

MAPITSI

PHUKUBJE

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9809714/E

SUPERVISOR

JYOTI MISTRY

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TITLE

How Sepedi, one of the official languages South Africa is represented on the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC).

Mapitsi Elizabeth Phukubje

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates through theoretical analysis and imperative research, how Sepedi is represented on SABC, especially on SABC 2 in accordance to the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA). Looking back at Sepedi programming before democracy and after democracy, SABC has gone through a major transition. This thesis visits the transitions that SABC went through and how SABC is transforming to serve public interests. This essay will be composed of empirical observations to depict whether these aims are in fact pursued and achieved.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Masters in Dramatic Arts in the University Of The Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted for any other degree or examination in any other university.

Mapitsi Elizabeth Phukubje

_____ Day of _____, 2007

DEDICATION

To my family with sincere thanks to their support during the writing of this thesis

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CONTENTS **PAGES**

Title.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Declaration.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v

Chapter One

Introduction.....	9
Television.....	13
Public Broadcasting Services.....	14
History of Broadcasting.....	18
Television in South Africa: Post 1990.....	22

Chapter Two

Language and Culture.....	36
SABC's Interpretation of Language and the Adoption Quotas by ICASA.....	41
The Public Broadcaster.....	44
Programming on SABC 2.....	55

Chapter Three

History of Bapedi, Culture and Customs.....62

An Analysis of Bophelo ke Semphekgo.....73

Chapter Four

Section on Regional Broadcasting.....99

Chapter Five

Section on Private Broadcasting Television.....117

Chapter Six

Conclusion.....126

Bibliography

Books.....133

Websites.....138

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This thesis will investigate the representation of Sepedi on SABC, especially SABC 2. Sepedi is an official language in South Africa according to the Section 108 of 1996 (the Constitution) of the Republic of South Africa. Based on the Constitution 108 of 1996, language policy of South Africa, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act (IBA) of 1993 and the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) will facilitate the issue of language representation presented in this thesis.

In light of the above, different definitions of television would be given to determine the function and the significance of television in mass communication and representation of national diversity. The central definition is that television is made to be enjoyed, inform and to educate its audience. The broadcasting legislation of South Africa recognizes three categories of Broadcasting services; Public, Commercial and Community broadcasting. Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) is the main service that is used by the SABC. It is free to air and every member of the public is entitled to its subjects to the payment of the annual license fees. PBS is seen as a tool to promote democracy, it is broadcasting that has no barriers and it is not allowed to discriminate. Different countries share the same definition of PBS but essentially PBS aims to offer diverse programming that reflects different social services. South Africa is no exception because it also defines PBS as a means to reflect different cultures and languages as well as a way to promote and develop the National Identity (NI). By giving the background of television in South Africa this

enables an understanding of South Africa's background which has changed from a period of monopoly to one of period democracy.

This discussion will unfold and explore the ways in which SABC has grown since its establishment in 1997 and how it has developed 28 years after its inception. Language representation has been one of the key challenges for the SABC to provide linguistic diversity as a public broadcaster.

After the Government of National Unity (the GNU) most people thought broadcasting will create a major turn in representing all the previously disadvantaged languages equally on television. Furthermore, this thesis will show how these perceptions have been abused and how the SABC is still struggling to represent all the official languages of South Africa on the screen. The language policy was drafted with the intention to promote South Africa's linguistic diversity and encourage respect for language rights within the policy framework of building and consolidating a united democratic South African nation.

The motive for investigating the representation of Sepedi on SABC 2 is that according to SABC policy, SABC 2 is a channel that should cater for Afrikaans and Sotho language group (SLG). The SLG are defined as Sepedi, Setswana and Sesotho and these languages are mutually intelligible.

ICASA is the successor of the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) and has mandated the SABC to function as a fair and successful public broadcaster. Among others, this thesis will revisit the ICASA mandate; it will show how the SABC is complying with the ICASA mandate by analyzing the advantages and disadvantages.

In Chapter Three this thesis will discuss and analyze the importance of language and how language is related to culture, identity and representation and how elements are tied together through the historical developments in South Africa. Language is a complex factor that the SABC should address as the public broadcaster. There should be more programmes that presented in other previously disadvantaged languages which seek to promote and develop these languages. As an example, Sepedi requires greater representation without being fused or mixed with other languages.

Chapter four will discuss the culture, traditions and customs of Bapedi and how these have changed through time. Bapedi people no longer practice the same customs that were practiced three decades ago and there have been new modifications of culture and identity. There should be more programmes that inform the audience about the cultures of Bapedi and how these have shifted over time.

Bophelo ke Semphekgo, a Sepedi drama series, which was aired in the eighties on TV3 for half an hour once a week, will be used as case study to compare the customs and cultures of Bapedi society and how they were practiced in the 1980's when Bophelo ke Semphekgo was shot. Since the GNU there has never been a single drama series in Sepedi that represents positive reflection of Bapedi culture and how it has changed in the 90's and the new millennium. Bapedi society is no longer up to date with the latest changes and beliefs of Bapedi culture and traditions.

A chapter on private broadcasting takes us through the pressure that is faced by the SABC as a public broadcaster. There more challenges to the hegemony once enjoyed by the SABC, such as private free to air service, E-tv, subscription pay television service, M-Net and Digital Satellite Service Television (DStv). ICASA has published a discussion paper entitled: "Inquiry into Regional Television" in August 2003. The main purpose of the paper was to "generate comment from all the stakeholders on the introduction of regional television broadcasting services in South Africa".

Following from the argument in chapter three, chapter six considers the SABC's plans to execute regional broadcasting across the country. If regional broadcasting is a success there will be licensing of Community Broadcasting Television Services (CBTS).

At this stage, there will be a need to explore how other countries have achieved successful regional broadcasting and how South Africa can learn from them.

Television

Television is a means of mass communication and has both formal and informal ways of influencing society. Television can be identified as a medium of entertainment and information. People watch television during their relaxation time because television gives them access to events happening outside and within their world. Fiction, entertainment, sports and other genres make television a global medium that society relies on to learn what people are doing around the world. Therefore, "television is the single most important institution shaping the symbolic environment in which we live". (Mieten and Dahlgren, 2000, p: x) television is made to be enjoyed and to represent, educate and inform the people who consume it.

Television has become, among other things, "a sphere of intensive and sophisticated knowledge management. It works to regulate access to privileged terms to those able to fund well-resourced publicity and media relation's activities." Television represents the world through visual and aural conventions, which work to evoke realistic credibility rather than critical engagement". (Corner, 1995, p: 44)

According to Scannel, (1989 and 1991) "television represents varieties of socially situated speech, portrays patterns of sociable interaction and provides shared resources for speaking". Television is seen as an 'information commons' which citizens depend on to explain the working of society and the experiences of others. It helps viewers to participate as fully formed social beings, better able to control their own destiny ". (Mulgan, 1990, p: 22).

Therefore, it can be said television is made to represent all the languages, no matter how small the language is.

Public Broadcasting Services (PBS)

Public broadcasting would mean that every member of the society should be given the same treatment in terms of broadcasting. It is “a service across the broad range of the audience’s needs, and part of that is a affirmation that their locality matters, both in itself and as part of the whole”.(Miller and Allen,1994, p: 65) “Public Broadcasting Services has been about the accessibility of good quality broadcasting ensuring universal access maintaining diversity and plurality, security and quality”.¹ “PBS is expected to nurture, reflect and represent the plurality and diversity of cultures as they exist and evolve in a society and other societies that make up the world’. PBS can be said therefore to have both’ a democratic and development role’. (Hills, 2003, p: 144).

PBS is broadcasting for the people regardless of their race, age, gender and culture. It is broadcasting that gives all its audience programmes that they would love and enjoy. For example, in Britain Public Broadcasting “ needs to provide programmes of wide range and diversity over a reasonable span of time for practically all kinds of tastes for large groups and small”(Blumber, 1985, p: 3). This definition is useful if we talk about diversity. Every member of the society needs to be provided with a variety of programmes. Therefore television should serve the variety of audience and this should be done in terms of programmes content. The broadcaster should make sure that all the people are catered for in respect of their values, interests and identities.

¹ www.communicationswhitepapers.gov.uk

In Germany, the Federal Constitution Court has emphasized:

“There is a need for a diversity of communication offering reflecting the Concerns of all relevant social forces and groups. It was assumed that in a well run public service system, television should at least occasionally present audience members with materials that would stretch their minds and horizons, awaken them to less familiar ideas and tastes and culture, the arts and the sciences challenge some of their uncritically accepted assumptions about life, morality and society” (Forman, 1987, p: 7).

PBS must ensure that broadcasting is available to the people and their programming appeals to the public’s tastes and interest. It should also promote ‘a sense of national identity and community and minorities especially disadvantaged minorities should receive special provision (McQueen, 1998, p: 207). The aims of PBS can effectively be achieved if scheduling is balanced. Programmes should not be dominated by one language. All languages must be allocated equal times so that all viewers feel accommodated.

The SABC mandate requires that local content programming news and current affairs are its distinctive edge and are in the corporate future perspective. The democratic government seeks to fulfill its mandate to free the airwaves and conduct a broadcasting dispensation, which meets the needs of all the South African people. SABC aims to reflect the diversity of the country’s different language and cultural groups and to promote a unified democratic nation. In the Conseil Mondial Publication (2002) website PBS is defined as:

Public broadcasting must appeal to the audience's intelligence and understanding. The information broadcast by public broadcasting must be treated with a concern for in-depth explanation and examination to enlighten citizens on the issue at hand, and, in so doing, enrich democratic life. It is often this ability to act as reference in the area of information that brings the public to recognize the importance and the role of public broadcasting, and identify with it. For public broadcasting, information is not restricted to newscasts and public affairs programmes; it extends to all those programmes enabling citizens to find out about different subjects of interests to them and to all those programs simply called "service programs" or "general interest programs", which often deal with matters of current or practical interest in people. These programmes which address consumer or legal issues, give practical advice, discuss health issues, publicize community services, and make public broadcasting itself a service offered to the people.²

The expression of opinions, values and ideas that are current in the society must be promoted by the Public broadcasting Services. PBS is a precise term, it is generally understood to comprise of four elements:

- Independence: a public body with a high degree of financial policy making independence from both governmental and commercial sources.
- Programme balance: a statutory requirement to educate, inform and entertain the audience. This is translated into a commitment to balanced scheduling across the different programme genres. Thus one institution is required to cover all the audience's needs and tastes.

² <http://www.cmrtv.org/radio-publique/radio-programme-en.htm>

- Geographic balance: a service provided to the whole of the audience (national) regardless of geographic distribution, in return for a basic, initial fee usually in the form of an annual license fee.
- Impartiality: political output is obliged to be balanced and impartial, distanced from all vested interests, particularly those of the government of the day.

Kuhn,1985; BRU, 1986 cited in Tomasselli and Teer,1989, p: 27-37)

The broadcasting institution of a particular country often mirrors the political system of that country thus often resulting in the broadcasting system being categorized according to the government policy and ideology. (Silke, 1989).

History of Television broadcasting on South Africa

SABC is the public broadcasting service of South Africa. The development of broadcasting in South Africa can be dealt with four periods. The years 1924-1936 was the establishment of the first independent local commercial radio stations until the creation of the SABC until the coming to power of the Nationalist government under General Smuts. The SABC attempted to establish a technical equality between the two white programme services, that is, service for white English and white Afrikaans speakers.

In the period 1948-1959 it was the post war expansion under the nationalist government in which Dr P.J Meyer, a Chairman of the Broederbond, became the chairman of the Board of control of the SABC. The years 1960-1971 was the period of transformation under Meyer; at the end of this period a recommendation to introduce television was made.³ The coming to power of the Nationalist government brought equality between the white English speakers and Afrikaans speakers (Tomaselli, Tomaselli and Muller, 1989, p: 31).

Economically, South Africa was the most advanced country on the continent but it was among the last countries in Africa to introduce television. This was because of the fear that television would give the people of South Africa information that was not needed at that time. Television was seen as a threat to the regulation of the apartheid regime.

Therefore, television was introduced in 1976 and it created critical matters on how to shape television. The crisis was on what to show to the audiences and what not to.

³ Tomaselli. R & , Tomaselli. K and Muller , 1989 Currently of power: State Broadcasting in South Africa (Page 24)

In the construction of television services black people were not included in any of the structures. Television was only a medium for English and Afrikaans speakers. During this period, SABC served the interest of the Afrikaans audience because it was the dominant language. Dominant language is a” language with a high status used in most of the high public domains and functions, despite the fact that it may be the first language of a statistical minority or even almost no one’s first language...” (Webb, 2001, p: 42).

At the beginning of television in South Africa, there was only one channel that was operating for five hours in the evening which was equally divided between English and Afrikaans languages. The first attempt at equality was the inclusion of Afrikaans and English programmes on one channel with announcements alternately in English and Afrikaans. “In 1982 the second channel was launched and it was here that black viewers were included for the first time. Since there were a large number of different ‘ethnic’ languages for black audiences, SABC divided the black channel into two separate channels in 1983”, TV2 and TV3. (Tomaselli and Tomaselli and Muller, 1989, p: 109).

Ethnic language is a “language, which has the primary function of symbolizing ethno cultural identity, often a language which has to be standardized, or recognized as appropriate in high function public context”(Webb, 2001, p: 42). In the case of South Africa ethnic languages would be Sepedi, Setswana, Sesotho, Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele, Swati, Venda, Tsonga and other languages except English and Afrikaans.

The new SABC channels were thus divided into TV1 addressed at white English and Afrikaans speakers, TV2 addressed at black Zulu speakers and TV3 addressed at black Sotho speakers. (Tomaselli and Tomaselli and Muller, p: 109). The division was not an easy thing to do because languages were still not represented fairly. Since SABC had difficulties in representing the two white languages, English and Afrikaans, representing ethnic languages became a major problem. Therefore little regard was made to serve the interest of the black public.

The formation of TV2 and 3 was a method of incorporating the emerging black petit bourgeoisie into the ideals espoused by capital with its emphasis on production and consumption (Gramsci, 1971).

The new television channels were established to accommodate black audiences but in actual fact it excluded the black audience from the rural areas. Therefore, there were no opportunities for the economic development by the black rural audience. TV4 began broadcasting in 1985 as an imported entertainment channel. Bop TV for Bophuthatswana homeland received its broadcasting license in 1983 and it was named Bophuthatswana Broadcasting Corporation (Bop TV).

Bop Broadcasting Corporation had three radio stations and two television stations, Bop and Mmabatho. In 1995, the broadcasting National Colloquium, organized by the Department of Communications, put forward the idea of integration of the former independent state broadcasters into the SABC and Sentech. Therefore, Mmabatho television channel ended up operating under SABC 3 without a clear programme of action.⁴

⁴ <http://www.fx.org.za/archivers/update/janfebrp/bop.htm>

Television in South African Post 1990

“The year 1990 marks the turning point of South African history. The then ruling party, National Party committed itself to the creation of a new non-racial society, promising that the negotiated constitutional reform process would be one that would facilitate the democratic participation of all South African citizens bringing an end to decades of illegitimate rule”. (Fokane, 2003, p: 5).

On 01 January 1992, Contemporary Community Values (CCV) was established. CCV was a commercial channel running entirely on advertising revenue. The head of CCV, Madala Mphahlele, said CCV was “the first multi-lingual station without any particular pre-determined market based on race, language group or cultural disparities as the other SABC channels have been”.⁵ The aims of CCV were “to offer and serve the SA public in such a way that the ideals of a democratic, non-racial, non-sexist society are pursued and advanced”.⁶

The other SABC channels at that time were divided into language groups. These channels broadcast in seven main languages which were: Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Zulu, Xhosa, English and Afrikaans. It also included Indian languages on Sunday mornings. The other four official languages (Tsonga, Venda, Ndebele and Swati) were not included here at all. CCV’s main goal was to reach the youth and educated audience who were conversant in English. Hence, CCV was not a channel for the audience living in the rural areas. Radio was the main medium that people in the rural areas used for their information,

⁵ Interview conducted by Msomi, 1993, p: 34

⁶ Ibid, page:39

entertainment and education. The key reason for this was because there were lack of infrastructure and electricity in the rural areas. CCV was primarily about attracting advertisers to generate sufficient revenue.

However, language was still another major problem faced by CCV. In the beginning of CCV, there were two main categories, namely: CCV-Nguni and CCV-Sotho. These services would broadcast in the languages appropriate to the regions. The division of CCV was seen as the same division in language barriers that other SABC channels were practicing. Thus, the two CCV services were combined to form CCV-TV. CCV had a broad range of programming appealing to a larger section of the population. It had entertaining and educational programmes that catered specifically for the children and teens. During prime time, there were programmes in ethnic languages targeted at black audiences.⁷ These programmes were particularly game shows, magazines and comedies. CCV had programmes like Imalini/Ke Bokae? and Ngomgqibelo/Ka Mokibelo. These programmes were strictly in Sotho language group and Zulu language group respectively.

In each programme there were two presenters, one addressing the Sotho speakers and the other one addressing the Zulu speakers. The campaign for Independent Broadcasting (CIB), a group that was facilitated by the convention for democratic South Africa, was established. CIB was formed to make sure that the National Party does not dominate in the airwaves. The main aim of the CIB was to change the SABC from being a monopoly to become a public broadcaster that will serve the all the people. Independently elected

⁷ Ethnic Languages are Sepedi, Setswana, Sesotho, Venda, Tsonga, Ndebele, Swati, Zulu and Xhosa

representative board members were elected. The duties of these board members were to govern the SABC during its transition period.

CIB had other objectives of ensuring that the regulation of the airwaves and the issuing of licenses are under the control of an independent and democratically elected regulatory body. Therefore, several societies were established to campaign the independence of the media from party political control. This led to the election of the independent board, which led to the establishment of the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) in 1993.

Independent Broadcasting Authority's (IBA) main goals were:

- To provide for the regulation of broadcasting activities in the public interest; to establish a juristic person to be known as the Independence Broadcasting Authority which shall function wholly independently of State, governmental and party political influences and free from political or other bias or interference;
- To provide for the representation of that Authority by and its functioning through a council;
- To define the powers, functions and duties of that Authority; to provide for the devolution of powers relating to the administration, management, planning and use of the broadcasting services frequency bands to the said Authority; and
- To provide for incidental matters.⁸

⁸ South African Content Paper and Regulations, 15 February, 2002

IBA ended the broadcasting policy of monopoly and broadcasting markets to competition. It provided transformation of the state broadcaster into a public broadcaster and it also introduced community broadcasting for the first time in South Africa. Furthermore, IBA “prioritized the regulation of the market by making use of the cross-media limitation and local quotas. IBA and SABC were both bound to meet the mandate of the Parliament and represent the people”.⁹ The problem of representing all society is not a problem faced by South Africa only. It is a major problem for all other developing countries. The people of South Africa are divided along their racial, ethnic, class, gender and cultural barriers. It is through these divisions that IBA continues to define the essence of its board.

IBA presented its Triple Inquiry Report (“the report”) to parliament was on the ‘protection and viability of public broadcasting cross media control of broadcasting services and South African television and music content’ and the outcome of the inquiry resulted in the introduction of the South African television content regulation in 1997. The 1997 regulations require that: “30% of the television content on the public broadcasting television services during prime time is South African and that each public broadcasting television services channel carries not less than 25% of South African content. The regulation further requires that 40% of South African content quotas to be met by broadcast licenses should be commissioned from independent producers. Broadcasters are encouraged to commission programmes, which are controlled by

⁹ The Green Paper for Public Discussion by the Ministry of Post, Telecommunications and Broadcasting Act of 1997.

historically disadvantaged group”.¹⁰ The Triple Inquiry Report made some of the following recommendations:

- That a full spectrum of language stations be licensed to the public broadcaster and that nine black language stations be dramatically upgraded; that seven of the SABC regional stations be sold; that licensing of a commercial free to air television channel take place;
- that broadcasting system should reflect the multilingual and multicultural nature of the South African society; and
- that community and commercial broadcasters provide their services in range of languages.¹¹ (11 July 2003, Mini-Summit on broadcasting Language and Content).

There was a need for a regulatory board and the establishment of the IBA was relevant for a democratic South Africa. South Africa needs the regulatory board to provide programming that expresses full regard of the distinctive culture, language, interests and tastes of the South African people.

¹⁰ http://www.sabc.co.za/annual/report_annual_1997

¹¹ http://www.ourmedianet.org/eng/members/Mtimbe/Mtimbe_ICASAKroonstad2003.rtf

In 1995, the IBA became the successor to Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA). The goals of ICASA are:

“to provide for the dissolution of IBA and the South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, to transfer the functions of the latter Authorities to ICASA, to amend the IBA Act of 1993, the Telecommunications Act of 1996, and the Broadcasting Act of 1999 and to provide matters connected therewith”.¹²

The main aim of ICASA is to create an Authority that is independent that will control broadcasting in favour of the public interest, ICASA also aims to promote diversity and fairness by representing South Africa according to Section 192 of the Constitution.

Section 192 of the Constitution provides that:

“National Legislation must establish an independent Authority to regulate broadcasting in the public interest and to ensure fairness and a diversity of views broadly representing South African society”.¹³

ICASA facilitates economic opportunities for the South African public who are in the music and television industry and related industries. In section 2 of the IBA Act No. 153 of 1993 (the IBA Act) states that “the primary purpose is to promote diverse range of sound and television broadcasting services on a national, regional and local level which cater for all language and cultural groups and provide entertainment, education and information to promote the development of public broadcasting services which are

¹² ICASA Act of 2000 in the SA Content Paper and Regulations

¹³ The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, p 104

responsive to the needs of the public. Since the democratization of the country some steps have already been taken, from the monopoly of the former state broadcaster to a transformed Public Broadcasting Service.

The SABC embarked on transformation in February 1996 with the re-launch of its three terrestrial television channels. CCV became SABC 1, TV1 became SABC 2, and NNTV became SABC 3. In the confusion, viewership figures registered a noticeable decline and advertisers migrated to M-Net, print and radio. Some viewers, outraged at the apparent “relegation” of Afrikaans to parity with other official languages, threatened to withhold television license payments. SABC executives concede there were mistakes in the early stages of transformation. There was little co-ordination between the three channels, with the result that similar programmes would be broadcast on different channels at the same time.¹⁴

In 1997, Minister Jay Naidoo¹⁵ initiated a policy process to look into the broadcasting industry and advise government on key policy considerations. A group of stakeholders representing the interest in the industry was selected and it held regular meetings to deliberate and make recommendations on key issues defining a broadcasting policy framework, which will take South Africa into the 21st century. At the same time the public was invited to identify crucial issues that needed discussion in a process of developing a policy framework for broadcasting. Numerous submissions by organizations of civil society, interested organizations and individuals were received and fed into the

¹⁴ www.btimes.co.za/97/1207/survey2.htm

¹⁵ Minister of Post and Telecommunications, 1997

work of the stakeholders committee. This led to the passing of the green paper that served as the first part of a consultative process. This consultative process led to the formulation of the policy framework for broadcasting. The policy framework for broadcasting posed questions to the public as part of assisting government to formulate the second part of the consultative process.

The White Paper was the second part of the framework for broadcasting which was passed in 1998. The White Paper states that:

“the Authority should draw up a plan for South African continent whereby South African broadcasters will provide a predominantly South African content in all genres within a target period of ten years. The White Paper argues that South African content is necessary for the protection of national cultural heritage, attitudes, norms ways of behaviour and the values that are uniquely South African”.¹⁶

Despite the efforts that the government of democracy had made, the majority of the broadcasting services still favoured the needs of the previously dominant sector of the population.

Currently on SABC there are three television channels. SABC is aimed at the youth and Nguni speakers. These would include Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele and Swati speakers. SABC 2 is for the adult and Afrikaans speakers together with the SLG. SABC 3 is a commercial channel primarily for English speakers. At least half of the official languages are covered in these channels but the Tsonga, Venda, Swati and Ndebele speakers are not.

¹⁶ The Green Paper for Public Discussion by the Ministry of Post, Telecommunications and Broadcasting Act of 1997.

Early last year (2003) SABC introduced news headlines broadcast outside of the prime-slots (between 16:00 – 17:00) in the four neglected official languages. The headlines took approximately ten minutes. In 2004 the news headlines were extended to 30 minutes of news broadcast. SABC has shown initiative and growth in the news department, however, there is major restructuring ahead to cover for all other languages in all programmes which form part of official languages of the country. These should be taken into consideration because most people have access to electricity due to the government infrastructure drive.

The introduction of electricity by Eskom was part of the efforts to bring minimal services to the people. Eskom introduced ‘Electricity for all’ in order to give low-income people an opportunity to have access to electricity. The pre-paid electricity system requires that people buy electricity vouchers suitable to their income. Therefore to own a television set is no longer about living in a luxury house and earning high salary. Most black homes in the townships have access to television and they see it as a medium which informs and entertains and this is the same in rural same settlements.

Sentech has conducted research concerning language universally and access. The results are that coverage and access is lowest in Limpopo, Eastern Cape and Kwazulu Natal.

Technology is converging at a rapid pace and it should not only be available to people in the cities but also those in rural areas. Sentech is a “broadband network business accommodating narrowband functionally on a common platform, supplying

communication solutions and services to wholesale and retail customers in chosen markets in South Africa and the rest of Africa”.¹⁷

People in remote areas should have the opportunity to receive varied types of services, especially television coverage. Technology offers an opportunity to meet the different needs of society and most importantly in new and cost effective ways. “There must be a framework which integrates, and promotes the introduction of technologies that will make the South African broadcasting system relevant, accessible, diverse and responsive to the communication needs of the country.”¹⁸

In terms of distribution, the SABC has committed itself to “all public broadcasting services in specific languages and as far as possible be made accessible to all South Africans speaking those languages nationally or regionally”. Therefore the SABC should ensure that there is an equitable distribution to reach all language groups in all regions to make this possible. People expect to find programmes that they will understand and enjoy, more especially programmes that they will identify with. The majority of South Africans rely on a single service, usually radio to meet their vast broadcasting needs.

It is assumed that television consumes a lot of electricity and since they are using pre-paid electricity they only watch television at night. Therefore television viewing in the rural areas and other environments is mostly done during printer international time viewing. It becomes very disappointing when you have waited for the whole day to watch

¹⁷ www.sentech.co.za

¹⁸ The Green Paper for Public Discussion by the Ministry of Post, Telecommunications and Broadcasting Act of 1997.

television only to find that one does not understand or identify with the programme shown on his or her television screen, or what is shown was broadcast the previous day or the previous week or month. Television plays a major role in keeping the public informed audio-visually and the public also expects representation on a PBD channel. This is one of the most important issues that SABC should address.

The public of South Africa will only gain access to a broad range of programming and information if the public broadcaster gives its audience huge programmes of public provision. By this, it is meant that programmes should be informative, entertaining at the same time. These could be of international or local content and if they are of international content the public broadcaster must find a way for people who do not understand English to appreciate and enjoy the programmes.

Since SABC cannot afford to have a channel for each language in the country, means should be made to accommodate the 'illiterate' or non-English speakers as they form part of the public to enjoy and understand international programmes, especially if these programmes contain valid information and education that could facilitate the development of the citizens of South Africa. For example, it can be agreed that when an international programme of value and information is aired, there should be a radio simulcast. If the programme is in English then we get a simulcast in Zulu or Sotho then this would mean that all the Nguni or Sotho language group speakers would at least understand what is happening on their television screen.

The other option would be to have dubbed material in either of the languages that need to be represented. Dubbing should not only happen if it is an international programme. Sometimes there are informative and educational programmes in Sesotho that the Nguni group does not understand. The Ngunis will only see that what is broadcast is interesting but they will not get the opportunity of understanding and enjoying the whole programme. Voice over is recommended and subtitling should also be recommended because it can ease the problems of language representation.

In 1997 language dubbing was introduced to private companies and R6 million was spent mainly on SABC 1 and 2. Most of the programmes were produced for children's viewing. Dubbing should not only be done in children's programming because there are other programmes that are worthy to be dubbed for adult viewing during prime time. In doing so the broadcaster will be promoting the issues of language because it is something that creates a sense of identity that would reflect a common experience and interest. Identity is a "form of individual personhood or self image, as well as collective self-image shared by the members of social groups and communities". (Rousse cited in Zegeye and Harris, 2002, p: 244).

In 1996, the SABC pioneered the regional television model which was divided into provinces. This service was later discontinued due to financial constraints. In Limpopo and Mpumalanga they had a programme called Mopani was broadcast in Sepedi, Tsonga and Venda. Cape at Six was broadcast in the Western Cape, which targeted the Afrikaans and Xhosa audiences. KZN-2-Nite in Kwazulu-Natal targeted the Zulu and Xhosa

audiences. These programmes would break away from SABC 2 national network on weekdays between 18h00-18h30.

Regional television broadcast news, sport, current affairs and information specially focused on and in the language of the targeted province. The survey indicated a high audience appreciation for provincial and local news, and showed steady growth in regional programmes across all language groups. Therefore, language is a major problem faced by the SABC in becoming a successful public broadcaster.

To conclude, television is made to accommodate all the cultures and society of its consistency by providing viewers with knowledge and entertainment. On public broadcasting services, all individuals are meant to be represented fairly by the public broadcaster regardless of the number of people who speak the language.

Most countries promote diversity and equality in terms of public broadcasting and that broadcasting should be available to all people regardless of their wealth, race and gender. SABC is in its third decade in broadcasting and there has been a major change since its inception in 1976. Moving from a monopoly to a public broadcaster, however, there are still many changes to be made in order to be a successful public broadcaster. The last ten years have seen SABC re-launch channels and re-branding but its “local content remains below 50%. (SABC Annual Report, 2001).

ICASA regulates broadcasting and has created hope in the public. Working on coverage in remote areas and access to those areas is one of the major steps that SABC need to take. Lastly, finding a way to accommodate all the cultures and languages is very important because this would help the SABC to grow.

CHAPTER TWO

Language and Culture

In the previous chapter I have discussed the meaning of television and how it meant to entertain, educate and inform its audience. In South Africa, television is dominated by public broadcasting services. I have discussed how this service is used in the country, the difficulties it faces in order to promote diversity and oneness. The promotion of different pinions, values and ideas in society is one of the major tasks of public broadcasting services. I also went through the discussion on the history of television in South Africa before and after democracy, the formation of the regulatory bodies (IBA and ICASA) and their mandates and how SABC is to comply with the regulatory body's mandate.

In this chapter, I will discuss the language issues in television broadcasting in South Africa. Language is one of the important features determining who we are, where we come from and our future.

“Language is amongst the basic tools through which people communicate and identify with each other in terms of who they are, where they come from and their cultural orientation”. (Ytrehus, 1999, p: 24). It is through language hat people recognize each other and group themselves in the category of their language identity. Every society is characterized by the individuals who share similar customs and set of attitudes towards language. In South Africa an example would be with Sotho Language Group (SLG) where one finds Sesotho, Sepedi and Setswana speakers.

Each of these language speakers shares the same attitudes and customs. Sometimes they differ a little because of the dialects. In the Bapedi culture (Sepedi speakers) one would find the Batlokwa and Balobedu who have their own customs and beliefs that are not distanced from each other. It is with the help of language that knowledge is produced and distributed. Whorf (1956) says “language is used not only to scientific inventions and discoveries but also as a carrier of culture”.

Moshibudi Mangena¹⁹ suggests that “Like knowledge language is power, you cannot take away the language of a people and expect them to have the power to interact with their situation effectively”.²⁰ One supports Mangena that if the language that you speak does not have power you are not proud speaking the speaking the language. The language of power would mean a language that is recognized and represented politically. “Language barriers are certainly barriers to economic progress (Le Page, 1964, p: 2).

If your language is not regarded as powerful, you also do not feel comfortable speaking the language when you are around languages that have power over your language. In the SLG Sepedi is seen as a rural language when compared to Setswana and Sesotho.

Therefore, you find Sepedi speakers switching or mixing Setswana or Sesotho when they are around speakers of those languages.

“Language is one mode through which thoughts, ideas and feelings are represented in a culture. Representation through language is central to the processes by which meaning is

¹⁹ Minister of Education, 2001 and President of Azanian’s People Organisation

²⁰ http://www.safrika.info/plan_trip/language.htm

produced. Culture is said to embody the “best that has been thought and said in a society. It is a sum of great ideas, as represented in the classic works of literature, painting, music and philosophy...” (Hall, 1997, p: 65).

Language is one of the most continuing work of art of culture, unless the dominating tribes take over language by force or by social economic and political domination to give up their language. People can always have their history traced through their languages. “Language, in addition to being the most important vehicle of a people’s ‘culture’, is the most distinctive of all the traits, which separate human beings from any other being conceivable. Language is so intimate to the human essence that not a few great thinkers have been attempted to propose that language and language structure determine human consciousness. (D’Encases, 1978, p: 143).

Language must therefore be seen as “a great act of inhumanity to inflict any disability on any person through the instrumentality of this uniquely human trait - it should be ultimate treachery to omit conscious to exploit language in the promotion of societal well being” (Emenanjo, 1990, p: 217).

A language is not only spoken to reach out to the other but about to declare a social bond, a sense of shared order experience, it also creates experience, and in the process sets out what can be experienced and how it can be experienced. (Garuba, 2001, p: 46). If groups are not represented by language they seem to feel discriminated and denied the right to their language.

When the right to language is taken away the right to communicate, to be real, and to be able to be heard is also taken away. Sepedi is being slowly taken away by the SABC because more concentration is on the promotion of multilingualism and in the SLG Sepedi is not given equal preference. By the representation of Sepedi I mean Sepedi as a language subset in the SLG. All these languages in the language groups should equally be represented as they are part of the official languages. Mangena says:

“Language is a medium through which information, knowledge, ideas, cultures, perceptions, norms, standards and value systems are transmitted and inculcated within a society. If we want to meaningfully contribute towards the social and economic development of the continent and ourselves, the need to protect and develop all African languages, particularly our indigenous one, is non-negotiable. The domination of English does not only damage us in the sphere of politics, democracy education; it devastates us in many other ways. Our cultures are inextricably bound to our languages. Our values, norms, customs and rituals are intertwined with our languages, music, dress and dances. When you suffocate the language of people, you also smother their customs, rituals, music, and dance, their creativity and dreams”. (*The Star*, 21 April, 2003)

In Chapter 1 Section 6 (1) of the Constitutional Law of the Republic of South Africa has declared eleven official languages at a national level - Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Zulu, Xhosa, Sesotho, Setswana, Swati, Venda, Tsonga and Sepedi. Section 6 (2) states that recognizing historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages of our

people, the State must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages. Therefore all languages must enjoy equal treatment.

Sepedi used to be known as “Northern Sotho” or Sesotho sa Lebowa”. This language is mostly spoken in the Limpopo province of South Africa (previously known as Northern Province). Sepedi is often (as in the constitution of South Africa) wrongly referred to as “Sepedi”; while in actual fact Sepedi is considered a dialect of the language “Northern Sotho”. There are around 3 695 846 people in South Africa who use Sepedi as their mother tongue.²¹ Sepedi speakers require information and education that enables them to understand and influence the changes taking place around them.

Representing Sepedi on television will promote the culture and the language at a national level. Culture is about ‘shared meanings’ while language is the privileged medium in which we make sense of things, in which meaning is produced and exchanged, language is central to meaning and culture, and has always been regarded as the key repository of cultural values and meanings. Bapedi people should not feel shy or embarrassed to speak their language and showcase their culture because it is as valuable as other cultures.

²¹ www.cyberserve.co.za

SABC's Interpretation and Adoption of Language Quotas by ICASA

In the SABC's mandate, language is the main factor that forms a key part of entertaining, informing and educating the South African public by giving the highest quality in broadcasting; although language plays a major role in the SABC, the corporation is not adequately catering to all language groups. When the SABC is asked why is not satisfying all the languages in television broadcasting, the SABC gives reasons that there is a "limited financial capacity" and there is a 'shortage of skills from its staff members'. According to the SABC, meeting the language mandate on television is challenging, taking into account the relatively little television air time available, especially to all eleven official languages.

The SABC strives to achieve this through a combination of strategies which include scheduling programmes in different languages across SABC television channels in a complementary way and encouraging the production of multilingual programming. These are programmes which include a substantial amount of more than one official language. The percentage of multilingual programming and programming in languages other than English, on public broadcasting service channel SABC 1 over a full day is currently in the region of 30% and SABC 2 is about 50%.

The SABC recognizes that there is no room for improvement in its language delivery and to facilitate the board in 2003, it began a process of reviewing the broadcaster's policy on language broadcasting. This included a workshop with interested groups including government, ICASA, PAN South African Language Board (PANSALB).

PANSALB is an organization which promotes South Africa's various languages in broadcasting, education and other spheres of public life. This in turn culminated in a draft policy on language in broadcasting that was published for comment in 2003.

The SABC language policy is based on the principles derived from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, ICASA, and the vision of the SABC. The SABC language policy states that:

- The stations will broadcast meaningful news and current affairs shows, children's programmes and educational material.
- The SABC will make a commitment to ensuring that they allocate money fairly to the different language stations.
- News will be broadcast in all official languages and sign language will be provided on selected bulletins.
- The SABC will focus on drama and children's educational programmes and pledge to use techniques such as dubbing, subtitling and multilingual programmes so that these can be widely understood.
- Languages that are more widely spoken will get more time, but the SABC will make sure that each language is heard. Fairness is not only about minutes on air but also about quality and choice.

- SABC resources are allocated equitably to each language and that audiences can understand a range of different types of programmes.²²

The ICASA Act aims:

‘to protect the integrity and viability of public broadcasting, the needs of language, culture, religious groups and the needs of regional and local communities and the need for educational, informational and entertainment programmes are taken into account. SABC has committed itself to deliver accessible broadcasting services of equal quality to the full spectrum of the audience’.²³

By quality here one understands that all audiences shall have equal representation in terms of entertainment, education and information in the languages that every audience shall understand and enjoy.

In terms of the IBA quotas, the Constitution and the SABC has made some obligations and acknowledgements that ‘the right of all South Africans to communicate in the languages of their choice, the equal status of all official South Africa’s languages, and its obligations to provide comprehensive programming accessible to all South Africans which meets their broadcasting needs and circumstances. This is the agreement in terms of the fairness in resource allocation made by the SABC to its people, regulation bodies, Constitution and other bodies. Because the ‘protection and nurturing of the South African languages’ is the main rule of the IBA Act, the SABC has recognized that ‘language are

²² www.sabc.co.za/annual_03/oacpdf

²³ www.sabc.co.za/annual_03/oacpdf

not static but dynamic, they continuously evolve and develop and change to meet the needs of all languages and thereby plays an active role in the enhancement of language development of the country'.²⁴

The SABC has committed to strive to broadcast in all eleven official languages; the SABC has 'vowed to provide at least basic broadcasting services in all official home languages'. In terms of shared language for example the SLG, the SABC has declared that 'it will contribute to unity and promote a common South African. This is because all languages are unique and important in broadcasting. There have been observations that SABC tends to give power to one language that is in a language and other languages in the language group tend to be significantly underrepresented. This approach leads to the other language within the same language group not being treated fairly.

In terms of language groupings, the analysis has shown that coverage and access is lowest among Sepedi, Venda, Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele speakers. SABC has been aware of this and for ten years nothing significant has been done about.

Complexities around Language Issue and the Public Broadcaster

There is an imperative need from the SABC to promote the eleven official languages of South Africa according to the Constitution. The people of SA should have an awareness of different languages. SA is still in the process of adapting to the new identity of national unity after many years of apartheid. National identity is based on 'sharing of

²⁴ www.sabc.co.za/annual_report/2002.htm

collective memory, history, myths, symbols and allegiance to a shared home language'. (Scholte, 1991, p: 5).

The new government of national identity is constituted by the cultural diversity of its people. There is multiculturalism and the right of the individual is practiced in this process of national unity. There are some processes that have been adopted to promote the idea of multiculturalism. Trade unions, business organizations, government departments and many other societies and organizations have joined hands to promote the idea of the "Proudly South African" campaign. It is a campaign about encouraging South Africans to identify with local products. It also seeks to build a single South African National Identity.

The other process is on "constructing a new national identity by creating a sense of belonging amongst different race, linguistic and ethnic groups to a broader SA community and pride its achievements" (Baines, 1998, p: 4). This is a new way of encouraging SA citizens to work hand in hand. The process of "acknowledging cultural diversity and accommodating group identities is another process challenging the idea of a nation sharing one culture and identity".

It has only been ten years since SA became a national unity government and there are still ideological traces of apartheid or discrimination in the SABC as a public broadcaster.

There are many challenges that the SABC is facing as a public broadcaster because of the pressures from its competitors who are private sector entities. One other challenge is from

the political side where party politics influences management of the SABC. Therefore, the SABC fails to be a tool to promote democracy in broadcasting.

In SABC programming, there is lack of creativity which leads to lack of originality. For example, on SABC 1 a game show programme called The Weakest Link is not a Proudly South African initiative but an idea from the British Broadcasting Corporation television (BBC). Other franchised programmes include, Friends Like These on SABC 1, All You Need is Love on SABC 1, Who Wants To Be A Millionaire on SABC 3 and Coca Cola Pop Stars on SABC 1. Instead of promoting creativity and developing local South African ideas SABC is failing to play a role in giving the citizens of SA opportunities to express their ideas. Franchising programmes is not only done in South Africa. Other national broadcasters in the UK, Europe and Africa are also buying rights to these kinds of programmes. This brought the idea of globalization which is now a core part of mass media.

The circulation of information, opinions, criticism, entertainment and education is not spread freely because of the political pressures and the commercial pressures. The SABC has initiated some strategies in order to keep its position as a public broadcaster by having two channels for different media. There is a commercial section and a public section that make up the SABC television channels. This strategy is a way for the SABC to contribute to the economy of the country but the SABC tends to forget its main role as the public broadcaster on the allocated public channels. Attention in terms of

programming is given to prime-time viewing slots and these slots are filled with ‘game shows and talk shows that are not up to standards.

For example two game shows that were shown on SABC 2 called Mokotla wa Tšhelete in Sesotho and Whammy in Sepedi. These shows showed lack of creativity and one could see that not much time was spent in producing the content of the programme. On both game shows, there is no quality information and educating questions. These programmes were targeted at “illiterate adults” SLG audiences but there was nothing informative about them to educate the viewers. There is another strategy that the SABC is following by having repetitive programmes throughout the day. Repeats are soapies in all SABC channels. For example, Generations is screened on SABC 1 at 20:00 on Mondays, it will be repeated on Tuesdays at 09:00, at 11:00 on the same day on SABC 3 and at 12:00 on SABC Africa on Digital Satellite Television (DStv).

Programme repeats are most common on SABC 1. SABC 1 is called “Ya Mampela” (the real one) but from its programming, it has been recently called “Ya MaRepeat” by Mahlangu.²⁵ Mahlangu says “Ya MaRepeat screens mostly copied western programmes such as Coca Cola Popstars and repeats of violent western movies’.²⁶ By repeating the programmes more than the required times becomes tedious and irritating for audiences. There has been discussion on repeat programmes and there are no regulations that distinguish between first release and repeat programmes.

²⁵ Mahlangu is the Sunday World Newspaper Reporter

²⁶ Sunday World, 31 October, 2004, p: 4

The discussion paper on South African content on television and radio requested stakeholders to submit ideas on whether there should be a limit on the number of repeats that are used when calculating compliance with the quota. Submissions were made to the authority on repeats programmes. The SABC and the National Association of Broadcasting (NAB) advocated the 'introduction of a weighing system that would give 100% for first transmission and first repeat, and a sliding scale thereafter'. The SABC recommended, however, that education and children's programmes be exempted from such weighting system, and that such repeats count towards South African content. SABC argues that the educational and children's programmes have to be repeated in order to be effective.

Independent Producers Organization (IPO) argued that 'only one repeat within four months of a programme's first broadcast in the year of its broadcast, and thereafter no more than one repeat in any subsequent twenty four months period, should be counted towards compliance with local quotas. Every repeat should count 50% less than the previous broadcast towards compliance with local content quotas up until it no longer counts. Performing Arts Workers Equity (PAWO) argued that repeats should qualify towards calculating compliance with the quota, should repeats qualify, and there will be no or very little incentive on the part of broadcasters to create new productions'.²⁷

There are few programmes that are about promoting SA. These are the programmes like the inauguration of the president and the annual festival coverage like the Grahamstown Festival. The setback about these programmes is that they come once after a while to

²⁷ SA Content Position Paper and Regulations, 15 February 2002

promote the national identity. The public should be shown programmes that are more of the social responsibilities. There should be programmes that have in-depth discussions on current affairs that represent the life and culture of each society. The social and political transformation that is going on in the country should not have a bad impact to public broadcasting. There have been some initiatives by the producers, writers, actors and directors in trying to find a way to represent each language, culture and society. This is seen more in the soap opera where there are “mixed race casts, multiple plots and different setting environments”. (Fourie, 2004, p: 12). This idea does not really mean that all of a sudden SABC is promoting a national unity but is another way of looking at promoting National Identity.

The main problem since the introduction of this strategy is that languages and cultures are still left out and only those languages that are popular are well represented. An example will be how Sepedi is represented in the SABC soap operas.

There are currently three soap operas on SABC from Monday to Friday during prime-time. Generations, 7de Laan and Isidingo are the most popular programmes but there is not a single main character who speaks Sepedi. The dominating languages are English, Afrikaans, Setswana, Sesotho and Zulu.

SABC claims to be trying hard to produce great results in catering for all its audience but it is only those viewers with power languages that have the benefit of being represented.

“One obvious feature of how language operates in social interactions is its relationship with power, which is both influential and instrumental. It inclines to make us behave in certain ways or adopts opinions or attitudes, without obvious force”. (Hall, 1996, p: 2)

English is still dominant SABC, “English is seen as the language of upward mobility and empowerment by black South Africans, yet it is historically disempowered, particularly in black rural areas”. (De Klerk, 1996, p: 7).

This fragments the SA public and it does not only happen on television but with the media as a whole. “The fragmentation of the SA media is clearly seen in the DSTV and M-Net, a private subscription and satellite dish”. (Fourie, 2004, p: 3).

The citizens who can afford DSTV watch 98% of overseas channels and they no longer have the wish to switch to the SABC channels. An example will be with the Afrikaans audience who has access to DSTV. A channel, kykNet on DStv is targeted at Afrikaans speakers and its broadcasts 24 hours with Afrikaans programmes. Therefore, Afrikaans speakers have access to this channel and do not have to rely on SABC channels that are meant to promote the National Unity.

Previously a disadvantaged audience does not have the opportunity to watch programmes that are proudly South African. Instead they watch many sitcoms, series, and films that are not from the production companies of South Africa but abroad. The SABC often say it is unable to perform as a public broadcaster because of the financial limitations. The SABC earns most of its money from advertisers by having a commercial channel. It

claims to be helping in its plan of raising its own funds so that it can perform accordingly as public broadcaster.

There has been a drop in the audience figures in the annual report of 2002/3 and there are issues surrounding these declines. Issues of criticizing the SABC for the decline drop of audience numbers are because of the “accusations that SABC has been criticized in mismanagement, nepotism, incompetence and a drop in quality”. (Fourie, 2004, p: 13).

The majority of the people are accusing the SABC of failing to promote the national unity. Minister of Communications Ivy Motsepe-Casaburi accused the SABC of ‘having content that most of the time is about far-away countries and events that have no bearing to our existence...’. (The Star, 13 Dec, 2002).

The SABC should find ways to win the challenges and threats to its function as a public broadcaster. There are a number of inconsistencies that have been discussed to address these challenges. The first one is regulation; there should be a thoughtful approval when addressing regulatory public broadcasting. Secondly, there is an issue of accessibility and funding; lastly is the issue of content.

Fourie (2004) identified four elements under the regulation paradox, namely:

- The inherent dichotomy between the culture and the market;
- diversity and competition leading to monopolization;
- national regulation in a global context; and
- convergence policy which may treat freedom of expression.

Policies should be able to give PBS its obligations and have a structure to guide PBS, the policies must “monitor the accountability of PBS”. (Syverston, 2003, p: 156 cited in Fourie, 2004).

There is a significant distinction in defining accessibility regarding private broadcasting and public broadcasting. In private broadcasting access is defined in terms of affordability and in public broadcasting accessibility should always be there. The main purpose of PBS is for the public to have a diverse range of coverage.

The issue of funding is another major problem that SABC is facing and steps have been taken regarding this issue. There were suggestions that PBS funding should be found through sponsorship, voluntary donation, license fees, direct government funding, taxing and others.

The SABC is trying these ways in terms of getting funds but as always it ends up not performing to its PBS standards. The donors end up taking control of what to broadcast therefore the public channels on SABC end up being commercial channels. “ Mixed funding seem to be the higher way most PBS are going and the paradox is that the higher the advertising figure as a proportion a total revenues the less distinctive a PBS”.

(McKingsley and Company 1999 cited in Fourie, 2004).

There is a need to provide a degree of protection for various aspects of the South African heritage. Television images are powerful and without a desirable amount of domestic content on our screens, we will be vulnerable to imported cultural norms. South Africa has to satisfy multi-cultural needs and at the same time build bridges between all its communities. Sensitivity to the diversity of the local cultures is important and not allowing “westernization” of African Cultures and “Americanization” of South African culture. (Eric Louw, Review: Nov, 1990).

In conclusion, the dominant language in this case, English, still enjoys the benefit of being treated as a powerful language. The SABC needs to represent languages equally so that the languages that were disadvantaged can have the opportunity to be recognized. This will lead to these languages being represented and enable them to contribute to the economical development of the country. The SABC has to work on their content and scheduling of programmes in order to achieve its goals and to follow the mandate of ICASA.

ICASA aims to provide the needs of the public by giving them programmes with language varieties, cultures and religion. However, this would not be achieved if part of the public does not have access to the public broadcaster. Therefore, distribution is a concern that needs to be attended. Repetition of programmes is another issue that must be avoided and new programmes that are proudly South African need to be introduced. Promoting a National Culture can be achieved with the help of the SABC and its programmes content.

Language representation is not the only important matter faced by the SABC. The problem of access and distribution is another main issue. People of SA should be able to have access to the SABC at all times regardless of their environment or distance. The SABC has found out from researchers that coverage is low in more than three provinces of the country and yet changes and broadcast information is slow. People need to be represented on television because representation is about identity. If one's identity is not seen as being as important then his or her history disappears because they have nothing to hold on to. According to Hall (1996)

Identities are about questions or using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not 'who we are' or 'where we come from' so much as 'what we might become', how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves. (Hall, 1996, p: 3).

Therefore identities are constituted through representation as well. Identities are not an endless feature but are regarded as something that changes through time. The identity of the Bapedi society four decades ago is not the same as now. Each time there are new constructions of identity built from the past.

Identities are, as it were, the position which the subjects is obliged to take up while always 'knowing' that they are representations, that representation is always constructed across the 'lack' of, across a division, from the place of the other, and thus can never be adequate – identical to the subject processes which are invented in them. (ibid, p: 6).

Identity and representation cannot be dealt with separately from culture. Each time one thinks of cultural identities, it should be connected with a cultural relationship. It is through our relationship with others that we know where we come from and where we stand. Our present is calculated by our past which makes cultural diversity necessary for cultural and linguistic representation. In the instance where particular groups feel underrepresented, there is a sense that value is not given to the culture and linguistic group.

Programming Analysis on SABC 2

In this section I will analyze how Sepedi is represented on SBC. The investigation is specifically on SABC 2 because it is a ‘full-spectrum free to air’ channel that is aimed at SLG, Tsonga, Venda and Afrikaans viewers. SABC is:

“obliged to provide a comprehensive range of distinctive programmes and services...it must entertain, support and develop culture and education as far as it is possible, it must secure fair and equal treatment for the various cultural groupings in the nation and the country...’²⁸

As part of my investigations I monitored six months of programming on SABC 2 during prime-time from Thursday 01 January 2004 to Saturday 31 July 2004. The monitoring took place between 17:30. Below is a summary of findings. The findings were that

²⁸ South African Content Paper and Regulations 15 February 2002

Afrikaans still has made more programmes that are informative, entertaining and educational as compared to the SLG programmes.

A week's programme has more than 50% of Afrikaans programming including the news.

Below is the breakdown programmes on SABC 2. 2004 was a year of the national elections and there were other programmes that I have not included on the table because they only lasted for a few days during the election period. There were programmes such as Democracy When, Democracy 10, The First Decade, The President's Inauguration Gala, Highlights of the Day, Elections Results, and Elections. These programmes were about providing coverage of the election process including news about regions, live interviews, regional profiles, and nation-wide round up of events, Live crossing to the regions, and footages from previous elections. Below is a breakdown of SABC programming:

Sundays**17:30 – 18:30 50/50, Afrikaans****18:30 – 19:00 Pasella, Afrikaans****19:30 – 20:00 News, Afrikaans****20:00 – 20:30 Gospel Time/Glory Hallelujah, English****20:30 – 21:00 News, Sotho Language Group****Saturday****17:30 – 18:00 Ready, Steady, Cook English****18:00 – 19:00 Maak n' Laas/ Noot vir Noot, Afrikaans****19:00 – 19:30 News, Afrikaans****19:30 – 20:30 GO for it/ Abracadabra, English****20:30 – 21:00 News, Sotho Language Group****Mondays****17:30 – 18:00 News, Tsonga/ Venda****18:00 – 18:30 Belboks Afrikaans****18:30 – 19:00 Sewende Laan, Afrikaans****19:00 – 19:30 News, Afrikaans****20:30 – 21:00 News, Sotho Language Group****21:00 – 21:30 Whammy Sepedi/ Muvhango, Multilingual****21:30 – 22:00 Motswako/ The Mix, Setswana, Sesotho and English**

Tuesday**17:30 – 18:00 News, Tsonga/ Venda****18:00 – 18:30 Blonde Ambisie/ Flink Dink, Afrikaans****18:30 – 19:00 Sewende Laan, Afrikaans****19:00 – 19:30 News, Afrikaans****20:30 – 21:00 News, SLG****21:00 – 21:30 Muvhango, SLG and English****21:30 – 22:00 Fela's TV/ Comedy Cabin, Multilingual****Wednesdays****17:30 – 18:00 News, Tsonga/ Venda****18:00 – 18:30 Pitstop/ Geraas, Afrikaans****18:30 – 19:00 Sewende Laan, Afrikaans****19:00 – 19:30 News, Afrikaans****20:30 – 21:00 News, SLG****21:00 – 21:30 Ashifashabba/ Emzini we zinsizwa, Multilingual****21:30 – 22:00 Khululeka/ Stockvel, Setswana and Sesotho****Thursdays****17:30 – 18:00 News, Tsonga/ Venda****18:00 – 18:30 Face to Face, English****18:30 – 19:00 Sewende Laan, Afrikaans****19:00 – 19:30 News, Afrikaans**

19:30 –20:30 Justice for All/ Zero Tolerance, **Multilingual predominantly English**

20:30 –21:30 News, **SLG**

21:00 – 22:00 The history of political parties/ Our nation in colour, **Multilingual predominantly English**

Fridays

17:30 – 18:00 News, **Tsonga/ Venda**

18:00 – 18:30 The Rugga Show, **English/ Afrikaans**

18:30 – 19:00 Fishy Feshuns/ Gauteng - Aleng - Aleng, **Afrikaans**

19:00 – 19:30 News, **Afrikaans**

20:30 –21:00 News, **SLG**

21:00 – 21:30 Meloding, **Sepedi**

50/50 - is a multilingual programme about animals and nature. Its producers recognize the fact that human beings are also an integral part of the environment and therefore also have a right to use nature, not to abuse it.

Abracadabra – is SA's first entertainment show featuring talented magicians.

Ashifashabba- is a comedy series which reflects the influences by African folklore and urban legends. The main languages are Sepedi, Setswana, Sesotho with Venda dominating the tone; the show has subtitles in English giving the series a universal appeal.

Belboks – an Afrikaans music video programme.

Comedy Cabin – comedy series which brings live comedy to local communities, using a truck that converts into stage, entertains locals while searching for hidden talent.

Flink Dink – the Afrikaans quiz show showcasing SA’s fastest wits and steeliest nerves, it is informative and educational.

Geraas – is an Afrikaans music programme which showcases budding and established SA music talent. It shows the ever growing SA music industry and is aimed at boosting and building a local love for artists and bands.

Gospel Time – is about a celebration of our local gospel stars and will be a platform to launch a new unsigned gospel talent.

Khululeka – is co-sponsored by the IEC as part of their democracy development, takes stock of how far we have come and looks into the future to consider what still needs to happen and it is about teaching people about the importance of the elections.

Nooit vir Noot – is the musical game show where excellence knowledge of musical notes can earn participants bundles of cash.

Meloding – is a contemporary African music programme.

Pitstop – is a prime-time panorama in African music programme.

Ready Steady Cook - based on the highly successful British Format, is about publishing SA chefs and contestants to their limit by making them produce mouth watering dishes in a limited time.

The History of South African Political Parties - is one of the most comprehensive documentaries this country has ever produced. Reflecting the life and the times of our lives for over a century. The history features exclusive interviews with the political party leaders, viewpoints from members as well as commentary from journalists.

Our Nation in Colour - an aerial journey around SA's borders.

The Rugga Show – reflects highlights of all weekend games.

Whammy - is a game show based on the highly successful American

Zero Tolerands - a detective series that is locally produced. The overall result is that SABC is trying hard to represent all the eleven official languages but more effort needs to be made to fulfill local content quotas. News programming is the only programme that caters for eleven languages fully. According to SABC annual report more than 85% of the audience relies on news. The audience sees the SABC as a 'primary and most important source of the news for the nation'. (SABC Annual Report, 2003).

CHAPTER THREE

History of the Bapedi Culture, Traditions and Customs

Chapter concentrated on the language issues and how every language deserves the right to be represented fairly and equally on the SABC. The SABC has its own interpretation of representation based on the ICASA mandate on language. The ICASA mandate on language is not an easy task for SABC because there are some complexities that are encountered. Every official language expects the SABC to represent it in full in terms of showing its culture and tradition objectively. This chapter will explore the culture and tradition of Bapedi society and how it has been portrayed on television through the drama series, Bophelo ke Semphekgo.

In addressing the themes of the drama series I will focus on the rituals and traditions as a core part of my example to reflect on how marriage customs have changed and how Bophelo ke Semphekgo reflects these changes. Marriage in the Bapedi culture is a very important issue. In the past, the main purpose of marriage was to have as many children as possible in order to raise the family. There are different types of marriages that Bapedi used to practice and none of those marriages exist today. All of these marriages require magadi (bride price). The payment of magadi may look like a transaction as people often think. Magadi according to the ethnologists “is compensation to the parents for the loss of services of their daughter”. (Harries, 1929, p: 3).

This gives a detailed and lengthy exposition on marriage rituals by Bapedi society.

Bapedi had different ways of executing marriage rituals and each of the marriage has its

own advantages. A mopedi woman is not considered married in the traditional Bapedi custom until the payment of magadi. Contemporary practices of paying magadi suggest that the fee automatically means that a woman is now married to the man and is normally followed by a white wedding. This differs with how magadi was paid in the ancestral years. There were other formalities that were practiced before a woman can be given over fully to the man. During the old times, magadi was regarded as the foundation of marriage in the Bapedi culture. Magadi was practiced to give responsibility to both partners to remain faithful until the final step of the final ceremony. After paying magadi it will take a period of time for the actual final ceremony to take place.

In the past and in some rural areas nowadays magadi is paid in a form of cattle. Most people who still practice it and who do not have access to cattle pay magadi in the form of money. They pay the magadi fee by calculating the cost of one cow. For example, if cow cost R1000 then they will say they want 10 cows which will be R10 000 in money. Historically, cattle in the Bapedi tradition played an important part in their lives and their domestic affairs were done mostly involving cattle. This was a custom that was not only practiced by Bapedi but other indigenous tribes. There are various ways of arranging for marriage that were done by Bapedi.

In the Bapedi tradition intermarriage was a marriage arranged by two brothers either from the same mother or the same father. In this custom fathers had the opportunity to choose wives for their sons. The wife could be an infant or the prospective girl to be born from

the chosen family. It was not permitted for a father to choose a wife from his elder brother or brothers. The main purpose of the intermarriage was to make sure that the cattle stock rotates within the family and to avoid contact with 'alien' blood. Alien blood would be any blood outside the family clan or tribe. Therefore, intermarriages were practiced in full and it was seen as an important custom by Bapedi.

The arrangement for the marriages is by the father of the young man. He will approach the father of the girl for possible ties between them and if the girl's father agrees, cattle will be paid by the young man's father. These cattle were not a representation of magadi but an acknowledgement to thank them for accepting the proposal to the girl's family. This will be followed by the ceremony whereby more cattle will be paid to the girl's family. Six men will be selected from the family of the young man's side to present the cattle to the girl's family. Three of the men were referred to as 'maditsela' (go between) and the other three were referred to as 'bakgonyana' (the in-laws). Their tasks were to act as official witnesses of the ceremony. All these are done while the girl is still a child or not born yet.

The reason for the payment of the cattle before the girl is born or still a child is for the girl to be fed with milk from the cows in order to grow up healthy and strong. When the girl reaches the age of about 12 years, the father of the young man sends his son to visit the family of the girl. The girl will be asked by her parents to take a calabash and pour water inside to give it to the young man who is visiting. She will also be informed that the young man is her husband-to-be. If the girl does not approve the arrangements done

by her parents she will then refuse to give water to the young man. If she agrees to give water to the young man then it signifies that she approves the arrangements of her parent and it is the same with the young man. If he does not like his father's arrangements he will not take the calabash offered to him and he will then go home to his father to inform him of the disapproval. If he agrees of the arrangements he will take the calabash and drink.

If the young man disapproves his father will then have to wait for the girl to reach a certain stage and he will take her as his wife because he had paid cattle for her. This only happened if the young man's father has many cattle so that he can give to his son to find another girl. If the father does not have enough cattle then the young man does not have a choice but to live by his father's arrangements. On the girl's side, if she refuses her parents' arrangements the cattle will be returned to the owner. These will include all the stock that was born from the magadi cattle. However, if both the girl and the young man agree to the arrangement made by their parents the pact will continue until the girl reaches puberty.

When the girl reaches puberty she then attends initiation school. The girl's father will inform the young man's father that the girl is about to attend initiation school and an ox will be paid from the young man's father. The initiation school will take place for a period of twelve months but this was reduced due to the social changes and pressures on customary schooling. There are few Bapedi girls who still attend initiation school and it is less than three months. After a girl's attendance at initiation school she is then ready to

be taken as a wife. These arrangements will be done by her father by informing the young man's father.

The young man's father will send his son to the girl's place for a visit. The visit will last for two to three days and during this visit the young man will not pay attention to his wife-to-be because the marriage ritual was not over. After the visit, the young man's father will send cattle to the girl's family. The visit would be for the celebration of the first wedding feast called 'monyanya'. An ox will be slaughtered at the expense of the young man's family and the feast is attended by the young man and Bakgonyana. The girl's father is not allowed to attend. After this ceremony the young man and Bakgonyana will go to the girl's father to give a report of the ceremony. The girl's father will then thank them and send them home.

The next step would be another custom called 'go lata' (to fetch). Here, the young man's father will give him a blanket and tell him to go to the girl's house to fetch her. The young man will go to the girl's family and directly inform the girl's father that he has come to fetch his wife. The girl will be given a 'legogo' (mat) to spread on the floor for the young man to lie on as a sign that she is still continuing with the deal. If the girl refuses to spread the mat it will mean that she no longer agrees to the arrangements. In most cases the girl would not disagree to her father's arrangements because it will show disrespect to the father. If the young man agrees to lie on the mat it will also mean that he still approves of the deal and if he is no longer interested he will refuse to lie down. If he

chooses to lie down he will then be required to stay with the girl's family for a period of a year.

In this period a baby will be born and the next ceremony will take place. The last custom is called '**go beka**' and it is the last one to be practiced before the young man takes full ownership of the girl. It is the phase when the young man decides that it is time for him to take his wife and child to his family. The young man as usual will approach his father to inform him of his decision. The young man's father will then inform the girl's father. He will ask for his blessings and thank them for the deal and wish each other success in this arrangement. The young man's father will then choose an ox from the girl's kraal to be a sign of 'maditsela' (road journey). The girl's father will then arrange for the ox to be delivered to the young man's house. After the delivery of the ox, wedding feast number two will take place. This is a feast to say goodbye to the husband and wife and after this feast the girl, her mother, several women and one man who represent the girl's father will take a journey to the young man's house.

Once the girl's companions are in the young man's house they give the girl rules and regulations on how to take care of her in-laws and husband. After this feast the girl's companion returns home and leaves her in the hands of her new parents and new home. This is how arranged marriages were done and it involved a lot of cattle from the man's family. Therefore, this custom was practiced by rich men who had enough stock and is no longer practiced nowadays.

The other type of marriage which was practiced was when a son grows up and finds that his father has not made any arrangements for him, it becomes his duty to look for a potential wife. If the young man feels that he is ready to take a wife he will then approach his father and notify him. If his father does not have enough cattle to pay magadi, the young man will make means to help his father with live-stock. There are formalities involved here and they involve a young man finding a young woman and telling her his intentions. If the young woman agrees to the man's proposal she will then find a messenger to approach her father and inform him about the young man's intentions. The young man will also go to his father to break the news. His father will then take the burden of arranging for a meeting with the young woman's father. The father will then go to the young woman's father to set up a meeting with him. The young woman's father will not oppose the idea but he will not send anyone to arrange a date with the young man's father.

Therefore, the young man's father will go again to the young girl's father for a meeting. This will take place four times with an interval of few months in between. The purpose of this delay is for the young girl's father to see how serious the young man is. During the fourth visit of the young man's father, a traditional beer will be prepared and the young girls' father will select a messenger to accompany the young man's father home. This will be followed by the delivery of the cattle from the young man's father. And the young man and the woman will then be called husband and wife.

Polygamy is another custom that was practiced by the Bapedi society. Polygamy was practiced by anyone from a King to a common person, and there were no limitations on the number of the wives. There were different reasons for polygamy practice. The first reason was that 'polygamy gratified the man's sexual desires. Secondly, polygamy made a man gain reputation of being a 'man' and lastly, polygamy gave men the potential profit to reap by the marriage many daughters in due course'. (Harries, 1929, p: 2).

There are other customs that are seen as uncanny today because of how they were handled in the past. This includes how women were treated differently from men in issues that affected them equally. For example, divorce, male impotence and barren women. According to the Bapedi law if a wife leaves her husband her magadi will be taken back to the husband's family.

If the same behaviour is done by a man nothing will be taken from him because nothing was paid for him. Bapedi men had few signs to show that they want to divorce their wives. The first sign:

“is when husband refuses to eat his wife’s food and accusing her of witchcraft, the second hint was of refusing to clothe his wife. It was a convention that every man prepares the skin forming the wearing apparel of his wife and if for no good reason he fails the wife is entitled to divorce him. Thirdly, if a man who has two or more wives neglects to plough land of one wife when he does for the others, the wife who is neglected may return to her family and accuse her husband of having divorced her. Lastly, divorce is shown when a man closes the entrance to his wife’s hut with reeds and brushes. (Harries, 1929, p: 22).

Therefore, there were no discussions involved in the case of one partner divorcing the other partner. Actions here spoke louder than words and it was an accepted way of dealing with divorce. What could be seen as more strange in this tradition is on matters like infidelity of wives.

‘If a wife becomes impregnated by another man it was not seen as a crime especially if the husband was not spending much time with the wife. The husband will not think of divorcing the wife because the child that the wife will be carrying will be regarded as the husband’s. This is because he is the one who paid magadi. This will also refer to the husband, if he impregnates a married woman somewhere the child is not going to be regarded as his but the husband of the wife he slept with’. (Harries, 1929, p: 23).

Cheating and deceiving was not recognized as bad behavior but as a way of living and this custom was known as 'go thola nageng' (picked up in the fields). In the case of a barren wife she will be scorned and called by names by her husband. For the wife to redeem herself from these insults she will go home to inform her parents that she is barren. Her parents will then organize another man to temporarily sleep with their daughter to prove that their daughter is not barren.

If the woman does not get pregnant she will then be taken to the traditional healers and herbalists for help. If this also turns negative the woman's family will have to find substitute for their daughter. These substitutes were called 'seantlo' (one who goes inside the hut). This would be someone who is from the same clan and blood as the barren wife. It was mostly done by the sister of the barren wife. If she does not have any an immediate relative would be organized. The children who are going to be born from the substitute are not going to be referred as hers but the barren woman's. This is because magadi were paid to her not her substitute. If the barren woman does not find a substitute it was then her duty to ask her parents for the cattle that were paid to her. She will then take the cattle and give them to her husband for him to find a substitute. A substitute that is organized by the barren woman has no status except that she should bear children and nothing more.

A substitute that is organized by the husband had all the status because full magadi was paid for her and she is also able to give birth. Therefore the barren woman will be seen as a useless object and she will be called names by other men and women in the village.

This case was treated differently when it was a man who was unable to bear kids. The wife was not supposed to discuss this matter with anyone. The impotent husband would go to his brother if he has or to the immediate relatives for a substitute. He will then inform the wife of his arrangements and he will tell the wife to open the door each time the substitute arrives.

The impotent husband will also tell his wife and he does not want to see his substitute anywhere near the yard in his presence. Therefore, the impotent husband will always be away to give his wife and his substitute enough time to be intimate. The children that are going to be born are going to be referred to as the children of the impotent husband because he is the one who paid for magadi.

Traditional Bapedi culture is no longer practiced today and where it is practiced it is not the same. The roles of women have also changed and the purposes of people getting married are also not the same as the historical reasons.

An analysis of Sepedi drama series, Bophelo ke Semphekgo

Bophelo ke Semphekgo is a Sepedi drama that airs from 11:00 to 11:30 on SABC1. This drama is one of the ‘Yama Repeats’ as it was first broadcast in 1985 on the then SABC channel known as TV2. As I have explained in the history of television of South Africa, TV2 was established to cater for the Sotho language group. I chose Bophelo ke Semphekgo as my case study because it has most elements of the Bapedi culture and represents the norms and attitudes of Bapedi. It has its pleasures and cultural meanings that Bapedi society relates to and enjoy. Anthony Thobejane, the series director and writer used the codes of television that makes sense of reality to the culture of Bapedi. According to Fiske, “a code is a rule governed system of signs whose rules and conventions are shared amongst members of a culture”. (Fiske, 1987, p: 4).

Fiske recognizes three codes of television and these codes are identified in Bophelo ke Semphekgo. Bophelo ke Semphekgo promotes the language and culture of Bapedi in various ways. It tackles the issue of marriage, womanhood, manhood, respect and other important social and cultural issues. The television codes that Fiske talks about are:

1. Reality → appearance, dress, make-up, environment, behavior, speech, expression etc.
2. Representation → camera, editing, lighting, sound
3. Ideology → are organized into coherence and social acceptability by the ideological codes such as those class, materialism, capitalism etc. (Fiske, 1987, p: 6)

Bophelo ke Semphekgo means ‘life is like a roller coaster. The title says it all because from the first episode to the last one there are ups and downs of life. The roller coaster that is talked about is more about love, love triangles, true love and family matters. Anthony Thobejane was known for his television and radio writing in the 1980s until the mid 1990s. he is an excellent writer with talent and has a passion to deliver good work to his Sepedi audiences. When Bophelo ke Semphekgo was broadcast for the first time in the 1990s, it attracted a broad range of viewers. It delivered to all age groups and was popular.

The main characters of Bophelo ke Semphekgo:

1. **Noko** by Podu Mamabolo
2. **Hunadi** by Lydia Mokgokoloshi
(Nkwešeng’s parents)
3. **Kgaribišane** by Felix Ramokhopha
4. **Modipadi** by Selina Tladi
(Matete’s parents)
5. **Nkwešeng** by Patrick Shai
6. **Matete** by Rinkie Tleane
7. **Senthaolele** by Nakedi Ribane

Character Breakdown

Nkwešeng

Appearance: He is a tall handsome young man in his late twenties. He works as a teacher and he lives with his parents and younger sister. He wears suits when is at work and dresses casual when at home.

Behavior: He is in a long term relationship with Matete and he is planning to marry her. Nkwešeng respects his father and his decisions but he does not have a backbone where his mother is involved. When he is with Senthaoelele he is unable to say no and he is scared to face his problems with Matete.

Environment: Nkwešeng is mostly seen at home and we rarely see him at work. He is either at his home, Matete's home, Senthaoelele's home or in town meeting with his other girlfriends.

Speech: He speaks in a charming tone when he is with Senthaoelele and speaks with respect and love when he is with Matete. His speech is also respectful when he speaks to his father, however, he speaks with a hard tone towards his mother when they argue about Matete's issues. His language is mostly formal and he uses idioms to stress his seriousness. All the main characters of Bophelo ke Semphekgo use Sepedi only throughout the whole series.

Expression: He expresses his love to Matete clearly when he is with Senthaoelele and his mother. He also makes it clear to Senthaoelele that there is no chance for them to marry because he will marry Matete.

Matete

Appearance: She is in her mid-twenties and she is madly in love with Nkwešeng. Matete lives with her parents and she is also a teacher. She comes from a family with high principles and morals. Her name means ‘miracles’. This name is normally given to both girls and boys after their parents have struggled to have children. Matete is an emotional person. She is tall and slender but she is represented as a naïve and vulnerable character and her style of dressing is not appealing. Matete’s speech and behavior is respectful and she expresses her love to Nkwešeng freely to her mother. Matete is mostly seen in her home environment and we never see her at work.

Noko

Appearance: he is a short handsome man with grey hair and he looks healthy. He dresses smartly in suits and ties when he is visiting friends. At home he dresses in casual with cardigan jerseys or pullovers and golf shirts. He likes drinking whisky and brandy. His behavior is well mannered and respected by all the characters in the story. Noko’s speech is hard when he speaks with his wife because they are always having an argument about Matete and her family. He speaks in idioms when he is with his friend Kgaribišane and he speaks with a friendly tone when he is with Nkwešeng. Noko expresses himself loud and clear in front of his wife and his son and also when he is with his friend and his

brother. He is seen in his home environment, his friend's home and his birth place in the rural area of Ga-Chuene in Limpopo (Northern Province).

Kgaribišane

Appearance: he is a short well built man and he wears smart casual most of his time. He does not wear suits except in special occasions like funerals or weddings. He is a well mannered man and he is a straight talker. He does not hide his expressions with anyone and he does not hesitate to make up his mind. He does not hesitate to speak his mind and he loves his family. He is in his mid-sixties and retired.

Hunadi

Appearance: She is a tall and strong built soft woman with good manners. She is the pillar of her family and she is open to her daughter. Modipadi is a house-wife who has everything she needs in the house. She wears traditional dresses and aprons and she dresses up in floral classic dresses when she goes to do shopping. She has a strong guiding speech to Matete and her husband and she has a good way of expressing herself to her family about Nkwešeng 's family. She is in most cases seen at home sewing, flowering plants, ironing, cooking or washing the dishes.

Senthaolele

Appearance: she is a slender, tall and pretty. She always has make-up and she dresses elegant. She is a nurse and she does not mind sharing a man with another woman. She is a heavy drinker and she tells her mother everything that happens to her including her love relationship. She is seen at work, nurse's home, night clubs, friend's houses and town. Her life is not based in one place because she is an explorer. Her behavior is different depending on the situation and mood. When she is drunk, she misbehaves and becomes uncontrollable and this is the same behavior when she is sober.

Fiske's Television Codes

The reality is represented with authentic Bapedi culture and the camera and lighting is used to enhance the experience that the series is set in a rural and urban context. The representation of reality in the urban setting is portrayed through the showing of taxis and taxi rank rushes. In episode ten, Nkwešeng's elder sister is dropped by a taxi outside Nkwešeng's home. In episode eleven, Senthaolele is also dropped by a taxi outside her home. This depicts the environment that it is developed. To represent the township, Thobejane shows it as dusty, dirty and noisy.

In episode fifteen, Matete and her friend walks along Juskei river as a representation of Matete's hometown. Nkwešeng's house is represented as clean with plants, green grass and long trees in the garden. This shows the reality of Nkwešeng's family as middle class. Lighting is bright and the representation of reality sound is shown through the voices of children playing and the sound of cars passing by. The houses are closer to each other to suggest lack of space. There is only one house that has more rooms that serve as a kitchen, bedroom, lounge and bathroom.

Representation of reality in the urban environment revealed differently from the reality in the rural environment. Lighting is darker and the sound is of birds, chicken, sheep, cattle and other domestic animals. The representation of the rural is the landscape, the river, mountains and mud houses. The houses are situated apart of each other and there are more than two houses in one big yard. One hut is used as the kitchen, the other one as a dining room and the other houses or huts as bedrooms. The other depiction of a rural setting is the kraal.

The ideological framework reinforces Bapedi culture and values. Women are seen mostly in the kitchen in the urban environment. In the rural environment women are seen outside cutting wood to prepare fire to cook. They are also seen fetching water from the river.

The other ideology that is stressed in Bophelo ke Semphekgo is the Bapedi saying that: *Lebitla la mosadi ke bogadi* (a woman's grave is at her in-laws). This saying brings out the importance of marriage and how Bapedi still hold to this belief of marriage. In the rural environment women wears Bapedi traditional clothes, necklace, bicep and bracelets.

The rural characteristics represent the culture, identity and ideology of Bapedi more than the urban characters. Ideology: there are a number of organized ideologies that are created in Bophelo ke Semphekgo. The ideology of the old women in the kitchen and serving their husbands with tea or food. They always cover their hair and they act as messengers from their children to their fathers. The young women are given the ideology of not being able to find real love and happiness like their parents. Rural women are respected than urban women and they follow their culture. The representation and culture of the community in Bophelo ke Semphekgo in the urban setting is of educated and modern families.

In episode eleven, Sentaolele's family invites Nkwešeng's family for lunch one Sunday. The invitation does not become a problem because Nkwešeng's family is small and they have a car. The young lovers also go on dates in town and visit the zoo as part of entertainment. The telephone is used as a means to connect with each other amongst the people in the urban areas. In the rural areas there is no electricity or telephones and this is represented when Noko had to take a long journey to Ga- Chuene to announce to his brother about Nkwešeng's intended marriage to Matete.

Synopsis of Bophelo ke Semphego

Nkwešeng is in love with Matete and is about to marry her when he meets Senthaoelele who is hunting for a man. Nkwešeng's father supports his relationship with Matete but her mother disapproves. Nkwešeng's mother wants Nkwešeng to marry Senthaoelele because she is a friend with Senthaoelele's mother. Hunadi does not like Matete because one of Matete's distant uncles killed Hunadi's uncle two years ago. Matete becomes pregnant and Nkwešeng only knows about it in the seventh month because he is having an affair with Senthaoelele. Senthaoelele tells Nkwešeng that does not disagree to Nkwešeng marrying Matete but she would love to be his mistress. Meanwhile, Matete chooses to wait for Nkwešeng to come back to her when he is done with his fooling around. Noko becomes ill and he is taken to hospital where he tells Nkwešeng to marry Matete and passes away.

After the death of Noko Nkwešeng's mother tells him that there is no longer a chance that he will marry Matete because she does not want her Senthaoelele becomes best friends with Nkwešeng's mother and her relationship with Nkwešeng improves. As they are going places together Nkwešeng notices that Senthaoelele does not respect him in front of people and she is an unruly alcoholic. Senthaoelele starts to misbehave in public in the presence of Nkwešeng. Nkwešeng to leave her and that is when he receives the news that Matete gave to a baby boy. Nkwešeng tells his mother that he is tired if listening to her wishes and now he is going back to Matete to marry her. Nkwešeng goes to Matete's family and asks for forgiveness. He decides to leave home for some time and he stops looking after his family.

When Hunadi sees that there is no money in the house anymore and Noko gave Nkwešeng the authority to run the family, Hunadi agrees that Nkwešeng marry Matete. Nkwešeng and Matete's relationship gets better and they start to go back to their happy relationship. After Nkwešeng marries Matete, Sentaolele comes back for revenge. There is a sense of relationship between Thobejane as the writer and the audience as the readers. Thobejane uses 'social action that captures the verbal exchange as well as the mood created in the course of social interaction'. (Sekhukhune, 1998, p: 23).

Thobejane as a first language speaker of Sepedi, understands properly the Sepedi language community speech and their culture. This helped him in his selection of style and choice between what can be written to be spoken in a correct way. Thobejane used various dialects that did not make his work suffer but was the reason for its popularity among audiences. The dialogue between the characters is appealing and you can tell the situation and the feeling of the action. For example Noko enters the front porch of the Kgaribišane's and finds him watering the garden. Their greeting is authentically Sepedi.

Kgaribišane: Noko

Noko: Mokgaga Makubela

The passage above cannot be translated directly because the two characters use their own praise names to greet each other which shows that these men understand and know other. This greeting is a 'simple and straight forward' language that Bapedi use everyday as a

speech “repertoire”. “Thobela” is mostly used by people in the rural areas because they are the ones who have a good trace of their clan and praise names. Alternatively Bapedi people use the word “Thobela” meaning good day. “Thobela” is the name of the first King of the Bapedi nation who ruled during the pre-historic era. ‘to honour him his name has been extended to a passer by in the use of the expression as a form of greetings. Bapedi people regard it with high esteem’. (Sekhukhune, 1988, p 37).

There are a number of stereotypes that Thobejane highlighted in Bophelo ke Semphego that are found in the culture of the Bapedi. The first one is seen is on the character of Senthaoelele. She is pretty, financially independent and she is a professional nurse. In the Bapedi norms a woman who works as a nurse is not a marrying type.

The reasons being that she spends most of her time away from home at night and she will not make a good wife. Senthaoelele uses men for her own personal interest and she does not get attached to everyman she dates except Nkwešeng. In episode six, a fat man waits for Senthaoelele outside her working place. He sees a friend of Senthaoelele and asks her to call her for him. When Senthaoelele’s friend calls she says:

Senthaoelele: ke emetše ke mang? Atšhe, e be ke nagana gore o tla re botša ka motho motho, e be ke nyaka gore a re tliše mo maabane, bjale o sa nyaka eng? Go feta fao ke tseleng ya go ya gae.

Senthaoelele: *who is waiting for me? Ag I thought you will tell me about a real person. I wanted him to give us a lift yesterday so what does he want now?*

Yesterday’s happening are yesterday’s happenings. Otherwise I am on my way home

The above extract shows that Senthaolele plays with emotions of men and she does not care. She behaves this way because she knows she has found a new working post in Johannesburg. This is why Bapedi women do not like it when their sons marry nurses because they are always working from one hospital to another. In the case of Bophelo ke Semphekgo Nkwešeng's mother wants him to marry Senthaolele because of her hatred owing to changes in social structures and economic access. Senthaolele's career is not the only stereotype; her beauty is also represented stereotypically.

In the Bapedi tradition a woman is not beautiful because of her physical appearance. The most important qualities of a woman are hard work, an ability to bear children and a good moral background. Senthaolele does not have any of these features but she is a pretty lady who misuses her beauty to manipulate men to do what she desires.

In the case of the Bapedi cultural conventions and attitudes towards marriage, Thobejane has highlighted a few elements. Traditionally the choice of a partner was the task of the parents as discussed in details in the previous section. Nowadays this norm has faded away because of the modern changes. In Bophelo ke Semphekgo Nkwešeng tells her father that he wants marry Matete. Nook approves the idea and calls Hunadi to hear what her son's decision is. Hunadi objects to the idea but because she is a woman her objection is not taken seriously especially that her reasons are personal and invalid.

The arrangement of Nkwešeng's "Magadi" (bride's money) continues without her approval. The arrangement of magadi involves the immediate relatives. Thobejane shows how this pattern is still being followed in the drama. Nkwešeng announces that he is marrying Matete then Noko takes trip to the rural place where his brother and family live to ask for 'Maditsela' who will act as an intermediate to discuss magadi with Matete's family. Magadi remains the one to which moral obligations; solemn alliances and social recognition are attached.

The general assumptions is that marriage business is a communal affair in which all relatives, friends and acquaintances of the bridegroom feel obliged to contribute toward the marriage goods'. (Cited in Sekhukhune, 1988, p: 109).

As I have mentioned before every woman in the Bapedi culture is entitled to be given magadi as a part of executing marriage regardless of class or wealth. The bride to be does not in a way get near the arrangements of magadi. The issue of magadi will only involve her parents and the family of his groom. This part still remains the same in the traditional discussion of magadi. Matete knows that Nkwešeng's family is coming to discuss magadi with her family but she does not tell her parents. Instead she waits for her parents to tell her of Nkwešeng's intentions. This is how it is done in the culture of Bapedi and is accepted this way.

Thobejane has set the announcement of Matete's magadi in a typical Bapedi way. In episode thirteen, Matete and her parents are having lunch when his father says:

Kgaribišane: afa mmago o go boditše ditaba tas gaboNkwešeng?

Did your mother tell you about Nkwešeng's news?

Matete: Aowa, nna mma a se a mpotsa selo.

No father, she did not say anything to me.

Kgaribišane: Aowi, Modipadi o reng o utla ngwana o taba e kaa?

Ao, Modipadi, why are you hiding such big news?

Modipadi: Ase ka mo utela, ke rile ke tla mmotsa ka yona nako ye.

I did not hide them; I was going to tell her at this time.

Kgaribišane: e re ke ye go fa dikgogo tšaka meetse

(Standing) let me go give my chicken water (he leaves)

Modipadi: Tatago Nkwešeng e be ale mo mola le ile Durban, o be tlile go kgopela sego sa meetse. Nkwešeng's father was here by the time you were in Durban. He was here to ask for the water calabash.

Matete: Ke ditaba tše botse tšeo. That is great news

Thobejane shows that in the Bapedi culture men are not supposed to discuss serious matters with their daughters even when it concerns them. Kgaribišane decides to go outside to give his chickens' water in order for Modipadi to break the news to Matete. It is not a shock to Matete because she knew all along that Nkwešeng's father was coming.

It also does not surprise her that her father is not the one who breaks the news to her. It is traditionally accepted that girls will be friends with their mothers and the same will happen with boys. Modipadi tells Matete that Nkwešeng's father asked for 'sego sa meetse' (water calabash) in literal terms.

If one is not a Sepedi speaker it will be difficult to understand what she means. To ask for water calabash is the representation of the common metaphor that is expressed to ask for another person's daughter in marriage. This is commonly used speech that is used by the Bapedi in their community speech. This speech reflects back in the old days when arranged marriage was practiced. When a young man was visiting the family of his wife to be and the wife is asked to pour water in a calabash for her husband to drink. This saying 'sego sa meetse' is now been used as an agreement that is done between the two families. Once magadi has been paid in full the daughter should then leave her family to stay with her new in-law family. There are duties and behavior that the bride must practice in her new home with new family.

Thobejane highlights it when Modipadi finds Matete washing the clothes;

Modipadi: O ka be o ntše o ithuta sesadi gobane bogadi o ile go hlatswetša monnago, matswalago le ratswalago.

You should be practicing womanhood because at your in-law's place you are going to wash for your husband, your mother in law and your father in law

Matete: Aowa, tšeo ga di ntshwenye nna

That does not bother me

Matete does not get bothered that she will be looking after her in-laws because it is accepted in the culture. It is part of the roles of women in the Bapedi culture. There are two generations in Bophelo ke Semphekgo, the modern characters and the old characters. This generation difference shows different behavior in women.

In Matete's family her mother has patience and perseverance and experience. Her experience is seen when she tells Matete to wait for Nkwešeng who is busy with Senthaolele. Modipadi tells Matete to be patient until Nkwešeng decides to come back to her which he did. Modipadi does not wear pants and she always has something on her head to cover her hair. We see her in the kitchen preparing something in most cases. If she is in the bedroom we see her sewing on her sewing machine. The modern generation, Matete, is the opposite of her mother. She is an emotional person and suicidal. She does not have strong beliefs and perseverance like her mother.

There are different behaviors that are seen from the men and women characters living in the rural and urban areas in Bophelo ke Semphekgo. The behavior of the women in the townships is different from those in the rural areas. In the sequence when Noko arrives with his car in Ga-Chuene, we see a shot of a woman in her mid forties kneeling down in a squatting position cutting wood with an axe. Then there is a pan into Noko's car approaching and a woman walking besides the car carrying a tin of water on her head.

Noko's car stops and the woman with a tin of water pass by without saying a word. Then the last shot in the sequence is if a group of men sitting under a tree. We see Noko's brother coming to the car to greet Noko. When he gets to the car the woman who was cutting the wood comes to Noko and shakes hand with him and then leaves. After few seconds the woman who was carrying a tin of water comes to Noko and shakes hand while bending on one knee as a gesture of greeting.

Nowadays it is commonly practiced in the rural areas because in the townships people no longer practice their traditions and customs. When Noko and Ngwato are inside the house the same woman who was carrying a tin of water comes inside the house carrying a bowl of water and a towel. She gives water to Noko and Ngwato and speaks in a low pitch voice that water is ready for them to wash their hands, she lives the room and comes back after a few minutes with a tray carrying two plates, one plate has porridge and the other one has meat and soup. This behavior shows how Bapedi men eat and how this has shifted in the townships whereby a man eats alone in one plate.

Traditionally two plates are used to dish up for a man. One will be used to carry meat which is usually an enamel plate and the other one for porridge, is a home made traditional plate. This sequence also shows that according to Bapedi culture it is not good manners to ask a visitor if they are hungry. Once a visitor comes to your place the first thing for the women to do is to prepare food and if the visitor is from far like Noko a chicken should be slaughtered.

In Sepedi culture men have a different attitude towards language and thus are the same with women. For men there are negative and positive attitudes which cause the language differentiation. The negative attitude is because of the psychological behavior that is given to women. 'Men on the hand are described as aggressive, courageous and powerful. Sexism in Sepedi can be clearly understood in the analysis of proverbs and idiomatic expression about women' (Sekhukhune, 1988, p: 156).

Key (1975) says woman accorded inferior status in their lives and this makes them appear humble and submissive before men. This behavior is termed linguistic sex varieties. Regarding this opinion Trugill (1974) points out that:

Linguistic sex varieties arise because language is closely related to social attitudes. Men and women are usually different in that society lays down different behavior patterns from them. Therefore, language reflects the social fact. (cited in Sekhukhune, 1988, p: 127).

Women's language among the Bapedi traditional societies is characterized by a specialized variety of language. These varieties relate to the women's sexual and maternity experiences. An example is when Matete tells her mother that she is pregnant:

Matete: Mma go na le selo se ke nyakago go boledišana le wena ka sona.

Mother, there is something that I want to discuss with you

Modipadi: ke eng, molato ke eng?

What is it, is there anything wrong?

Matete: Mma, ga ke ikwe gabotse mo mmeleng

Mother, I don't feel right in my body

Modipadi: o nyaka go mpotša gore...

You want to tell me...

Matete: ee mma, ke gabedi

Yes, mother I am double

Modipadi: ke kgwedi tše kae?

How many months?

Matete uses an idiomatic expression to inform her mother of her pregnancy. 'ke gabedi' which literally means 'I am double' means that Matete is no longer alone but she has company in the tummy. Modipadi understands this language and it is seen as a polite way to announce pregnancy. The idiomatic expressions and utterances are used in everyday life and they reflect the general influence of the female role. Below is an example of sexism in Sepedi language which is practiced by the male speech:

Mošaa, kwa lentšu la banna, o se kwe mmago

Young man listen to the word of men, not your mother.

This saying expresses the way men teach their sons a negative attitude towards women. Young men are encouraged not to confide in their mothers especially issue that are important. There are the stereotypes that according to Chikand, men have coined them'. (Sekhukhune.1988. p: 185).

It is not always negative attitudes, there are positive expressions that are based on motivation and they function as interpreting the intended goals and attitudes of man towards woman. An example:

Mosadi ke tšhwene o lewa mabogo

Literally: A woman is a baboon, her hands are eaten

It means that the beauty of a nubile woman is weighed in terms of her industriousness and competence. (Sekhukhune, 1988.p: 158).

The expression is:

Lebitla la mosadi ke bogadi

The women's grave is her in-law's place

It means that no matter how hard a married woman's encounters problems with her in-laws; she cannot in any chance divorce or go back to her parents. Divorce is a taboo in the Bapedi culture but it is recognized as discussed earlier and it is viewed as lacking morals.

In Bophelo ke Semphego Thobejane highlights this saying in the opposite way. When Matete quarrels with her mother in law to be on the phone, her parents tell her that if Hunadi does not treat her with human kindness she should not hesitate to come back home, Matete's parents know it very well that it is a taboo for a Mopedi woman to get

divorced but they do not get embarrassed to tell their daughter to do so if there is no other way.

This could mean that Matete's parents will not allow their daughter to be ill treated and accept it as part of culture. Matete's family breaks the rules of culture so that their daughter becomes happy. This custom is now being practiced by many Pedi people and it is becoming accepted as part of life not tradition. The language variety is also shown in the naming of men and women. 'The use of nominal suffix-**gadi** in the names of Bapedi females is normally used. For example:

Morutiši- morutiš**igadi**

Male teacher- female teacher

At times the suffix-gadi is not clearly seen because it uses the suffix-**adi**. The purpose of this suffix is to distinguish themselves from male praise names.

In Bophelo ke Semphekgo, Thobejane highlighted this is in the naming of the old generation characters. The names like Hun**adi** and Modip**adi**.

Respect is one of the cultural aspects that Thobejane points out in the story. Nkwešeng refers to Matete's father as 'Papa' (father) and her mother as Mma (mother). According to the Bapedi culture a mother or father is not necessarily supposed to be a biological father or mother.

Every male or female who is old enough to be one's father should be addressed as such. 'This principle is embedded in the social organization of the people whereby each person has to respect all people belonging to age-grades older than his own, irrespective of their genealogical status.

Myth is also highlighted in *Bophelo ke Semphekgo*, after the death of Noko Matete gives birth to a baby boy; Kgaribisane names the boy after Noko's clan name and calls him Madimenyana.

On the other hand when Nkwešeng learns that Matete has given birth to a baby boy he also talks to himself that he will name after his father. This is how the Bapedi people show their respect to the non-living. The Bapedi people are taught to respect the dead more than the living. The general belief amongst members of the Bapedi traditional society is that the spirit of the dead are immortal and they are always with the living.

In most cases the dialogue is dominated by idiomatic dialogue. *Bophelo ke Semphekgo* uses Sepedi that everyone from all dialects can understand. For an example Matete speaks in the accent that is from Ga-Chuene district while her father speaks in the

Batlokwa dialect from Batlokwa district. When these two characters speak you can tell by their accent where they come from and this does not belittle the characters and it is accepted as a dialect variety. Therefore 'when a person speaks in a dialect it does not mean his or her language is of a 'lesser logic' or it is of a 'lesser language'. (Gregory and Carrol, 1978, p 12).

Martmet (1965) 'there seems to be no objective culturally non-biased way of measuring a dialect. 'Dialect is used to refer to the relationship of language habits with the speaker's place on dimensions on individually, time, place, social class and speech community'. Therefore, 'accent normally refers to "particularly" and acoustic features of language while dialect refers to the totality of lexical, grammatical and phonological and features. Dialect incorporate accent but remains distinct from it. (Haugen, 1996, p: 143).

'A dialect gives a person an identity defining him in terms of birth place, class. Education and age. (Gregory and Carrol, 1978, p: 12) 'Writing is a myth and myth is a story by which a culture explains or understands some aspects of reality on nature'. (Tulloch, 1990, p: 8).

There are primitive myths which are about life and death, men and gods, good and evil. Then there are the sophisticated myths that are about masculinity and feminism about the family success. (Tulloch, 1990, p: 8).

The main focus of this chapter was on how culture has changed over time shown through analysis of Bophelo ke Semphekgo. The Bapedi customs and beliefs that were practiced forty years ago are no longer the same. Everything has shifted from the beliefs, style of dressing, morals, language and tradition to the way things are practiced now. Marriage is no longer something that the parents discuss without listening to their children's concerns. There are some traces of culture but they have also been shifted to fit in these day's life style and behavior. Bophelo ke Semphekgo shows how some of the Bapedi culture was still being practiced in the 1980's.

The older generation in the story still wears hats to cover their heads and they are unemployed but they have everything they need because their husbands provide for them. The new generation women characters have shifted, they are educated and they do not wear anything on their heads and they do not have steady relationships like their parents. Bophelo ke Semphekgo portrays a particular period of Bapedi culture. Thobejane highlights the important attitudes and behavior of the Bapedi culture in an interesting way. He uses Fiske's codes of television to execute his intentions.

Drama, even at a low budget also provides an opportunity to deal with contemporary matters of interest to people, historical drama may serve to teach about the past and therefore, enlighten the present. SABC must broadcast authentic and realistic representation of Bapedi culture on television, to ensure that it is seen as part of mainstream society and to encourage and to encourage better understanding of the Bapedi culture.

Before democracy there were a number of Sepedi television drama series that were shown on the then SABC channel TV2. There were dramas like Bophelo ke Semphekgo, Mokgonyana Matswale, Makhurumetsa, Ngwana ngwanaka o kae? and others.

These drama series were in Sepedi and Bapedi audience had the pleasures of enjoying their language, culture and traditions being fully represented on television. Sepedi speakers still need more drama series that would represent them.

After democracy there has been the promotion of multilingualism and multiculturalism as part of promoting identity and this is in a way jeopardizing the development of the previously disadvantaged languages. Previously disadvantaged languages no longer receive full recognition on television on television even though democracy is about facilitating representation for minority groups.

In most cases when Sepedi is represented, it is in a form of a rural accent and sarcastic to the Bapedi society. Programmes like Yizo Yizo 3 and Emzini wesinziswa 3 and Muvhango 3 each have Sepedi characters who speak in Sepedi that is represented as rural. Therefore, people will associate Sepedi with rural people who hamper promoting Sepedi and creating a stereotype. It is a concern amongst the Bapedi society groups about the stereotypical portrayal of Bapedi on television. Drama series like Ke bona boloi which was in Sepedi did not show a positive representation of Bapedi society.

Groups from Bapedi talked of the way in which it presented certain issues like witchcraft and superstitions on television. The treatment of the various important issues were neither accurate nor did it reflect the way in which the system had changed over time. Moreover, Ke bona boloi had characters who were not fluent Sepedi speakers. Therefore, the series caused ridicule in Bapedi audiences.

Chapter Four

Section on Regional and Community Broadcasting Television

The previous chapter dealt with the custom and culture of Bapedi society. Bapedi people have a complicated way of executing marriage, making their marriage customs unique. I have made comparisons of how marriage was practiced and how it has changed in the drama series, Bophelo ke Semphekgo. The series portrays the changing beliefs of marriage customs in the Bapedi culture. Bophelo ke Semphekgo shows a sign of a cultural shift as compared to the detailed analysis of the Bapedi marriage in the nineteenth century. The shifting of culture is an important yet a crucial factor of life and people should be aware of the shifts in order to become part of the cultural experience. “Cultural experience is always experience of the others: the others, the real others, are the dispensable transformation objects in historical change”. (Hall and Du Gay, 1996, p: 82)

SABC is going through a major transition that involves accommodating all the eleven official languages of the country. There is a belief that regional broadcasting will be the problem solver of giving all the languages a chance to be represented fairly. Therefore, this chapter will go through regional and community broadcasting and highlight the advantages and disadvantages of having a regional channel. I will also look at how other countries have structured regional broadcasting.

There are questions about how the SABC addresses the language issues and there have been some steps that the SABC has followed to promote the eleven languages of the country. This is done through the help of the Broadcasting Amendment Act which “provides the establishment of two regional services. These regional services were “supposed to be up and running by March 2004, but the process of investigating their feasibility and financial viability and whether SABC would be able to address the language issue”. (Fourie, 2004, p: 12).

“The new policy and competitive strategy that are used by the SABC have made it to lose distinctiveness as a public broadcaster”. (ibid, p: 14) This is because SABC is concentrating more on competing with the private broadcast.

Statistics according to census 2001 says that South Africa has a population of 48, 8 million. KwaZulu-Natal has most people of 9, 4 million, Gauteng with 8, 8 million, other provinces with a lower number. In terms of languages, the most common language spoken in South Africa is Zulu, followed by Xhosa the Afrikaans. About 54% of South Africa has access to television, 44% is African, 74% is coloured. Section 22 (i) of the IBA Act obliges ICASA to ensure that in the provision of public broadcasting services, the needs of the languages, cultural and religious groups are duly taken into account.

The public broadcasting system should be designed in a manner that allows for the fair treatment and development of all eleven official languages of South Africa, with special emphasis on those that have been marginalized, and also in a manner that contributes towards the appreciation of all the different languages and cultures in South Africa.

ICASA is aware that the denial of language rights is a denial of continuity, of tradition, of historical memory, each of which is important to living in the present and essential to the survival of a people.

“The Broadcasting Amendment Act mandates the SABC to apply to ICASA for two additional regional television channels that will focus specifically on marginalized official languages, which are not adequately catered for by the SABC television channels”. These applications must be made by 08 December 2003).

In August 2003 ICASA published a discussion paper “inquiry into regional television”. The purpose of the discussion paper was to gather comment from all stakeholders on the introduction of public regional television services, under the territory of the SABC.

Section 2 of the IBA Act, No. 153 of 1993 (“the IBA Act) states that the primary purpose of the Act is to provide for the regulation of broadcasting and promote the provision of a diverse range of sound and television broadcasting services on a national, regional and local level, which when viewed collectively, cater for all language and cultural groups and provide entertainment, education and information.

To promote the development of public, commercial and community broadcasting services which responsive to the needs of the public, ensure that broadcasting services viewed collectively develop and protect a national and regional identity, culture and character, provide regular news services, actuality programmes on matters of public interest, programmes on political issues of public interest, and programmes on matters of international, national, regional and local significance.²⁹

There is a clear indication that the SABC is unable to provide for all the languages and cultures of the country on the two SABC channels. It has been argued that the SABC would be more representative of linguistic groups through regional and community broadcasting that would help in promoting the previously marginalized languages and cultures. Therefore, the licensing of regional and community television stations would help to promote various cultures and languages of South African citizens.

Regional television would help in encouraging the development of regional identity, culture and character. It will also take a vital role in promoting regional production companies and regional economy. According to the SABC’s editorial draft policy “public

²⁹ Section of the IBA Act No 153 of 1993

regional television has to be defined by the characteristics of relevant regional content, reflective of the language and socio-cultural backdrop of the regions, some level of local content origination and production.³⁰

ICASA has given licenses to two other channels that will hopefully cater to all the official languages. These two channels will be based on regional consolidation with languages reflective of the regions. Region A will cover Limpopo, Gauteng, North West, Free State and Northern Cape; and will broadcast in Setswana, Sepedi, Sesotho, Tsonga, Venda and Afrikaans. Region B will cover Mpumalanga, Limpopo (east border).

Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, Western Cape and will most likely broadcast in Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele, Swati and Afrikaans. English is not represented in the regional quota because English has been the dominant language since the inception of television in South Africa. The SABC has planned to reach its goal of trying to constantly combine unilingual and multilingual programmes creatively, and to explore technologies such as subtitling.

An important boost to meeting the language mandate is the possibility of the SABC's complementing its national television service with regional services in languages other than English, as required by the Broadcasting Act. The languages that will be accommodated here will be Sepedi, Setswana, Sesotho, Tsonga, Venda and Afrikaans. Region B will be Mpumalanga, Limpopo (eastern border) Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal,

³⁰ SABC's submission to ICASA on the "Inquiry into Regional and Local Television", September 2003, p: 21

Eastern Cape and Western Cape. The languages would be Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele, Swati and Afrikaans.

On the other hand, Community broadcasting would also promote the identity, culture and traditions of the community. Both broadcasting would help in the developing of skills and job creation in the regions and communities. One may argue the need for Community Television while there is a Regional Television. Community is “the locality in which people live having cultural, religious and other similar characteristics in common. People from the community also fall under the regional and community broadcasting would help in promoting each language and culture successfully without the disturbance of other languages and cultures. This would also interrupt the idea of nation building because the people will not have a chance to each other’s traditions, cultures and languages.

The reason for this grouping is because majority of these languages in one group are mutually intelligible. “Public regional broadcasting television is not defined in the IBA Act or in the Broadcasting Act. Section 22A (1) of the Broadcasting Act only indicates that the services must be broadcast regionally, in languages appropriate to the region being served. The discussion paper suggests that the term “region” could mean more than one province”. An example is in Gauteng Province which it is included in both region A and B.

Regional television must be able to provide programming that informs, educates and entertains and it should also deliver news, information programming and children's educational drama and South African drama in the indigenous languages other than Afrikaans and English. Section 22A of the Broadcasting Act specifically directs the SABC to apply to ICASA in terms of section 41 (4) of the IBA Act, to be licensed to provide additional regional television broadcasting services.³¹

To avoid complications there is a need for more frequency allocations in addition to the existing one. The introduction of regional television has been initiated by the proposal that was passed by the Government under the ambit of the SABC. This policy objective was enshrined in Section 22A (1) of the Broadcasting Act which provides that "in the performance of its public mandate under Section 10 (1) (a) and (b), the corporation must within nine months of the commencement of the Broadcasting Amendment Act, 2002, apply to the Authority in terms of Section 41 (4) of the IBA Act, read with Section 45 (2) of that Act to license it to provide additional television services which broadcast:

- Regionally;
- in such official languages as are appropriate, having regard to language usage within respective regions served by the proposed services; and
- so as to ensure that between these regional services, broadcasting in the languages of Sepedi, Setswana, Sesotho, Swati, Ndebele, Afrikaans, Zulu, Xhosa, Venda and Tsonga is provided on an equal basis.³²

³¹ Regional Television Broadcasting Services, Position Paper, November 2003, p: 19

³² Section 22A of the Broadcasting Act

It has been finalized that Regional Television would be funded by money from the parliament, donations, grants and sponsorship. ICASA has decided not to allow advertising but if advertising were to be allowed services would still be largely dependent on government funding for their survival. Regional television will not use English in any of the regional channels. Where there is an interview in English it would be translated in one of the indigenous languages or have a voice over.

It was also suggested that more air time should be allocated to Venda, Tsonga, Swati and Ndebele because currently on the national television these languages are hardly represented. Each regional serviced shall be required to ensure that they provide a range of actuality programmes. This includes documentary programming, documentary drama, informal knowledge building programmes and regular current affairs programmes.

Community broadcasting would be an alternative in offering potential to people to enable them to express their opinions within their communities. Community broadcasting is perceived to have two major roles in the development of the country. The first one is the “provision of local development information via the community broadcaster”. The second one is “process of establishing, managing and programming a community broadcaster within a community”. (Keene-Young, 1994, p: 2). This is a way of forming the basis for community empowerment and a way for community members to restore their dignity and be proud of taking part in politics and expressing themselves.

“The IBA allows for preference to be given to the disadvantaged communities in the allocation of licenses”. The challenging part here is that these communities should be able “to control their broadcasting and ensure that it meet their needs and serve their interest as a community” these communities should also “be able to participate in the programming of the community by accessing an outlet for the expression of their opinions and their participation of their community affairs”. (Keene-Young, 1994, p: 4).

The IBA defines a Community Broadcasting Service as broadcasting service which”

- Is fully controlled by a non-profit entity and carried on for non-profitable purposes;
- serves a particular community;
- encourages members of the community to participate in the selection provision of programmes to be broadcast in the course of such broadcasting services; and
- may be funded by donations, grants, sponsorship advertising or membership fees.³³

The problem of establishing community broadcasting would be the lack of skills and funding. People from previously disadvantaged background need to gain important skills that should be taken into consideration before implementing the community channels.

The communities should be able to bring back their dignity which was taken away from them in the years of monopoly broadcasting by the Nationalist government. Without skills, Community Broadcasting would fail and this would mean going back to National

³³ IBA Broadcasting Act 1993

Broadcasting where languages are hardly represented. Therefore, people should be encouraged to participate in Community Broadcasting. “Enabling people to participate fully in their development requires recognition of and respect for “indigenous knowledge.” (Awa-N, 1987-1989 cited in Keene-Young, 1995, p: 20).

Communities have respect and knowledge of their culture, language and religions which would enable informed broadcast of their traditions and cultures on television. Many societies feel inferior to participate in functions of their traditions and beliefs because they feel they are not proper. This is because of the bad past that discouraged people to participate fully in their traditions. If Community Broadcasting comes to existence then people must be trained with outside assistance.

This should not mean that the outside people would then take part in the broadcasting of Community Television. Outside assistance should be there for local people to gain skills and they should control their Community Broadcasting. Communications between the community should be encouraged so that they do not get robbed their robbed responsibility by outsiders. “Without communication there could be no participation, community communication is the basis for all development which aimed at self-reliance and empowerment”. (Keene-Young, 1995, p: 23).

Black South Africans have never participated in the development of South Africa since the period of colonialism followed by apartheid. Therefore, they do not have knowledge on how and where to start promoting and developing their cultural identities and languages. Their rights to participate in communication ‘was removed and replaced with a system which through its communication policies relegated them to secondary statuses’. (Keene-Young, 1995, p: 37).

Besides skills as a problem in implementing the regional and community broadcasting, lack of finance is also a major concern. If there is no funding from the government advertisers might try their luck and regional and Community Broadcasting would again be a commercial matter. Therefore, the idea of promoting marginalized languages will fail to materialize as a reality.

There are conflicting views on the introduction of Regional and Community Broadcasting. The positive aspect is that people will be able to participate in the development of the country if services are introduced. People will gain skills and respect of their cultures and they will be proud to be part of the developing South Africa. The negative aspect is how will these people gain the needed skills and where would the money to train these people come from.

The other concern is that if we have Regional and Community Television are we not going to go back to the ideas of the apartheid era of segregating people and culture. If we have these different Regional and Community Services when are we going to promote the idea of a national unity? Therefore, there should be a channel that will cater for all the marginalized languages from the national broadcaster, a channel that would be accessible to all the people of different languages and cultures as a way of promoting National Identity.

ICASA requires regional television licenses to ensure that their programming across the schedule as a whole and a prime-time reflects the diversity of the South African provincial identities, cultures and characters in the region covered by regional television services. Research has been made by the Authority about regional television in other countries. The Australia Broadcasting Authority (ABA) has been used as a case study. The ABA has imposed new license conditions on Regional Television in four markets of Queensland, South Wales, North Wales and Regional Victoria. The license conditions divide each aggregated license area into a number of local areas reflecting the different communities of interest within that market or license area.

All regional television licenses in these four aggregated markets will be required to broadcast material of local significance to meet a weekly average total of 120 points in each specified local area. Points will accrue on the basis of 2 points per minute for local news and 1 point per minute for most other types of local content, excluding paid advertising. The Authority stated that the quotas for Regional and Community Television

will be determined during the process of drafting regulations for these sectors. The production of South African programmes will develop the South African production industry. Therefore, the quotas for public broadcasting have been increased. With effect from August 2003, the quota for public broadcasting is 55% and for communication is 35%. Research done by the United Kingdom's Independent Television Commission; states that broadcasters must recognize their special relationship to their sense of community and national unity.

“The most effective ways in which they can do this is by enabling more programmes to be made by the regions for network transmission”. This quota is what South Africa needs to promote national interest and regional interest which will ‘capture the diverse views of broadcasting services located in different cultural centres within South Africa’.

(Discussion Paper 2003, p: 23).

The introduction of Public Regional Television is important because it will give more opportunity to promote the different cultures and lives of the people living in the same region. The introduction of Public Regional Television does not mean that it should broadcast for the whole day or daily. According to the research that was conducted in European countries, it has been found that there is no Regional Television that is broadcast for a full day.

Regional Television in other Countries

“There are a number of small television stations which broadcast a few hours a day and are linked up with larger companies to provide a sustainable service, for instance, Independent Television Stations (IIV) in the United Kingdom and regional centres in France which are linked up with French National Broadcaster.³⁴ “In the United Kingdom Public Regional Television is a broadcast by the public broadcaster, British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), as part of its mandate.

The BBC is the largest UK broadcaster; it runs two national television channels. In a study conducted by UK Independent Television Commission and the Broadcasting Standards Commission on whether regional identity and Regional Broadcasting are still regarded as being important in today’s global society, it was found that the audience felt that both national and regional identities are crucial and that regional broadcasting is critical in ensuring that they stay alive”. (Discussion Paper, 2003, p: 19).

Regional Public Broadcasting in Africa has been in use by the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation. Nigeria has one of the most competitive television industries in Africa. Television transmission began in West Nigeria in 1959 and a year later in East Nigeria. The Federal Government established the Nigerian Television Service in Lagos in 1962. The development of television broadcasting reflected regional and federal politics and desires. Over the past 25 years 34 television stations were established in Nigeria at a rate of 1.5 stations per year.

³⁴ ICASA Discussion Paper on Regional Broadcasting

There is increased diversity of choice of television channels. There are currently 80 television channels operating in Nigeria provincial and regional stations. The regulatory authority is the National Broadcasting Commission which was established in 1992. Public Broadcasting Service is done by Nigerian Television Authority which was established in 1977 and brought all ten existing television stations under the control of the Federal Government of Nigeria. (Discussion Paper, 2003, p: 20).

In France, Public Regional Television is only offered on France 3. RTV broadcasting services have been established in France more than twenty years ago. RTV is produced through regional centres in the main cities of France by being broadcast on regional “windows” within a national grid of programmes. Its main characteristics are the provision of regional programming including news. RTV in Germany is characterized by regional programming. Its main characteristics are the provision of regional programming including news. It is carried on channel 111. Germans have three models for RTV:

- a collaboration between broadcaster and newspapers;
- public access channels-platforms for individuals to provide and distribute their own programming.³⁵

In Poland, RTV is broadcast through regional centres. The purpose of these centres is to create special forums where the public debates about regional problems and the functioning of local and national government are discussed. Regional programming

³⁵ Enquiry Paper into Regional Television, ICASA, 2003

consists of local news, documentary, touring, educational, children and magazine programmes.

The audience reach of RTV is approximately 82% of Poland's population and it broadcast a total of around 730 hours of programming. The international survey demonstrated that RTV "windows" for public RTV broadcasting services are commonly made available on national channels, in many cases by the public broadcaster.

Television Africa is a content provider for 18 public television stations operated by the State of Nigeria. Each television station in Nigeria has a mandatory 40% local programming requirement. The lack of independent production houses makes this figure difficult to achieve. Existing independent production houses suffer from lack of funding as they are reliant on funding from major projects from multinationals, foreign aid and government. (Discussion Paper, 2003, p: 21).

In South Africa there might also be a problem of lack of independent production houses that aims at the local production. There is a need for more production houses that make programmes that give service to the people in the regions. Most countries share the same reasons of having Regional Public Broadcaster to give services that encourage and promote national and regional diversity. This leads to the promotion and full coverage of minor languages. Therefore, Regional Television should be free-to-air broadcasters rather than by subscription services so that every member of the society can have access to what is happening around them. Like other countries, South Africa has the desire to encourage

diversity and create opportunities for certain languages, such as the marginalized indigenous official languages that are spoken by large sections of the population in certain regions. South Africa should start with Regional Public Broadcasting. There is a lot to be learned from Regional Public Broadcasting which will help in the introduction of other services.

In conclusion, Regional and Community Broadcasting needs to be looked at very carefully. ICASA would like to give the people who were previously disadvantaged the opportunity to participate in the broadcasting matters. The most important thing to do before giving away extra licenses, ICASA should look at particular regions. It would be of no help if people in the Limpopo region are headed by a person from KwaZulu-Natal. This does not mean we should not refuse people with skills and knowledge to help but they should not be given the authority to decide.

Regional and Community people need to be empowered and given the opportunities to showcase their creativity and some undiscovered skills and talent. Community and Regional Broadcasting must be funded by grants, donations, and membership fees that would make them concentrate on becoming a public broadcaster than falling into the trap of competing with private broadcasters. No advertisers should be allowed in Regional and Community Broadcasting unless it is a free advertisement.

The introduction of Public Regional Television is important as it offers the opportunity to reflect the lives living in different regions and promote a sense of community in those

areas. The unforeseen problem about Regional Television is the large number of black people in the broadcast industry who lack skills. White people are still the ones making decisions because they have skills and they are still the ones who win the tenders and they are still the ones behind the cameras. 'The power of manufacturing representation still lies in the hands of white production companies, writers and directors'.³⁶ (Mistry, 2003, p: 36).

There are drama series that represent about the lifestyle of black people but they are written by white writers. An example is Muvhago, dominated by white writers and this raises many questions about promotion of black empowerment.

³⁶ The Media 1997-2003, 2003/07/01

CHAPTER FIVE

Section on Private Broadcasting Television

The previous chapter addressed how Regional Broadcasting can be facilitated in South Africa and how ICASA has planned for the development of Regional Broadcasting in the country. SABC 4 and 5 will be launched at a later stage as part of promoting diversity and language representation on television. The IBA Act stated that ‘its primary duty is on providing for the regulation of broadcasting and the promotion of provisioning a diverse range of sound and television broadcasting services on a national, regional, and local level’.³⁷ (IBA Act of 1993) The larger question is how will this be successful with private broadcasting in competition?

PBS has been deteriorating for various reasons. PBS is weakened by politics, finance and technology as I have explained in details in the previous sections. The costs of public spending combined with inflation are one of the main factors that PBS is facing crisis in meeting its mandate. The other factor is the growing market because of technology that offers new television channels that has led to the establishment of Private Commercial Broadcasting. Private Commercial Broadcasting in South Africa has come to exist side by side with public broadcasting in the mid 80s. Private Broadcasting was established to create equilibrium in broadcasting and to shape broadcasting in South Africa.

There are two private broadcasting services in South Africa, one is a private “free-to-air” television channel called E-TV. The second private television in South Africa is a pay-tv

³⁷ Content and Regulation Paper, February, 2002

channel called M-Net. M-Net was established in 1986 as an 'encoded pay-tv services and it is owned by a group that is made up of the big four newspaper group. M-Net charges its audience for the subscription of the channel and it began transmitting to other African countries in 1992.

M-Net broadcasts 'to over 5 million subscribers in 44 countries across Africa and its adjacent islands. It is a subscription channel, it does not provide news and current affairs programming and it is also not eligible to broadcast the country's election or advertising that is related to politics'.³⁸ M-Net shows the most recent release feature films which makes viewers to be willing to pay for its service. Viewers with money can access the M-Net service and enjoy watching the recent movies that are fresh from the cinemas. There is also a satellite broadcasting service called Digital Satellite Television (DStv). This is a subscription service that is delivered both terrestrially and by direct to home satellite. DStv as a pay-tv has a mixture of programmes ranging from those provided by 'free-to-air' channels like feature film, sport and children's programming. There are more than 50 channels on DStv including SABC channels.

³⁸ www.busrep.co.za

The most popular channels are SuperSport, MTV, Discovery, Movie Magic and National Geographic channels and all these are accessed only by audiences who can afford monthly subscription. E-TV is a channel that is free to its audiences and it is accessible like all other three SABC channels. This discussion will be more focused on E-TV as a ‘free-to-air’ channel that was created to play an important role in improving services to the minority and disadvantaged audiences.

IBA has provided new licenses for private broadcasting as part of creating greater choice for viewers and promoting positive development in society of democracy like South Africa. The broadcasting policy “calls for the imposition of specific broadcasting license conditions on private broadcasting to make a contribution either through programming or funding of educational and information programmes, the production of South African programme material, the promotion of all languages and the multicultural nature of South African society”.³⁹

ICASA drew policies to regulate different services so that private broadcasting offers service commensurate with the nature of their operations. Unlike public broadcasting, private free-to-air broadcasting has only one source of revenue that is supposed to help to deliver to the audiences and it is in a form of advertising.

³⁹ White Paper on Broadcasting Policy, 4 June 1998

E-TV is made to compete with the “public broadcaster, community radio broadcasters, private subscription broadcasters and with non regulated media such as the press and outdoor advertising for the advertisers spending”.⁴⁰ M-Net and E-TV differ in a way that M-Net as a pay-tv channel cannot meet the public policy goals like E-TV as a free-to-air channel. E-TV was launched to develop local dramas and to provide new source of news from national and provincial sectors. E-TV should also have information programmes of interest to the general public and provide programmes that are for children. The government of South Africa has a number of objectives that are meant for the private broadcaster, namely:

- Private broadcasting has a key role to play in the forging of a new South African identity;
- It should provide a diverse range of programming that is free over the air;
- Provide programming directed specifically to all of South Africa’s official language group;
- To develop national sports programming as to provide a shared national experience of pulling together for a common cause;
- Private services should reflect culture, character, needs and aspirations of the people of all South African provinces and regions and meet the special requirements of the regions, at the time that regional services become available by developing a sense of regional identity;

⁴⁰ White Paper on Broadcasting Policy, 4 June 1998

- Private broadcasting should have a particular role to play in the provisioning of programmes of entertainment. It is expected that they will be the leaders in providing South African drama of all kinds ensuring that their programming provides a balance and wide variety of points of view on matters of public concern, and;
- Making particular efforts to broadcast high quality domestic and international programmes for children and youth at times that are appropriate for them.⁴¹

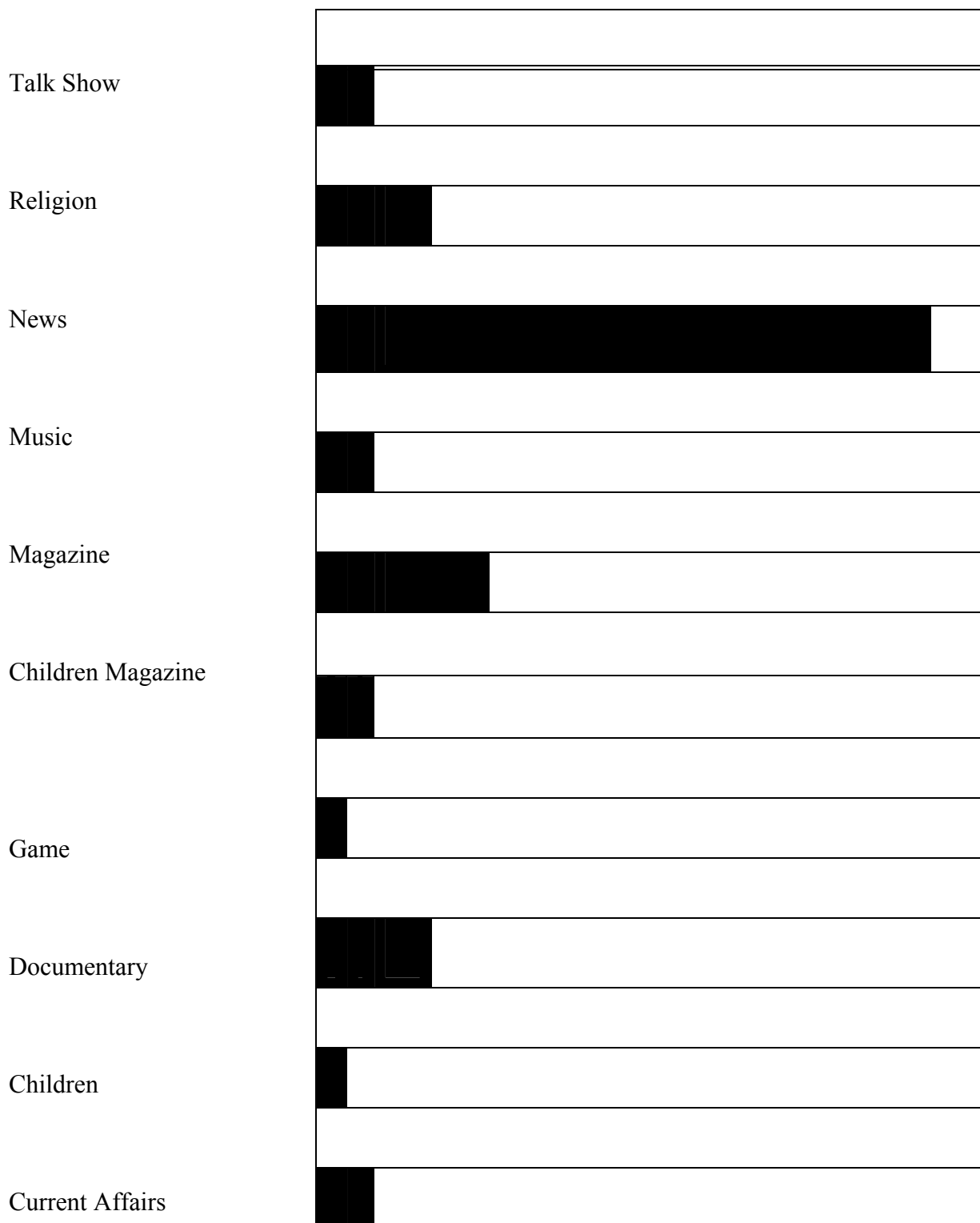
Currently E-TV is limited to provide for the national services and it will at a later stage cater for the provincial services. E-TV as compared to the SABC should have a priority to access advertising because it provides a great social contribution to the largest number of viewers in the country. It has been given a period of ten years since its launch in 1998 to achieve its goals of becoming the provider of the broadcasting system that is dominated by local South African content. It has been six years since the introduction of E-TV and I will analyze how E-TV has developed as a free-to-air broadcaster.

E-TV has not complied with some of its license responsibilities. In terms of local content, E-TV has initially agreed to give viewers 30% of local programming in their first year of broadcast. According to the Media Monitoring Project, E-TV “has successfully provided 30% of local programming in the first seven months after its launch.

⁴¹ ICASA Regulatory Paper, 2002

The percentage has then deteriorated by 2-4% in the later months and years. “E-TV promised to have 45% of local content in their third year of broadcasting which unfortunately never materialized” (Media Monitoring Project, 1999, p: 5). In terms of diversity E-TV has attempted to have diverse programming for different viewers and backgrounds.

Various programmes that are covered range from youth drama, talk shows, sport, religious news, music, magazine, children magazine and current affairs. The graph below shows a representation of programming diversity on television E-TV. (Graph by Media Monitoring Project, 1999).

Local Content Types

Referring to the graph above, most programmes that are covered are news, followed by magazine, documentary, music and current affairs. Out of the programmes that are covered those that are of local content are news, magazine programmes followed by children's programmes. More programmes still need to be covered or improved. Therefore, E-TV needs to improve its programming diversity focusing on the local content.

In terms of language programming, E-TV uses English as a medium of address and four indigenous languages that should be promoted. Those languages are Zulu, Xhosa, Setswana and Sesotho. These official languages are to be treated equally. "Equitable treatment of official languages is important for it allows E-TV to enter into a broader scope in broadcasting and it would ensure that the diverse needs of the viewers are met". (Media Monitoring Project, 1999, p: 15).

E-TV is using a strategy of having one programme that uses more than one language whereby if Setswana is used for continuity then other languages like Xhosa and Afrikaans are used in the lead and feature items. This method gives languages equal attention and promotes multilingualism. E-TV languages are promoted in programmes like children's programme called Crazy-e. This programme tries to represent at least three indigenous languages a day. The second programme is in the soap opera called Backstage that broadcast in Multilanguage. The rest of the programmes are in English

and this includes the news. Some of the programmes have a bit of Afrikaans and this is a concern because Afrikaans still enjoys a much higher recognition as compared to the four indigenous languages together. Therefore, E-TV like SABC is failing to meet its license conditions and also fails to perform according to its promises. E-TV is ignoring its role as a private broadcaster by comparing itself with pay-television channel, M-Net. E-TV is focusing on making money for its stakeholders by showing too many feature films that win most audiences.

In conclusion, SABC must not in any way compete with M-Net or E-TV because there are different mandates assigned to these broadcasters. SABC as a public broadcaster should make sure that the private broadcasters do not win their audiences. Therefore, SABC should have programmes that are worthy for their audiences so that the audiences does not think of subscribing with M-Net or sticking with E-TV. Like SABC, E-TV tends to concentrate on competing with M-Net and forgetting that it received its licenses to assist SABC in providing the needs of the public. More South African programmes need to be commissioned. E-TV must have balanced scheduling and promote South African talent and creativity.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

How Sepedi, one of the official languages of South Africa is represented on SABC, especially SABC 2 was the central focus of this research undertaking. Chapter one offered a basic understanding of what television and public broadcasting services mean. PBS is a service that is for the public which needs to address the diverse ethnic interests in the country. I discussed the four elements of PBS which are: independence, programme balance, geographical balance and impartiality. Without these factors PBS fails to serve its function representing the public interest. The history of SABC is an important issue to discuss as it helps to understand where SABC comes from in relation to television broadcasting. When television was introduced in 1976, English and Afrikaans were the only languages that were patronized.

A few years later the inclusion of Sotho Language Group (SLG) and Nguni Language Group (NLG) showed initiative in language representation. Languages were not fully covered and immediately after the instating of a democratic government in South Africa. Contemporary Community Values (CCV) was launched. CCV was seen as a channel that would minimize the problem of programme variety but it was not. CCV was thus not seen as a channel that accommodates the previously disadvantaged languages; instead CCV promoted English and failed to adequately represent the different cultures and languages of South Africans. This led to the formation of the autonomous bodies, IBA (later to be known as ICASA) to inform broadcasting regulations. The main purpose of

ICASA is to control broadcasting in favour of the interest of the public. ICASA has assigned mandates to SABC on how, when and what to broadcast in order to accommodate the public. This prevents monopolies and ensures some mixture of broadcasting with politics and if languages are represented adequately.

In the fifteen century culture used to refer to the domestic responsibilities of farming and domestic animals. The twentieth century has shifted that meaning to include popular culture. Popular culture includes “the working class and the lower middle class and it is penetrated by the contents of the mass media, film and television, popular music, newspapers, and magazines (Hall, 1992, p: 231). SABC is also adopting the ICASA mandate of promoting the eleven languages on television except in its news programming. SABC concentrates on building a national identity which covers a few of the several official languages. Programme content is one of the major issues because most of the programmes are not locally produced. The question of creativity is brought up when most of the programmes are not home brewed. Moreover, repetition of programmes more than the required times is SABC’s other weakness and there have been discussions on how to calculate the limit of repeats that can be used to comply with the ICASA quota.

In chapter three I analyzed the history of Bapedi marriage culture and customs and compared this with its representation in Bophelo ke Semphekgo. The Sepedi drama series Bophelo ke Semphekgo is used as a case study to substantiate my argument on the changing culture and custom of Bapedi society. The roles of men and women shifted, the

marriage practices and the beliefs are no longer the same as before. Bophelo ke Semphekgo offers similarities to the practice of marriage. The culture of Bapedi in the series has been represented in different ways that highlights the similarities and differences that Bapedi people practiced and the new cultural meanings that have been created in order to accommodate the modern lifestyle. Bophelo ke Semphekgo was shot in the 80s and it has been more than a decade since it was first broadcast. South Africa is now concentrating on the promotion of a national identity and Bapedi is still and is still an important community of South Africa's culture. There have been major political and social changes since the eighties which has impacted communities and changed their culture.

Therefore, more drama series in Sepedi are necessary to reflect and represent the new cultural meaning and changes of the Bapedi society in transforming South Africa. The narratives, cultural and linguistic representation in Bophelo ke Semphekgo were welcomed by the public particularly Bapedi community because it was something they identified with. The public enjoy watching a reflection of reality and Bophelo ke Semphekgo was the relevant drama series at that time.

Popular culture is dynamic and Bophelo ke Semphekgo contrasts how Bapedi society lived in the "olden days" and reflects contemporary interpretation of culture. There is a change in "language, fashion, appearance and gestures". (Hall, 1992, p: 233)

All these changed practices means of communicating meaning that is part of the social activity that has a 'symbolic dimension'. This dimension of symbolization and meaning is what is changed by the changing culture. People are not born with national identities, instead, these national identities are "formed and transformed within and in relation to representation". (Hall, 1992, p: 292).

In the building of national identities every language and culture must be promoted so that people are accustomed to and reflective of the social and cultural transformation. The chapter on regional broadcasting discussed the introduction of two regional channels by the SABC and how it can be part of accommodating the previously disadvantaged languages. Regional broadcasting was intended to be effective as of March, 2004, but it was not launched. Financial difficulties, skills shortages and license negotiations are the main reasons regional television is still shortages and license negotiations are the main reasons regional channels of SABC and these channels will only be opened in targeted provinces that would broadcast in the language of the particular province.

The section on regional broadcasting in other countries discussed the possible solutions that SABC can model from other countries in order to run a successful regional channel. I have briefly discussed how France, Poland and Nigeria have dealt with the issues of language representation through regional broadcasting. The private broadcasting chapter focused on commercial free-to-air (E-TV) and pay television (M-Net) and its relation to the responsibilities of SABC as a public broadcaster. All these services are mandated by ICOSA and there are different policies and regulations assigned to them. M-Net does not

offer news and it delivers the most entertaining programmes and new released movies. On the other hand, E-TV must promote the eleven languages of the country by presenting locally brewed programmes.

In general, I would say language representation is still a sensitive issue because it is one of the most evident characteristics that define a given ethnic group and gives it identity. Sepedi is not the only language that is misrepresented and stereotyped. Other so called “official” languages are still not given equal treatment. The difficulty to represent all official languages would be because of the promotion of national culture.

“National culture is a way of constructing meanings which influences and organizes both actions and our conceptions of ourselves”. (Hall, 1992, p: 292).

This would include representing identities that are about the future and the past which will protect the lost past that was important. Therefore, if a society’s past is not looked at in the transformation of national culture, the past would be known to the future generation. Language and ethnicities are basic elements of the identity and individuality of a human being. At the same time they stand at the forefront of social interaction.

The previous marginalized languages are at the moment powerless to decide their own fate on television because they are unable to establish the nature of their own destiny. The promotion of national culture creates the ethnic culture of a society to scatter around which will make these cultures to float. SABC must commission more drama series Bophelo ke Semphekgo in all ethnic languages in order to preserve the history and

languages of the country. Failing to do that will lead to the death of ethnic languages on public service broadcasting.

The SABC is guided by the South African Constitution and the Broadcasting Act which sets out the framework for creating an equal society in which all people are treated equally with dignity. Its mandate is to encourage “the development of South Africa’s expression by broadcasting a wide range of programming that refers to South African opinions, values and artistic creativity”. (Broadcasting Act No.4 of 1999, Permeable)

SABC 2 recognizes the value of each individual family unit within the country as being vital part of the greater whole and so we seek to:

- Strengthen social ties beyond cultural societal division; and
- Create a responsible, trustworthy and stable environment that reflects hope and appeals to those traditions and established norms which reinforce and support the ideas in the face of the real world.⁴²

The section on programme analysis showed that the SABC as a full spectrum television service providing a programming mix of enlightening, informative, educational and entertaining material still need to give more variety to its viewers. SABC 2 is currently planning to:

⁴² SABC Content Hub, 2005

- Maintain a high level of local content in a cost efficient way as the best means to respond to the channel's target audience;
- to develop local drama as an audience power house and a vehicle of delivering social change; and
- commission signature variety and reality properties as cost efficient, audience enhancing alternatives to drama whilst offering opportunity for interaction in an entertaining way.

Funding is a major problem for the SABC to commission variety of programming, this lead to the SABC scheduling old programmes that still reflects the days of apartheid. The promotion of national identity must be done appropriately to include all the previously marginalized languages. The people of South Africa need equal treatment and fair representation on television.

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