

**SOCIO-LINGUISTIC REFLECTION OF GENDER: A CASE OF BASOTHO IN  
THABO MOFUTSANYANE DISTRICT IN THE FREE STATE PROVINCE**

**MANTOA CONTRAVETRA MOTSAMAI**

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Supervisor: Dr VSM Moeketsi, Dlitl. (US)

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## DECLARATION

I, **Mantoa C Motsamai**, Identity number: [REDACTED] and student number [REDACTED], do hereby declare that this research project submitted to the Central University of Technology, Free State for the Degree: **Magister Technologiae: Language Practice**, is my own independent work; and complies with the Code of Academic Integrity, as well as other relevant policies, procedures, rules and regulations of the Central University of Technology, Free State; and has not been submitted before to any institution by myself or any other person in fulfilment (or partial fulfilment) of the requirements for the attainment of any qualification.

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**SIGNATURE OF STUDENT**

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**DATE**

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I am greatly indebted for the following people whose contribution without this study would not have been completed.

- My hearty thanks and gratitude to my Supervisor Dr VSM Moeketsi for his professional contribution, patience and encouragement through this journey.
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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between language and gender. Gender, is a term that denotes the distinction: male or female. It is the term that relates to roles which boys and girls, women and men are socialised into, that is their respective and different types of behaviour, attitudes and so on. Further, whilst sex indicates a biological fact or distinction, gender refers to the social stereotypes and expectations of the way in which men and women should and do behave, that is, it describes socially constructed categories and roles based on sex.

Theories on women's language suggest that females use a language style that reflects diffidence, shyness, and lower self-confidence, indicating a lack of commitment or strong opinion. One device is euphemism, where a person uses words such as “fudge” or “heck” instead of profanity. Another device is the use of tag questions and hedges,

The researcher conducted interviews as sources of data for analytical study. The population comprised of Basotho in the Free State province. Boys and girls, men and women as well as elders were interviewed with regard to the manner in which they speak.

The views of different researchers in Chapter two, combined with the results of the empirical study revealed the following about the difference between language and gender. From the foregoing, it is evident that the language of men and women is different. What is evident from this is that from, the cultural approach to language and societal behaviour became apparent because they are trained as part of the societal norms at a young age. Men were speaking with self-confidence and forcefully, whereas women's language was characterised by hedges and some adjectives to name a few.

In most of their responses, men were a bit harsh, and the eye contact was not compromising as they wanted to emphasise male importance in the community. Another observation is that women seemed to be more apologetic when they from time to time respond to this question because at home they are still subservient to men, and if they can boldly reflect their views on this matter, they feel that they may be branded as being opposed to cultural norms.

.

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my late uncle Molaodi Augustinas Motsamai.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FOR CUT RESEARCH**

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study examines the socio-linguistics of gender, and emphasis is placed on the Basotho cultural group. The rationale with regards to the study is discussed, followed by a literature review to ascertain what research in the field has been done in relation to the intended study. The research problems, approach to the study, aims and hypothesis is covered in this section. A study requires the process of collecting data, the theoretical approach which underlines this project will be reflected in this section. The limitations to the study are set out briefly, and the chapters contained in this study are summarised in this first chapter.

### 1.2 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The women's liberation movement of recent years has contributed to the fact that since 1970; the research done on language differences between women and men has increased in both quantity and quality. Many of us realize that ideas about 'how women are' and about the subordinate role women perform are reflected in language. It is important that these sex-dependent language differences be described. Knowledge of the differences can contribute to awareness, - and awakening can contribute to change (Brouwer, Gerristen & De Haan, 1979:33).

Most societies recognise two genders, namely, male and female. Classifying individuals as male and females determines or predicts characteristics of their speech, and this assertion has been central to the discussion of gender and language since the late 1980's and early 1990's, and the concern is also related to factors such as social class, age, and ethnicity. Although gender differences in communication play a major role, other factors consistent with power perspective in the use of various linguistic features are also a common factor, as Simskin-Bullock and Wildman (1991:149) rightly observes.

In view of the foregoing, the aim of this study is to examine the relationship between language and gender. Gender, as Marais (Sa) contends, is a term that denotes the distinction: male or female. It is the term that relates to roles which boys and girls, women and men are socialised into, that is their respective and different types of behaviour, attitudes and so on. Further, whilst sex indicates a biological fact or distinction, gender refers to the social stereotypes and expectations of the way in which men and women should and do behave, that is, it describes socially constructed categories and roles based on sex (Marais,[sa]). This implies that the roles and categories based on sex, results in inequality between, males and females.

In many societies, men and women are not equal, meaning that the male group is dominant and has the greater status and greater access to power. The cultural perceptions of the role of women serve to perpetuate and reinforce this dominance and inequality, and language reflects the patriarchal state of affairs, and Marais ([sa]) refers to this bias as sexism or male chauvinism. People who possess more power and authority use language differently than people lacking such status. Simskin-Bullock and Wilkman (1991:152) intimate that the effects on use of such power differences masquerade as

gender differences because women in this society usually possess limited power or status compared to men, even on an interpersonal level. Power differences between the conversant are the underlying determinants of the speakers' language style. According to this perspective, the view that certain language features are used more frequently by women than by men can be explained by women's subordinate and powerless place in the culture as compared to men's.

Following from the above, the aim of this study is therefore, to examine how gender differences in language use have variables that would be likely to reflect conversational dominance or passivity such as interruption patterns, turn taking, amount of talk, control of topic of conversation, power differentials through eye contact, smiling, posture, touching and other kinds of non-verbal communication. The study focuses on the Basotho cultural group to determine whether perceived power use of language can perpetuate gender differences.

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

A number of theorists examine the relationship between an individual's gender and specific features of their language: that is, the focus is on the characteristics of speech which correlate with membership of gender as one particular social category. Analysts who adopt this approach treat gender as an identifiable social variable for the purposes of their analysis, a position justified by the fact that most people intuitively agree on what gender categories mean, and share a common conception of gender.

Flowing from the above, the specific research problem in this study revolves around the view that women and men are born and bred in one culture, but when it comes to communication, it appears as if people have grown up in two sub-cultures. They have two broadly different styles of speaking. It is generally accepted that men and women do not use and interpret language in the same way. The previous statement will therefore serve as a crux on which the study is based, and will be clarified in the section that follows.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS**

In an attempt to gain insight into, or knowledge pertaining to the relationship between language and gender, the researcher has to make assumptions about what underlines the differences between the linguistic styles of males and females in the well-defined geographical setting. In other words, the researcher has to formulate a hypothesis regarding the stipulated problems. The formulation of the hypothesis shall proceed as follows:

*Gender is the process of socialization and femaleness and maleness in conversation are learned by means of interaction with others.*

In this study, the aim will therefore be to examine differences between the speech of women and men among the Basotho in the Free State province, and to typify the linguistic

strategies representing female and male dominance or powerlessness in different social contexts.

## 1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This section of the study focuses on research questions that emanate from the problem statement. The research questions are therefore outlined as follows:

- What is the relationship between language and gender?
- Do males and females born and bred in the same cultural setting speak the language in the same way?
- Are certain language features relegated to women to ensure that they have a powerless place in the cultural context as opposed to men? Or who have less power within the cultural context as opposed to men?)
- Are differences in speech of males and females inherent in the language system or in language use?

## 1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In order to realise the aim of the study, the following objectives will be pursued.



- To explore the relationship between language and gender.
- To examine whether males and females living in the same geographical boundary use the same or different linguistics styles or forms.
- To investigate whether there is 'women's language' that influences their status in the patriarchal society.
- Investigate which language features are inherent to men and women respectively.

## 1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Methodology is a plan of action or strategy that narrates precisely what the researcher performed, how performance was carried out, and most importantly the justification of the methodology used (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2011:274).

According to Creswell (2003: 5-10) research methodology can be described as the strategy or plan that clearly outlines how the research will be conducted within the structure (research design).

“Research design is a plan of how the research is going to be conducted, indicating who or what is involved, and where and when the study will take place. It is a method(s) and technique(s) used to collect, analyse and interpret data” (DuPlooy, 2007).

This research makes use of the qualitative research method. The reason for the use of this method is to gain understanding of how language differs between the two genders and to what extent does power of authority; social class determine the difference in

language amongst the two genders. This method chosen gives a clear understanding of what this interaction is.

Qualitative research methodology according to Lowe (2007:14) associated with the interpretivist and critical realist approach. It produces the field notes, unstructured interviews and observations, and is dependent on narrative data. Mouton (2001:161) views qualitative research as the method that describes and evaluates the performance of programmes in their natural settings, focusing on the process of implementation rather than on the quantifiable outcomes.

### **1.7.1 Qualitative design**

The objectives of qualitative design are to explore areas where limited or no prior information exists and/or to describe behaviours, themes, trends, needs or relations that are applicable to the units analysed (Du Plooy, 2007). The researcher will conduct interviews as sources of data for analytical study. The Sesotho speaking people will be the subjects for the study.

### **1.7.2 Interviews**

Interview refers to a conversation between two people. It involves a set of assumptions and understanding about the situation which is not normally associated with a casual conversation (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003). In this regard, the researcher will come face to face with the interviewees so that she gains more insight into the meaning and significance of what is happening. In case the interviews become too long, the researcher will make use of the audio-recorder so that the recorded interviews can easily be transcribed. The researcher has chosen the interviews because they rely on the fact that people are able to offer accounts of their behaviour and actions to those who ask them questions.

### **1.7.3 Field notes**

Field notes refer to various notes recorded by scientists during or after their observation of specific phenomenon they are studying. They are particularly valued in descriptive sciences such as ethnography, biology, geology, and archaeology, each of which has a long tradition using field notes. Anderson (2004) defines field notes as descriptive records of the research, accounts describing experiences and observations the researcher has made while participating in an intense and involved manner. The researcher has included field notes as part of the instruments of research so as to record what she observes in an unobtrusive manner.

### **1.7.4 Literature study**

A literature study describes theoretical viewpoints and earlier research findings related to the research problem. More prominence is placed on what earlier researchers have done in areas similar but not necessarily identical to the researcher of this investigation (Leedy and Ormond, 2001). A thorough study was done on differences between the speech of women and men among the Basotho in the Thabo Mofutsanyana district of the Free State province.

## **1.8 POPULATION AND RELEVANCE**

Population is defined by Salkind (2006) as the possible number of respondents in the research project. The characteristics of the population must be correctly identified by the researcher, and the rationale for selecting it as unit of analysis must be stated. The type of unit of analysis can be individuals, groups, institutions, or organisations, social actions etc.

According to Cameron and Price's (2009) research, population has a special meaning, it refers to the total category from which the sample is selected, and conclusions made. Therefore, population could mean people, items, occurrences, etc.

The population will therefore, comprise of Basotho people of the Free State province focussing on men and women as well as elders.

## **1.9 SAMPLING**

According to Gravetter and Wallnu, (2002) a sample is a set of elements selected from an identified population, with the intention of generalising the findings to the whole population. A sample is usually drawn due to difficulties of covering the entire population as a result of time and financial constraints

Lacobucci and Churchill (2010) states that the size of the sample will be sufficiently large if the sample passes two tests, namely is the size big enough to make a convincing conclusion, and is the outcome convincing?

However, Cameron and Price (2009) argue that, non – response possibility, or response rate, is the determinant of sample size for both questionnaires and interviews. They claim that sample size can be determined by the finding of the percentage response rate for questionnaires. The size of the sample will ultimately become small if the response rate is low.

In this research, stratified random sampling was used to collect data. The sample was stratified in terms of language, gender and age. Two speakers were selected from each category, that is, the Basotho were represented by twelve (12) participants in all.

The researcher decided on using participants from the Thabo Mofutsanyane district. Thabo Mofutsanyane is the former homeland (Qwaqwa) of Basotho, and the inhabitants are still clinging to their cultural heritage, hence the researcher chose the district for the study.

## **1.10 LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY**

The research is based on how people who possess more real power and authority use language differently than those lacking such status. The study was confined to the Free State Province among the Basotho cultural group. Men and women, married and unmarried people were interviewed.

### **1.11 CONCLUSION**

From the foregoing, the background and rationale for the study were discussed, followed by the problem statement, research objectives, research questions, methodology, population, sampling and the limitations to the study. It is vividly clear that the specific research problem in the study revolves around the view that women and men are born and bred in one culture, but when it comes to communication, it appears as if they are people who have grown up in two sub-cultures having two broad diverse styles of speaking. The research methodology is the qualitative design that includes interviewing of respondents. The population is drawn from Thabo Mofutsanyane district where people are still regarded as custodians of the Sesotho language and culture.

The next chapter deals with theory of language and gender.

### **1.12 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS AND TIME FRAME OF STUDY**

The study is divided into five chapters that form a sequential whole. The time frame of the study is also included, and the division and time frame are outlined as follows:

**Research proposal:** (September 2012 – June 2013)

Read literature relevant to the study, and started drafting the proposal.

**Registration:** (February 2013 – June 2013)

Registration for the study; final drafting of the proposal; and the defence of the proposal before the TRC.

**Chapter One:** Introductory orientation (August 2013 – November 2013).

It is a background and introduction to the study. The chapter discussed the aims and scope of the study, gives an explanation of the research problem, research hypothesis and research design and methodology.

**Chapter Two:** Literature review ( December 2013 – April 2014).

This chapter provides an overview of what the existing research in general states about the relationship between language and gender, the most recent research findings completed on this specific topic as well as the gaps that exist for future research. In this chapter, theories of language and gender are discussed.

**Chapter Three:** Research methodology and research design (May 2014 – August 2014).

This chapter discusses research design and methodology. The quantitative method of study was used where face to face interviews were conducted with target groups to find out what actually lead to categorisation of males and females and what determined and predicted the characteristics of their speech and verbal interactions.

**Chapter Four:** Data collection and analysis (September 2014 – October 2014)

Data analysis and results are covered in this chapter. Findings and interpretations of the study are discussed and interviews conducted are analysed.

**Chapter Five:** Conclusion (November 2014 – February 2015).

This is the concluding chapter. The recommendations regarding the problem investigated are made.

## CHAPTER TWO



## THEORY OF LANGUAGE AND GENDER

### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

In this section of the study, focus is placed on previous and present research done on the relationship between language and gender. It addresses some of the research methods, developments, and findings concerning variances in language and gender. The aim is to present an overview of language differences referred to between women and men on gender differences in conversational discourse. Theorists in gender and language research such as Mills (2000:37), concludes that gender differences cannot be discussed simply in terms of different linguistic behaviour of male and female groups. The differences must be analysed in terms of various strategies which women and men use in particular circumstances and communicative acts displayed under those circumstances. The section that follows discusses sex and gender.

### 2.2. SEX AND GENDER

Most feminist writing has tried to evade biological determinism by relying on a conceptual division between sex and gender. Here the former concept refers to the biology of the body and the latter notion to the cultural assumptions and practices that govern the social construction of men, women and their social relations. Subsequently it is argued that it is social, cultural and political discourses and practices of gender that lie at the root of women's inequality (Butler, 1993:47).

However, Butler's (1993) argument that sex and the body are discursive constructs, breaks down the sex-gender difference since both are socially constructed. Of course, most societies continue to operate with a binary of male-female distinction. Further, they often attach to this distinction cultural expectation that is detrimental to women. However, the cultural variations that exist in women, based not only on differences of class, ethnicity, age, etc, but also on differences about what it means to a woman. This suggest that there is no universal cross-cultural category of "woman" that is shared by all women according to Butler (1993: 47).

The distinction between sex and gender has been one of the foundations of Western feminist thought. The following pairs of definitions are typical. Sex and gender serve a useful analytic purpose in contrasting a set of biological facts with a set of cultural facts. In clarifying the concepts "sex" and "gender" the use of the term "sex" refers to biological differences between males and females and use of "gender" connotes the social, cultural, psychological constructs that are enforced upon these biological differences. Gender describes a set of categories to which we can give the same brand cross-linguistically or cross-culturally because they have some connection to sex differences. These categories are however arbitrary insofar as they are not reducible to or directly derivative of natural, biological facts. They vary from one language to another, one culture to another, in the way in which they order experience and action (Shapiro, 1981:446-465).

As Cameron (2006:724) says: 'Sex is a word used in connection with the biological characteristics that mark humans and other animals as either male or female, whereas gender refers to the cultural traits and behaviours deemed appropriate for men or women by a particular society.' Elsewhere she points out that: men and women ... are members

of cultures in which a large amount of discourse about gender is constantly circulating. They do not learn, and then mechanically reproduce, ways of speaking 'appropriate' to their own sex; they learn a much broader set of gendered meanings that attach in rather complex ways to different ways of speaking and they produce their own behaviour in the light of these meanings ..." (Cameron, 2006:724).

Lakoff (1975:372) is well known for her work on "women's language", which she describes as characterized by features such as greater usage of modals such as should, could and might, more negative politeness (e.g. You wouldn't mind, would you?) and different vocabulary such as more colour (use of adjectives) (e.g. exquisite, lovely, divine). Taking a feminist perspective, Lakoff (1975:372) argues that women's language reflects powerlessness and subordination in contrast to most quantitative variation approaches explaining sex-based language differences as the result of men's dominance over women.

According to Cameron (2005) Lakoff's (1975) ideas draw on concepts in socialisation theories that view women as subject to men's power in social, economic, and linguistic spheres of life. Socialization theories also form a foundation for research by Tannen (1990) who, in contrast, preferred to describe gendered language as involving male and female 'cultures', rather than including discussions of power difference in her research. Tannen (1990) argues that men and women use language differently because they have been exposed to different sociolinguistic subcultures, and hence they employ interactional features such as overlap, eye-contact and topic initiation differently, which sometimes leads to what is referred to as cross-cultural miscommunication.

Hymas (1974;232) uses the word speaking as an acronym for the various factors he deems to be relevant. The setting and Scene (S) of speech are important. Settings refers to the time and place. i.e. the concrete physical circumstances in which speech takes place. A bit of speech may be deemed to be quite inappropriate in certain circumstances. Within a particular settings, of course, participants are free to change scenes, as they change the level of formality or as the kind of activity in which they are involved, changes according to Hymas (1974).

Sex is to a very large extent biologically determined, whereas gender is a social construct, but still one heavily grounded in sex (Wadhaugh, 2011:334). While the distinction between sex and gender is well established in usage, it presupposes that we can distinguish between innate and environmental differences. . Again part of the problem is that even in biology, society's views about the cultural position of women dictate that men should be regarded as generically superior to women. The preceding contention is underpinned by Romaine (2000) that "What it is to be a boy, to grow in the belief that without any merit or exertion of his own, by the mere fact of being born a male he is by right the superior of all an entire half of the human race".

### 2.2.1. *Gender*

Early sociolinguistic studies of gender often assumed that gender should be studied where it was most prominent “in cross-sex interaction in gender-specific tasks” (Brown and Levinson, 1983). At its best, work based on this assumption led to a series of intelligent relationships or in experimental settings designed to simulate such relationships (Fishman 1979; Tannen 1990; West and Zimmerman 1987). There are however, at least four significant, and increasingly controversial, theoretical assumptions about gender embedded in this recommendation: (1) gender is closely wedded to sex, and the study of gender is closely wedded to the study of heterosexuality; (2) gender is an attribute; (3) the study of gender is the study of individuals; (4) gender is best studied where it is most salient.

Wodak (1997:4) says that gender is ‘not... a pool of attributes “possessed” by a person, but ... something a person “does”’. Further what it means to be a woman or to be a man [also] changes from one generation to the next and varies between different radicalised, ethnic, and religious groups, as well as for members of different social classes. In this regard, gender must be learned anew in each generation.

However, Coates (1989:13-15) argues that, gender-differentiated language use may play a significant role in the continued marginalisation of women in professions, particularly in terms of career progress and development. She further argues “it is now widely accepted that women and men talk differently, that is, that women and men make differential use of the linguistic resources available to them”. Maltz and Borker (1982:82) using an ethnographic approach, also argue that same-sex play in childhood leads to girls and boys internalising different conversational rules, with boys developing adversarial speech, and girls developing a style characterised by collaboration and affiliation. Support for such

a distinction comes from more psychologically oriented research on gender identity and moral development and on gender differences in epistemological development, which characterises the feminine orientation as focussing on the relationship on connection, and the masculine orientation as focussing on the self, on separateness (Coates, 1989).

In this discussion, theories about gender always have more than theoretical significance; they always suggest the cause of inequities and thus indicate where society should direct its resources to amend inequity (Jaggar, 1983).

Traditional gender roles embody the male role as agentive, where action, self-expansion, and individuality are the rule. By contrast, traditional gender roles define the female role as communal, embodying emotional expressiveness and a focus on the needs of others (Bakan, 1966). The work of Deborah Tannen (1990) suggests that the communication patterns of males and females often differ, with males using a direct and forceful style while females use a more indirect and intimate style of interaction). Such linguistic styles parallel the masculine principle of agency and the feminine principle of communion (Tannen, 1990).

Recent research has suggested that language use also varies according to an individual's age and that gender differences vary across children ages (Pennebaker and Stone, 2003: 291-301). It is hypothesized that large differences between males and females' language would be found with function words. Function words, which tend to be processed in the brain differently from more traditionally studied nouns and regular verbs, have been found to be linked to emotional states such as depression, social connections with others and how individuals think about the world around them (Pennebaker et al., 2003: 291 – 301).

As an initial way to examine the nature and of function of words and gender differences, they compared the average effect size for the function word categories to the average effect size for the content categories of nouns and verbs.

Gendered language use in CMC (computer-mediated communication) contexts is not very different from that in face-to-face interactions, and includes similar features of “verbosity, assertiveness, use of profanity, politeness (and rudeness), typed representations of smiling and laughter, and degree of interactive engagement” (Herring, 2000). There are, however, differences in the modes of CMC, which may have consequences for language use or social interactions. For instance, online chatting differs from the turn-taking patterns of face-to-face or telephone conversation because online posts appear out of sequence, thereby impacting on language coherence (Herring, 2000). Instant Messaging (IM) may foster intimacy among users, including self-disclosure and sentimental feelings, because it cultivates social connectedness ( Wood, 2007:125).

Lakoff's (1975) theories on women's language suggest that females use a language style that reflects diffidence, shyness, and lower self-confidence, indicating a lack of commitment or strong opinion (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2003:461-490). One device is euphemism, where a person uses words such as “fudge” or “heck” instead of profanity. Another device is the use of tag questions and hedges, such as “This weather is terrible, isn't it?” or “I kinda got angry.” Another device is indirection when there is a reluctance to commit to something, for instance, “Oh sorry, I've got a doctor's appointment around that time” (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2003). For Lakoff (1975) page), women's language represents an overall conventional politeness (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2003).

How do Lakoff's (1975) theories relate to gender within a CMC context? A study of 2,692 messages of Internet discussion groups finds that groups dominated by females tend to 'self-disclose' and avoid or attempt to reduce tension (Savicki, 1996:51-62). Similarly, Herring (2000) finds that women are more likely to thank, appreciate and express regret, and to be upset by violations of politeness (Herring, 2000).

In contrast, discussion groups dominated by males tend to use impersonal, fact-oriented language (Savicki, 1996), and males seem less concerned with politeness and sometimes violate expected online conduct (Herring, 2000). In an analysis of personal web pages, females are found to be "friendly" and "smiling", while males present themselves as "confident" ( Miller, 1999:40-41).

Rodino (1997:724-730) disagrees with conceptualizing male and female language use in terms of a binary opposition. In her study of Internet-Relay Chat (IRC), she finds that IRC participants construct and express gender in a variety of ways, and language usage is flexible and dynamic. Therefore, traditional gender and language research may oversimplify online language patterns because being "virtual" allows more freedom and flexibility" (Rodino, 1997).

In either case, studying CMC can provide a variety of insights into the ways males and females present themselves and interact with others in online settings. For the study, gender similarities and differences in language use represent an important means by which adolescents form an online identity.

In the case of gender, it has been established that in many speech communities female speakers will use a higher proportion of prestige forms than male speakers. Women tend



to use fewer stigmatised forms than men, and in formal speech they are more sensitive to prestige language than men. In the case of linguistic variables in the process of change, it appears that LMC *women* are particularly sensitive to new prestige variants, and exhibit an even greater degree of hypercorrection than displayed by the LMC generally. This phenomenon is referred to as the “Sex/Prestige Pattern” (Coates, 2004:147-150);

An important consequence of gender differentiation in language is *linguistic change*. Aspects of linguistic variability are of interest to sociolinguists who attempt to chart how the language used by individuals and groups in various social situations can vary in patterned ways Grégoire (2006:1). Language variation serves to distinguish the speech of different social groups (social variation), as well as the speech of an individual in different contexts (stylistic variation). Over time, these variations may lead to language change, which occurs when a new linguistic form, used by a particular sub-section of a speech community, is adopted by other members of the community and accepted as the norm. Sociolinguists now recognize that not only linguistic variation between social groups, but also *gender differences* in speech play an important role in the promulgation of language change Grégoire (2006:1).

Tannen (1990) as quoted by Baranauskiene and Adminiene (2014:872) intimates that gender differences are parallel to cross-cultural differences. She claimed that when interpreting the cultural information encoded by language, women and men rely on different sub-cultural norms. Male sub-culture uses language to build hierarchical relationships, while female sub-culture uses language to build equal relationships. In

other words, Tannen (1990) maintains that differences in language between women and men result from a misunderstanding of the intent of the sex, and not from the dominant position of men in society.

The research evidence does not support the claims made by Tannen (1990) and others about the nature, the causes, and the prevalence of male-female miscommunication". She argues that social differences between men's and women's roles are not clearly reflected in language use. One additional example is a study she has done on call centre operators in the United Kingdom where these operators are trained to be scripted in what they say and to perform the necessary 'emotional labor' (smiling, expressive intonation, showing rapport/empathy and giving minimal responses) for their customer-callers. This emotional labour is commonly associated with the feminine domain, and the call centre service workers are also typically female. However, the male workers in this call centre do not orient to the covertly gendered meanings when they are tasked to perform this emotional labour. While this does not mean that the 'woman's language' is revalued, nor does this necessarily call for a feminist celebration, Cameron (2006) highlights that it is possible that with time, more men may work in this service industry, and this may lead to a subsequent "de-gendering" of this linguistic style. Communication styles are always a product of context, and as such, gender differences tend to be most pronounced in single-gender groups. One explanation for this is that people accommodate their language towards the style of the person they are interacting with. Thus, in a mixed-gender group, gender differences tend to be less pronounced. A similarly important observation is that this accommodation is usually towards the language style, not the gender of the person.

That is, a polite and empathic male will tend to be accommodated on the basis of their being polite and empathic, rather than their being male (Trudgill, 1972:179-195).

Female speakers feel anxiety and hesitation in different social situations for example, in women's language two specific phrases – hedges (“it seems like” or “would you mind ) and tag questions (e.g... aren't you?") are often observed. Other researchers have found further evidence that women use phrases that may communicate relative uncertainty (e.g. “I wonder if”). They feel powerless and need men's support. Male speakers in many instances, are presented as a contrast, their statements are abrupt, confident and dominant. As Trudgill (1972) suggests, women may be more ‘status-conscious’ because they are less protected and have less well developed usage in that working-class speech has connotations from it, and that for that reason, preferring types of speech which are regarded as more superior, are preferred by woman.

Furthermore, when the two genders must interact in any workplace, males seem to believe that the male style should be the norm for all (Holmes, 2006:343). There is considerable evidence that the fields of discourse tend to differ between men and women and that, as a consequence of this, topics of conversation (one manifestation of field) differ, as well as grammatical structures (the means by which field and topic, and women and men themselves, are talked about). Many fields are identifiable as male or female on the basis of acknowledged and unacknowledged restricted access (discrimination) and on the basis of what people say. Many men see the fields of sport, local government, the stock market, economics, wine, and hospital administration as being male and many women concur. Men and women are talked about differently, not only in terms of the characteristics roles, activities, and objects that are associated with them on the basis of

the fields that they are known to be involved in and that are perceived appropriate for them to engage in (differences that will come out as lexical differences, words characteristically associated with, or seen as female and male), but also in terms of differences in the perceived centrality or marginality of their participation in the affairs of the world, differences that will come out as grammatical differences, particularly involving participant roles in clause structure (Poynton, 1990).

Romaine (2000) also claims that "Much language is ambiguous and depends on context for its interpretation, a factor more important than gender. On closer examination, there are few, if any, context-independent gender differences in language. The same words can take on different meanings and significance depending on who uses them in a particular context".

Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame which congeals over time to produce that appearance of substance, of a "natural kind of being". The needs some explanation in the context of your study Butler's (1993) discussion as a stylized performance is central to much research on gender and sexuality since the concept of performativity highlights the constructed and unfixed nature of identities.

It should be clear from the discussion of theories reviewed thus far that gender studies as a whole have moved away from analysing gender as a binary category of male/female and instead moves towards investigating how gender is produced in diverse ways in various social practices. In this view, gender is not a characteristic of person but a performance enacted in daily life that involves an ongoing negotiation between self and

society. Through ways of speaking and acting, individuals perform gendered identities that may in turn challenge, comply with or even subvert dominant ideologies of gender. In performing their gendered selves, individuals also make choices as to how to style themselves, though most scholars would also agree that these choices are not isolated from societal expectations, cultural models and ideologies about gender. For this reason, gender is best understood as 'a complex system of social relations and discursive practices, differently constructed in local contexts' (Norton, 2000:281).

### **2.2.2. SEX**

The differences between men and women are hardly a matter of dispute. Hymas (1974:302-303) Females have two X and chromosomes whereas males have an X and a Y; which is a key genetic difference and no geneticist regards that difference as unimportant. On average, females have more fat and less muscle than males, are not as strong and weigh less. They also mature more rapidly and live longer. The female voice usually has different characteristics from the male voice, and often females and males exhibit different ranges of verbal skills. However, we also know that many of the differences may result from different socialization practices. For example, women may live longer than men because of the different roles they play in society and the different jobs they tend to fill. Differences in voice quality may be accentuated, partially at least, by beliefs, what men and women should sound like when they talk, and any differences in verbal skills may be explained through differences in upbringing as Wardhaugh (2010) aptly puts it.

Performing masculinity and or femininity 'appropriately' cannot mean giving exactly the same performance regardless of the circumstances. It may involve different strategies in mixed and single-sexed company, in private and public settings, in the various social positions (parent, lover, professional, and friend) that someone might regularly occupy in the course of everyday life (Cameron, 2006.) Linguistically the performances are also influenced by the context.

In various disciplines, with the help of different methods, and starting from differing conceptions of the problem, a number of aspects of sex differences in language have been studied. The differences fall into two categories, which can occur on all linguistic levels. The two categories are outlined by Bouwer, Gerritsen and De Haan (1979:556) as follows:

The first category is called the sex-based differences inherent in the language system. Every natural language has a language system in which two things can be distinguished: a set of basic elements such as phonemes, morphemes, and words, and a set of combination rules. All native speakers, have the same knowledge of the combination rules of their language. In some languages, however, people have to use certain number combination rules which are dependent on the sex of the language user/speaker. *In French 'Je suisheurex'*. These differences between women and men in the application of the combination rules of language are absolute, i.e. exclusive for women or men as Brouwer et al (1979) observed.

The second category is referred to as the sex-based differences in language use. These differences are concerned with the extent of the use of certain basic elements and/or

combination rules. They are differences of degree: one of the sexes uses a certain basic element and/or combination rule more often than does the other. Anthropologists have examined particularly language differences between the sexes which are inherent in the language system, while linguists have occupied themselves more with sex-based differences in speech, namely the second category mentioned in the previous paragraph. In this research, the researcher does not look at differences inherent in the language system, but focuses the discussion on sex-based differences in speech and language behaviour (Bouwer et al., 1979).

Tannen's (2013) distinction of information and feelings is also described as report talk (of men) and rapport talk (of women). The differences can be summarized in as: Women talk too much; speak in private contexts; build relations; overlap; speak symmetrically and men get more air time; speak in public; negotiate status/avoid; speak one at a time and speak asymmetrically.

Tannen (2013) further asserts that women speak and understand a language of attachment and closeness, whilst men speak and understand a language of status and independence. This implies that conversation between men and women is a type of transcultural communication, subject to a clash of styles.

### **2.2.2.1. Men**

Masculinity is a central concept that defines males. It is tailored in order to make males fit in their societies. In harmony with Wood (2007), literary masculinise theory helps a

critic to understand masculinists. Furthermore, Wood (ibid) asserts that masculinists are interested in a male cultural stereotypical portrayal of their societies.

Further still, Wood (2007) indicates that the masculinism attitude aims to free males from cultural stereotypical portrayal as masculinists regard cultural prescriptions for gender as 'toxic' to males. He points out that masculinists intend to change the cultural stereotypical view about males. Masculinists put the emphasis on the limitations of the traditional portrayal of males in language.

In conversations involving both men and women many researchers agree that men speak more than women do. One also found that when men talked to men, the content categories of such talk focused on competition and teasing, sports, aggression and doing things. On the other hand, when women talked to women, the equivalent categories were the self, feelings, affiliation with others, home, and family. Women are also reported to use more polite forms and more compliments than men. In doing so, they are said to be seeking to develop solidarity with others in order to maintain social relationships. On the other hand, men are likely to use talk to get things done. They like to 'play the expert' and 'hold forth' on topics and issues of disagreement with others. Women prefer to avoid such 'masculine,' 'authoritative,' and 'powerful' ways of speaking Wardhaugh(2010).

When the two genders interact, men tend to take the initiative in conversation but also try to achieve some kind of accommodation so far as topics are concerned: men speak less aggressively and competitively, and the women reduce their amount of talk about home and family (Tannen, 1990).



As this research is based on the Basotho, it is worthwhile to highlight the three categories of proverbs that define masculinity, and these are outlined below:

*Ngoana moshemane ke kabeloa manong* [A baby boy is a prey for vultures]

*Monna ke tšepe e ntšo* [A man is a black iron]

*Poho e tsejoa ka mengoapo* [A bull is known by the scars]

*Poho ea motho ha e behoe ea ipeha* [A person's bull is not chosen]

*Khang ea monna e khaoloa ke letlaka* (Mokitimi 1997:53) [The quarrel amongst men is solved by fighting between conflicting groups ].

*Monna ke pela ea itebela* [A man is a rock-rabbit he looks after himself]

Examples 1 to 6 express a positive note. Basotho males are encouraged to exercise patriotism and never to run away from enemies in a war situation. This implies that men in Basotho tradition are regarded as protectors who must see to it that families and the communities are protected from the enemies. Their experiences when growing up influence their character, hence their language is characterised by strong wording and vulgar.

#### **2.2.2.2. Women**

Sociolinguistic studies have long observed that women use more forms of standard language than men, so much so that the stereotype of women's hypercorrect language has emerged as somewhat of a universal principle in the field. By extension, sociolinguists

have also recognized women's important role in the initiation and dissemination of language change. Earlier studies identified women as the leaders of linguistic changes that spread from above the level of public consciousness and involved new prestige forms emanating from the upper ranks of the social strata. In contrast, men were found to lead changes in vernacular forms spreading below the level of public awareness (Labov 2001:213-215).

Women's language has been said to reflect their conservatism, prestige consciousness, upward mobility, insecurity, deference, nurture, emotional expressivity, connectedness, sensitivity to others and solidarity. Men's language is heard as revealing their toughness, lack of affect, competitiveness, independence, competence, hierarchy and control (Wodak, 1997:127).

An analysis in terms of topic gives only a superficial idea of the way women's conversations are constructed. Conversations between women can be analysed in terms of two main components: narrative and discussion. In other words, most sections of talk between women can be described as a story or as a discussion, and in friendly conversation there is a constant fluctuation between the two. By *story*, I mean both autobiographical accounts of things that have happened, and anecdotes about other people and events. To count as a story these accounts must be structured in a particular way, which in our culture basically entails having a beginning, middle and an end. By *discussion*, I mean those parts of conversation where everyone joins in to mull over particular issues (usually issues which have been raised in a story) (Coates, 1993).

Wardhaugh (2011) asserts that Women are expected to use and do use talk to a greater extent than men to serve the function of establishing and maintaining personal relationships (this is not surprising, as the responsibility for interpersonal relationships primarily rests with women); for example, as we have observed, women, to a greater extent than men, are expected to talk, and do talk, simply in order to keep the interaction flowing smoothly and to show goodwill toward others, and they are expected to talk, and do talk, about personal feelings and other socio-emotional matters relevant to interpersonal relationships to a greater extent than men. What is particularly important in female friendships is the sharing of intimate feelings and confidences through talk, whereas in male friendships talk of activities is more important.

Mills (2003: 9) contest the view that women are more polite than men. She says that 'politeness' is not a property of utterances; it is rather 'a set of practices or strategies which communities or practice develop, affirm, and contest. Politeness requirements vary by situation and there is no overall imperative to be polite to others; woman can be impolite too and other views of politeness are incorrect..

Romaine (2000:235) states that, early research on language and gender devoted a great deal of energy to addressing the issue of " women's language' using laundry lists of specific linguistic features such as hedging (e.g kind of late, you know). The use of tag questions (e.g. we're going 6 o'clock, aren't we?), the use of a high rising tone at the end of an utterance, especially when making statements, which sounds as if a question is being asked, etc. The features were believed to be tied to women's subordinate status,

and made women seem tentative, hesitant, lacking in authority and trivial. Because many researches simply counted the number of tag questions used by men and women without paying attention to the function or context in which they were used.

### **2.3. LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY**

During the last decades, linguistic sub-disciplines, such as Sociolinguistics, Feminist Linguistics, Discourse Analysis, Pragmatics, and Cognitive Linguistics, all recognise the importance of language use and behaviour, and the conceptualising power of the word (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2003).

Feminists argument that language is 'man made', and then our history, philosophy, government, laws and religion are products of a male way of perceiving and organizing the world. Because this knowledge has been transmitted for centuries, it appears 'natural', 'objective', a 'master' discourse beyond question. Sexism in language can be demonstrated with many different kinds of evidence. Words for women have negative connotations, even where the corresponding male terms designate the same state or condition for men (Romaine, 2000).

In most societies around the world, women's language use differs from that of men in terms of sociolinguistic behaviour patterns (Coates, 1993), in terms of interactional behaviour in discussions, and in terms of the use of politeness strategies (Holmes, 2006). This can be attributed to a number of different reasons, all of which are social in nature, as language reflects the social position of women in their society—inferiority, dependence, lack of access to resources.

The linguistic aspect of *hlonipha*, (in the Basotho culture, *ho hlompha* ) that is, the replacement of syllables and words which are taboo for married women (see below), is an example of how some societies deny women access to certain linguistic resources. It marks women's language as special and different, which can result in a certain tension for the affected women, in the context of a discourse (McConnell-Ginet, 2003:129).

In any society where males and females have equal access to the standard form, females use standard variants of any stable variable which is socially stratified for both sexes more often than males do (Nevalainen, 2002: 186).

The *hlonipha* describes a custom between relations in-law, and is generally but not exclusively applied to the female sex, who, when married, are not allowed to pronounce or use words which have for their principle syllable any part or syllable of the names of their chief's or their husband's relations, especially their father-in-law; they must keep at a distance from the latter. Hence they have the habit of inventing new names for those persons (Finlayson, 1978:82).

In some cases, this has even led to conscious linguistic change in an attempt to change people's attitudes, such as the introduction of the term "Ms" in the late 1960s (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2003: 53). Thus, language use can reflect and also influence social attitudes, and this becomes particularly evident with regard to language and gender– and tradition (Smith, 1985:170).

McConnell-Ginet (2003:53), for instance, observe that "when people converse with one another, they are making various kinds of social moves." Language is a social phenomenon, and as such it reflects the society which uses it as "gender structures to limit

people's access to participation in situations, activities, and events, hence their opportunities to perform particular speech acts legitimately" (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2003: 129). By analysing the language use of a particular group of speakers, linguists can make inferences about the gender and power structures of that particular speech community. At the same time, however, the way people use language – consciously and subconsciously – influences the views held by the members of the society.

Language issues have played a major role in debates concerned with Human Rights and Women's Liberation in many parts of the world and feminist linguists have begun to discuss the tension between the status quo and their desire for liberation: language customs seem to act as reinforcing elements, which seem to assist in maintaining the status quo. On the other hand, changes in language customs might indicate social change" (Smith, 1985:170).

Generally, proverbs are regarded as a vehicle which carries culture everywhere. It is through the interpretation of proverbs that one learns about the needs, experiences and aspirations of Basotho communities. According to Possa and Makgopa (2010:1-12), various proverbs are used for different situations and are '...an embodiment of the distilled collective experiences of the community...'.the Basotho use proverbs in different situations with different objectives. In Sesotho texts written by writers such as Sekese (1994) and Mokitimi (1997), there are proverbs which directly refer to 'man' by beginning with this masculine noun and those which are more inclined to be used to refer to what is considered to be a man than a woman. The above discussion implies that the culture

dictates how men and women should speak, and this will be supported by the discussion in chapter four of this research.

## **2.4 CONCLUSION**

From the foregoing discussion, it is evident that the relationship between language and gender has long been a matter of interest within sociolinguistics, pragmatics, discourse analysis and other related disciplines. The discussion focused on an overview of language differences between women and men on gender differences in conversational discourse. Sex was viewed as a word used in connection with the biological characteristics that mark humans and other animals as either male or female, whereas gender referred to as the cultural traits and behaviours deemed appropriate for men or women by a particular society. In respect of speaking, it was discovered that men and women use language differently because they have been exposed to different sociolinguistic subcultures, hence they speak differently.

Theorists on women's language suggested that females use a language style that reflects shyness, and lower self-confidence, indicating a lack of commitment or strong opinion whereas men males tend to use impersonal, fact-oriented language and seem less concerned with politeness.

The next chapter discusses the research methodology.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

As discussed in chapter two, very little research has been done to understand the difference between men and women's language. The methodology used to collect and analyze the data is described in this chapter. This includes a description of the research



design, population of relevance, sampling method used, interview instrument used, tools and techniques used for data analysis and the limitations of the study conducted.

In order to establish the relationship between an individual's gender and specific features of their language a specific research design and method should be identified before the tools to collect the data, can be developed.

### **3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN**

Research design refers to the plan and structure of the investigation used to obtain evidence to answer research questions. The design describes the procedures for conducting the study, including when, from whom and under what conditions the data is obtained. In other words, design indicates how the research is set up, what happens to the participants and what methods of data collection are used (White, 2003).

### **3.3. RESEARCH METHOD**

According to Jugenheimer, Samuel, Kelley, and Hudson (2010:302-303) the term "method" and "methodology" are often misused in research especially by those who do not use research on a regular basis and by those who wish to make their work seem important, as well those who simply do not understand the difference between the two words. A research *method* is simply how one goes about conducting the research, usually

in a logical, orderly, or systematic way. This includes quantitative research, qualitative research, and historical research.

Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, (2011:274) defines methodology as a plan of action or strategy that narrates precisely what the researcher performed, how performance was carried out, and most importantly the justification of the methodology used.

Creswell (2003:33) suggests that research methodology can be described as the strategy or plan that clearly outlines how the research will be conducted within the structure. In this research, qualitative research method is used. Qualitative research is grounded in an essential constructivist philosophical position, in the sense that it is concerned with how the complexities of the socio-cultural world are experienced, interpreted and understood in a particular context and a particular point in time. The intent is to examine a social situation or interaction by allowing the researcher to enter the world of others and attempt to achieve a holistic rather than a reductionist understanding (Maxwell, 2005:118).

Merriam (2009:3-15) further states that, qualitative methodology implies an emphasis on discovery and description, and objectives are generally focused on extracting and interpreting the meaning of experience. Combine into one paragraph qualitative research according to White (2005) is concerned with the understanding of social phenomena from the perspective of the participants.

According to Henning (2004:290), Qualitative studies are more controlled, using instruments in which verbal and iconic data are captured in the format of the instrument, such as an observation schedule, interview, or open-ended questionnaire.

The principal aim of qualitative research is to gain interpretive understanding of human experience, using a naturalistic approach. This means that questions are formulated within a specific context, and the information is almost always gathered in a naturally occurring setting (Furlong, Lovelace and Lovelace,2000).

Furlong et al., (2000) state that unlike the research questions addressed by quantitative research, qualitative research is generally attends to aspects of behaviours, setting or skills that may not be rigorously measured, if measured at all, in terms of their amount, strength, frequency, time, or quantity. Qualitative methods do not completely forego counting and numbers, but they are more focused on the presence or absence of phenomena.

Qualitative studies are more controlled, using instruments in which verbal and iconic data are captured in the format of the instrument, such as an observation schedule, interview, or open-ended questionnaire (Henning, 2004).

The following research methods; observation, interviews, textual analysis, and transcription, are discussed hereafter.

### **3.4. POPULATION**

According to Jugenheimer et al., (2010:101-102) much of the time, we cannot study the entire universe. It is too vast, with too many research subjects. So we narrow the scope to those research subjects we can study, which we call the population.

Population is defined by Salkind (2006:816) as the total possible number of respondents in the research project. The characteristics of the population must be correctly identified by the researcher, and the rationale for selecting it as unit of analysis must be stated. The type of unit of analysis can be individuals, groups, institutions, or organisations, social actions etc.

According to Cameron and Price (2009) in research, population has a special meaning. It refers to the total category from which the sample is selected, and from which a conclusion is made. Therefore, population could mean people, items, occurrences, etc. therefore, the population is the Basotho men and women living Thabo Mofutsanyane district.

### **3.5 SAMPLING**

According to Gravetter and Wallnu, (2002) a sample is a set of elements selected from an identified population, with the intention of generalising the findings to the whole population. A sample is usually drawn due to difficulties of covering the entire population as a result of time and financial constraints.

However, Cameron and Price (2009) argue that, non – response possibility, or response rate, is the determinate of sample size for both questionnaires and interviews. They claim that sample size can be determined by finding the percentage response rate for questionnaires. The size of the sample will ultimately become small if the response rate is low.

Stratified sampling is used by researches when they want to measure opinions or attitudes of subgroups within a population. These subgroups might be divided by various demographic variables, such as age sex and income. These homogeneous subgroups are called strata of a population Jugenheimer et al. (2010). Therefore in this research, stratified sampling will be used, due to the different ages, and sex of participants involved. The next section deals with data collection instruments.

### **3.6 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS**

Data collection is the process of gathering and [measuring](#) information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypothesis, and evaluate outcomes. The data collection component of research is common to all fields of study including [physical](#) and [social sciences](#), humanities, business, etc ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Data\\_collection](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Data_collection)).

According to Saunders. Lewis and Thornhill (2009) data gathering instruments have advantages and disadvantages. Because of this, it is helpful to employ more than one instrument to minimise the disadvantages of the instruments and to re-enforce the advantages. The following is the method which will be used to collect data.

### 3.6.1 Observation

It is the primary method used by qualitative researchers to collect information about a person, group or event in a particular context. Observation is crucial for a qualitative researcher to be able to understand the group or culture under study. It is used to help focus the research question. It is a major data collection method (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009: 290).

There are two major kinds of observation, the *unobtrusive observations* in which the subject of observation is not aware that they are observed, and the *participant observation* when the researcher becomes a member of the group under study (Saunders et al., 2009:290). The researcher will use the participant observation because with participant observation, she wants to establish a rapport with the participants so that they act naturally. In this way, the researcher will allow for an open and non-judgemental attitude whilst studying their behaviour of speaking.

### 3.6.2 Interviews

This study will make use of interviews as a tool of collecting data. Interviews are the most versatile and flexible research method. An interview is defined as a specialised form of communication between people for a specific purpose associated with some agreed subject matter. When used skilfully, interviews are a rich source of data (Struwig and Stead, 2001).

Greeff (2005) defines an interview as an attempt to understanding the world from the participant's point of view to unfold the meaning of people's experiences and to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations. A mixture of interviews was used to extract information from the participants. These were open-ended questions as well as follow-up questions. With regards to open-ended questions-, the researcher invited respondents to answer in any way they may wish and follow ups were made to ensure that clarity was attained.

In this study interviews were conducted with the population comprising of Basotho in the Thabo Mofutsanyana municipality in the Free State province, men and women as well as elders were interviewed. Before the interview was conducted with participants a debriefing interview was conducted in which the researcher informed the participants of the research purpose. The researcher explained that the interview is voluntary and respondents' identity would be kept anonymous. Face to face interviews were conducted. The reason for this approach was to ensure that respondents were not limited to time. Twelve interviewees participated, namely, six male and six females.

### **3.6.3 Textual analysis**

It covers a wide range of methods for investigating existing sources of written information about a culture or context. Two kinds of materials are used, and are archival materials and textual materials. *Archival materials* include any pre-existing records or documents that are publicly available e.g. books, newspapers, songs etc. *Textual material* produced by participants in a research projects are e.g. diaries, journals etc, (Furlong et al., 2000).

The researcher will therefore use archival material such as books written by native speakers of the language, and the aim is to corroborate the view that there are differences in speaking between males and females in the Basotho communities.

### **3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In any research study, ethical issues relating to the participants are vital (Bloomberg and Volpe 2012:134). The research process involves enlisting voluntary cooperation, and it is a basic premise that participants are informed about the purpose of the study. The central issue being the respect afforded to protecting participants privacy in the way information from them is analysed or reported on.

In addition, the researcher developed an informed consent form for participants to sign before they engaged in the research.

The following elements were included in the consent form:

- The right to participate voluntarily and the right to withdraw at any time, so that the individual was not forced to participate.
- The purpose of the study, so that individuals understood the nature of the research and its likely impact on them.
- The procedures of the study, so that individuals could reasonably know what was expected from their participation in the research.



- Their right to ask questions, obtain a copy of the results, and have their privacy respected.
- The benefits of the study to an individual participant.
- Signatures of both the participant and the researcher agreeing to these provisions.

The researcher was committed to keeping the names and/or other significant identity characteristics of the sample population confidential.

### **3.9 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATION**

Due to its demarcation and nature, the study contains limiting conditions, some of which are related to the common qualitative research methodology in general.

A related limitation was that the interviewees, due to some of them being older than the researcher and their status (e.g. the elderly men) within their societies, had difficulty adjusting to the researcher taking the role of interviewer, a phenomenon referred to by Maxwell (2005) as *participant reactivity*.

Demarcation and time almost became hindering issues. Firstly, even though the participants and researcher lived in the Free State, the researcher had to familiarize herself with the geographical place of the participants and find an appropriate location that was suitable to all participants. Secondly because of the demarcation of the study, the researcher had to book accommodation and because of that the researcher scheduled interviews in pairs of participants, but because in this part of the Free State, the Sesotho culture and traditions are still practiced in its original form, participants had

to be scheduled according to their gender and status (e.g. women do not engage in any formal talks with men) which the researcher had to respect, and which led to the schedule of interviews taking longer than planned.

Some aspects of language and communication also became a challenge (e.g. reading, turn taking)., due to the age of some of my participants. The researcher had to explain the consent form before signing it and answer other related questions.

Aside from issues pertaining to the participants, the research sample itself was restricted to one particular area. Therefore, a criticism of this research might be the limited possibility of generalizing this study to other groups or cultures.

### **3.11 CONCLUSION**

In summary, this chapter provided a detailed description of the study's research methodology. The qualitative research method was used as a tool of data collection and to explain the difference between language and gender and to find out if there really is a difference.

The data collection method used was observation, interviews and textual analysis and

questions were closed-ended in nature. Stratified sampling was used to identify participants. Ethical considerations and limitations were outlined in detail and were considered as vital for the success of the study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

In chapter three, it was stated that the qualitative research method would be used to collect data. Interviews, observations as well as supporting documents from literature

material were also used to collect data. Twelve people were interviewed, that is, six males and six female members of the Thabo Mofutsanyane district in Qwaqwa. This chapter discusses the actual analysis of data collected from respondents.

It was indicated in chapter one that the aim of this research is to investigate the socio-linguistics of gender, and emphasis placed on the Basotho cultural group. The researcher intended to investigate whether there are differences in the way Basotho men and women speak. Twelve respondents were interviewed and the researcher used a tape recorder to collect data. The interviewees comprised six males and six females and the following aspects were taken into consideration when interviews were conducted. Behaviour of the respondents that included: attitude towards certain questions; sentences construction, usage of words and sentences, as well as the tone when responding to certain types of questions. The section that follows, deals with the biographical details of the interviewees.

## **4.2 ANALYSIS OF THE BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF INTERVIEWEES.**

The interviewees were selected on the basis of the following: age; sex; educational qualifications; and employment status. This section outlines these categories as follow:

### **4.2.1 Age of participants**

The following age groups participated in the interviews:

30 – 40	41 - 50	51 - 60
4	4	4

The reason the researcher opted to use three age categories was that community members would be representative in terms of all ages. Participants between the ages of 30 – 40 have little experience of life but are more exposed to many things that affect most people's lives today (modern technology namely, computers, cell phones to name a few), hence their linguistic patterns were indispensable to this research.

The age group between 41 – 50 represents community members who are experienced in the usage of the language and who have seen many changes taking place in the development of their language, and whose lives have taken different shapes in the language concerned (from childhood to where they are today). So, their life and language experiences added favourably to the research, and therefore they were selected to participate.

The last group is referred to as the veterans or custodians of language. They serve as advisors on all matters that are related to values and norms, and also keep a close watch on the development of language, that is from its early development up to its usage today. Their contributions were indispensable to this research.

#### **4.2.2 Sex**

As the research is based on linguistic differences between men and women, six men and six women were selected for interviews.

Men	Women
6	6

This selection does not need any further explanation as the topic of research has already clarified.

#### 4.2.3 Educational qualifications

The educational qualifications were important because questions were based on current affairs in South Africa. Interviewees who did not go to school at all were not selected as the questions were outside their scope of understanding. The research was not based on the proficiency in language but on differences in terms of manner of speaking. Therefore, six men and six women participated. Their educational qualifications are outlined as follows:

Qualifications	Men	Women
Primary education	2	2
HighSchool education	2	2

University education	2	2
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#### 4.2.4 Employment status

The researcher selected interviewees from different fields such as education, nursing, administration and religion. In education teachers were selected, as well as, nurses, clerks and priests. The variety of fields included people who are working at various places, certificated but without jobs.

	Men	Women
Education	2	2
Professional nursing/clergy	2	2
Various clerks?	2	2

The following section of this research deals with the actual analysis and interpretation of data.

### 4.3 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This section deals with the information gathered from the interview of twelve participants. The whole interview process was arranged in such a way that an environment was

created in which participants felt free to respond to questions. The setting and scene of speech were important in the interview. Setting refers to the time and place, i.e. the concrete physical circumstances in which the speech took place. The participants included various combinations of speaker-listener, addressor-addressee, or sender-receiver and finally, the researcher evaluated the participants in respect of the precise words used, how they used them and the relationship of what is said to the actual topic at hand.

Also of importance in the process was the tone of the speakers (participants), manner, or spirit in which particular messages were conveyed. The questions posed ranged from light-hearted, serious, precise, dull, and so on. The process was also marked nonverbally by certain kinds of conduct, gesture, posture, or even deportment.

The researcher used a variety of communication channels such as oral, written, and the actual forms of speech used, were the official languages English and Sesotho.

During the interaction with the participants certain behaviour patterns such as silence, loudness, and gaze were observed to be part of the research as they also impact on the differences between men and women. The respondents were given numbers as a form of identification. These tags or identifiers were distributed as follows: For six male participants: M1 – M6, and for female participants: F1 – F6, in which the symbol “M” was used for male and the symbol “F” for female. The twelve participants were placed in one room to discuss the issues affecting their lives. This was done to promote a rapport between respondents themselves and the researcher. The researcher wanted to make sure that every participant was free and at ease before the main individual interviews took place.



The following observations were made: Women on one hand, talked more than men and were more polite. They were complaining most of the time and continuously asking questions. They were supporting one another in the debate and were very cooperative. Men on the other hand were using strong language, speaking with more authority and interrupted women when they wanted to put forth their points of view. The researcher was satisfied that everybody was free to speak, and proceeded with the main interview. Individual interviews took place in a room and other participants waited for their turn outside.

#### **4.4 INTERVIEWS**

The analysis and interpretation of interviews with the participants were extracted from the recordings and other materials used during the interviews. Questions were asked in Sesotho and responses were also recorded in Sesotho. Borrowing from Tannen (2013) six contrasts, binary of oppositions such as status vs. support; independence vs intimacy; advice vs understanding; information v/s feelings; orders v/s proposals and conflict v/s compromise were identified? Tannen (2013) further states that: women speak a language of connection and intimacy and that men speak a language of status and independence, and these are outlined below.

##### ***4.4.1 O nahana eng ka demokerasi bophelong ba hao?***

[What do you think of democracy in your life?]

**M1:** *Nna, a itshupa sefubeng, ha ke nahane demokerasi e nketseditse letho bophelong ba ka. Bophelo ba ka boitshwanela le nakong ya pele*

[Me, pointing a finger on his chest, I don't think democracy brought any changes to me, my life is still the same].

**M2:** *Ke nahana hore demokerasi e re tliseditse tokoloho. Nakong ya kgale re ne re etela dibaka tse mmalwa feela, mmoho le dintho tse mmalwa tseo re neng re lokela ho di etsa.*

[I think democracy brought us freedom, in the olden days we were limited to places we could go and things we could have].

**M3:** *Demokerasi, ho nna e bolela hore bohle ba na le monyetla wa ho sebedisa ditokelo tsa bona ka toka. Ho bolelang hore mang kapa mang a ka etsa seo a se ratang.*

[Democracy to me, means that everybody is able to exercise his rights but with responsibility. Meaning everyone can do what they wish].

**M4:** *Demokerasi e re tliseditse tekatekano hobane nakong ya pele re ne re hloka dikgwebo kapa menyetla ya thuto, mme kajeno re fumana dithendara, ebile re na le dbo dikhamapeng tse kgolo.*

[Democracy bought us equality, because before we did not have any business or educational opportunities and nowadays we are running tenders, shareholders and executives in companies].

**M5:** *Le ha e re tiseditse tokoloho, empa ntho e teng ka mona ba re ke tlhekefetso ya bana le basadi. Ke eng yona ntho ee ha e se ho re tellisa ka basadi baa?*

[Even though democracy has brought us freedom, there is something called abuse of children and women. What is this thing is it not used to emasculate us?]

**M6:** *Demokerasi e re file monyetla wa hoba seo re leng sona kajeno. Nakong ya apartheid, batho ba batsho ba ne basa shejwe mabapi le mosebetsi ofe kapa ofe, empa kajeno, mang kapa mang o na le bolokolohi baho ba seo a se batlang. Le bana ba rona ba kena dikolo tseo e neng e le tsa ba basweu mme batho ba batsho ba ne ba behilwe mahae le makeisheneng.*

[Democracy gave us an opportunity to become who we are today. In the apartheid era, black people were not considered in any field for any position, but nowadays everybody has the freedom of becoming what he wants. Even our children attend schools which were reserved for white children only and blacks were restricted to remote area of homelands and townships]

**F1:** *Ho hlokahetse karabo*

[No Response]

**F2:** *Jwaloka... ho ya ka nna, demokerasi e re pholositse bokgobeng mme ya re tlisetsa mesebetsi le menyetla ya thuto.*

[Sort of...To me democracy saved us from oppression and brought us work and study opportunities]

**F3:** *Hantle! Ke bona demokerasi e le bokamoso boo re bo fuweng mmoho le tekatekano. Ha ho jwalo?*

[Lovely. I see democracy as a future given to us and equality. *Isn't it?*]

**F4:** *Ke nahana hore demokerasi e re tliseditse menyetla ya hore re sebedise ditokelo tsa rona.*

[I think *that* Democracy brought us an opportunity to exercise our rights].

**F5:** *E-e-e-! ke nahana hore demokerasi e tlile ka dintho tse ngata maphelong a rona. E re entse hore re se hlole re hatella wakebanna ke hore ditole;otsarona di se kgutsufatswe.*

[**Yees!** I think democracy came with many things in our lives. It gave us a breakthrough from being dominated by men and being restricted].

**F6:** *Ke nahana hore demokerasi e re file bophelo bo betere ho feta boo re neng re bo phela nakong ya kgale.*

[*I think that democracy gave us better life than we had before*].

### **Analysis:**

The question was aimed at how individual respondents feel about the current state of affairs in South Africa in terms of equality. How the present day South Africa affects their lives at home, at work and other places of interest. It is evident that the majority of male respondents see democracy as a the way of enhancing one's status in the community and this confirms Tannen's (1990) assertion that male participants see democracy as a way of creating opportunities and enhancing independence for them because they participate in business ventures that improve their status. Men grow up in a world of competitiveness and seek to achieve the upper hand or to prevent others from dominating, which is also evident from their answers about democracy, while the female respondents see it as a way whereby every citizen is equal before the law. (Tannen 1990). The preceding argument by women implies that women want the status quo to be

changed and equality and achievement as against prescription in terms of family roles, employment opportunities, status within the society to benefit all. Women should no longer be seen as the tools of procreating children, or taking back seat in the affairs of the communities, but be seen as participants in all matters affecting them. The previous statement is underpinned by the Constitution of South Africa which states that South African women still face an uphill struggle when it comes to competing against their male counterparts, especially in the workplace (Chibba 2011:1).

The behaviour in general between men and women differed greatly when they responded to questions. Men were very assertive and excited when they responded as opposed to the women who were a bit nervous and uncomfortable. This is supported by the majority of women who from time to time started their responses with 'I think...' meaning that the respondent was not so sure about what she was saying, when she used this phrase. Men were speaking with self-confidence and forcefully, whereas women's language was characterised by hedges and some adjectives to name a few. From the above analysis, it is implied that the majority of women feel uncertain about what they were speaking about, hence the hedges and adjectives.

#### **4.4.2 *Maikutlo a hao ke afe mabapi le thupa ha e kgutlisetswa dikolong?***

[What is your view on corporal punishment being brought back to school?]

**M1:** *Ke nahana hore lokile ha e kgutlisetswa hobane bana bana ha ba hlomphe matitjhere a bona, ebile ha ba etse tseo ba lokelang ho di etsa, jwaloka homeweke.*

[I think it is good and it should be brought back because learners disrespect their teachers and do not do what they are supposed to do, eg. Homework and study].

**M2:** *E lokela ho kgutlisetsa hobane ke mokgwa o le mong feela wa ho kenya hlomphe empa e se sebediswe ho feta tekano ke ba baholo. Ho lokela ho kengwe tsela ya ka moo e ka sebediswang hantle ka yona.*

[It must come back because that is the only form of discipline that works but must not be over-used or abused by those in charge, measures must be brought into place on when and how it must be used].

**M3:** *Nka qhomela hodimo. E lokela ho kgutla. Matsatsing a kajeno, bana bana bana le ditokelo tse ngata ho feta boikarabelo bo elbelletsweng ho bona.*

[I can jump with happiness. It must come back. Nowadays, these children exercise too many rights than responsibilities].

**M4:** *Ee, e ka tlisa phethoho boitshwarong ba barutwana hobane matsatsing ana ha ba tshabe mang kapa mang.*

[Yes. It can bring change in the behaviour of learners because they are not afraid of anyone nowadays].

**M5:** *ke mokgwa o motle wa ho kenya boitshwaro mme o ka sebetsa*

[It is a good form of discipline and it works]

**M6:** *Ee. E lokela ho kgutliswa. Ke yona tsela eo bana ba rona ba tla utlwisisang ho hlompha*

[Yes. It must come back. It is the only language children understand and respect]

**F1:** *ha o dumela, ke tla re – e lokela ho kgutliswa. Ho teng ditsela tse ngata tsa ho kgalemela bana, ha se ho shapa feela ho lokileng. Kotsi ya thupa ke hore matitjhere a mangata a shapa bana ho tlosa stress.*

[If you do not mind, I would like to say - it must not come back. There are many other ways to discipline a child than beating them. The danger of corporal punishment is that other teachers use it to release their stress].



**F2:** *Ho shapa ngwana ha ho rarolle letho. O lokela ho dula fatshe le yena mme buisane le yenaka ho mmontsha hore ke eng se lokileng le se sa lokang, le ho mo mmontsha tsela e lokileng*

[Beating a child up does not solve anything. You need to sit down with a child and talk to him and let him know what is wrong and right and give them direction].

**F3:** *Tjhe! Motswadi wa ka. A fella moo.*

[No! *motswadiwaka* and no further response]

**F4:** *Hleng bathong. Yaba o a thola*

[*Hleng bathong* (and no response)]

**F5:** *Ho hlokahetse karabo*

[No response]

**F6:** *Ho hlokahetse karabo*

[No response]

## ***Analysis***

All males responded in affirmation and were very happy and confident that corporal punishment should be reinstated, and only two female respondents were able to answer this question. As stated in the previous section of this chapter, the educational qualifications of the respondents showed different levels of exposure in as far as learning is concerned. As some females had a lower or no qualification at all, this topical issue was too tough to respond to, hence words such as *hleng bathong* and *Motswadi wa ka* were used as responses. To the male respondents, corporal punishment is a way of disciplining a child, which is what normally happens in households where men set the rules of how things should be done. Males were using strong words such as 'Yes', that show that they will accept corporal punishment of children "with two hands" or gladly. Democracy has emasculated them, and they feel frustrated when they see discipline being eroded by the new democratic order. To female respondents it was more of finding other solutions or ways of disciplining children which is in line with them – that is always proposing ideas rather than setting rules. Women bear children and are the ones who feel the pain of child-bearing hence the majority refused to comment. The phrase *no motswadi waka* implies that women speak the language of respect. *Motswadi* means, 'mother' or female elder. Therefore, tradition has influenced women in society that when one meets a stranger (the researcher) for the first time, one should use words that show respect. This is a sign of exhibiting modesty to strangers.

#### **4.4.3 Maikutlo a hao ke afe mabapi le hore ho teng tekatekano pakeng tsa bomme le bontate?**

[What is your view on men and women having equal power?]

**M1:** *E ka etsahala mosebetsing empa e seng hae hobane motho wa ntate e tla dula e le hloho ya lelapa.*

[It can be possible at work but not at home because the man will always be the head of the house].

**M2:** *Monna le mosadi ba ka se lekane le kgale hobane basadi ha ba na matla ao banna ba nang le ona mesebetsing e itseng*

[Men and women can never be equal, because women do not have the same strength men have to do some jobs].

**M3:** *E ka etsa hahala, empa monna o ntse a le ka hodimo*

[It can be done but man is always on top]

**M4:** *Le ha ba ka ba le ditokelo tse tshwanang le tsa banna, lentse la monna le tla dula le ahelwa lesaka*

[Even if they have equal rights, the man's word will always be the last]

**M5:** *Banna le basadi ba ka lekana nthong tse itseng feela, empa tse ding di etseditswe banna feela.*

[Men and women can only be equal in certain areas but others are specifically made for men].

**M6:** *Sena se ka se sebetse hobane 'Mokgwa o tswang tlokgolo o ya ntlwaneng'.*

[do not think it will work. The subordinates learn from the superiors]

**F1 :***Hmm...banna ke dihlooho tsa malapa, empa bomme ba lokela ho fuwa monyetla wa ho hlahisa tse ba tshwenyang lapeng.*

[Hmm ...Men are the heads of the house but women should be given opportunity to raise their concerns regarding issues especially in the house or home].

**F2 :***Ee... basadi ba lokela ho fuwa hlomphe e tshwanang le ya banna hobane re kgona ho etsa mesebetsi e etswang ke banna.*

[Yes... women should be given equal respect just as men, because we are capable of doing to the work done by men].

**F3:** *Eee... basadi ba lokela ho fuwa monyetla ha ho ntsha maikutlo a bona.*

[Yes... Women must be given an opportunity to express themselves]

**F4:** *Banna ke dhlooho tsa malapa, mme basadi ba lokela ho fuwa hlomphe e ba lokelang le ha bas a tlo lekana ka matla ka tlung*

[Men are head of households, and women should be given respect they deserve even if they are not equal at home].

**F5:** *Basadi ha ba tshwanela ho hatellwa, mme ba lokela ho fana tlatssetso moo ho lokelang teng*

[Women must not be oppressed and give input on matters that concern them, *not so?*]

**F6:** *Monna ke hlooho ya lelapa. Empa mosadi le yena ke motho ya lekanang le yena, ha ho jwalo?*

[Man is the head of the house, but the woman must be an equal partner, *isn't it?*]

### **Analysis**

Here the answer of the male respondents is about information, because they clearly state what they believe to be facts where issues of strength in certain occupations play a big role and in the culture of the man as the leader. The responses of men were a bit harsh, and the eye contact was not compromising as they wanted to emphasise male importance in the community. The tone of their responses illustrates that they do not fear anything to reverse the status quo where women have been given a free rein to participate in the affairs of the communities. Female respondents were more concerned about their feelings of what their input in their homes could be and how they can be given opportunities. Another observation is that women seemed to be more apologetic when they from time to time responded to this question because at home they are still subservient to men, and if they can boldly reflect their views on this matter, they feel that they may be branded as being opposed to cultural norms. But at times some women used the indirect request by the usage of *isn't it?* And *not so?* as if the researcher would agree with them.

#### **4.4.4 O nahana eng ka thobalano batjheng?**

[What do you think about sex amongst youth].

**M1:** *E fosahetse, mme bana ba lokela ho sheba dintho tsa sekolo le tse bohlokwa maphelong a bona.*

[it is wrong they should focus on school and other important factors of their lives]

**M2:** *E a etsahala matsatsing ana, mme re ka se thibele. Seo re lokelang ho se etsa*

*ke ho ruta bana ba rona hore ba sebedise dithela hore ba se fumane tshwaetso kapa ho ba le bana dilemong tse tlase.*

[it happens nowadays and we cannot stop it. All we have to do is to teach our children how to use protection so that they don't get infections or have children at a young age]

**M3:** *Ha ba nyetse ha ho na phoso, empa ha ba sa nyala, ke phoso e kgolo*

[If they are married there's no problem but, if not it is wrong]

**M4:** *Ba lokela ho ruta ditsela tseo ba tla itshireletsa ka tsona hobane kaofela ha*

*tsona di qala dilemong tse tlase*

[They must be taught about the safety measures because all of them start it at a young age]

**M5:** *Ho tla ikamahanya feela le dilemo tseo ba etsang thobalano ka tsona*

[It depends on their age of having sex]

**M6:** *Re lokela ho ba fa tsela e lokileng, mme re qoqe le bona hobane baka e etsa ka tsela efe kapa efe*

[We should give them direction and discuss it with them because they will do it any way]

**F1:** *E fosahetse hobane bona ba e sebedisetsa mabaka a fosahetseng hobane e lokela hob a bakeng sa lerato*

[it is wrong because the youth use it for all the wrong reasons, because it's supposed to be about love]

**F2:** *E fosahetse*

[it is wrong]

**F3:** *Ke boitshwaro bo fosahetseng*

[it's unacceptable behaviour]



**F4:** *Batjha ha ba lokela hore ba be ba ntse ba nahana ka ditaba tsena*

[young people should not even be thinking about such]

**F 5:** *Ba lokela ho shebana le ditaba tsa sekolo e seng thobalano*

[They should focus on school not intercourse]

**F6:** *Ke sebe*

[It is a sin]

### ***Analysis***

Women speak in private contexts and men speak in public/ Information versus feelings. Male respondents answered about sex openly and gave suggestions on when it should happen. Female respondents did not answer much on the question and felt it as uncomfortable to do so. According to the answer given by the female respondents it is evident that such topics are not discussed by them and their children and are dealt with when it happens, but to the male respondents, it is a topic they might have discussed with their children. The theory of gender and leadership describe this as behaviour of

difference in leadership originating in socialisation processes whereby individuals learn to conform to societal expectations about their role. This leadership behaviours of women include more consideration and are more relationship orientated and adopt a democratic or participative leadership style, whereas that of men consist of more initiating structure and is more task orientated, more autocratic or a directive leadership style (Eagly 2007:1-12). This theory of leadership is clearly shown in this question because -of the answers given by the female respondents. It is apparent that their leadership in their households is about building a good relationship with their children and if their children do not want to talk about something, they will respect that, but to the male respondents it shows that to them such a topic comes up in everyday conversation just to make sure that the children know what they are doing and the results of it.

Women were very short and to the point, thus emphasising the view that sexual relationships between young people is totally prohibited, and using words such as “a sin” implies that women seem to be the custodians of customs, morals, and values of the society, whereas men rationalise the subject at hand so that they find ways of solving it.

#### **4.4.5 O sebedisa ethaeme ya bojkae ka letsatsi?**

[How much airtime do you use in a day?]

**M1** :*Ha ke le mosebetsing ha nke ke sebedise founu*

[I don't normally use a phone only when I am at work]

**M2:** *Diranta tse leshome ha re bua ka papadi ya bolo pakeng tsa Chiefs le e nngwe ya dihlopha tseo e bapetseng le yona*

[Ten rand when we talk about soccer involving Chiefs with another team that it has played with]

**M3:** *Nakong ke sebedisa e ka tlase ho diranta tse leshome*

[Sometimes less than ten rand]

**M4:** *Diranta tse hlano*

[Five rand]

**M5:** *Diranta tse hlano*

[Five rand]

**M6:** *Haholo ke diranta tse leshome nakong eo ke batlang ho neha e mong mmae ebang a mphoseditse*

[At the most ten rand when I want to give one a hell when he has infringed my personality rights]

**F1:** *Diranta tse leshome le ho feta, ke shebile hore ke batho ba bakae bao ke ba founelang*

[Ten rand and more depending on how many people I call or need to talk]

**F2 :***Bonyane diranta tse leshome*

[At least Ten rand]

**F3:***Ho tswa feela hore ke nako efe ya kgwedi, ha kena le tjhelete nka sebedisa*

*diranta tse mashome a mararo ka letsatsi*

[It depends on the time of the month because if I have money I may use

more than thirty rand per day]

**F4:** *Ke nahana horeho fihla ho diranta tse mashome a mararo*

[I think up to thirty rand]

**F5:** *Ho ka ba jwang ha nka ka re diranta tse lesheme le metso e mehlano.*

[How will it be if I can say fifteen rand]

**F6:** *Diranta tse mashome a mabedi, ha ho jwalo?*

[Twenty rand is that not so?]

### ***Analysis***

In this question, it became clear that male respondents use less airtime than women. The logic to this is that women talk more than men, talk too much and are more polite, indecisive/hesitant, complain and nagging, ask more questions, support each other, and are more co-operative, whereas men don't talk about emotions, talk about sport, women and machines in the same way insult each other frequently, are competitive in conversation, dominate conversation, speak with more authority, give more commands, interrupt more (George and Shuttleworth, Sa: 222). This indecisive/hesitant and polite behaviour of women also influences their way of using language which is further explained by Robin Lakoff (1979) where a set of basic assumptions that marks out the language of women; Hedges ("sort of", "kind of"), super polite forms ("would you mind...

use of tag questions (aren't you?), use of empty adjective (divine, lovely), over use of qualifiers ( "I think that..."), use indirect commands and requests etc., was used by the female respondents. Such aspects can be very time consuming and can cause a conversation to be prolonged explaining partially why more airtime is used by females.

#### **4.4.6 *Ha o iphumana o le tulong e sele, kapa eo o sa e tlwaelang, o etsa eng ha o kopana le bothata?***

[If you find yourself in a foreign country/situation, what would you do if you experience problems? ]

**M1:** *Ke tla sebedisa theknoloji*

[I will make use of technology].

**M2:** *Ke tla founela e mong w aba ha eke mmolelle hore ke lahlehile, mme ke batla tsela*

[I will call someone from back home to let them know that I am stuck or need direction].

**M3:** *Ke tla ya bathong bao ke ba tsebang*

[I will go to people I know].

**M4:** *Ke tla ya police station e haufi*

[I will go to the nearest police station]

**M5 :***Hoban eke motho ya tsamayang kereke, ke tla leka ho fumana bakreste ba tshwanang le nna ke ba botse.*

[because I'm a church goer the first people I will try to find is my fellow Christians]

**M6 :** *Ho hlokahetse karabo*

[No response]

**F1:** *Ke tla bala maemo a ditaba, le tulo mm eke nke ho tloha moo*

[I will evaluate the situation or environment and take it from there].

**F2 :***Ke tla botsa tsela hona moo mme ho teng ya tla nthusang*

[I will ask around for directions, somebody will help]

**F3 :***Ntlha ya pele ke ho ikokobetsa, mme ka mora moo ke ikopanye le batho batla nthusu*

[First is to humble yourself and connect with the people around you so that they can help you].

**F4:** *Jo! Ke tla botsa, hobane ngwana ya sa lleng o shela tharing*

[Jooh! I will ask, because one who does not ask end up losing direction in life]

**F5:** *Ho hlokahetse karabo*

[No response ]

**F6:** *Ho hlokahetse karabo*

[No response]

### ***Analysis***

According to the female respondents, answers to this question was not only about the seeking of directions but also about building relationships and hence words like ‘ubuntu’ and Sesotho idioms like “*ngwana asa lleng o shwela thareng*” was mentioned by them, but for the male respondents it is all about their status and avoiding failure or to look like a failure. To them it was about not being seen as lost or begging. Women build relations while men negotiate status or avoid failure. Tannen (1990) elaborates by saying “Women often think in terms of closeness and support and struggle to preserve intimacy. Men, are



concerned with status, and tend to focus more on independence. These traits can lead women and men to starkly different views of the same situation”.

#### **4.4.7 *Ha ngwana wa hao a fihle hae a lla, ke eng ntho ya pele eo o e etsang?***

[If your child comes home crying, what is the first thing you do].

**M1:** *Ho hlokahetse karabo*

[No response]

**M2 :** *Ho hlokahetse karabo*

[No response]

**M3:** *Ke tla botsa ngwana hore ho etsahetse eng, e le hore ke tle ke tsebe ho fumana se etsahetseng*

[I will ask the child what happened and get to the bottom of what happened].

**M4:** *Ke tla botsa lebaka ke eng, mme ke nke ho tloha moo*

[I will ask what is the matter and take it from there].

**M5:** *Ke tla batla se etsahetseng mme ke fumane tharollo*

[I will find out what took place and find a solution].

**M6:** *Ke ikopanye le motho ya entseng sena*

[Confront the person who hit them]

**F1:** *Ho hlokahetse karabo*

[No response]

**F2:** *Ke tla mamela se etsahetseng, mme ke thodise ya llang*

[I will listen to what they say to make them stop crying]

**F3:** *Ke tla ba tshedisa*

[I will offer them something and comfort them].

**F4 :** *Ke tla ba tshedisa*

[I will comfort them].

**F5:** *Ke tla ba tshedisa*

[I will comfort them]

**F6:** *Ke tla botsa se etsahetseng, ebe ke a tshedisa*

[I will ask them what happened and comfort them].

### ***Analysis***

Male respondents answered in using words like “take it from there” and “get to the bottom” while the most frequently used word amongst the female respondents was “comfort”. Furthermore, to the female respondents this situation could just be a misunderstanding that happened between children playing, but to the male respondents it could have a hidden agenda. Gilligan (1982) claims that boys are socialised into becoming men who value autonomy and their individualised ability to wield power. Boys and men are alleged to reason fairness and justice by an appeal to abstract principles, while girls and women are said to reason contextually, through the ongoing demands of the relationships they build. Girls and women are claimed to reason concretely through specific cases, a mode of ethics based on care and attachment in relationship rather than autonomous decisions.

Due to this, the answers given by the female respondents about comfort rather than confrontation confirms their approach to every situation or case.

**4.4.8 *Ha motho e mong a tla ho wena mme a o bolella hore mang o ne a ntse a bua ka lebitso la hao hampe, o etsa eng?***

[If someone comes to you and tell you that someone has been talking ill about you, how do you deal with such a situation?

**M1** :*E tla ba ntho e sa tlwaeleheng hobane ke tla botsa ya ntsebisang ka sena hore ba ne ba bua ka eng hore lebitso la ka le hlahelle ditabeng tsa bona.*

[it would be funny because I will ask the person who came to me what they were talking about that led to them discussing me].

**M2** :*Ke tla nka enwa ke ye le yena ho monnga ditaba moo nnete e tla hlahellang teng*

[I will take the person and go to the person he said talked about me to find the truth].

**M3** :*Motho ya o sebang ke ya o tshabang*

[A person who cannot tell you something in your face is scared of you].

**M4**: *Nka se kgathalle hore ba ne ba bua eng ka nna*

[I will not care about what they say ]

**M5:** *Ke tla ba thiba le pele ba ka tswela pele.*

[I will stop them before they even continue].

**M6:** *Ke tla ikopanya le bona ka bobedi*

[I will confront them both of them]

**F1:** *Ke tla mamela, ke etse dipatlisiso tsa seo ba neng ba bua ka sona, mme ke ye ho ya a neng a bua tsena ho utlwa lehlakore la hae la ditaba. Nka se bolelle ya neng a mpoella hore ke ilo ikopanya le neng a mpua hampe*

[I will investigate the matter by listening to what she is saying, and then go to the person who said bad things about me to hear what they say to have both sides of the story, I will not tell the one that came to me that I am going to the other one].

**F2 :** *Hang ha ke utlwa ditaba tsena, ke tloha pela ya mbolellang tsona*

[if I hear such I immediately walk far from her].

**F3 :** *Ke tla ya ho ya mpuang hampe ka yona nako eo ho utlwa ka seo ba neng ba se bua ka nna*

[I will go to her there and then to confront her about what they are saying about me].

**F4** :*Ke tla lo ikutlwela ka seo ba neng ba se bua*

[I will go to her and tell them what I heard and hear their side].

**F5** :*Ke tla itholela feela*

[I will just ignore it].

**F6**: *Ke tla mamela, mme ke se etse letho*

[I will listen but do nothing about it].

## **Analysis**

To some of the male respondents it was very important to find the truth around the matter due to factor that their reputation and respect could be damaged by what was said about them. The other male respondents even though not necessarily talking about confrontation, did mention something relating to their 'ego. Which is stated by Tannen (1990) that men's language evolve around status, independence and fear of failure. The female respondents start by assuming the gender 'her' and that they will not react to such gossip, and the reason for such is what Tannen (1990) describes as gossip which is

categorised in terms of house – which is to exchange information, scandal a considered judging of the behaviour of others, and women in particular, Bitching- this is the overt expression of women’s anger at their restricted role and inferior status, chatting which is an intimate form of gossip. Hence the mixed feelings appear in this question whereby some respondents said they would confront them (her) about it and the others just ignored because they know and understand their “nature” as women.

#### **4.4.9 O na le metswalle e mekae?**

[How many friends do you have?]

**M1** :*Ba bararo*

*[They are three]*

**M2** :*Ba babedi*

[They are two]

**M3** :*Motho mang kapa mang ke motswalle wa ka*

[Everybody is a friend]

**M4:** *Ba supile*

[They are seven]

**M5:** *Ba bahlano*

[They are five]

**M6 :** *Ba bangata*

[They are many ]

**F1:** *O mong*

[Only one]

**F2:** *Ha kena*

[I don't have any]

**F3:** *Ba babedi*

[They are two]



**F4** : *O mong*

[Only one]

**F5** : *Ha kena*

[I don't have any]

**F 6** : *Ba babedi*

[They are two]

### ***Analysis***

The following is evident according to the answers of both female respondents. Males have more friends than the females. This is clarified by Maltz and Borker (1982) that “Boys/men tend to play in large groups that are hierarchically structured with a leader. Status is negotiated via order, or telling jokes/stories. They always boast about skills, size and ability while girls/women tend to play in small groups/pairs, where the centre of their social life is a best friend where intimacy is key. Many of their activities do not have winners and losers and do not boast but stay humble”. This is evident in the number of friends they have, which is corroborated by the respondents’ answers.

**4.4.10.O ka qoqa le metswalle ka ntho tsa bohlokwa tse amang lelapa la hao?**

[Do you discuss important factors of your home with your friends?]

**M1:** *Tjhe!..*

[No]

**M2:** *Tjhe!.*

[No]

**M3:** *Tjhe!.*

[No]

**M4:** *Ho hlokahetse karabo*

[No response]

**M5:** *Ho hlokahetse karabo*

[No response]

**M6: Tjhe!**

[No]

**F1: Ee... re arolelanadikeletso ka mehla**

[Yes we share advice *on a daily basis*]

**F2 : Ee... haholo batho ba baholo**

[Yes especially the elderly]

**F3: Ee... bao feela ke leng hufi le bona**

[Yes the ones I am close too]

**F4 : Ee... empa e seng kaofela ha bona**

[Yes but not with all of them]

**F5: Ee... hobane re a ahana**

[Yes we build each other]

**F 6:** *Eee... ke ka moo re phelang ka teng ka hara motse*

[Yes, that is how we live in our community].

### ***Analysis***

The purpose for this question in short is called “self-disclosure” which is explained by theorists as sharing information with others that they would not normally know. According to Fishman (1979) female tendencies toward self-disclosure is, that they share their problems and experiences with others, often to offer sympathy while with males tend towards non self-disclosure and professing advice or offering a solution when confronted with another’s problem, hence the answer of the male respondents was very clear “no”, which could be due to the fact that their status is seen to be compromised because they always want to be in charge of the situation, but for female respondents, sharing feelings is not a problem because of their belief in sharing emotions and experiences.

**4.4.11** *Ha ngwana a kula, o kgola hore a ka fodiswa ke ngaka tsa sekgowa kapa tsa setso?*

[Do you believe in western or traditional methods of healing when your child is ill?]

**M1:** *Ee, ke dumela mekgweng ya setso hobane ba re fa tshireletso ka dinako tsohle*

[Yes, in traditional methods, because they are the protectors of our lives]

**M2:** *Ee, hobane setso hobane re hodisitswe ka sona*

[Yes, because were socialised in the traditional way]

**M3:** *Ho tsa sekgowa*

[Western]

**M4:** *Ka bobedi ba tsona di ka thusetsa ha ho se ho le hobe*

[Both because they can help when there is a need]

**M5 :** *Ho hlokahetse karabo*

[No response]

**M6:** *Ho tswa feela mofuteng wa lefu le mo tshwereng*

[It depends on the type of ailment]

**F1** : *Tsa sekgowa, ha ho jwalo?*

[Western, isn't that true?]

**F2** : *Tsa sekgowa*

[Western]

**F3** : *Hmmm...ke nnete, ke nahana tsa sekgowa hobane ba na le tsebo ya meriana bakeng sa mafu a kajeno*

[Uhhh... yes I think western because they have knowledge of current diseases].

**F4**: *Ee... Tsa sekgowa hobane bana le mahlale a kajeno, empa le tsa setso di ka thusa moo ho hlokahalang teng*

[Western, because they have the knowledge but even traditional can help where needed]

**F5**: *Tsa sekgowa, le tsa setso nakong, kapa ke nepile?*

[Western, but traditional can also be contacted, am I right?]

**F6:** *Tsa sekgowa, hobane ba na le di tsohle tse hlokalang ho thusa*

[Western because they have all the resources available to help]

### ***Analysis***

The majority of male respondents feel that traditional healing is important because they were raised and socialised within their communities using this method of healing. This implies that men are still clinging to their old traditional mentality, and are assertive in showing their support to tradition. The majority of female respondents believe western methods to be the best, but are hesitant because they seem not to be sure about what they are talking about. This is supported by frequent hedges from the female respondents.

### **4.5. CONCLUSION**

The investigation was to understand whether there are differences in the way Basotho men and women speak. Twelve respondents were interviewed, namely six males and six females and the researcher used the tape recorder to collect data. The interviewees were selected on the basis of the following: age; sex; educational qualifications; and employment status. The whole interview process was arranged in such a way that created an environment where participants felt free to respond to questions. The setting and scene of speech were important in the interview. The respondents were given numbers as a form of identification. These tags or identifiers were distributed as follows: For six

male participants: M1 – M6, and for female participants: F1 – F6, meaning that the letter/symbol M was for male and the letter/symbol F for female. The twelve participants were placed in one room to talk about issues affecting their lives. This was done to promote a rapport between respondents and the researcher.

The behaviour in general between men and women differed greatly when they responded to questions. Men were very assertive and excited when they responded as against women who were a bit nervous and uncomfortable. This is supported by majority of women who from time to time started their responses with ‘**I think...**’ meaning that she was not so sure about what she was saying, when she used the phrase. Men were speaking with self-confidence and forcefully, whereas women’s language was characterised by hedges and some adjectives. Women speak the language of respect. *Motswadi* means, ‘mother’ or female elder. Therefore, tradition has influenced women in society that when one meets a stranger (the researcher) for the first time, one should use words that show respect. This is the sign of exhibiting modesty to strangers. The male respondents responses were about information, because they clearly stated what they believed to be facts where issues of strength in certain occupations played a big role in a culture of men as the leaders. The responses of men were a bit harsh, and the eye contact was not compromising as they wanted to emphasise male importance in the community. The female respondents, answers to questions were not only about the seeking of direction but also about building relationships and hence words like ‘ubuntu’ and Sesotho idioms like “*ngwana asa lleng o shwela thareng*” were mentioned by them but for the male respondents it is all about their status and avoiding failure or not to look like a failure. To them it was important not be seen as lost or begging. Women build relations while



men negotiate status and avoid failure. From the analysis made in this chapter, it is evident that men and women do speak language differently and put different contexts to the same situation.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter four of the research dealt with the actual analysis of differences in speech between men and women. Six men and six women from different educational levels were interviewed and of importance is that they were not forced to answer questions in a specific way, but were given liberty to express their feelings regarding some of the aspects that revolved around their lives. Of importance was the manner in which they used language to exhibit their feelings. It became apparent that their use of language embodies attitudes as referential meanings. The next section deals with the synthesis of chapters

#### **5.2 SYNTHESIS OF CHAPTERS**

Chapter one of the study dealt with the background and rationale, problem statement; research questions; research objectives; research design and methodology; data collection; sampling method; data analysis; and delimitations of the study.

Chapter two discussed literature review. In this chapter, previous research in the field of language and gender was discussed. The difference between sex and gender were discussed at length and theorists outlined the course and background of differences.

Chapter three discussed the research methodology and design. The Qualitative research method was used to collect data. Interviews, observation and textual analysis were used to collect information. Twelve respondents participated in the answering of the questions. Respondents' answers were objective and subjective due to the nature of the questions which were culture based.

In Chapter four the results of the study were analysed and interpreted. The interviews revealed tendencies that are regarded as in line with the results of the other studies in the field, which is that language differences between male and female will always exist as a result of the culture/context the language emanates from.

Chapter five concludes the study and highlights the research findings and conclusions.

### **5.3 FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH**

The views of different researchers in Chapter two, combined with the results of the empirical study revealed the following about the difference between language and gender.

Status vs support – Questions such as democracy and sharing of resources support this theory. Men were very assertive and excited when they responded to questions about democracy which for them has played a role in enhancing their status, as opposed to women who were a bit nervous and uncomfortable. Men were speaking with self-confidence and forcefully, whereas women's language was characterised by hedges and some adjectives. From the above analysis, it is implied that the majority of women feel uncertain about what they are speaking about hence the hedges and adjectives. Men perceive democracy as a way of creating opportunities and enhancing independence for them because they participate in business ventures that improve their status. Men grow in a world of competitiveness and seek to achieve the upper hand or to prevent others from dominating, which is also clear with regards to their answers about democracy, while the female respondents see it as a way whereby every citizen is equal before the law (Tannen, 1990).

Independence vs intimacy – What is evident from this question is that from, the cultural approach to language and societal behaviour became apparent because they are instilled as part of the societal norms at a young age. Boys play in a large group that is hierarchically structured with a leader and status are negotiated. Their games have

winner so that they could boast about their abilities and skills. On the contrary, girls tend to play in small groups or pairs. The centre of their social life is a best friend and intimacy is the key within the group (Maltz and Borker 1982).

Information vs feelings – The question of equality was aimed at looking at how the two groups analyse information and how their feeling with regards to the changing structure of the society differs. The responses of men were a bit harsh, and the eye contact was not compromising as they wanted to emphasise male importance in the community. Another observation is that women seemed to be more apologetic when they from time to time responded to this question because at home they are still subservient to men, and if they can boldly reflect their views on this matter, they feel that they may be branded as being opposed to cultural norms.

Orders vs proposals – It was observed that women's language is filled with proposals and hedges as evidenced in phrases such as "*Hmm, Ee.., ha ho jwalo?*" . Women's language always has indirect phrases and suggestion while men's language is direct and firm. This leadership behaviour of women include more consideration and are more relationship orientated and adopt a democratic or participative leadership style, where as that of the men consists of more initiating structure and is more task orientated and more autocratic or a directive leadership style (Eagly,2007). This theory of leadership is clearly shown in this question because of the answers given by the female respondents. It is apparent that their leadership in their households is about building a good relationship with their children

and if their children do not want to talk about something they will respect that but to the male respondents it shows that if such a topic comes up in everyday conversation they will address it just to make sure that the children know what they are doing and the results of it.

Conflict vs compromise –Gilligan (1982) claims that boys are socialised into becoming men who value autonomy and their individualised ability to wield power. Boys and men are alleged to reason fairness and justice by an appeal to abstract principles, while girls and women are said to reason contextually, through the ongoing demands of the relationships they build. Girls and women are claimed to reason concretely through specific cases, a mode of ethics based on care and attachment in relationship rather than autonomous decisions. According to Fishman (1979) Females tend towards self-disclosure is, that is sharing their problems and experiences with others, often to offer sympathy while with males the tendency is non self-disclosure and professing advice or offering a solution when confronted with another's problem hence the answer of the male respondents was a very clear "no", which could be due to the fact that their status was being compromised because they always want to be in charge of the situation, but for female respondents, sharing feelings is not a problem because of their belief in sharing emotions and experiences.

## **5.4 CONCLUSION**

It is apparent that the language of men and women is different. What is evident from this is that from the cultural approach to language, societal behaviour became apparent, because male and female linguistic patterns are trained as part of the societal norms from a young age. Men were speaking with self-confidence and forcefully, whereas women's language was characterised by hedges and some adjectives.

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