bolele se batametše

(The chance for the chief to talk has come nearer)

Nako ya gore mosadi a kgopele monna wa gagwe tshwarelo e fetile

(The time for the woman to apologize to her husband has passed)

Beke ya go rapelela balwetši e fihlile

(The week for praying for the patients has come)

Letšatši la gore bašomi ba lefe metšhelo ga le kgole

(The day for the workers to pay taxes is not far)

Kgwedi ya gore diphadišano tša sebjana sa lefase di swarwe e kgauswi

(The month for the world cup competition to be held is near)

#### 4.4 CONCLUSION

The discussion on the descriptive possessive makes it possible to differentiate it from the possessive. This chapter clears a confusion as regards the structure and the semantics of the descriptive possessive. The possessive **-a-** plays a very important role in this regard. As it has been indicated above, the descriptive part is the head of the noun phrase. This head noun may have various semantic features. The descriptive part can also be the complement of the preposition **-a-**. In this case, the descriptive of human beings are explained by means of the semantic subcategories, such as physical features, psychological features, skills, wealth and profession. The descriptive part may as well indicate a natural object, natural phenomenon, state, quantity, animal, food, plant, artefact, locative, time and infinitival clause. Infinitival clauses also appear in the semantic subcategories.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE NOMINAL RELATIVE CLAUSE

#### 5.1 AIM

The main aim of this chapter is to discuss the nominal relative clause in Northern Sotho. Firstly, a brief summary of some of the previous works will be analysed. In this discussion, a few scholars like Ziervogel, et. al. (1969), Lombard, et al. (1985), and Poulos and Louwrens (1994) will be mentioned. In the structure of the relative clause, the determiner will be treated. It is also important to select the copulative verbs which may appear with nominal relatives. Various complements of the copulative verbs will also be discussed.

#### 5.2 PREVIOUS STUDIES

The nominal relative clauses that will be treated in this section are based on the previous works of the following scholars: Ziervogel, et. al. (1969), Lombard, et. al. (1985), and Poulos and Louwrens (1994).

##### 5.2.1 Ziervogel, et. al. (1969)

According to Ziervogel, et. al. (1969:55), the nominal relative construction serves to qualify either a noun or a pronoun. The author goes on to say that:

With the nominal relative the first position of the demonstrative acts as a concord without further additions except the noun which follows it.

The following examples are evident:



(1)	Class	Concord	Nominal relative
	Mo-	yo	bohlale
		yo	bohlale (he/she/it that is clever)
	Ba-	ba	bohlale (they that are clever)
	Mo-	wo	bohlale
	Me-	ye	bohlale
	Le-	le	bohlale
	Ma-	a	bohlale
	Se-	se	bohlale
	Di-	tše	bohlale
	N-	ye	bohlale
	Din-	tše	bohlale
	Bo-	bjo	bohlale
	Go	mo	bohlale (locative classes and infinitive)

### 5.2.2 Lombard, et. al. (1985)

Lombard, et. al. (1985:59) asserts that nominal relatives have **bound class prefixes**. This actually implies that the root of the relative noun cannot change its class prefix in accordance with the noun of the class which is being qualified, e.g.:

(2)	(Yo)	bohlale	(bo- + - hlale)	‘Clever’
	(Se)	bohlale	(bo- + - hlale)	‘Clever’

It is also important to note that relative nouns appear usually together with the qualificative particles. For comparative reason, in the following sentence,

- (3) **Maatla** a gagwe a - a - ntšhoša  
 ‘His power frightens me’

the word **maatla** (power) is not a relative noun, but a basic noun. From the morphological point of view, **basic** and **relative** nouns do not differ from each other. The distinction between two sub-categories can be realized on the basis of usage, viz.:

- (a) Relative nouns normally occur after qualificative particles.
  - (b) Relative nouns can be used as qualificatives, even though the noun which is being qualified may also be implied:
- (4) Monna yo **maatla** o - a - epa  
‘The strong man is digging’
  - (5) Yo **maatla** o - a - epa  
‘The strong one is digging’

The examples below are also regarded as relative nouns in the Northern Sotho language:

(6)	Relative Noun	Class	Example and translation
	Bohlale	1	Moithuti yo <b>bohlale</b> o - a - ithuta ‘A clever student studies’
	Maatla	2	Banna ba <b>maatla</b> ba kgorometša sefatanaga ‘The strong men push the car’
	Botšididi	3	Moya wo <b>botšididi</b> ke - a - o - rata ‘I like <b>cold</b> air’
	Boima	4	Morwalo wo <b>boima</b> ga - ke - o - nyake ‘I do not want a <b>heavy</b> load’
	Bohloko	5	Legetla le <b>bohloko</b> le - a - ntshwenya ‘The <b>sore</b> shoulder is troubling me’

Monate	6	Magapu a <b>monate</b> ke - a - a - rwala 'I carry <b>tasty</b> watermelons'
Boreledi	7	Seatla se <b>boreledi</b> se - a - nkgahla 'A <b>smooth</b> hand pleases me'
Bofefo	8	Difofane tše <b>bofefo</b> ke - a - di - fšega 'I am afraid of the <b>light</b> aeroplanes'
Boleta	9	Nama ye <b>boleta</b> e - ratwa kudu ke bana 'A <b>soft</b> meat is mostly liked by children'
Borutho	10	Dikobo tše <b>borutho</b> di - rekišwa mabenkeleng a magolo fela 'The <b>warm</b> blankets are sold only at the big shops'
Bothata	14	Bogobe bjo <b>bothata</b> ga - ke - bo - nyake 'I do not want <b>hard</b> porridge'
Botho	1	Mokgekolo yo <b>botho</b> o - a - re - thuša 'The <b>kind</b> old woman is helping us'
Mafolofolo	2	Bašemane ba <b>mafolofolo</b> ba - šomile go fihla bošegogare 'The <b>energetic</b> boys worked until midnight'
Bogale	9	Mpša ye <b>bogale</b> e - kitimiša mahodu 'A <b>vicious</b> dog is chasing the thieves'
Bjale	1	Ge ba - na le morutiši yo <b>bjale</b> , mathata ka moka sekolong a - tlo - fela 'If they could have <b>such</b> a teacher, all the problems at school shall come to an end'
Bjalo	9	Na ba - kile ba - e - bona taba ye <b>bjalo</b> e - direga? 'Have they seen something <b>like that</b> happen?'
Bjang	10	Gona ke tše <b>bjang</b> 'tsebišo tšeo? 'So <b>what</b> is the <b>nature</b> of those announcements?'



Besides the nouns which are used as relative nouns, the numerals are also regarded as nominal relatives in both the traditional and abridged way of counting. The examples below can be compared:

(7)	Relative noun	Class	Example and translation
	Seswai	2	Batho ba <b>seswai</b> 'Eight people'
	Senyane	4	Lesome le metšo ye <b>senyane</b> 'Nineteen (19)'
	Lesome	8	Didiba tše <b>lesome</b> 'Ten fountains'
	Dikete	10	Dinku tše <b>dikete</b> tše pedi le makgolo a mabedi le masome a mabedi le metšo ye mebedi. '2 222 herd of sheep'.
	Sohlano	4	E - šetše e - ka - ba metsotswana ye <b>sohlano</b> a- sepetše 'It may even be already <b>fifteen (15)</b> seconds since he/she left'
	Masopedi	10	Lešela la ntshe le - fihla mitara tše <b>masopedi</b> 'The cloth stretches up to <b>twenty</b> metres (20m)'

### 5.2.3 Poulos and Louwrens (1994)

Poulos and Louwrens (1994:111) also assert that nominal relatives are simply qualificative constructions which are based on **nouns**. According to them, the relativiser (or concordial element) is, without any doubt, followed by a noun. Poulos and Louwrens (1994:111) go on to say that:

The relativiser (or concordial element) agrees in class with the noun which is qualified, i.e. the antecedent.

The examples which the above linguists refer to indicate the nouns that occur in constructions which normally belong to classes **6** and **14** as in the following cases:

(8)	<b>Class 6</b>	Monna yo maatla	'A strong man'
	<b>Class 6</b>	Mobu wo meetse	'Wet soil'
	<b>Class 14</b>	Mpša ye bogale	'A fierce dog'
	<b>Class 14</b>	Ditšhipi tše boima	'Heavy irons'

From the contribution of the linguists mentioned above, it is evident that in the case of nominal relative, the concordial morpheme is usually vested in the qualificative particle only (Lombard, et. al. 1985:61).

To clear up the matter, it is important to cite the following example:

(9)	<b>Qualificative particle</b>	<b>Relative noun</b>
	le	borutho 'warm' (Bound class prefix <b>bo</b> - plus nominal root <b>-rutho</b> )

### 5.3 THE STRUCTURE OF THE RELATIVE CLAUSE

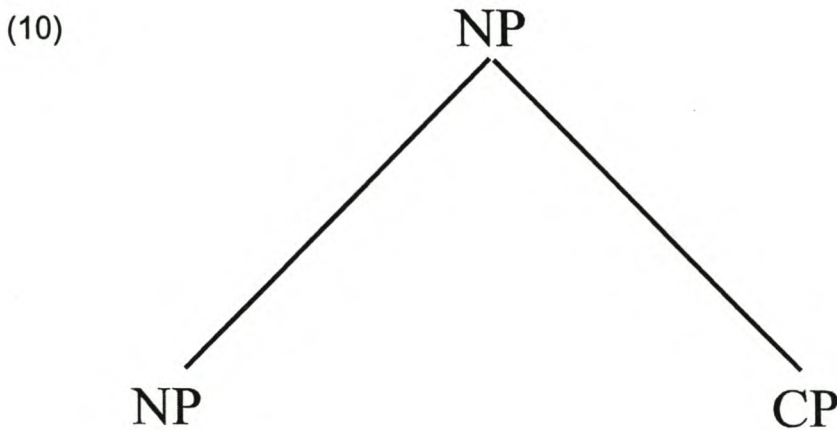
#### 5.3.1 Aim

The aim of this section is to discuss the structure of the relative clause in Northern Sotho. This aim will be achieved by putting focus on aspects such as **the determiner**, **the copulative verb**, **the relative clause** and **the complement of the copulative verb**. As many other scholars like Ziervogel, et. al. (1969), Lombard, et. al. (1985),

Poulos and Louwrens (1994), etc. do not concentrate on the structure of the relative clause, the study as far as this section is concerned, will rely heavily on Du Plessis's and Visser's (1996) works.

### 5.3.2 The relative clause

The relative clause in Northern Sotho is a complementizer phrase (CP) which appears as a complement of a noun phrase in a structure such as the following:



The relative clause in Northern Sotho is furthermore divided into two separate types of clauses, i.e. nominal relative clause and verbal relative clause. These two types of relative clauses are i.a. distinguished by the presence of different types of verbs in the relative clause. In the case of the verbal relative clause the verb in the clause is always a non-copulative verb while the nominal relative clause has a compulsory copulative verb in the relative clause. Another major difference between these two types of relative clauses is concerned with the antecedent of the relative clause. It is compulsory for the antecedent to be present in all relative clauses in Northern Sotho. Such an antecedent may be present in the relative clause in various forms i.a. as objectival agreement:

(11) [Batho] [ba [ke - ba - nyakago]]



In this noun phrase the antecedent is **batho**. This antecedent is present in the relative clause through objectival agreement **ba** which is coindexed with an empty **pro**. This empty **pro** is referred to as a resumptive pronoun which is a variable bound by an operator which is its antecedent:

(12) [Batho<sub>i</sub>] [ba [ke - ba<sub>i</sub> - nyakago pro<sub>i</sub>]]

The nominal relative clause only allows its antecedent as a subject of the relative clause, i.e. the resumptive pronoun in such a relative clause will always refer to subjectival agreement of the antecedent.

As indicated above, the nominal relative clause may only appear with copulative verbs. For this purpose it will be necessary to look at the copulative verb in Northern Sotho. These copulative verbs will be considered within a matrix clause which is not a relative clause.

The copulative verb which appears with all nominal relative clauses has no overt form in Northern Sotho but it may be represented as LI with a meaning of stative:

- (13) a. Bana ba botšwa  
(The children are lazy)  
b. Bana [ArgS-LI [botšwa]]

The second copulative verb is **le** which appears in a subordinate participial clause:

- (14) a. Ge thipa e - le bogale ...  
b. Mosese [o - be [o - le [meetse]]]

The third copulative verb which appears with a nominal relative as complement is the negative verb **se**. This negative verb appears in the place of the copulative verb **le** above as well as in a nominal relative clause:

- (15) a. Ge thipa e - se bogale ...  
b. Thipa ye e - sego bogale

The fourth copulative verb **ba** may appear in all cases with a nominal relative as complement but in this case it has an inchoative meaning:

- (16) Dipelo tša bona di - bile bohloko

To return then to the nominal relative clause: it is apparent that three of these copulative verbs may appear in a nominal relative clause:

The copulative verb **LI**:

- (17) a. Thipa ye bogale  
b. [Thipa] [ye [AgrS-LI [bogale]]]

The copulative verb **se**:

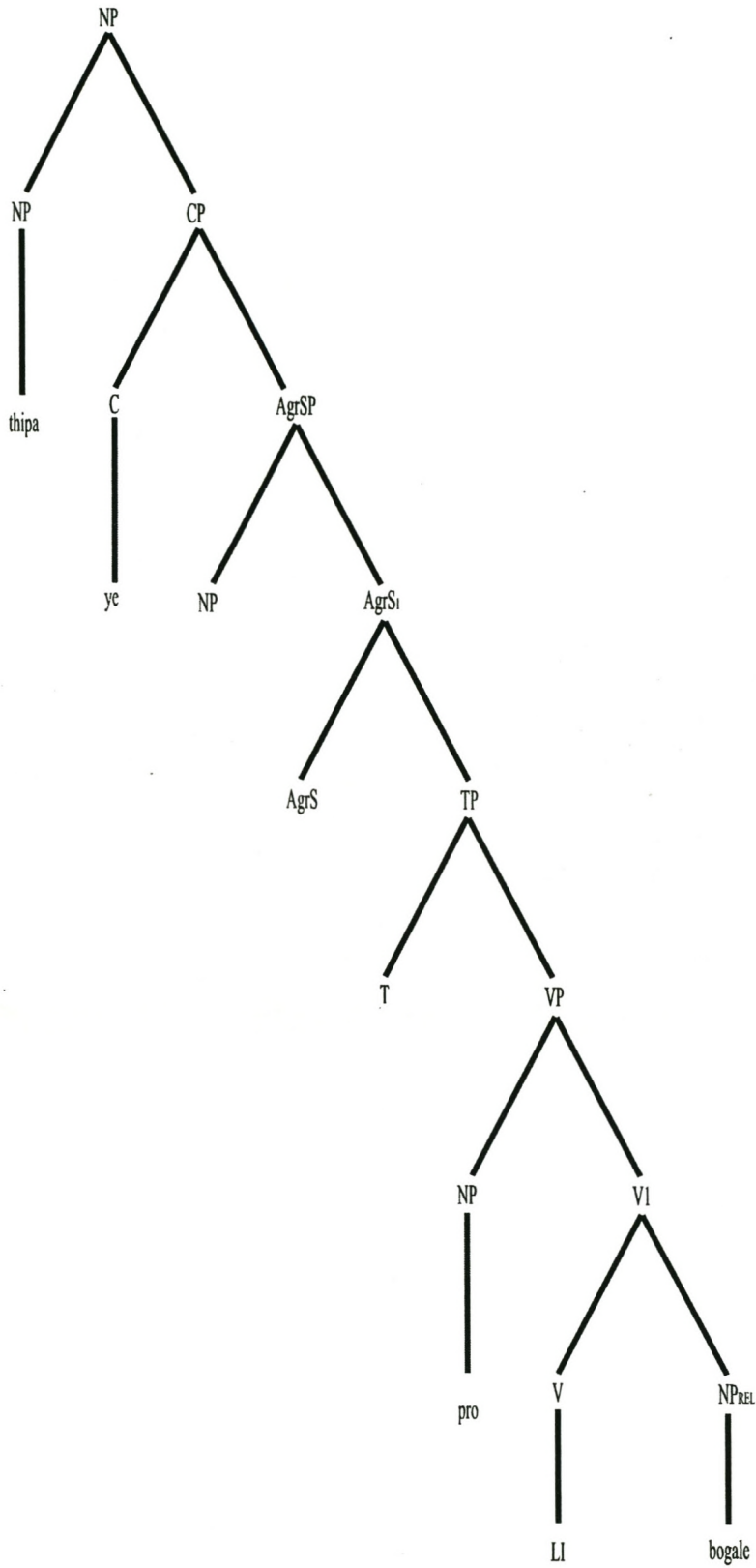
- (18) a. Thipa ye e - sego bogale  
b. [Thipa] [ye [AgrS-se-go [bogale]]]

The copulative verb **ba**:

- (19) a. Thipa ye e - tla-ba bogale  
b. [Thipa] [ye [AgrS-ba [bogale]]]

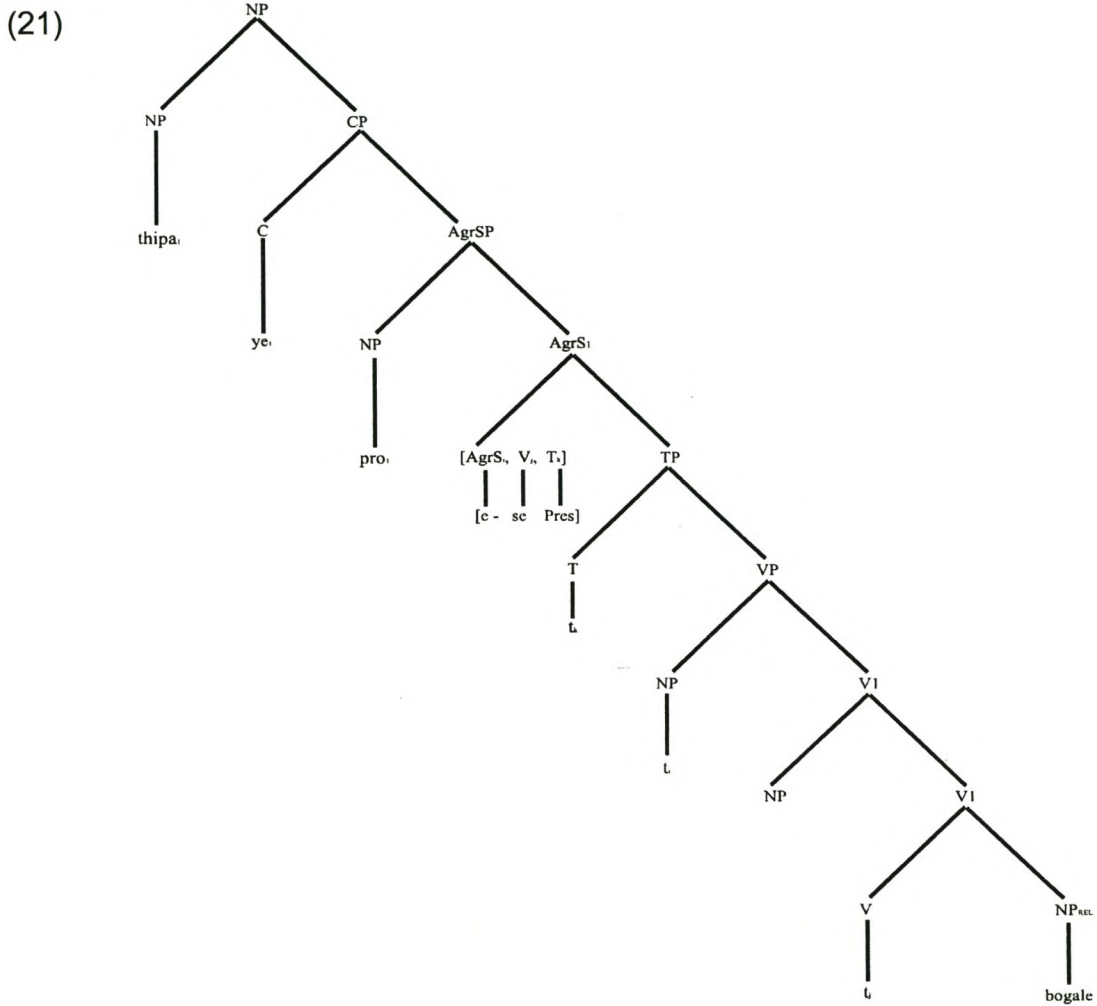
The structure of a relative clause in Northern Sotho has to make provision for a determiner in COMP. Such a structure may have the following form:

(20) [thipa]<sub>NP</sub> [ye bogale]<sub>CP</sub>





The copulative verb above is LI which has no overt form in Northern Sotho. In such a case AgrS of the relative clause will also not surface. However, if the copulative verb is **se** or **ba**, such AgrS will surface:



### 5.3.3 The determiner

It is quite important to make the interesting observation that the determiner of the relative clause in Northern Sotho has the same morphological structure as the basic demonstrative of position (1). The following determiners are used in the formation of the relative clauses in Northern Sotho:

(22)	Class	Determiner
	1	yo
	2	ba
	3	wo
	4	ye
	5	le
	6	a
	7	se
	8	tše
	9	ye
	10	tše
	14	bjō
	15	mo
	16	fa
	17/18	mo

Du Plessis and Visser (1992:16-17) also assert that there is always a compulsory presence of a clitic on the verb in the relative clause. According to them, it is a basic requirement of all the relative clauses that the antecedent must be present in the relative clause in one way or the other.

#### 5.3.4 The complement of the copulative verb

The nouns or nominal relatives can be complements of the copulative verbs. They can be classified into smaller categories.

## Humans and non-humans

### Physical features

#### Age

- (23) a. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Kgoši e bogareng  
'The chief is middle-aged'
- (ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke kgoši ye bogareng  
'It is a middle-aged chief'

#### Body shape

#### Well-built

- (24) a. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Mosadi o maatlakhogedi  
'The woman is attractive'
- (ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke mosadi yo maatlakhogedi  
'It is an attractive woman'

#### Strong

- (25) a. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Monna o maatla  
'The man is powerful'



(ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke monna yo maatla  
'It is a powerful man'

b. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Lerapo le thata  
'The bone is hard'

(ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke lerapo le thata  
'It is a hard bone'

### Heavy

(26) a. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Mmele o boima  
'The body is heavy'

(ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke mmele wo boima  
'It is a heavy body'

### Stout

(27) a. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Mošemane o mešifa  
'The boy is virile'

(ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke mošemane wo mešifa  
'It is a virile boy'

## **Pain**

- (28) a. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Leoto le bohloko  
'The foot is painful'
- (ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke leoto le bohloko  
'It is a painful foot'

## **Naked**

- (29) a. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Ngwana o lepono  
'The child is naked'
- (ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke ngwana yo lepono  
'It is a naked child'

## **Stiff**

- (30) a. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Motho o bothata  
'The person is stiff'
- (ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke motho yo bothata  
'It is a stiff person'

## Psychological features

### Intelligent

- (31) a. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Mokgekolo o bohlale  
'The old woman is intelligent'
- (ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke mokgekolo yo bohlale  
'It is an intelligent old woman'

### Timid

- (32) a. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Ngwanenyana o bonolo  
'The girl is meek'
- (ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke ngwanenyana yo bonolo  
'It is a meek girl'
- b. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Monna o bofokodi  
'The man is weak'
- (ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke monna yo bofokodi  
'It is a weak man'



- (33) a. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Lešole le bogale  
'The soldier is brave'
- (ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke lešole le bogale  
'It is a brave soldier'
- b. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Potšišo e boleta  
'The question is simple'
- (ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke potšišo ye boleta  
'It is a simple question'
- c. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Ngwetši e botho  
'The bride is kind'
- (ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke ngwetši ye botho  
'It is a kind bride'
- d. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Monna o lerato  
'The man is amorous'

- (ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke monna yo lerato  
'It is an amorous man'
- e. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Moithuti o boikokobetšo  
'The student is humble'
- (ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke moithuti yo boikokobetšo  
'It is a humble student'

### **Bad behaviour**

- (34) a. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Nkgwethe e boikgopolo  
'The champion is self-centred and stubborn'
- (ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke nkgwethe ye boikgopolo  
'It is a self-centred and stubborn champion'
- b. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Rakgwebo o hlogothata  
'The businessman is stubborn and obstinate'
- (ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke rakgwebo yo hlogothata  
'It is a stubborn and obstinate businessman'

- c. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Moagi o bofori  
'The builder is deceitful'
- (ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke moagi yo bofori  
'It is a deceitful builder'
- d. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Lehodu le bohlale  
'The thief is cunning'
- (ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke lehodu le bohlale  
'It is a cunning thief'
- e. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Mmolai o šoro  
'The murderer is cruel'
- (ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke mmolai yo šoro  
'It is a cruel murderer'
- f. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Molwetši o swele  
'The patient is malevolent'
- (ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke molwetši yo swele  
'It is a malevolent patient'



- g. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Kgoši e megabaru  
'The chief is greedy'
- (ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke kgoši ye megabaru  
'It is a greedy chief'
- h. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Mošemane o manganga  
'The boy is aggressive'
- (ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke mošemane yo manganga  
'It is an aggressive boy'
- i. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Mosadi o pelompe  
'The woman is bad-tempered'
- (ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke mosadi yo pelompe  
'It is a bad-tempered woman'
- j. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Lekgarebe le bobbe  
'The young woman is evil'
- (ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke lekgarebe le bobbe  
'It is an evil young woman'

- k. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Tau e kotsi  
'The lion is dangerous'
- (ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke tau ye kotsi  
'It is a dangerous lion'

### Habits

- (35) a. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Mošemane o ditšhila  
'The boy is dirty'
- (ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke mošemane yo ditšhila  
'It is a dirty boy'
- b. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Mosadi o botšwa  
'The woman is lazy'
- (ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke mosadi yo botšwa  
'It is a lazy woman'

### Skills

- (36) a. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Moraloki o boitemogelo  
'The player is experienced'

(ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke moraloki yo boitemogelo  
'It is an experienced player'

b. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Mmetli o bokgoni  
'The carpenter is skillful'

(ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke mmetli yo bokgoni  
'It is a skillful carpenter'

### Taste

(37) a. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Maswi a bodila  
'The milk is sour'

(ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke maswi a bodila  
'It is a sour milk'

b. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Nama e monate  
'The meat is nice'

(ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke nama ye monate  
'It is a nice meat'



## Natural phenomena

- (38) a. (i) In a matrix clause:  
Boloko bo meetse  
'The dung is wet'
- (ii) In a relative clause:  
Ke boloko bjo meetse  
'It is a wet dung'

### 5.4 DISTRIBUTION OF A RELATIVE

#### 5.4.1 Aim

The aim of this section is to discuss the distribution of the relative in Northern Sotho. Focus will be assigned on the **complement of a noun** and **position in a clause**.

#### 5.4.2 Complement of a noun

A nominal relative can appear as a complement of a noun. It can be described in two different ways as in the following cases:

##### 5.4.2.1 N + Nominal Relative

- (39) a. Malesela ke mošemane [yo bohlale]  
'Malesela is a clever boy'
- b. Monna yola e bile ngaka [ye maatla]  
'That man was a powerful doctor'

- c. Ba bangwe ba re e tla ba mošomo [wo boima]  
'Some say it will be a heavy job'
- d. Go nele pula [ye bofefo]  
'The light rain fell'
- e. Ke šomile le banna [ba mafolofolo]  
'I worked with the energetic men'

#### 5.4.2.2 Pro + Nominal Relative

- (40)
- a. Bogobe bjo ke bjo monate  
'This porridge is the nice one'
  - b. Leino le e bile le bohloko  
'This tooth was the painful one'
  - c. Maswika ale ke a boreledi  
'Those stones are the smooth ones'
  - d. Mpša ye e tla ba ye bogale  
'This dog will be the vicious one'
  - e. Banna bale ga se ba botho  
'Those men are not the kind ones'

#### 5.4.3 Position in a clause

The recognition of the distribution of the nominal relatives is particularly relevant as far as their occurrences in the different clauses are concerned.

#### 5.4.3.1 Subject position

In this section, the relative sentence as a nominal modifier may appear freely as the specifier or complement in the subject position:

- (41) a. Monna [yo [maatla] o bookelong  
‘The man who is strong is in hospital’
- b. [Yo [maatla] monna o bookelong  
‘The man who is strong is in hospital’
- c. [Yo [maatla] o bookelong  
‘The one who is strong is in hospital’

#### 5.4.3.2 Object position

Here, the relative clause as a nominal modifier may be used as a complement in the object position of the sentence either with or without the head:

- (42) a. Motsomi o rata [dimpša [tše bogale]]  
‘The hunter likes dogs which are vicious’
- b. Motsomi o rata [ tše bogale]]  
‘The hunter likes the vicious ones’

#### 5.4.3.3 Complement of a preposition

The undisputable fact in this section is that, in the Northern Sotho language, the relative clause as a nominal modifier may be used freely as a complement of any preposition.



**Instrumental ka:**

- (43) a. Ke bolela [ka [magetla [a bohloko]]]  
'I am talking about shoulders which are painful'  
b. Ke bolela [ka [a bohloko]]  
'I am talking about painful ones'

**Associative le:**

- (44) a. Matsobane o šoma [le [batho [ba mafolofolo]]]  
'Matsobane is working with energetic people'  
b. Matsobane o šoma [le [ba mafolofolo]]  
'Matsobane is working with energetic ones'

**Locative go:**

- (45) a. Re tla kitimela [go [batho [ba botho]]]  
'We will run to the people who are kind'  
b. Re tla kitimela [go [ba botho]]  
'We will run to the kind ones'

**Possessive -a:**

- (46) a. Ga ke nyake sefatanaga [sa [monna [yo bogale]]]  
'I do not want the car of the man who is brave'  
b. Ga ke nyake sefatanaga [sa [yo bogale]]  
'I do not want the car of the brave one'

**Agent of a passive verb:**

- (47) a. Ba nyalwa [ke [banna [ba bohlale]]]  
'They are married by the men who are clever'
- b. Ba nyalwa [ke [ba bohlale]]  
'They are married by the clever ones'

**5.5 CONCLUSION**

From the discussion above, it is evident that the prefixes of nominal relatives do not change according to the noun class prefixes, i.e. nominal relative prefixes do not look the same as those of the noun class prefixes. In some instances the nominal relatives may not appear with the nouns they qualify, but with only the qualificative particles (determiners). These qualificative particles are always used when the object is known between the speaker and the listener. Nominal relatives can also appear freely with the copulative verbs. They can be used both in negative and positive clauses. They also take various positions in a clause. The prepositions may as well be used together with nominal relatives, i.e. nominal relatives may appear as their complements.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

The adjectives in Northern Sotho have been analysed in depth in this study. Different types of adjectives and their semantic and morphological properties have been identified. Noun phrases have also been treated.

This chapter presents in brief the findings from the previous chapters and finalizes the results attained from the aims written in each chapter. The foregoing study of the adjectival category appears to indicate that the separability of word-class distinctions is mainly based upon morphosyntactic features on the one hand, and semantic or functional distinctions on the other, is of doubtful validity. This research, however, has indicated that the two are intertwined, and further, the former are motivated by the latter.

**Chapter One** introduced the discussion of this research. It stated the purpose and the aim of the study. As far as methodology is concerned, various approaches have been employed.

The organization of the study, which forms the core of this research, has also been included. The definitions of important concepts in this research and the derivation of adjectives are of great significance in this chapter. The implication put by this chapter shows that adjectives are essentially equivalent to nouns, verbs and other lexical categories.

**Chapter Two** gives an exposition of the semantic types of adjectives in Northern Sotho. These adjectives partially focus on aspects such as morphological adjective, descriptive possessive and relative clause although they are consequently discussed in details in chapters 3, 4, and 5.



In 2.4.3 there are two different relative clauses which may be used as complements of noun phrases. They are nominal relative clauses and verbal relative clauses. Subcategories of humans and non-human nouns with either complete verbs or copulative verbs have also been indicated. These subcategories are **physical features**, **psychological features**, **skills**, **wealth** and **professional**. In these subcategories, there are stative verbs which appear in the perfect tense and those which appear in the present tense. The concept 'stative' has also been defined. The copulative relative clauses in 2.4.3.3 have been further used in various subcategories. The complement of a copulative verb may either be a noun phrase or a PP with [le] as head.

**Chapter Three** dealt with the morphological adjective which was also analysed by various scholars such as Morris (1975), Nokaneng (1975), Lombard, et. al. (1985), Poulos and Louwrens (1994) and Ziervogel, et. al. (1969).

In this chapter, the scholars have a common opinion that adjectives are words which indicate attributes added to describe things. The adjectives have been grouped according to their meanings. According to them, every adjective is divided into two parts, namely; adjectival prefix and adjectival stem as in 3.3.3. In most cases, adjectival prefixes are similar to noun class prefixes. There are some cases whereby the noun class prefix of class 9 which is also used in class 8 and 10 will hardly take place with certain adjectival stems. The best examples are given in (19).

In 3.3.3.2.3 **individual-level** adjectives have been distinguished from **stage-level** adjectives. Different adjectives, namely; descriptive, quantitative and colour adjectives can be used with certain nouns. Not every adjective can be used with any noun. Some adjectives do not accept certain nouns as in 3.3.3.2.5. In 3.3.4.1 different suffixes play a dominant role in diminution, feminine and augmentative. Adjectives, like other word categories, can be reduplicated. They can also be compounded to nouns in the absence of determiners. Adjectives may as well be distributed to various positions in sentences as in 3.3.8. They can work as complements of prepositions. In 3.3.9 a comparison of two things in order to discover their likenesses or differences has been



made. It is also important to state that adjectives may be used in exclamations as in 3.3.10, i.e. utterances which indicate the stress of sudden thoughts or emotions.

**Chapter Four** elaborated more on the descriptive possessive. This chapter draws a line of demarcation between the descriptive possessive and possessive. In almost all the noun phrases which have been mentioned in 4.3, the descriptive part is the head of the noun phrase.

The examples given in (30) indicate that descriptive possessives can be used in infinitive clauses. Sometimes, the descriptive part can be used as the complement of the preposition [-a-]. In this case, **physical features**, **psychological features**, **skills**, **wealth** and **profession** are the aspects which have been used to describe humans.

Non-human nouns, however, have also been incorporated. They include descriptive part which can be a natural object, natural phenomenon and state. The descriptive part can also indicate quantity, animal, food, plant, artefact, locative, time and gore-clauses.

**Chapter Five** concentrated on the nominal relative clause. Different scholars like Ziervogel, et. al. (1969), Lombard, et. al. (1985), and Poulos and Louwrens (1994) agree that nominal relative deals with the noun.

In 5.3.2, there is a structure of the relative clause which is further divided into two various types of clauses, namely; nominal relative clause and verbal relative clause. As it has been indicated in this chapter, the two clauses differ as far as the functions of their verbs are concerned. There are some copulative verbs which appear with nominal relative clauses. The determiners of the relative clauses have been used with the noun classes as in 5.3.3.

In the complements of the copulative verbs, two types of clauses have been used to describe humans and non-humans. Examples of sentences in the matrix clauses and in the relative clauses have been constructed. Smaller subcategories such as **physical**

**features, psychological features, skills, taste and natural vegetation** are important in this regard. In the distribution of a relative in 5.4, more attention was based on the **complement of a noun and position in a clause.**



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