

**IsiNdebele Influence on Sepedi
Learners
Around the Dennilton Region in the
Limpopo Province**

L.J. Thamaga

2012

**IsiNdebele Influence on Sepedi Learners around the Dennilton Region in
the Limpopo Province**

by

LESETJE JOHANNAH THAMAGA

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for:

MAGISTER ARTIUM

In The Department of African Languages

PROMOTER: R.M. RAMAGOSHI

CO-PROMOTER: S.K. MAHLANGU

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

PRETORIA

2012

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Above all I would like to thank God who gave me wisdom and strength to complete this study.

My sincere gratitude further goes to my promoter Mrs Ramagoshi, the late Dr Skhosana, and Mrs Mahlangu for their encouragement, inspiration and their professional guidance throughout my years of study.

I will not forget the Limpopo Department of Education for granting me permission to collect data from the learners and the educators at schools in the Dennilton region. Principals at these schools have been very cooperative and for that I am very thankful.

I remain grateful for the support I received from my husband and children.

God bless everybody who showed appreciation and support towards the success of this study.

DECLARATION

I declare that “ISINDEBELE INFLUECE ON SEPEDI LEARNERS AROUND THE DENNILTON REGION IN THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE“ is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted in this study have been acknowledged.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER ONE	
1.1 Background to the study	1
1.2 Geographical distribution of Sepedi and isiNdebele speaking people of South Africa	3
1.3 Problem statement	5
1.4 The aim of the study	5
1.5 Significance of the study	6
1.6 Literature review	6
1.7 Methodology	11
1.8 Data collection	12
1.9 Chapter outline	12
CHAPTER TWO	
2.1 Introduction	15
2.2 Analysis of the learners' questionnaires	15
2.3 Analysis of the educators' questionnaires	20
2.4 Observations by teachers	24
2.5 Observations by the researcher	25
2.6 The teacher to learner ratios in both Grades 6 and 7 at the designated schools	27
2.7 Conclusion	29
CHAPTER THREE	
3.1 Introduction	30
3.2 The Sepedi Sound System	30
3.2.1 Sepedi vowel system	30
3.2.2 Sepedi consonant system	32
3.2.2.1 Labials	32
3.2.2.2 Labio-dentals	33
3.2.2.3 Labio-alveolars	33
3.2.2.4 Labio palatals	34
3.2.2.5 Alveolars	35

3.2.2.6 Palato-alveolar	37
3.2.2.7 Palatals	38
3.2.2.8 Prevelar	40
3.3 IsiNdebele sound system	40
3.3.1 IsiNdebele vowel system	40
3.3.2 IsiNdebele consonant system	42
3.3.2.1 Plosives	42
3.3.2.2 Implosives	44
3.3.2.3 Fricatives	45
3.3.2.4 Affricatives	46
3.3.2.5 Liquids	49
3.3.2.6 Vibrants	49
3.3.2.7 Semi-vowels	49
3.3.2.8 Nasals	50
3.3.2.9 Click sound system	51
3.3.2.10 Dental clicks	51
3.3.2.11 Palato- alveolar clicks	52
3.3.2.12 Lateral clicks	53
3.4 The infiltration of isiNdebele sounds into the Sepedi sound system	53
3.4.1 Standard vocabulary	53
3.4.2 Method of extracting vocabulary with non-Sepedi sounds	55
3.4.3 The Zunda-Nguni voiced lateral alveolar fricative [z]	60
3.4.4 The Nguni voiced lateral alveolar fricative [dl]	61
3.4.5 Zunda-Nguni voiced lateral alveolar fricative [v]	61
3.4.6 The Zunda-Nguni devoiced velar fricative [g]	62
3.4.7 The Zunda-Nguni secondary nasal compound [nd]	62
3.4.8 Nguni devoiced prepalatal affricative [dʒ]	62
3.5 Borrowing	63
3.6 Conclusion	64

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 Introduction	65
4.2 Morphological influence	66
4.2.1 Prefixation of Nguni versus Sotho languages	66
4.2.2 Suffixation of Nguni versus Sotho languages	72
4.3 Syntactic influence of isiNdebele on Sepedi	74

4.3.1 IsiNdebele vocabulary that has not changed the Sepedi sentence structure	74
4.3.2 IsiNdebele vocabulary that has changed the Sepedi sentence structure	77
4.4 Semantic influence of isiNdebele on Sepedi	78
4.4.1 Semantic shift as a result of isiNdebele influence on Sepedi	79
4.4.2 Narrowing of meaning as a result of isiNdebele influence on Sepedi	83
4.5 The learners' use of vocabulary from other languages	85
4.6 Conclusion	85

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 Introduction	86
5.2 The successes achieved by the Limpopo Education Department in the Dennilton region	87
5.3 Recommendations by the educators to the Limpopo Education Department	88
5.4 Recommendations by the educators to the parents	89
5.5 The researcher's recommendations to Sepedi educators	90
5.6 The researcher's recommendations to parents	92
5.7 Conclusion	93

REFERENCES	95
-------------------	----

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: Luchau Primary School Grade 6	16
Table 2.2: Luchau Primary School Grade 7	16
Table 2.3: Njoma Primary School Grade 6	17
Table 2.4: Njoma Primary School Grade 7	17
Table 2.5: Mokgalabje Primary School Grade 6	18
Table 2.6: Mokgalabje Primary School Grade 7	19
Table 2.7: Montsošabošego Primary School Grade 6	19
Table 2.8: Montsošabošego Primary School Grade 7	20
Table 2.9: Educators' cultural groups at the schools in this study	21
Table 2.10: Teacher-to-learner ratios at the schools in this study	28
Table 3.1: Nguni sounds in the Sepedi learners' essays	59
Table 4.1: Noun classes as well as absolute pronouns in IsiNdebele	67
Table 4.2: Sepedi noun classes as well as absolute pronouns	67
Table 4.3: Semantic shift as a result of IsiNdebele influence on Sepedi	83

SUMMARY	101
KEY TERMS	103
OPSOMMING	104
SLEUTELWOODE	106
APPENDIX A (Learners' questionnaires)	107
APPENDIX B (teachers' questionnaires)	109

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Background to the study

The Sepedi speaking people are, according to Statistics South Africa (2004), spread throughout the nine provinces of South Africa but are mainly found in the Limpopo Province. One of the regions in the Limpopo Province called the Dennilton region, in the Greater Sekhukhune District, is divided into Hlogotlou Circuit, Manthole Circuit, Motetema Circuit, Rakgwadi Circuit, Moutse West, Moutse East and Moutse Central Circuits. The Dennilton region is not only dominated by the Sepedi speaking people, it is also inhabited by Nguni speaking people, and particularly amaNdebele (also referred to as Southern Ndebele). Schools in this area teach Sepedi, isiZulu and isiNdebele as subjects from lower grades to Grade 12. IsiNdebele learners were taught isiZulu as a first language until isiNdebele was recognized by the Constitution of RSA (1996:4) as an official language for learning and teaching. Consequently, isiNdebele replaced isiZulu in all schools in this area. The reason for this replacement was motivated, among other things, by the greater number of isiNdebele speakers found within this area, as compared to other Nguni language speakers such as isiZulu. Dennilton is the only education region that has a greater number of isiNdebele speakers in the Limpopo Province than any other education regions and is the only region where Sepedi speaking people are in contact with Nguni languages, predominantly isiNdebele in this case.

Some scholars such as Pettman (1913:3), Malimabe (1990:12), and Calteaux (1996:187) have conducted research on language contact and language mix but have mostly concentrated on cosmopolitan or urban areas where more than two languages are in contact. These scholars are in agreement that language variations such as Tsotsitaal, Isicamtho, Pretoria-Sotho, and other variations are unavoidable, because

language and cultural contacts occur as a result of industrialization and urban migration (Malimabe, 1990:12).

In the Dennilton region where this study is conducted, Ndebele speaking people known as amaNdebele and Sepedi speaking people known as Bapedi dominate the area as a result of previous migration. Van Vuuren (1983:18) states as follows regarding the amaNdebele who are found around this region.

Jafta het in sy getuienis voor die Plaaslike Komitee van Oos-Transvaal verklaar dat hy die opperhoof van die Nzunza is en sedert 1874 by KoNomtjherhelo gewoon het en as verteewoordiger (regent) vir Fene Andries optree. Hy versoek ook dat sy mense toegelaat word om na Blinkwater naby Stofberg te trek. Jafta het in 1942 met 'n aantal volgelingen op die plaas Goedgedacht, naby Phokwane in die Nebodistrik gaan woon. Hy word op 3 April 1950 as 'n stamhoof van hierdie Nzunza herken.

From the above statement it is clear that the amaNdebele have occupied the area where this research has been conducted for more than a century, 136 years to be precise. A number of amaNdebele followed chief Jafta to the above areas. Gradually greater numbers settled around the Phokwane and Saaiplaas areas and spread around the neighbouring towns such as Marble Hall and Groblersdal. The Sepedi speaking people also came into contact with amaNdebele as a result of working on the orange and cotton farms. This resulted in the establishment of large settlements such as Motetema, Leeufontein, Monsterlus, Tafelkop and Luckau where both amaNdebele and Bapedi came into contact with each other, thus influencing each other culturally and linguistically. Pettman (1913:3) maintains that “various races, using different languages cannot occupy the same territory and live in daily contact without being mutually affected; each will acquire something from and in turn give something to

the other”. Pettman is supported by Calteaux (1996:19) in stating that languages that exist and are spoken in the same locality have a tendency to influence each other.

Looking at the population constituting the Dennilton region, Sepedi and isiNdebele are the two main languages that are in contact, and in this study the focus is, therefore, on the impact of isiNdebele on Sepedi. In his research, Skhosana (1998) has shown the influence of Sepedi and Setswana on isiNdebele. He observes that these two languages have had an influence on the phonology, syntax, semantics and morphology of isiNdebele. In the Dennilton area, where this research has been conducted, isiNdebele was first introduced at fewer than ten primary schools as a subject in the year 2000 and gradually developed until 2010 where it is offered up to Grade 9. Since 2000, this language has grown from eight primary schools to twenty-six including secondary schools in Manthole and Hlogotlou circuits. To date, no research has been done on the impact of isiNdebele on Sepedi in any area where amaNdebele co-exist with Sepedi speaking people. The Dennilton region was therefore chosen as a suitable area where such a study can be conducted.

1.2 Geographical distribution of Sepedi and isiNdebele speaking people of South Africa

The Sepedi speaking people are spread throughout the nine provinces of South Africa. It is indicated by Bothma (1969) as quoted by Grobler (1990:29) that the Bapedi people separated from the Bakgatla (a Tswana tribe) at Schilpadfontein about 300 years ago. It is alleged that they settled in the then Lebowa with chief Thulare. Sepedi is a standard language that is used by speakers of Middle Sotho dialects as well as Peripheral Sotho dialects (Grobler 1990:29). It is further shown by Taljard (2000, Addendum N) that the Berlin Missionary Society facilitated the writing of Sepedi when they taught the Bapedi people how to read and write.

The first readers in Sepedi were published in 1870, the Sepedi grammar in 1876 and the translation of the Bible's New Testament in 1890 (Grobler 1990:29). It was in

1957 that the Bantu Language Board was established. An official orthography was then recorded to ease the reading and the writing of Sepedi. Although Statistics S.A. (2004) show that the number of Sepedi speaking people is greater than isiNdebele speaking people in the Limpopo province, the possibility of them influencing each other in and outside the classroom cannot be ignored.

According to Statistics SA (2004), there are more than 750 000 isiNdebele speaking people who have spread throughout the nine provinces of South Africa. Mpumalanga, Gauteng and Limpopo provinces are the provinces with the highest numbers, while Northern Cape province has the lowest count at 287 (see Statistics SA:2004). Nevertheless, the Constitution of RSA (1996:4) makes no distinction between Southern and Northern Ndebele which are both also spoken in South Africa. It is therefore constitutionally right to speak of them as isiNdebele speaking people of South Africa.

Scholars such as Ziervogel (1959:4) and Van Wyk (1996:36) say the difference between Southern Ndebele and Northern Ndebele is that Southern Ndebele is one of the Zunda-Nguni languages, while Northern Ndebele is of the Thekela-Nguni languages. Wilkes (2001:310) notes that Northern Ndebele is not one of the national or regional official languages and is not even taught as a subject in schools as is the case with its Southern counterpart (i.e., isiNdebele). It has been indicated by scholars, such as Skhosana (1998:13) and Wilkes (2001:18), that Northern Ndebele is spoken by the followers of Mthombeni (or Gegana) which split from the main Ndebele group earlier during the reign of their ancestral Ndebele chief Musi at KwaMnyamana (also known as Bon Accord) north of Pretoria. This language (Northern Ndebele) is, according to Van Warmelo (1930:7) and Ziervogel (1959:4), spoken around Potgietersrus, Polokwane and Zebediela and comprises the Gegana, Langa, Moledlane and Lidwaba dialects.

IsiNdebele, unlike its sub-languages Northern Ndebele, is one of the developed languages that is used as a medium of teaching and learning at some schools.

This study focuses on Sepedi medium schools where isiNdebele is spoken and not offered as a school subject in the Dennilton area in the Greater Sekhukhune district in the Limpopo Province.

1.3 Problem statement

As reflected in the annual Grade 12 results of the Limpopo province (Education Statistics, 2009), learner performance declined from 65% in 2008 to 62.5% in 2009 nationally. Poor learner performance is a complex issue and many possible factors could contribute to the problem. Intensive studies on language diversity, language contact and influence have been done, especially in Tanzania with 135 to 150 spoken languages, and in Kenya with 42 spoken languages (Webb, 2000:47-51). The same problem prevails in South Africa with eleven official languages (RSA Constitution, 1996:4)

This study investigates the influence of isiNdebele on standard Sepedi as one of the possible causes of poor performance in Sepedi as a home language.

1.4 The aim of the study

The aim of this study is to investigate the influence of isiNdebele on Sepedi learners in the Dennilton region of the Sekhukhune District where Sepedi and isiNdebele are predominantly spoken. The study findings as well as the recommendations by the researcher will hopefully provide insight into and solutions to language educators regarding language teaching and learning in a situation where more than one language is predominant.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study contributes to various academic fields such as language teaching and learning especially for the Limpopo and Mpumalanga Education Departments as well as in the sociolinguistic field of study. The information obtained from the present study should assist language policy makers to have a better understanding of the challenges faced by teachers and learners in improving their level of proficiency and effectiveness and enhancing their competency in language studies.

1.6 Literature review

This study falls within the realm of sociolinguistics, and data analysis has been undertaken within this theoretical framework. Below follows a brief overview of the sociolinguistic concepts relevant to this study. Language has been explained by Blench (2006:29) as a group of speech forms where the speakers of which can all understand one another without considerable effort.

In most cases where a community speaks different languages, children or learners (as well as elders) tend to borrow from or donate lexical items to one another (Ntshangase, 1993:48; Calteaux, 1996:20; Heine and Derek, 2000:309). The linguistic items may be used by the host language in their original form or they may be changed to suit the context in which they are used. Nkonko in Webb and Kembo Sure (2000:89) show that borrowed lexicons may be integrated or adopted into the lexical stock of the borrowing or host language.

Gumperz (1993:87) defines adoption as the introduction of single words or frozen phrases from one variety into the other. There is transfer of words from the source language to the borrowing language. These borrowed words are then incorporated into the grammatical system of the borrowing language. Through repeated use, such

words become part of the host language and take the morphological characteristics of the host language and its syntactic structures.

Madiba (1994:87) explains that all languages at some stage or another have a need for new words and no language can claim to be completely self-sufficient. In The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1990:13) adaptation is defined as ‘something you change to make it suitable for a new purpose’. The term ‘adaptation’ is used by sociolinguists such as Knappert (1970), Raubenheimer (1983) and Coulmas (1985) as an umbrella term for various types of changes which are the result of environmental language factors.

It is during daily conversations among multilingual speakers where code-switching and code-mixing evolves. Poplack (1979) and Meyers-Scotton (1993) give different types of code-switching which are found in almost all levels of societies, that is in the upper class, middle class and lower class. Bokamba (1988: 24) defines code-mixing as:

the embedding or mixing of various linguistic units,
i.e. affixes, words, phrases and clauses from two distinct
grammatical systems or subsystems within the same
sentence and the same speech situation.

Bokamba believes that code-switching, the switching or alternation of the code occurs intersententially and intrasententially. An example of an intersententially code-switching would be:

Ke ile Gauteng maabane. I just wanted a shop where I could buy something
beautiful.

The sentence is supposed to read:

Ke ile Gauteng maabane. Ka nyaka lebenkele le nka rekang sengwe se se botse.

[I went to Johannesburg yesterday. I just wanted a shop where I could buy something beautiful.]

The above example of intersentential code-switching is more typical of the middle class speakers who regard themselves as “educated” than of those of the lower class. Code-switching can also occur intrasententially as in the following example:

Tlaa mono, please, o tle go planta mielies mo tšhemong.

The sentence should read:

Tlaa mono hle, o tle o bjala lehea mo tšhemong.

[Come here, please, and plant the mealies here in the field]

There is an assumption among the learned that the above intrasentential code-switching is used by people who do not have higher education qualifications. Nontolwane (1992:28) regards this type of code-switching as code-mixing. She defines it as:

The use of one or more languages for consistent transfer of linguistic units from one language to the other.

To support this, she cites the following example:

Ngizoletha ama-phepha we-agreement uzowasayina-ke.

[I will bring the agreement papers so that you can sign them.]

There is no doubt that if the use of code-switching and code-mixing occurs regularly in people’s daily conversation, adaptation occurs. People get used to using foreign

words without adapting them. Therefore foreign words are perceived to be “normal” in their speech. Meyers-Scotton (1993:152) points out that “code-switching is both a tool and an index. For the speaker, it is a tool or a means of doing something. For the listener, code-switching is an index or a symbol of the speaker’s intentions”.

Code-switching and code-mixing are contributing factors to adaptation, and from the above observation, it is becoming an accepted bilingual strategy which, when differentiated and used intersententially (which is more acceptable in formal gatherings) will help in communicating a person’s thoughts without hesitation due to lack of terminology or as a way of expressing a foreign concept in one’s mother tongue

Ansre (1971:15) shows that when lexical items are adopted into the borrowing language, it is not just a matter of co-existence over a long period, but socio-cultural factors may also contribute. Linguistic items usually flow from the dominating cultural group to that of the dominated community.

Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000:113-114) explain important processes of language shift, language loss and language death. Together with Masinge (1997:27) and Blench (2006:91), they maintain that:

- (a) Language shift occurs when speakers of the minority community abandon the use of their mother tongue and yield their speech forms to those of the dominating community.
- (b) Language loss is noticed when members of a community lose fluency in their mother tongue. They indicate that the dominated language is not necessarily dead, but it remains a potent medium of communication at other areas.
- (c) When there is no one left who can speak the language as a first language, then such a minority language is dead. This death may be propagated by the extermination of the whole speech community, perhaps by an epidemic,

genocide, or even the domination by a superior community to an extent that in the end there is no one left who can pass the language to the next generation.

Furthermore, Wilkes (1997) and Skhosana (1998) have investigated the influence of non-Nguni languages on isiNdebele. They indicate that there are sounds in isiNdebele that have been borrowed from the Sepedi and Setswana languages, e.g.:

IsiNdebele	Sepedi	Tswana	
-kghona	-kgona	-kgona	‘be able’
-tlhogomela	hlokomela	-tlhokomela	‘take care’
-rhorha	-goga	-goga	‘pull’
-nghala	-nganga	-nganga	‘contest’

(Skhosana, 1998:50-51)

Wilkes (2001:21) has also conducted research on the diverse linguistic composition of Northern Ndebele as a result of influence from other non-Nguni languages. Language contact affects not only the language behaviour of the people in contact, but also their culture or lifestyle as already stated. The cultural patterns of the minority community are usually adjusted to those of the dominating community through intercultural transmissions. Skhosana (2002) clearly points out that amaNdebele manhood names, particularly from the Nzunza group, are mainly drawn from Bapedi chiefs and initiates as a result of cultural influence between amaNdebele and Bapedi. Skhosana (2002:143) states:

For instance, some of these names are the names of the Pedi former chiefs such as uSgwadi named after Chief Sekwati, uNompuru named after Chief Mampuru of the Sekhukhune Pedi, uThulare named after Chief Thulare of the Pedi.

Research on isiNdebele conducted by Wilkes (1997) and Skhosana (1998) is of significance to this investigation. They both discuss grammar and language influence, and their studies are helpful in the analysis of data in this study.

1.7 Methodology

Qualitative and quantitative research methods are used in this investigation.

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001:101), qualitative research often starts off with general research questions rather than a specific hypothesis and is followed by the collection of an “extensive amount of verbal data from a small number of participants”. The subsequent organization of data into a coherent format and the portrayal of the situation through the use of verbal descriptions are then used to state tentative answers to the research questions. The same process has been followed for this research. The proposed research conducted during this study has many of the typical characteristics of qualitative research identified by Leedy and Ormrod (2001). Through a qualitative research method, variables are quantified, i.e., essays of both male and female learners of equal quantity are compared to obtain greater clarity on how isiNdebele learners influence Sepedi learners. Moreover, through qualitative research method, data has been objectively analysed, evaluated, synthesized and interpreted (White 2003:13) to determine the extent of isiNdebele influence on Sepedi.

Quantitative research is ‘Research conducted for the purpose of obtaining empirical evaluations of attitudes, behaviour or performance designed to generate projectable numerical data about a topic’ www.jrsconsulting.net/frearticles_21.html. The quantitative strategy, i.e., the size of sample groups and the targeted grades are discussed in more detail below.

1.8 Data collection

This study has been conducted at four schools from six circuits which are all in the Dennilton region in the Greater Sekhukhune District in Limpopo Province where amaNdebele people and Sepedi speaking people have been in close contact for many years. The four schools chosen are as follows: Luckau Primary School (Manthole Circuit); Njoma Primary School (Manthole Circuit); Mokgalabje Primary School (Hlogotlou Circuit); Montsošabošego Primary School (Tsimanyane Circuit).

Permission was requested from and granted by the Department of Education of the Limpopo Province, the circuit managers as well as principals of schools to conduct this research at these designated areas. Informed consent was sought from and given by the parents or guardians of the participants. Assent from participants was also sought. Learner's workbooks were collected and perused at each school to determine to what extent isiNdebele has an influence on Sepedi learners when writing essays. These books were selected by way of random sampling from their class registers, that is, ten male learners and ten female learners in both Grades Six and Seven. Thereafter, the identified learners were given a questionnaire to determine the learners' language profiles and, characteristics of their linguistic behaviour.

Another important element in regard to language influence in the classroom situation is the educator. Sepedi educators were therefore required to fill in questionnaires to establish their language profiles.

1.9 Chapter outline

Chapter 1

In Chapter One the following issues will be discussed:

1.1 Background to the study

- 1.2 Geographical distribution of Sepedi and isiNdebele speaking people of South Africa
- 1.3 Problem statement
- 1.4 The aim of the study
- 1.5 Significance of the study
- 1.6 Literature review
- 1.7 Methodology
- 1.8 Data collection

Chapter 2

The learners and educators' questionnaires are dealt with under Chapter Two. The questionnaires have been analysed to determine how the linguistic material from one or both of the languages filters through to the other.

Chapter 3

Chapter Three focuses on the new phonemes that do not occur in Sepedi, but are introduced by isiNdebele through influence. Grades 6 and 7 essays were analysed by capturing words that have non-Sepedi phonemes.

Chapter 4

Chapter Four focuses on the morphological, semantic and syntactic influence on Sepedi by isiNdebele. Grade 6 and 7 essays were assessed to determine the non-Sepedi formatives, meaning of words and the structure of sentences they construct in their essays.

Chapter 5

This is the concluding chapter. It is a recapitulation of the entire research including the recommendations from the researcher as well as the teachers to the Department of Education of the Limpopo Province.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide an analysis of the learners' and the teachers' questionnaires so as to determine the extent to which the isiNdebele learners in the case study influence the Sepedi learners, especially when writing essays at the selected primary schools in the Dennilton region. The discussions will follow these sub-headings:

2.2 The analysis of the learners' questionnaires

2.3 Analysis of the educators' questionnaires

2.4 Observations by the teachers

2.5 Observations by the researcher

2.6 The teacher to learner ratios in both Grades 6 and 7 at these schools

2.2 The analysis of the learners' questionnaires

As has been shown in Chapter One, the learners in the primary schools in Dennilton region speak diverse languages. This results in language influence or code-switching which can be detected, especially in the learners' essays. To obtain the necessary data that shows the influence of isiNdebele on Sepedi, the learners as well as the educators were asked to fill in the questionnaires.

At the three schools where this study was conducted (Luckau Primary, Mokgalabje Primary and Njoma Primary), the learners who speak Sepedi and isiNdebele are combined in one class and are only separated when the period in these languages commences. At Njoma Primary School, there are also learners who study isiZulu in Grades 6 and 7 as their first language, while the isiNdebele group under discussion is still in Grade 4. Learners are combined in one class to fit the available teaching staff

and to avoid accommodation problems. The question of language influence has, evidently, not been considered, or practical issues have been prioritised to the detriment of linguistic considerations.

Montsošabošego Primary School is an exception here, because at this school there are no learners enrolled for isiNdebele or isiZulu even if the questionnaires indicated that such mother tongue speakers are enrolled in the school.

The following tables illustrate the numbers of Sepedi, isiNdebele, isiZulu speakers as well as other cultural groups at the designated schools in percentages in both Grades 6 and 7.

Table 2.1: Luckau Primary School Grade 6

Bapedi Learners	32
IsiNdebele Learners	38
IsiZulu Learners	20
Other cultural groups	10
Total	100%

Table 2.2: Luckau Primary School Grade 7

Bapedi Learners	40
IsiNdebele Learners	26
IsiZulu Learners	18
Other cultural groups	16
Total	100%

At Luckau, the number of Sepedi speaking learners in both Grades 6 and 7 is greater than the number of isiNdebele, isiZulu and learners speaking other languages at this school. However, the findings in this research reveal that the Sepedi learners are being linguistically influenced by their class mates. The Nguni phonemes (discussed in Chapter Three) found in Sepedi learners' written work indicate that there is even isiNdebele influence accruing from the minority of learners who are affecting the majority group of Sepedi learners.

Table 2.3: Njoma Primary School Grade 6

Bapedi Learners	42
IsiNdebele Learners	25
IsiZulu Learners	20
Other cultural groups	13
Total	100%

Table 2.4: Njoma Primary School Grade 7

Bapedi Learners	30
IsiNdebele Learners	30
IsiZulu Learners	23
Other cultural groups	17
Total	100%

At Njoma, the questionnaires show a higher percentage (42%) of Sepedi speaking learners in Grade 6 than isiNdebele speakers and an equal number (30%) of Sepedi speaking learners and isiNdebele speaking learners in Grade 7. At this school the isiNdebele group is made to study Sepedi or isiZulu, because at the time that they first registered, isiNdebele had not yet been introduced as a language of teaching and learning at this school. During this study, the group for isiNdebele was still in Grade 4, as mentioned earlier. The Nguni phonemes found in the written work of Sepedi learners indicate that the isiNdebele learners and the isiZulu learners form a greater number of learners at this school than Sepedi speakers and this results in them influencing the Sepedi learners linguistically.

Table 2.5: Mokgalabje Primary School Grade 6

Bapedi Learners	33
IsiNdebele Learners	28
IsiZulu Learners	27
Other cultural groups	12
Total	100%

Table 2.6: Mokgalabje Primary School Grade 7

Bapedi Learners	32
IsiNdebele Learners	30
IsiZulu Learners	20
Other cultural groups	18
Total	100%

At Mokgalabje, there is a greater number of Sepedi speaking learners in both Grades 6 and 7 and a relatively smaller number of isiZulu speakers. All are squeezed into either Sepedi or isiNdebele groups, because there is no isiZulu class at this school. However, the Sepedi learners still use the isiNdebele and isiZulu terminology and phonemes when they write, because of the close contact that exists between these learners and the isiNdebele ones as well as the isiZulu speaking learners in this area. This is a clear case of the linguistic dilemma that faces facilitators, learners and policy makers in South Africa: pragmatism supercedes best practice.

Table 2.7: Montsošabošego Primary School Grade 6

Bapedi Learners	50
IsiNdebele Learners	28
IsiZulu Learners	12
Other cultural groups	10
Total	100%

Table 2.8: Montsošabošego Primary School Grade 7

Bapedi Learners	55
IsiNdebele Learners	20
IsiZulu Learners	15
Other cultural groups	10
Total	100%

Amongst the schools chosen for this study in this region, as shown in Tables 2.7 and 2.8 above, there was only one school where learners were enrolled for one language, that is, Sepedi. However, the learners' questionnaires revealed that there are mother tongue isiNdebele and isiZulu speaking learners at this school. They were given no option but to study Sepedi, because this is the only medium taught. The use of Nguni phonemes and isiNdebele and isiZulu terminology by Sepedi learners in their written work is sufficient proof that there is also an isiNdebele and isiZulu influence on Sepedi learners in this area. Again, this situation reflects the difficulties faced by South African learners of most of the official languages.

2.3 Analysis of the educators' questionnaires

Nationality differences were also detected from the educators teaching Sepedi in Grades 6 and 7 at the schools used in this research. Some are first language Sepedi speakers, others are isiNdebele speakers or isiZulu speakers as well as speakers of other national languages. They can be categorized as follows:

Table 2.9: Educators' cultural groups at the schools in this study

Bapedi by birth and married into Sepedi speaking families	11
Bapedi by birth but married into isiNdebele speaking families	11
Bapedi by birth but married into isiZulu speaking families	9
Bapedi by birth but married into other cultural groups	4
IsiNdebele by birth and married into isiNdebele speaking families	10
IsiNdebele by birth but married into Sepedi speaking families	8
IsiNdebele by birth but married into other cultural groups	5

isiZulu speaker and married into Zulu speaking families	10
isiZulu speaker but married into Sepedi speaking families	8
isiZulu speaker but married into isiNdebele speaking families	7
isiZulu speaker but married into other cultural groups	4
Other cultural groups but married into Sepedi speaking families	6
Other cultural groups but married into isiNdebele speaking families	4
Other cultural groups but married into isiZulu speaking families	3
Total	100%

It is observed from the above table that the Nguni educators are in the majority, with 20% compared to the 11% of Bapedi educators. From the questionnaires that the educators filled in, it was shown by their major subjects from colleges of education and universities, that some did not study Sepedi as a major subject but were requested to teach it. There are several reasons for this, such as the facts that:

- The school could not find a Sepedi educator.
- The school is understaffed and the educator has to teach Sepedi, because there is no suitable educator to teach Sepedi.
- Some educators teach Sepedi for a short period (e.g., four months), because the Sepedi educator is on leave and the Department of Education was not able to provide a replacement as the school's staff establishment does not allow for this.
- Other staff members argue that Sepedi is an African language, so anyone can teach it!

Moreover, educators who studied Sepedi as a major subject at college or university but happen to have married into isiNdebele or isiZulu speaking families are influenced by one of these Nguni languages at home. This further influence the learners they are teaching at school. Mesthrie (1991:54) has also observed this and he says:

Women who moved from one dialect area to another after marriage tend to show the influence of the new environment, while retaining some of the characteristic features of their childhood dialect.

In other scenarios there are educators who are isiNdebele by birth but who have married into Sepedi speaking families and they teach Sepedi at their schools. It then becomes difficult for these educators not to compromise their mother tongues. In some of the books, they were unable to detect some isiNdebele vocabulary as in the following paragraph written by the learners:

Baoki ba hlwa ba re botša gore re je merogo ka mehla. Nna ga ke rate mazampane le khabetšhe. Ge re **dlala** mantlwantlwane Lerato o tla le nama. Nama yona e **mnate** kudu. Yena Lerato ke **sehlobo** le Noni. O phela a mo zamela gore a seke a **doya** ge re.**dlala**.

[Nurses usually advise us to eat vegetables every day. I don't like potatoes and cabbage. Lerato brings along some meat when we play "housie-housie". Meat is very delicious. Lerato is related to Noni. She always tries to protect her when we play.]

The sentence should actually read:

Baoki ba hlwa ba re botša gore re je merogo ka mehla. Nna ga ke rate **matsampane** le khabetšhe. Ge

re **bapala** mantlwantlwane, Lerato o tla le nama.
Nama yona e **bose** kudu. Yena Lerato ke **moloko** le
Noni. O phela a **leka** gore a seke a phoša ge re
bapala.

Ge re eya sekoloni re reka magwinya mo tseleni.
Mzala Rose o wa rata kudu. Ge **Mam** a ruta Dipalo
ke kwešiša ka pela, o tla be wa kwa a nkhuza.

[We buy “fat cakes” (meat doughnuts) on our way to school. My cousin Rose likes them. When Mam teaches Mathematics, I understand her very fast, and she praises me.]

The sentence should actually read:

Ge re eya sekolong re reka makunya mo tseleng.
Motswala Rose o a rata kudu. Ge morutiši a ruta
Dipalo ke kwešiša ka pela, o tla ba wa kwa a ntheta.

Variations from these sample sentences can be represented as follows-

IsiNdebele	Sepedi	English
Mazampane	matsampane	potatoes
Dlala	bapala	play
Mnandi	bose	nice/tasty
Sehlobo	moloko	relative
Magwinya	makunya	fat cakes (meat doughnuts)

Nkhuza

ntheta

praise

These uncorrected, non-standard Sepedi varieties show the reader that the facilitator saw nothing wrong in the text he/she was marking.

2.4 Observations by teachers

The researcher spoke to the individual educators teaching Sepedi in order to enumerate the individual challenges they encounter in their day-to-day contact with the learners, and to allow them to make recommendations about the teaching and learning of languages in the primary schools.

Some of the teachers enjoyed teaching Sepedi as a first language, especially with the learners who speak Sepedi at home and are mother tongue speakers. One educator commented by saying: ‘You just have to make sure that they can read and write this language. From there, learning becomes fun.’

Some facilitators indicated that there are parents and ultimately learners themselves who have a negative attitude towards their mother tongue as well as towards their African culture. They said that learners showed very little knowledge of traditional practices or rituals such as:

- go phasa badimo [talking to the ancestors]
- go kgopela pula go badimo [asking for rain from the ancestors]
- letšema [an organised way of helping one another at home or on the farms].

To some of the learners, traditional utensils such as: moeta (calabash), mogopo (wooden dish) as well as traditional food like dikgobe (uncrushed cooked maize), mpshi (porridge made from sour milk), and other traditional food are just stories and

pictures that they read and see in books, according to some of the teachers. They said that some learners also complained about their parents in that they neither cook traditional food nor show them the traditional equipment. They only encounter these when they are shown on television.

Teachers mentioned that learners perform surprisingly well in traditional songs, especially in isiNdebele and isiZulu songs, which seem to dominate the culture or practice at these schools, because learners are more attracted to isiNdebele songs which are sung mostly on their return from initiation schools. The recommendations made by the teachers are outlined in Chapter Five of this study.

2.5 Observations by the researcher

During the conversations with the teachers, a lot of code-switching and code-mixing by the teachers themselves was picked up wherein both English and Sepedi words were used interchangeably. (Code-switching and code-mixing have been explained in Chapter One)

Some of the educators in Grades 6 and 7 said:

[Grade six and seven] instead of: Mphato wa botshelela le wa bošupa.

When greeting me they said:

Le kae **mam?** [how are you mam?] instead of: le kae **morutišigadi?**

In addition they used English conjunctions in their speech, such as:

Bana ba kgona go bolela, **but** go ngwala ke bothata.

[The learners can speak, but writing is a problem.]

The sentence should read:

Bana ba kgona go bolela, **efela/feela** go ngwala ke bothata.

Others used the following conjunctions:

Ke boletše le bona **then** ra kwana

[I spoke to them and then we agreed.]

The sentence should read:

Ke boletše le bona **gomme** ra kwana.

The code-switching and code-mixing by teachers during African language lessons tend to spoil the learners' ability to stick to the use of standard African languages. Calteaux (1996:183) recommends that teachers should be equipped with the necessary skills to manage the use of non-standard varieties in the classroom successfully. Being able to identify non-standard varieties in the classroom will enable the educators to correct the incorrect use of standard language.

Webb (1999:8) provides some reasons why English has become so popular in everyday communication. He says:

- English is a world language; it provides access to almost all the sources of knowledge.
- It is the most important language of work in the country.
- It allows one to communicate with billions of people all over the world.
- It is the language of the most successful people in the Western world.
- It is the language of struggle against apartheid.

English is valued as an international language and is the preferred or valued language in the work place and can therefore not easily be avoided especially in the learning situation. However, the value of African languages should not be compromised.

2.6 The teacher to learner ratios in both Grades 6 and 7 at these schools

It is anticipated that good results are produced when teaching smaller groups than when teaching larger groups, because large groups are difficult to manage, organise, control and assess. Kembo-Sure in Webb, (2000:293) says in this regard that some of the poor performances are attributable to overcrowded classes.

The actual teacher to learner ratio at primary schools in the Limpopo province is currently calculated at 40 learners to one teacher in both the intermediate and the senior phases (Department of Education, 2010)

The Sepedi, isiNdebele and isiZulu teacher-to-learner ratios at Luckau Primary, Mokgalabje Primary, Njoma Primary and Montsošabošego Primary schools in the year 2010 are shown in the following table (This was obtained from the class registers of the respective classes through the class teachers.)

Table 2.10: Teacher-to-learner ratios at the schools in this study

Names of schools	Grades	Sepedi teacher to learner ratio	isiNdebele teacher to learner ratio	isiZulu teacher learner ratio
Luckau Primary School	Grade 6	1:159	1:28	-----
	Grade 7	1:104	1:16	-----
Mokgalabje Primary School	Grade 6	1:7	1:23	-----

	Grade 7	1:8	1:14	-----
Njoma Primary School	Grade 6	1:90	isiNdebele group still in Grade 4	1:29
	Grade 7	1:85		1:24
Montsošabošego Primary School	Grade 6	1:160	-----	-----
	Grade 7	1:129	-----	-----

The teacher to learner ratios shown above reveal that most classes are overcrowded and as a result remedial work is difficult for the teacher. Controlling group activities as well as proper application of assessment strategies by the teachers may not be maximally done. This problem of overcrowding was also observed by Kembo in Webb.(2000:293) from the schools in Kenya. He notes that:

Teachers handle groups as large as fifty pupils. This means that pupils may often not get a chance to say anything other than to repeat (usually in chorus fashion) the structures being taught.

Another factor that perpetuates language influence is that besides the learner's contact outside the classroom (as stated earlier), the Sepedi, isiNdebele and isiZulu learners are accommodated in one classroom and will only separate when the period for Sepedi, isiNdebele or isiZulu commences. This means that there is a possibility of learners helping one another even with home activities. In other words, the Sepedi learner may attempt to help the isiNdebele speaking learner and vice versa, and the use of standard Sepedi will in the interval be overlooked.

2.7 Conclusion

It has been shown in this chapter that isiNdebele influence on Sepedi at the various primary schools in the Dennilton region of the Greater Sekhukhune District results from such factors as language diversity and language contact, multilingual schools, overcrowded classrooms in which the learners learn, unsuitably qualified teachers as well as teachers speaking other first languages but who happen to teach Sepedi.

CHAPTER THREE

ISINDEBELE SOUNDS THAT HAVE INFILTRATED THE SEPEDI SOUND SYSTEM

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the isiNdebele sounds that have infiltrated into the Sepedi sound system are discussed. Before the discussion of the infiltration of isiNdebele phonemes into the Sepedi sound system, the sound systems of both languages, namely, isiNdebele and Sepedi are given. Grades 6 and 7 learners' essays have been analysed by capturing words that have non-Sotho phonemes and the origin of such phonemes is discussed. Phonemes are explained by Webb, (2000:161) to be:

The smallest unit of sound in a given language, distinguishing words from each other at the level of speech sounds.

3.2 The Sepedi Sound System

3.2.1 Sepedi vowel system

Sepedi is one of the Sotho languages which recognises seven basic vowels (Poulos 1994:427-435), which are as follows: a, i, e, ê, o, ô, u. Descriptive terminology for these vowels follows David Crystal's *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language* (2010).

a [a]: an open front unrounded vowel e.g.

- | | | | |
|-----|------|--------|------------|
| (1) | bala | [βala] | ‘count’ |
| | bana | [βana] | ‘children’ |

i [i]: close front unrounded vowel e.g.

- | | | | |
|-----|--------|--------|----------|
| (2) | -dira | [dira] | ‘do’ |
| | faihla | [fiɦa] | ‘arrive’ |

e [e]: mid-close front unrounded vowel e.g.

- | | | | |
|-----|------|--------|----------|
| (3) | lema | [lema] | ‘plough’ |
| | mela | [mela] | ‘grow’ |

ê [ɛ]: semi-open front vowel e.g.

- | | | | |
|-----|------|--------|----------|
| (4) | rema | [rɛma] | ‘chop’ |
| | hema | [hɛma] | ‘breath’ |

o [o]: mid-close back rounded vowel e.g.

- | | | | |
|-----|-------|--------|--------|
| (5) | -loma | [loma] | ‘bite’ |
| | šoma | [ʃoma] | ‘work’ |

ô [ɔ]: mid-open back rounded vowel e.g.

(6)	-bona	[βɔna]	‘see’
	foła	[fɔła]	‘heal’

u [u]: close back vowel, e.g.

(7)	-bula	[βula]	‘open’
	fula	[fula]	‘grace’

3.2.2 Sepedi consonant system

The following is the consonant system of Sepedi (Poulus, 1994:433-435):

3.2.2.1 Labials

- **ph [ph]: voiceless aspirated bilabial plosive, e.g.**

(1)	pholo	[pholo]	‘ox’
	phela	[phela]	‘live’

- **p [p’]: voiceless ejective bilabial plosive, e.g.**

(2)	pala	[p’ala]	‘be impossible’
	pula	[p’ula]	‘rain’

- **b [β]: voiced bilabial fricative, e.g.**

- (3) bea [βea ‘put, place’
 bala [βala] ‘read’

m [m]: voiced bilabial nasal, e.g.

- (4) ima [ima] ‘become pregnant’
 mae [mae] ‘eggs’

• **w [w]: bilabial voiced semi-vowel, e.g.**

- (5) -wa [-wa] ‘fall’
 wena [wena] ‘you’

3.2.2.2 Labio-dentals

• **f [f]: voiceless radical labio-dental fricative, e.g.**

- (6) -fa [fa] ‘give’
 fula [fula] ‘graze’

3.2.2.3 Labio-alveolars

• **fs [fs]: radical voiceless fricative, e.g.**

- (7) lefsifsi [lefsifsi] ‘darkness’
 fsiela [fsiela] ‘sweap’

- **ps [ps']:** voiceless ejective affricative, e.g.

(8) psila [ps'ila] 'beautiful'

- **psh [psh]:** aspirated voiceless affricative, e.g.

(9) pshio [pshio] 'kidney'
pshikološa [pshikološa] 'roll'

3.2.2.4 Labio-palatals

- **fš [Φš]:** radical voiceless fricative, e.g.

(10) -lefša [leΦša] 'be paid'
lefšega [leΦšega] 'coward'

- **bj [bj]:** voiced fricative, e.g.

(11) bjala [βjala] 'beer'
bjalo [bjalo] 'like that'

- **pš [p']:** ejective affricative, e.g.

(12) bopša [bopʃa] 'be moulded'
mpša [mpʃa] 'dog'

- **pšh [pʰ]: the aspirated affricative, e.g.**

(13)	pšhatla	[pʰhatl'a]	'break'
	pšhega	[pʰhega]	'diarrhoea'

3.2.2.5 Alveolars

- **t [tʰ]: a voiced ejective alveolar plosive, e.g.**

(14)	topa	[tʰop'a]	'pick up'
	tau	[tʰau]	'lion'

- **th [th]: the aspirated alveolar, e.g.**

(15)	thopa	[thopa]	'capture'
	thaba	[thaba]	'be happy'

- **tl [tlʰ]: voiceless ejective alveolar lateral ejective, e.g.**

(16)	tla	[tlʰa]	'come'
	tlama	[tlʰama]	'fastern'

- **tlh [tlh]: the aspirated alveolar, e.g.**

(17)	tlhabô	[tlhʰo]	'a stab'
------	--------	---------	----------

tlhago [tlhago] ‘nature’

• **s [s]: the radical voiceless alveolar fricative, e.g.**

(18) sesadi [sesadi] ‘womanliness’
sola [sola] ‘dish up’

• **hl [hl]: the radical voiceless alveolar lateral fricative, e.g.**

(19) hlaba [ɬaba] ‘stab’
hlaola [ɬaola] ‘sort out’

• **r [r]: the radical alveolar rolled consonant, e.g.**

(20) rata [rat’a] ‘love’
raka [rak’a] ‘chase away’

• **d [d]: a voiced retroflexive, e.g.**

(21) dula [dula] ‘sit’
duma [duma] ‘envy’

• **l [l]: a voiced alveolar lateral non-fricative continuant, e.g.**

(22) lala [lala] ‘sleep’
loma [loma] ‘bite’

- **n [n]: voiced alveolar nasal non-fricative continuant, e.g.**

(23)	nama	[nama]	‘meat’
	nona	[nɔna]	‘be fat’

- **ts [ts’]: voiceless ejective alveolar affricative, e.g.**

(24)	tsela	[ts’ela]	‘road’
	tsena	[ts’ena]	‘come in’

- **tsh [tsh]: the aspirated alveolar, e.g.**

(25)	tshadi	[tshadi]	‘feminine’
	tshela	[tshela]	‘six’

3.2.2.6 Palato-alveolar

- **š [š]: the radical voiceless palato-alveolar fricative, e.g.**

(26)	šala	[šala]	‘remain’
	šila	[šila]	‘grind’

- **j [j]: the voiced palato-alveolar fricative, e.g.**

(27)	-ja	[ja]	‘eat’
------	-----	------	-------

jele [jele] 'ate'

- **tš [tʃ]: the voiceless ejective palato-alveolar affricative, e.g.**

(28) tšea [tʃ'ea] 'take'
tšola [tʃ'ola] 'undress'

- **tšh [tʃh]: the aspirated equivalent to 'tš', e.g.**

(29) tšhaba [tʃhaba] 'flee'
tšhila [tʃhila] 'dirt'

3.2.2.7 Palatals

- **ny [ny]: the palatal voiced nasal, e.g.**

(30) -nyaka [nyaka] 'look for'
nyama [nyama] 'sad'

- **y [j]: the voiced semi-vowel, e.g.**

(31) -ya [ja] 'go'
-yo [jo] 'this one'

- **k [kʰ]: voiceless ejective velar plosive, e.g.**

(32)	kudu	[kʰudu]	‘much’
	kuka	[kʰukʰa]	‘pick up’

- **kh [kh]: the aspirated equivalent of ‘k’, e.g.**

(33)	khudu	[khudu]	‘tortoise’
	khunama	[khunama]	‘kneel down’

- **ng [ŋ]: the velar voiced nasal, e.g.**

(34)	ngwana	[ŋwana]	‘child’
	ngwaya	[ŋwaya]	‘scratch’

- **n [ŋ]: pronounced like [ŋ] is a voiced nasal, e.g.**

(35)	nku	[ŋku]	‘sheep’
	nko	[ŋkɔ]	‘nose’

- **g [g]: the voiced velar fricative, e.g.**

(36)	-goga	[gɔga]	‘pull’
	gae	[gae]	‘home’

- **kg[kxk]: voiceless aspirated velar affricative, e.g.**

(37)	-kgama	[kxhama]	‘throttle’
	kgomo	[kxhɔmo]	‘cow’

3.2.2.8 Prevelar

- **h[h]: a voiced glottal fricative, e.g.**

(38)	sehêbêhêbê	[sehɛβehɛβɛ]	‘secret’
	lehea	[lehea]	‘maize’

3.3 IsiNdebele sound system

The vowel system and the consonant system of IsiNdebele are given and discussed as follows:

3.3.1 IsiNdebele vowel system

IsiNdebele, like any other Nguni language, has five vowel sounds where two of these have variant forms (Mahlangu, 2007:7-10). These phonemes can be phonetically represented by seven symbols (with examples):

[a]: neutral vowel, e.g.

(1)	sala	[sala]	‘remain’
-----	------	--------	----------

halala [halala] ‘congratulations’

[e]: closed mid-close front unrounded vowel, e.g.

(2) leli [leli] ‘this’

ekhaya [ekhaya] ‘at home’

e [ɛ]: open mid-low front vowel, e.g.

(3) sela [sɛla] ‘drink’

phela [phɛla] ‘finish up’

[i]: close high front vowel, e.g.

(4) lilizela [lilizɛla] ‘applause’

ipeni [ipɛni] ‘pen’

[o]: mid-close high back vowel, e.g.

(5) ikosi [ik’osi] ‘king’

godu [goɔu] ‘again’

[ɔ]: mid-open low back vowel, e.g.

(6) bona [ɓona] ‘see’

isono [isɔno] ‘sin’

[u]: close back high vowel, e.g.

(7)	khulu	[khulu]	‘big’
	khumbula	[khumbula]	‘remember’

3.3.2 IsiNdebele consonant system

According to Skhosana (1988:50), isiNdebele retains a number of sounds that do not occur in the phonemic inventories of the other Nguni languages. Moreover, Mahlangu (2007:28-36) has compiled the following isiNdebele consonant system which was revised by the isiNdebele Language Board in 2006.

3.3.2.1 Plosives

- **p [p’]: ejective bilabial explosive, e.g.**

ipuphu	[ip’uphu]	‘mealie meal’
ipi	[ip’i]	‘war’

- **ph [ph]: aspirated bilabial plosive, e.g.**

(2)	iphaphu	[iphaphu]	‘lung’
	-phapha	[phapha]	‘fly’

- **b [b]: voiced bilabial plosive. Only occurs in nasal compounds, e.g.**

(3)	-thamba	[thamba]	‘get wet’
	-lamba	[lamba]	‘get hungry’

- **bh [b]: devoiced bilabial plosive, e.g.**

(4)	-bhubha	[buba]	‘die’
	-bhoboza	[bɔbɔza]	‘dent’

- **t[tʰ]: ejective alveolar plosive, e.g.**

(5)	-tataya	[tʰatʰaja]	‘learn to walk’
	itatawu	[tʰatʰawu]	‘play ground’

- **th [th]: aspirated alveolar plosive. e.g.**

(6)	-thela	[thɛla]	‘pour’
	-thumba	[thumba]	‘win’

- **k [kʰ]: ejective velar plosive, e.g.**

(7)	ikunzi	[ikʰunzi]	‘bull’
	-kakarela	[kʰakʰarela]	‘hold tightly’

- **k [k]: radical velar plosive, e.g.**

(8)	-phakela	[phaɕɛla]	‘dish up’
-----	----------	-----------	-----------

-phakama [phaḵama] ‘stand up’

- **ng [ŋ]: devoiced velar plosive. Occurs outside nasal compounds, e.g.**

(9) ngabuya [ŋgabuja] ‘I came back’

 ngakhamba [ŋgakhamba] ‘I went’

- **g [g]: devoiced velar plosive. Occurs outside nasal compounds, e.g.**

(10) -gabha [gɒḃa] ‘vomit’

 -gida [gɪḃa] ‘dance’

- **kh [kh]: aspirated velar plosive, e.g.**

(11) isikhova [isikhɔva] ‘owl’

 -khomba [khɔmba] ‘point’

- **d [ɖ]: devoiced alveolar plosive. Occurs outside nasal compounds, e.g.**

(12) amadada [amaɖaɖa] ‘ducks’

 dabula [ɖabula] ‘tear’

3.3.2.2 Implosive

- **b [ɓ]: bilabial implosive, e.g.**

(13) -buza [ɓuza] ‘ask’

 -babaza [ɓabaza] ‘exclaim’

3.3.2.3 Fricatives

- **f [f]: voiceless dentilabial fricative, e.g.**

(14)	-fihla	[fiɬa]	‘hide’
	-funda	[funda]	‘read’

- **v [v]: voiced dentilabial fricative, e.g.**

(15)	-vusa	[vusa]	‘wake up’
	-vuna	[vuna]	‘reap’

- **s [s]: voiceless alveolar fricative, e.g.**

(16)	-sela	[sela]	‘drink’
	-siza	[siza]	‘help’

- **z [z]: voiced lateral alveolar fricative, e.g.**

(17)	-zalisa	[zalisa]	‘fill in’
	izulu	[izulu]	‘rain’

- **dl [ɸ]: voiced lateral alveolar fricative, e.g.**

(18)	-indlu	[inɸu]	‘house’
	indlovu	[inɸovu]	‘elephant’

- **hl [h]: voiced lateral alveolar fricative, e.g.**

(19)	-hlaba	[ɫaba]	‘slaughter’
	-hluma	[ɫuma]	‘grow’

- **h [h]: voiced glottal fricative, e.g.**

(20)	-halalisela	[ɦalalisɛla]	‘congratulate’
	amahala	[amaɦala]	‘nothingness’

- **rh [x]: voiced velar fricative, e.g.**

(21)	-rharhaza	[xaxaza]	‘gargle’
	-rhona	[xɔna]	‘snore’

- **dlh [ɸh]: voiced lateral aspirated alveolar fricative, e.g.**

(22)	-dlhadlhabala	[ɸɦaɦɦaɓala]	‘be stubborn’
	idlhamedlhu	[iɦɦameɦɦu]	‘bullfrog’

3.3.2.4 Affricatives

- **ts [tsʰ]: ejective alveolar affricative, e.g.**

(23)	itsikiri	[itsʰikʰiri]	‘bicycle’
	utsotsi	[utsʰotsʰi]	‘thief’

- **dz [dz]: voiced alveolar affricative, e.g.**

(24)	idzinyani	[idzɪnani]	‘chick’
	-idzorwana	[idzorwana]	‘smell intense’

- **tl [tʰ]: lateral ejective alveolar affricative, e.g.**

(25)	[abatloli]	[abatʰoli]	‘authors’
	imitlamo	[imiʰamɔ]	‘drafts’

- **tj [tʃ]: ejective prepalatal affricative, e.g.**

(26)	isitja	[isiʃa]	‘dish’
	utjani	[uʃani]	‘grass’

- **tjh [tʃh]: voiceless aspirated prepalatal affricative, e.g.**

(27)	isitjhebo	[isitʃhɛbɔ]	‘relish’
	itjhatjhatjha	[itʃhatʃhatʃha]	‘savoury doughnut’

- **j [dʒ]: devoiced prepalatal affricative, e.g.**

(28)	ijamo	[idʒamɔ]	‘shape’
	imijeje	[imidʒɛdʒɛ]	‘lines of people’

- **the devoiced prepalatal affricative becomes voiced in nasal compounds, e.g.**

(29)	inja	[indʒa]	‘dog’
------	------	---------	-------

injumbani [inǀzumbani] ‘sjambok’

• **kgħ [kxh]: voiced aspirated velar affricative, e.g.**

(30) -kgophola [kxhɔphɔla] ‘hook’
-imikghadi [imikxhadi] ‘hide blanket’

• **tlh [tlh]: lateral aspirated alveolar affricative, e.g.**

(31) imithhala [imithhala] ‘traces’
imitlhatlhana [imitlhatlhana] ‘shacks’

• **tsh [tsh]: aspirated alveolar affricative, e.g.**

(32) tshwenya [tshweɲa] ‘troublesome’
-tshwila [tshwila] ‘postpone’

• **(m)f [mqfʰ]: ejective dentilabial affricative, e.g.**

(33) iimfesi [iimqfʰesi] ‘fishes’
umfundisi [umqfʰundisi] ‘pastor’

• **(m)v [mbv]: voiced dentilabial affricative, e.g.**

(34) imvu [imɔbvu] ‘sheep’
iimvalo [iimɔbvalɔ] ‘lids’

3.3.2.5 Liquids

- **l [l]: voiced lateral alveolar liquid, e.g.**

(35)	-lalela	[lalelə]	‘listen’
	-lila	[lila]	‘cry’

3.3.2.6 Vibrants

- **r [r]: voiced alveolar vibrant, e.g.**

(36)	-rera	[rera]	‘plan’
	imiraro	[im̩irarɔ]	‘problems’

3.3.2.7 Semi-vowels

- **y [j]: prepalatal semi-vowel, e.g.**

(37)	yami	[jami]	‘mine’
	yakho	[jakhɔ]	‘yours’

- **w [w]: velar semi-vowel, e.g.**

(38)	wethu	[wethu]	‘ours’
	iwoma	[iwɔma]	‘group’

3.3.2.8 Nasals

- **m [m]: bilibial nasal, e.g**

(39)	-mema	[mɛma]	‘invite’
	-memeza	[mɛmɛza]	‘yell’

- **n[n]: alveolar nasal, e.g.**

(40)	nina	[nina]	‘you’
	-unana	[unana]	‘baby’

- **[ŋ]: velar nasal that occurs in nasal compounds only, e.g.**

(41)	iinkomo	[iɪŋkɔmɔ]	‘cows’
	iingozi	[iɪŋgozi]	‘accidents’

- **ng [ŋ]: velar nasal that occurs outside nasal compounds, e.g.**

(42)	-nghonghoyila	[ŋɔŋɔjila]	‘complain’
	-nghangha	[ŋaŋa]	‘resist’

- **ny [ɲ]: prepalatal nasal, e.g.**

(43)	inyonga	[ɪɲɔŋga]	‘thigh’
	inyama	[ɪɲama]	‘meat’

3.3.2.9 Click sound system

Not all click sounds occur in isiNdebele as compared to other Nguni languages such as isiXhosa, for instance. The following click sounds are found in isiNdebele (Mahlangu, 2007:35)

3.3.2.10 Dental clicks

- **c [ʘ]: voiceless dental click, e.g.**

(44)	-cabanga	[ʘabʌŋga]	‘think’
	-icala	[ʘi/ala]	‘crime’

- **ch [h]: aspirated dental click, e.g.**

(45)	-chisa	[hisa]	‘make bed’
	-chacha	[ha/ha]	‘loosen’

- **gc [g]: voiced dental click, e.g.**

(46)	-gcugcuzela	[guguzɛla]	‘encourage’
	-gcina	[gina]	‘end’

- **nc [ŋ]: nasal dental click, e.g.**

(47)	-ncama	[ŋama]	‘be determined’
------	--------	--------	-----------------

-isincele [isiŋ/ɛlɛ] ‘left hand’

3.3.2.11 Palato-alveolar clicks

- **q [!]: voiceless palato-alveolar click, e.g.**

(48) isiqu nto [isi!unt’ɔ] ‘decision’

iqiniso [i!iniso] ‘truth’

- **qh [!g]: aspirated palato-alveolar click, e.g.**

(49) isiqhema [isi!hema] ‘group’

-isiqhwala [isi!hwala] ‘disabled person’

- **gq [!g]: coiced palate-alveolar click, e.g.**

(50) igqatjha [i!gatʃha] ‘sour porridge’

isigqila [isi!gila] ‘slave’

- **ngq [ŋ!g]: voiced nasalized palate-alveolar click, e.g.**

(51) ungqongqotjhe [uŋ!gɔŋ!gɔtʃhɛ] ‘minister’

ingqondo [iŋ!gɔndɔ] ‘mind’

3.3.2.12 Lateral clicks

Only a single lateral click is found in isiNdebele, i.e., the nasalized lateral click nx [ŋ//] which occurs in a very limited number of words such as onomatopoeic ideophones as well as in de-ideophonic verbs, (Skhosana.1998:46), e.g.

(52)	nx [n//]	‘interjective of annoyance’
	-nxafa [ŋ//afa]	‘utter click of annoyance’

3.4 The infiltration of isiNdebele sounds into the Sepedi sound system

3.4.1 Standard vocabulary

Learners tend to use both standard and non-standard vocabulary when they speak and when they write essays, because they are continuously exposed to language variations, shifts in meaning and changes perpetuated by language contacts in the region under investigation (Dennilton). It has however been difficult to give a clear definition of standard language by linguists and, in this regard, Malimabe (1990:4) has attested that

What was a standard language today may not be so in the future; and what was regarded as non-standard could achieve a standard form.

Nevertheless, Van Wyk (1989) in Malimabe (1990:3) has the following views on standard language:

- It is accepted by the society as a super-ordinate variety

- A set of linguistic norms recognized by members of a society could make a language standard.
- A standard language must survive the test of time through its dynamism. It should be flexible so that it can always be accessible.
- Some languages become standard because of the influence of the dominant class, institutional decision and the fact that the dialect or that variety of language was the first to be written.

Trudgill (1987:20) effectively concludes this by saying:

All languages, and correspondingly all dialects, are equally 'good' as linguistic systems. All varieties of a language are structured, complex, rule governed systems which are wholly adequate for the needs of their speakers

As Sepedi, isiNdebele as well as isiZulu (as shown in Chapter Two) are the standard languages used for teaching and learning at the schools in the Dennilton region, the code-switching among these languages by the learners cannot be overlooked.

The findings from the learners' written work at the schools selected for this study (Luckau Primary School, Njoma Primary School, Mokgalabje Primary School and Montsošabošego Primary School) indicate that some isiNdebele sounds have infiltrated the Sepedi sound system. The learners' daily contact inside and outside the classroom as well as in other environments in which the learners grow up (as has already been noted) results in the exchange of vocabulary from their non-Sotho peers. The non-standard vocabulary also filters through to the children through multilingual parents and teachers as has been shown in Chapter Two.

3.4.2 Method of extracting vocabulary with non-Sepedi sounds

At each school, forty essay books were selected through random sampling from both boys and girls in both Grades 6 and 7. These essays were then studied to establish the non-Sotho sounds that are being used by the Sepedi speaking learners when writing essays. At Luckau Primary School, the following paragraph from the essay topic: **Mokete wa lenyalo [The wedding celebration]** was picked out:

Ge re dutše ka **ndlung**, **mzala** a gopola gore o lebetše mangina a gagwe gae. E be e le yo mongwe wa diphelesi mo lenyalong. Abuti a re o tlo mo **zamela** a mangwe lebenkeleng la kgauswi.

Makoti a nkaparetše ga **mnate**, a swanelwa. Diphelesi tša basadi di be di apere diroko tše tala, mola banna ba apere disutu tše ntsho ka dihemepe tše tala. Ge ba bina, banna ba **hlangana** le basadi ka **dilaene**. Re fihletše ga **gogo** ge re bowa. Ke rata go mmona **njalo**

[While sitting in the house, my cousin realized that she had forgotten her earrings at home. She was one of the bridesmaids at the wedding. My brother said he would organise for some others from the nearest shop. The bride was well dressed and looked nice. The female bride's attendants wore green dresses while the males wore black suits with green shirts. As they danced, they mixed in lines. We passed by my grandmother's place when we come back. I always like to visit her.]

The above paragraph should read as follows in Sepedi:

Ge re dutše ka ngwakong, motswala a gopola gore o lebetše mangina a gagwe gae. E be e le yo mongwe wa bo makgetle mo lenyalong. Abuti a re o tlo mo nyakela a mangwe lebenkeleng la kgauswi.

Makoti a nkaparetše gabotse a swanelwa. Bo makgetle ba basadi ba apere diroko tše tala mola banna ba apere disutu tše ntsho ka dihempe tše tala. Ge ba bina, banna ba kopana le basadi ka meraladi. Re fihletše ga koko ge re bowa. Ke rata go mmona gantši.

Other Nguni sounds were picked out from parts of the essay on:

Thuto ka dinonwane [A lesson about riddles] at Njoma Primary School

Dinonwane di **vula** menagano ya batheeletši ba tšona. **Gogo** wa Lotanang o di kgona ka kudu. Ge letšatši le subetše o gana ge ba **yula** monyako le ge go fiša. O tšhaba ditsotsi. O re ge di **zula** bošego di tla ba bolaya. Ke nako ya gagwe ya go re botša dinonwane yeo. Ke rata ye nngwe ya ‘batho le mabele.’ O re gwa **dlula** beke ngwana wa tšhuana a jele **mavele** gomme a sa hwe, batho ka mphela ba thoma go ja **mavele** ba kwa a le **mnandi**.

Gogo ga a nyake Lotanang a **dlala** kgole le gae. Ge Lotanang a tsamaya Phesi o **ngenela** yena le Kgotso. O gana go **hlangana** le Lerato le ge re hlaela.

[Stories stimulate the minds of their listeners. Lotanang’s grandmother is very good at them. After sunset she does not want them to open the door even if it is hot. She is afraid of thugs. She says they will kill them as they hunt around during the night. That is her time to tell us stories. I like the one about people and the sorgum. She says a week elapsed and the orphan child did not die after eating the sorgum, and all the people started to eat the grain and it was nice.

Lotanang’s grandmother does not want Lotanang to play away from home. When Lotanang goes, Phesi replaces her and Kgotso. She does not want to mix with Lerato even if we run short.]

The paragraph should read as follows in Sepedi:

Dinonwane di bula menagano ya batheeletši ba tšona. Koko wa Lotanang o di kgona kudu. Ge letšatši le subetše o gana ge ba bula ngwako le ge go fiša. O tšhaba ditsotsi. O re di tla ba bolaya ge di sela bošego. Ke nako ya gagwe ya go re botša dinonwane yeo. Ke rata ye nngwe ya ‘batho le mabele’ O re gwa feta beke ngwana wa tšhuana a jele mabele gomme a sa hwe, batho ka moka ba thoma go ja mabele gomme ba kwa a le bose.

Koko ga a nyake Lotanang a bapala kgole le gae. Ge Lotanang a sepela Phesi otsenela yena le Kgotso. O gana go hlakana le Lerato ge re hlaela.

Learners at Mokgalabje Primary School also wrote Sepedi essays and from these essays some Nguni sounds were picked out in their activity on: **Merogo e fepa mmele. [Vegetables are good for the body.]**

Ke rata khabetšhe, mafodi, dikherotse le mazampane. Merogo e **mnante** ge ba e tšhetše makhura. Mma o feditše makhura ge a apea magwinya, bjale re hloka sa go apea sopho ya ditamati. Le yona ke e rata kudu.

Morutiši wa rena wa N.S. (sic) o re rutilé go bjala merogo mo gae. O re ka mehla pele re yo **dlala** re e nošetše. Se se tlo re thuša go seketša tšhelete ka mo lapeni.

Ngwana wa gešo o a **ndemela** ge ke re a nthuše go nošetša. Ga a rate mazampane. **Njalo** o a hlatša ge ba mo gapeletša go ja mazampane.

[I like cabbage, pumpkin, carrots and potatoes. Vegetables are nice when mixed in some oil. Mother has finished the cooking oil while cooking the savoury doughnuts, now we do not have cooking oil to make tomato soup. I like it too. Our N.S. (sic) teacher taught us to plant some vegetables at home.

He says we should water them every day before we go to play. This will help to save money in the house.

My younger brother does not want to help me water them. He does not like potatoes. He vomits now and then when they force him to eat potatoes.]

The above paragraph should read as follows in Sepedi:

Ke rata khabetšhe, mafodi, dikherotse le matsapane. Morogo o bose ge o tšhetšwe makhura. Mma o feditše makhura ge a apea makunya, bjale re hloka sa go apea sopho ya ditamati. Le yona ke e rata kudu. Morutiši wa rena wa N.S (sic) o re rutila go bjala merogo mo gae. O re ka mehla pele re yo bapala re e nošetše. Se se tlo re thuša go seketša tšhelete ka mo lapeng.

Ngwana wa gešo o a nkganyetša ge ke re a nthuše go nošetša. Ga a rate matsapane. Ka dinako tšohle o a hlatša ge ba mo gapeletša go ja matsapane.

At Montsošabošego learners' essays were also studied and some Nguni related sounds were uncovered as in the topic on: **Leeto la Kruger National Park [The Kruger National Park journey.]**

Ge re eya Kruger National Park mootledi wa pese o be a sa tsebe **ndlela** gabotse. Re fihlile Leseding Lodge bošego gomme moletadikgoro a gana go **yula**. Morutiši a founela **nduna** ya gagwe gomme a tla a **yula**. Re bone diphoofolo ra ba ra **hlangana** le pitsi ge re le tseleng re namela thaba. Ge re di **khuza** di be di emiša ditsebe, di **dlalisa** mesela ya tšona. Go be go le **mnate**.

[When we were going to the Kruger National Park, the driver did not know the way. We arrived late at night at Leseding Lodge and the watchman did not want to open the gates for us. The teacher phoned the owner and he came to open for us. We saw many animals and we even met zebras while we were

going up the mountain. When we praised them, they would raise their ears and twist their tails. It was very enjoyable.]

The above paragraph should read as follows in Sepedi:

Ge re eya Kruger National Park mootledi wa pese o be a sa tsebe tsela gabotse. Re fihlile Leseding Lodge bošego gomme moletadikgoro a gana go bula. Morutiši a founela ntona ya gagwe gomme a tla a bula.

Re bone diphoofolo ra ba ra gahlana le pitsi ge re le tseleng re namela thaba.

Ge re di duduetša di be di emiša ditsebe, di bapadiša mesela ya tšona. Go be go le bose.

After studying the learners' written work at the designated schools in this region, a composite illustration of the Nguni related sounds that were discovered are worth showing to illustrate the spread of these sounds in Sepedi learners' written work in this area.

Table 3.1 Nguni sounds found in the Sepedi learners' essays

	Luckau P.School	Njoma P.School	Mokgalabje P.School	Montsošabošego P.School	Total
No. of books	40	40	40	40	160
Nguni sounds at schools					
z[z]: voiced lateral alveolar fricative	28	30	31	29	111

dl[dl]: voiced lateral alveolar fricative	31	34	33	33	131
v[v]: voiced lateral alveolar fricative		22		18	40
g[g]: devoiced velar explosive	19	29	27	26	116
nd[nd]: secondary nasal compound			22	29	51
j[dʒ]: devoiced ejective velar affricative	22	20	18	26	86

3.4.3 The Zunda-Nguni voiced lateral alveolar fricative [z]

The voiced lateral alveolar fricative [z] is not a Sotho sound but an Nguni sound. Through close contact with isiNdebele speaking communities, Sepedi learners have adopted several words containing the sound [z] for Sepedi voiceless ejective alveolar affricative **ts** [ts] as in:

IsiNdebele	Learners' vocabulary	Sepedi vocabulary	English
amazambani	mazampane	matsapane	potatoes
umzala	mzala	motswala	cousin
khuza	khuza	khosa/duduetša	praise

3.4.4 The Nguni voiced lateral alveolar fricative [dl]

Out of the 160 learners' essays, 131 words with the sound [dl] occurred, while the rest of the essays used a proper Sepedi (voiced bilabial) sound **b [b]**. The words with the sound [dl] demonstrate that learners in this region have started to internalize this Nguni sound e.g.

Standard	Learners'	Sepedi	English
IsiNdebele	Vocabulary	Vocabulary	
dlala	dlala	bapala	play
dlalisa	dlalisa	bapadiša	play with
dlula	dlula	feta	elapse

3.4.5 Zunda-Nguni voiced lateral alveolar fricative[v]

The appearance of the Nguni voiced lateral alveolar fricative [v] was also noted. There are 40 learners who seem to adapt to the use of the sound v [v] for the Sepedi voiced bilabial fricative sound **b [β]** as in:

Standard	Learners'	Sepedi	English
IsiNdebele	Vocabulary	Vocabulary	
vula	vula	bula	open
amabele	mavele	mabele	sorghum

3.4.6 The Zunda-Nguni devoiced velar fricative [g]

The devoiced velar fricative [g] is also prevalent in the written work of the learners. Out of the **160** books that were examined, **116** words were detected with the Nguni devoiced velar fricative sound [g] for the Sepedi voiceless ejective velar plosive sound ‘k’ [k’].

Standard	Learners’	Sepedi	English
IsiNdebele	Vocabulary	Vocabulary	
ugogo	gogo	koko	granny
amagwinya	magwinya	makunya	savoury
			doughnuts

3.4.7 The Zunda-Nguni secondary nasal compound [nd]

Some of the learners have opted to use the Nguni nasal compound [nd] instead of the Sepedi voiced ejective alveolar plosive sound t [t’] as in:

Standard	Learners’	Sepedi	English
IsiNdebele	Vocabulary	Vocabulary	
induna	nduna	ntona	headman
indaba	indaba	taba	news

3.4.8 Nguni devoiced prepalatal affricative [dʒ]

The learners cannot differentiate between the Nguni devoiced prepalatal affricative sound [dʒ] and the Sepedi sound **bj** [bj] (labio-prepalatal voiced fricative) as in:

Standard	Learners'	Sepedi	English
IsiNdebele	Vocabulary	Vocabulary	
Njalo	njalo	bjalo	that way
Njani	njane	bjang	how

3.5 Borrowing

Another linguistic phenomenon worth considering in language contact situations is borrowing. Borrowing happens amongst languages in contact and it is there to facilitate the growth of the host or borrowing language. Nkonko in Webb (2000:31) shows that the integration of linguistic items from one language into another entails adapting the borrowed items to the phonological, morphological, and syntactic patterns of the borrowing language. Mutaka (2000:280) says it is

the outright adoption of foreign lexical items from another language the target language is in contact with.

The following are some of the borrowed isiNdebele lexical items picked out from the above extracts of Sepedi learners' essays:

Learners'	Standard	Standard	English
Vocabulary	IsiNdebele	Sepedi	Vocabulary
-sihlobo	-isihlobo	moloko	relative
-phelesi	-ipelesi	makgetle	bridesmaid
-dlala	-dlala	bapala	play
-dlula	-dlula	feta	pass
-ngena	-ngena	tsena	come in
-bangani	-abangani	bagwera	friends
-hlangana	-hlangana	kopana	meet
-khuza	-khuza	duduetša	praise
-khomba	-khomba	šupa	point

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has elaborated on Sepedi vowels as well as consonants. IsiNdebele vowels and consonants have also been explained with examples from Mahlangu (2007:28-36) and Skhosana, (1998:50). In addition, the existence of isiNdebele sounds as well as borrowed lexical items in the written work of Sepedi learners has been examined through some extracts from their essays. It is evident from the study of the learner's written work that Sepedi learners are gradually internalising the isiNdebele vocabulary together with its sound system.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE MORPHOLOGICAL, SYNTACTICAL AND SEMANTICAL INFLUENCE OF ISINDEBELE ON SEPEDI

4.1 Introduction

IsiNdebele influence on Sepedi appears also on the disciplines of morphology, syntax and semantics when learners write Sepedi essays. This chapter focuses on these influences in the following sub-headings:

4.2 Morphological influence

4.2.1 Prefixation of Nguni versus Sotho languages

4.2.2 Suffixation of Nguni versus Sotho languages

4.3 Syntactic influence

4.3.1 IsiNdebele vocabulary that has not changed the Sepedi sentence structure

4.3.2 IsiNdebele vocabulary that has changed the Sepedi sentence structure

4.4 Semantic influence

4.4.1 Semantic shift as a result of isiNdebele influence

4.4.2 Narrowing of meaning as a result of isiNdebele influence

4.2 Morphological Influence

Morphology as a discipline of language has been studied and described by linguists such as amongst others, Lombard (1985:16) and Poulos (1994:3) who describe it as:

a discipline which analyses the structure of polymorphemic words or the study of elements from which and the manner in which words are formed.

Polymorphemic words are constructed by more than one morpheme and this makes the morphology of these words more complex. The prefixation of these morphologically complex words of isiNdebele and Sepedi is of importance here and is therefore looked at in some detail.

4.2.1 Prefixation of Nguni versus Sotho languages

Learners in both Grades 6 and 7 cannot distinguish between isiNdebele and Sepedi prefixes because of the daily contact prevailing amongst them. Nguni and Sotho prefixes are consequently used interchangeably by these learners when they write essays. Prefixes are defined by Kosch (2006:8) as “Affixes which precede the root with which they are most closely associated”.

It is therefore important to look at both isiNdebele and Sepedi noun classes to establish which isiNdebele prefixes are being used instead of Sepedi prefixes.

Table 4.1: Noun classes as well as absolute pronouns in IsiNdebele

Class	Class prefix	Class concord	Pronominal root	Common suffix	Absolute pronoun
1	imu-	u-	-o-	-na	Yena
2	a-	ba-	-o-	-na	Bona
3	umu-	u-	-o-	-na	Wona
4	imi-	i-	-o-	-na	Yona
5	ili-	li-	-o-	-na	Lona
6	ama-	a-	-o-	-na	Wona
7	Isi	si-	-o-	-na	Sona
8	Izi	zi-	-o-	-na	Zona
9	i(in-)	i-	-o-	-na	Yona
10	ii-izi(n-)	zi-	-o-	-na	Zona
11	Ubu	bu--	-o-	-na	Bona
12	Uku	ku-	-o-	-na	Khona

(Jiyani, 1994:4)

Table 4.2: Sepedi noun classes as well as absolute pronouns

Class	Class prefix	Class concord	Pronominal root	Suffix	Absolute pronoun

1	mo-	O	O	-na	Yena
2	ba-	Ba	Ba	-na	Bona
1a	-				
1b	bo-	Bo		-na	Bona
3	mo-	O	O	-na	Wona
4	me-	E	E	-na	Yona
5	le-	Le	Le	-na	Lona
6	a-	A	A	-na	Wona
7	se-	Se	Se	-na	Sona
8	di-	Di	Di	-na	Tšona
9	n-	Di		-na	Yona
10	diN-	Di		-na	Tšona
14	Bo-	Go		-na	Bjona
15	Go			-na	Gona
16	Fa			-na	Gona
17	Go			-na	Gona
18	Mo			-na	Gona

(Lombard, 1985:102)

Examination of the learners' written work from Luckau Primary School, Njoma Primary School, Mokgalabje Primary School as well as Montsošabošego Primary School reveal the following Nguni prefix features:

Learner A:

Umorutiši **u** nyaka mošomo wa gae. **U** hweditše re **u** dirile ka moka gomme a thaba. Ke be ke sa **wa** kwešiše **amadiri** mara (sic) ke a **wa** kwešiša bjale.

[The teacher wants the home work. He found that we all have done it and he was happy. I did not understand the verbs but now I do.]

The sentence should read as follows in Sepedi:

Morutiši **o** nyaka mošomo wa gae. **O** hweditše re **o** dirile ka moka gomme a thaba. Ke be ke sa **a** kwešiše **madiri** mara (sic) ke a **a** kwešiša bjale.

Learner B:

Ke a **wa** rata **amafela**. Mma **u** ntlela le one ge a bowa **eteropone**.

[I like mielies. Mother brings them for me when she comes from town.]

The sentence should read as follows in Sepedi:

Ke a **a** rata **mafela**. Mma **o** ntlela le ona ge a bowa **teropong**.

Learner C:

Ithelebišene ya gešo e senyegile, abuti **u** ile **u** tla reka ye mpsha.

[Our television is out of order. My brother said he will buy a new one.]

The sentence should read as follows in Sepedi:

Thelebišene ya gešo e senyegile, abuti **o** ile **o** tla reka ye mpsha.]

Learner D:

Malome o aga **indlu** ye kgolo, o re ge a fetša o tlo reka **ikoloi**.

[My uncle is building a big house. He says he is going to buy a car when he is finished.]

The above sentence should read as follows in Sepedi:

Malome o aga **ngwako** wo mogolo, o re ge a fetša o tlo reka **koloi**.

Jiyane (1994:4) has shown that nouns are prefixed in IsiNdebele. He cites the following examples of prefixed nouns;

Umuntu ‘a person’

Ugogo ‘grandmother’

Umama ‘mother’ (see Table 4.1 above for more examples). In contrast, Sepedi nouns are not prefixed, but from the learners’ written work it is observed that they are adopting the isiNdebele way of prefixing some of the nouns when they write sentences as in:

Learners'IsiNdebele	Standard IsiNdebele	Sepedi	English
Prefix	Prefix		
umorutiši	umfundisi	morutiši	teacher
amadiri	izenzo	madiri	verbs
amafela	isiphila	mahea	mielies
eteroponi	edorobheni	toropong	in town
ithelebišeni	ithelevitjhini	thelebišene	television
indlu	indlu	ngwako	the house
-ikoloi	ikoloyi	koloi	the car

Learners have a tendency of also using the isiNdebele subject concord especially for some nouns in noun class 6 as they write sentences as in the following:

Learners'	IsiNdebele subject	Sepedi subject	English
Subject concord	concord	concord	
Ke a wa kwešiša	Ngiyazizwisisa	Ke a a kwešiša	I understand them
amadiri	izenzo	madiri	the verbs
Ke a wa rata	Ngiyasithanda	ke a a rata	I like
amafela	isiphila	mafela	mielies

4.2.2 Suffixation of Nguni versus Sotho languages.

Suffixes were studied and described by Kosch (2006:9) as affixes which follow the root with which they are most closely associated. When going through the learners' written work, it was realized that the Sepedi learners are gradually adopting the Nguni suffixation style as shown in the following examples:

Learner A:

Esikoloni ba re kgopetše gore re tle mesong. Papa o re nametša koloi, mara (sic) o re fološa **tseleni** ka gore yena o šoma **etoroponi**.

[They asked us to come early at school. We travel in father's car but he drops us on the way because he works in town.]

The sentence should read as follows in Sepedi:

Sekolong ba re kgopetše gore re tle mesong. Papa o re nametša koloi, mara (sic) o re fološa **tseleng** ka gore yena o šoma **toropong**.

Learner B:

Ka Sontaga re fihlile **ekerekeni** ra swiela pele moruti a fihla. Ra phumola marwele mo **dituloni** le mo **ditafoleni**. Ge re feditše ra thoma go opela.

[On Sunday we arrived at the church and swept the floors before the priest could arrive. We dusted the chairs and the tables. When finished we started singing.]

The above sentence should read as follows in Sepedi:

Ka Sontaga re fihlile **kerekeng** ra swiela pele moruti a fihla. Ra phumula marwele mo **ditulong** le mo **ditafoleng**. Ge re fetša ra thoma go opela.

In Sepedi, the locative noun is expressed by means of the suffix **-ng** attached to the noun but it is observed from the above sentences that the learners are adopting the Nguni locative suffix **e-(i)ni**, to express place or locality as in:

Learners'	Standard	Standard	English
IsiNdebele	IsiNdebele	Sepedi	
Suffix	Suffix	Suffix	
esikoloni	esikolweni	sekolong	at school
tseleni	endleleni	tseleng	on the way
etoroponi	edorobheni	toropong	in town
ekerekeni	egeregeni	kerekeng	at the church
dituloni	eentulweni	ditulong	on chairs
dituloni	eentafuleni	ditafoleng	on the tables

The findings from the designated schools show that there is a gradual adoption of both Nguni prefixes and suffixes into Sepedi prefix and suffix system by learners when they write Sepedi essays.

4.3 Syntactic influence of isiNdebele on Sepedi

Syntax as a linguistic discipline looks into the sentence structure and the formation thereof in a language. Louwrens (1985:2) explains syntax as:

The linguistic discipline which looks at the rules according to which words combine with one another to form larger entities such as word groups and sentences.

In this study the learners' way of constructing sentences has been examined in the following:

4.3.1 IsiNdebele vocabulary that has not changed the Sepedi sentence structure

As the learners converse with each other in and outside the classroom, they ultimately adopt one another's vocabulary. This is observed in the vocabulary used in their written work. However, some of these Nguni vocabulary has in this case not changed the structure of the Sepedi sentences; they only fit in the isiNdebele words that they want to adopt as in:

Learner A:

Re ile lenyalong ga **shlobo** sa gešo. Ke be ke le yo mongwe wa **diphelesi**. Go be go le **monate** kudu. Ge re eya go tšea dinepe (sic) ka bona koloi ye botse ka e **khwela**. Ka mo gare go be go le ba bangwe ba **bankane** ba monyadiwa bao ke sa ba tsebego. **Diphahlo** tša bona e be e le tša go turwa.

[We went to my relative's wedding. I was one of the bride's best bridesmaids. It was enjoyable. When going to the photo shoot, I travelled in a beautiful car in which other groom's friends were travelling but I was not familiar to them. They were dressed in expensive clothes.]

The above sentence should read as follows in Sepedi:

Re ile lenyalong ga **moloko** wa gešo. Ke be ke le yo mongwe wa bo **makgetle**. Go be go le **bose** kudu. Ge re eya go tšea dinepe (sic) ka bona koloi ye botse ka e **namela**. Ka mo gare go be go le ba bangwe ba **bagwera** ba monyadiwa bao ke sa ba tsebego. **Diaparo** tša bona e be e le tša go turwa.

Learner B:

Lerato o **hlopha** barutiši mo sekoloni. **Njalonjalo** o kgopela go ya ka ntle gore a **dlale** le **bankane** ba gagwe. Ke mo kwele a ba botša ka monna wa go **hlanya** yo re mmonego kua toroponi.

[Lerato is annoying to teachers. She now and then wants to go out so that she may play with her friends. I heard her telling them about a mad man that we saw in town.]

The above sentence should read as follows in Sepedi:

Lerato o **tshwenya** barutiši mo sekolong. O kgopela go ya ka ntle kgafetšakgafetša gore a bapale le **bagwera** ba gagwe. Ke mo kwele a ba botša ka monna wa **segafa** yo re mmonego kua toropong.

Learner C:

Nompumelelo o **kitima** kudu. Ge re mo **khuza** o a gakala. Ga a nyake go re **phoqa**. **Mohlampe** ge a ka hlokomela talente ye ya gagwe a ka fihla kgole ka moso

[Nompumelelo runs very fast. She performs best when we praise her. She does not want to disappoint us. She may go very far if she takes her talent seriously in future.]

The sentence should in Sepedi read as follows:

Nompumelelo o tšhabeša kudu. Ge re mo **duduetša** o a gakala. Ga a nyake go re nyamiša. **Mogongwe** ge a ka hlokomela talente ye ya gagwe a ka fihla kgole ka moso.

The vocabulary used by the learners in the sentences above, shows that they cannot differentiate between isiNdebele and Sepedi standard vocabulary. This emanates from the close contact between isiNdebele speaking learners and the Sepedi speaking learners at school and at home as well (as has already been shown in Chapter One.)

Learners’ Vocabulary	Standard IsiNdebele	Standard Sepedi	English
sihlobo	isihlobo	moloko	relative
diphelesi	ipelesi	makgetle	brides’ maid
monate	mnandi	bose	nise
khwela	khwela	namela	climb
monkane	umngani	bagwera	friend
diphahlo	iimpahla	diaparo	clothes
hlopha	hlupha	tshwenya	naughty
njalonjalo	njalonjalo	kgafetšakgafetša	now and then

dlala	dlala	bapala	play
hlanya	hlanya	gafa	mad
khuza	khuza	duduetša	praise
phoqa	phoqa	nyamiša	disappoint
mohlampe	mhlambe	mohlomongwe	maybe

4.3.2 IsiNdebele vocabulary that has changed Sepedi sentence structure

The Sepedi basic sentence structure, especially on demonstratives, differs from that of isiNdebele. In Sepedi the indicating pronouns are subdivided into three basic positions on the grounds of the relative distance from the speaker (Lombard 1985:87). Moreover, some learners are adopting the IsiNdebele demonstrative structure which comes before the subject as in:

IsiNdebele sentence structure used by the learners

Lo mfana o kgona dipalo.

[This boy is good at Maths.]

Lo mama, o apara gabotse.

[This woman dresses up nicely.]

Le puku, ke ya ka.

[This book is mine.]

Standard IsiNdebele sentence

Umsana lo wazi iimbalo

Umma lo wembatha

kuhle

Incwadi le ngeyami.

The Standard Sepedi sentence structures for the above sentences are:

Mošemanane yo o kgona dipalo.

Mama yo o apara gabotse.

Puku ye ke ya ka.

Some of the learners construct questions in this way:

Non Standard IsiNdebele	Standard IsiNdebele	Standard Sepedi
Eng taba le rasa? [Why are you making noise?]	Kubayini nirasa?	Le reng le rasa?
Eng taba le sa botšiše morutiši? [Why don't you ask the teacher?]	Kubayini ningabuzi utitjhere?	Le reng le sa botšiše morutiši?

4.4 Semantic influence of isiNdebele on Sepedi

The way in which learners write their essays and the meaning contained in what they write, has made it necessary for the researcher to discuss the discipline of semantics based on the following sub-headings:

4.4.1 Semantic shift as a result of isiNdebele influence on Sepedi

4.4.2 Narrowing of meaning as a result of isiNdebele influence on Sepedi.

4.4.1 Semantic shift as a result of isiNdebele influence on Sepedi

The discipline of semantics in a language looks into the meaning of any written text. Mokgokong (1975:21-22) wrote about the meaning of words in sentences and he attests that no two persons ever mean exactly the same thing by the same word when they speak or write. This means that with the same word or sentence, learners may refer to more than one meaning. Richard (1992:329) also wrote about meaning in written and spoken texts and he said:

There are many different approaches to the way in which meaning in language is studied. Philosophers, for instance, have investigated the relationship between linguistic expressions, such as the words of a language, and persons, things and events in the world to which things refer.

When learners speak or write essays, they put their views out to the reader through the spoken or written word which contains such a meaning. In this case the learners used isiNdebele vocabulary which may convey different meanings in Sepedi and thus shift the basic meaning contained in the sentence depending on how the words or terminology is used. Mokgokong (1975:26) attests that semantic shift occurs when the basic meaning of a word has undergone some modification. The following sentences from the learners' written work serve to illustrate this:

Learner A:

Diphelesi di be di apere **diphahlo** tša go turwa.

[The brides' maids wore expensive clothes.]

The word ‘**diphahlo**’, as used above, implies clothes (iimpahla/izembatho) in isiNdebele. However, it has a different meaning in Sepedi. The noun ‘**diphahlo**’ refers to furniture or items in the house in Sepedi, as in:

Maphodisa a hweditše **diphahlo** tšeo di utswitšwego ka ntlong ye kgolo kua Polokwane.

[The police found stolen goods in a big house in Polokwane.]

It is thus confusing for the teacher or the reader to understand the semantic value of **diphahlo** when used by both isiNdebele and Sepedi speaking learners.

Learner B:

Ge ba kena gae ba ile ba **hlakana** le mahodu a tšhaba. Mahodu ao a sentše kudu lapeng leo.

[When they arrived at home they met the thieves at their heels. Those thieves caused much damage in that house.]

The word **hlakana** in Sepedi (**hlangana** in Standard IsiNdebele) means to mix as in:

bašimane ba tla **hlakana** le basetsana ge ba opela.

[The boys will mix with the girls when they sing.]

The above two sentences have two distinct meanings of **meet** in isiNdebele and **mix** in Sepedi, but they are being used interchangeably by the learners.

Learner C:

Re ba fihletše pele, gape koloi ya malome ye mpsha e a **hamba**.

[We arrived before them, because my uncle's new car goes very fast.]

Hampa! Ke kgale ba go emetše sekolong, mmagwe a realo go morwagwe.

[Go! They have long been waiting for you at school, said the mother to her son.]

Sepedi has the verb **sepela** meaning to go, while isiZulu has **hamba** for the verb go. However, some Sepedi learners say **hamba** for a car that goes very fast and thus shifts the meaning from 'go' to 'going very fast'

Learner D:

Ge mohlahlobi a tsena bana ba ile ba **phakama**.

[The children stood up when the inspector got in.]

Learner E:

Ge ke bona lehodu maikutlo a ka a a **phakama**.

[I got emotional when I see the thief.]

From the above sentences it is apparent that learners used the verb 'go **phakama**' in different contexts to bring about different meanings. The reader will understand the meaning of the word as he or she reads the sentence further. In this case **-phakama** has the meaning of:

- to stand up,
- to get emotionally teased,

- be promoted.

Learner F:

O tla hwetša maemo a go **phakama** ge a phasitše thuto ya dipalo.

[He will get better position if he passes Mathematics.]

However, learners also used the word **–phakama** in a wrong context from IsiNdebele. They should have said ‘**aphezulu**’ instead of **phakama** [higher position].

Learner G:

Ge re eya Kruger National Park, re be re sa tsebe **indlela** ya gona. Mootledi a botšiša maphodisa ba re thuša.

[When going to Kruger National Park, we did not know the road thereof. The driver asked the police and they helped us.]

Indela ye a re rutago Dipalo ka gona, ga ke mo kwešiše.

[I don’t understand the way he teaches us Maths.]

The learners use the isiNdebele word ‘**indlela**’ to refer to two things which are:

- the **road**
- the **way** of doing things or the method of doing things.

Table 4.3: Semantic Shift as a result of IsiNdebele influence on Sepedi

Learners' Vocabulary	Standard IsiNdebele	Standard Sepedi	Actual Sepedi Meaning	Shifted Sepedi Meaning
Diphahlo	Limpahla	Diaparo	furniture	items in the house
-hlangana	Hlangana	Hlakana	mix	meet
-hampa	Khamba	Sepela	go	go very fast
-phakama	Phakama	Ema	stand up	be emotionally teased or be promoted
Indlela	Indlela	Tsela	road	the method

4.4.2 Narrowing of meaning as a result of isiNdebele influence on Sepedi

Some learners write texts that contain very specific meaning. Calteaux (1996:138) reiterates the essential feature of semantic narrowing as the retention of the original meaning of the source item of the adoptive in a precise or narrow sense. Learners in this case use isiNdebele vocabularies that bring no ambiguity into the meaning of the sentence as in:

Learner A:

Lerato o **dlala** le bankane ba gagwe

[Lerato is playing with her friends.]

The isiNdebele word ‘**dlala**’ for ‘**bapala**’ in Sepedi is very specific.

Learner B:

Lesiba le ‘**monkane**’ wa gagwe ba a ‘**hlopha**’ kua sekolong, ba kgopela go ya ka ntle ga ntši.

[Lesiba and his friend are troublesome at school; they always ask for permission to go out.]

The isiNdebele word **monkane** meaning **mogwera** in Sepedi and isiNdebele word - **hlopha** meaning **tshwenya** in Sepedi are being specific and clear to the reader.

Learner C:

Ke nyaka go etela **mzala** ge dikolo di tswalelwa.

[I want to pay a visit to my cousin when the school closes.]

The learners use isiNdebele **mzala** for Sepedi **motswala** and the meaning is not confusing. The reader may not find it difficult to understand what the learners imply by using the isiNdebele word **mzala** instead of the Sepedi word **motswala** meaning ‘cousin’.

IsiNdebele influence brings about both semantic shift which has a shifted or changed meaning and semantic narrowing which brings about a specific meaning of isiNdebele words and these words are being used for Sepedi vocabulary by Sepedi learners.

4.5 The learners' use of vocabulary from other languages

When reviewing the learners' written work, it becomes clear that learners are also using vocabulary from other languages such as:

'mara' is borrowed from Afrikaans word **'maar'** meaning 'but', and is **'feela'** in Sepedi.

'rasa' is borrowed from Afrikaans word **'raas'** which means 'noise' and is **'lešata'** in Sepedi.

'hamba' is isZulu word for **'sepela'** in Sepedi which literally means **'go'**

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated the morphological, syntactic as well as the semantic influence of IsiNdebele on Sepedi. The IsiNdebele vocabulary found in Sepedi learners' written work is an indication that there is a gradual flow of isiNdebele vocabulary into Sepedi lexical stock. Moreover, there are words from other languages such as Afrikaans and isiZulu which learners also use when they write their essays. This means that language influence is not only from IsiNdebele, but from other languages as shown above.

It becomes clear from the examples given in this chapter that language purity is impossible in the complex language mixes in the chosen case studies.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 Introduction

This chapter concentrates on a recapitulation of the whole work. In Chapter One, the necessity of investigating the influence of isiNdebele on Sepedi primary school learners, when writing essays in the Dennilton region and its significance of (as has already been said) solving problems of language teaching where more than one languages are spoken, was elucidated.

Chapter Two revealed through questionnaires that learners in the Dennilton area grow up in multilingual environments where the isiNdebele, Sepedi as well as isiZulu languages are predominantly spoken and this makes them victims of language influences. Educators' questionnaires further revealed in this chapter that isiNdebele influence on Sepedi learners is also being prompted by educators.

The Sepedi and isiNdebele sound systems were compared in Chapter Three and those isiNdebele phonemic sounds which are infiltrating the Sepedi sound system were picked out from the learners' written work.

In Chapter Four, the morphological influence of isiNdebele on Sepedi with emphasis on the prefixation and the suffixation in Nguni languages as compared to Sotho languages was discussed. The syntactical influence especially on isiNdebele vocabulary that has changed the Sepedi sentence structures and those that did not change the Sepedi sentence structures were detailed with relevant examples from the learners' written work. It was also shown that some isiNdebele vocabulary which the learners use results in a semantic shift of the sentences, whereas some are being used without changing the meaning of the sentences.

5.2 The successes achieved by the Limpopo Education Department in the

Dennilton region

After the democratic government was put in place in 1994, the constitutional (1996) principle (XI) stressed that,

The diversity of language and culture shall be acknowledged and protected, and conditions for their promotion shall be encouraged.

IsiNdebele benefited much from this stipulation. It gained official status and could now be taught and spoken as an official language at schools, official gatherings, in the media and in other communication channels. However, if Sepedi and isiNdebele are both spoken in the Dennilton region, Sepedi remains the dominant language in this region.

Nevertheless the efforts of the Department of Education and particularly those of the Limpopo Education Department in their endeavour to develop the teaching and learning of African languages, especially isiNdebele and Sepedi in the Dennilton region, need to be cherished. African languages have also been extended even to the former Model C schools and suitably qualified educators have been deployed to teach these languages. It was in this province where isiNdebele, which was one of the marginalized languages, was introduced and taught at schools as a first language.

The Department has further supplied the National Curriculum Statement compliant teaching and learning material to the schools in this region to ease the teaching and learning of African languages. This shows that the Department (the Limpopo Education Department) is doing its best to comply with the stipulations of the Constitution on languages and towards improving the conditions of learning and teaching of African languages at schools.

5.3 Recommendations by the educators to the Limpopo Education Department

Educators face daily challenges in the classrooms during their contact with the learners. They were therefore allowed to make their own recommendations on the teaching and learning of languages, especially to the Limpopo Education Department. Mokgokong's (1975:136) writing on developing communities attests that

When a society changes, there are new things that need new names, physical objects, institutions, values, concepts and new words are coined to describe them.

The teachers at the designated schools have realised the importance of using standard language in the learning and teaching of African languages and they made the following recommendations:

- The standard vocabulary be coined up for new terms in all African languages because as the communities grow, their languages also grow, i.e., that they be expanded.
- The emergent technological devices such as computer, Internet, network, airtime, laptop, etc. require that the vocabulary for the scientific and medical terms be updated, because learners are tempted to use such terms and their teachers do not have relevant corrective vocabulary in Sepedi when marking their essays.
- The need for language specialists, language practitioners as well as the Language Board for all African languages to revise and upgrade the available orthography of African languages cannot be overemphasized.
- The updated orthography of all the African languages that are being taught at schools should be made available to such primary schools so that educators may revisit them for corrective measures.

- Dictionaries as well as additional reading material for all the African languages, including isiNdebele should be made available to schools where such languages are being taught so as to attract the learners to reading.
- Workshops on teaching African languages including assessment techniques on all the learning outcomes of languages should be regularly conducted.
- Instilling writing skills in learners and the assessment thereof are also problematic because of overcrowding in the classes (see Chapter Two on pupil-teacher ratio). This necessitates some extra accommodation at these schools.

5.4 Recommendations by the educators to the parents

Educators further indicated that learning, especially of African languages, is not a one man or teacher effort only; parents need full participation in this venture. They indicated:

- that some parents seldom encouraged learners to complete their home activities;
- that some parents are reluctant to come to school when they are requested to do so by the educators;
- that parents should encourage their children to read even if it is for enjoyment by providing reading material like magazines, newspapers etc. in the specific African languages;
- that most of the parents are illiterate and this hampers them in trying to help the learners with home activities. However, Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) classes are being offered at some schools and parents should be encouraged to attend to reduce illiteracy;

- that most of the learners are vulnerable; they do not have both parents and they are parented by grandparents most of whom cannot read or write; some do not allow enough time for the learners to do schoolwork in the afternoons. These children lack support for their learning.

These being the case, much needs to be done by the teachers, the School Management Teams, the School Governing Bodies as well as the communities in this region. Amongst others, the following can be done:

- Strategize on how to attract parents and guardians to come to school when requested to do so.
- Involve the communities in creating a learning atmosphere for all and this may be achieved by requesting funding for the erection of community libraries even from nongovernment organizations.
- Establish care centres for vulnerable children to assist them with school work.
- Encourage parents to attend ABET classes so as to eradicate illiteracy in these communities.

5.5 The researcher's recommendations to Sepedi educators

It is imperative to keep in mind that the success of the child in the learning process very much depends on the educator. It has been shown in Chapter Two that educators are the language models that learners imitate, and that educators should therefore be the right models, in the teaching and learning of African languages. Hence, Engelbrecht (1994:11) stressed that they should:

Help the child to love his language by making him proud of himself when he uses the correct intonation, pronunciation,

ability to express himself, and when he acquires a good vocabulary.

This demands from the educators in their daily contact with learners that they should realize the following:

- The maximum use of standard language by the educators will help to minimize language influence in this region.
- Poems, prose and story telling in oral work should not be overlooked as they help the educator to detect errors in the learner's language use. They are vital assessment tools when assessing the learning outcomes of speaking. The learners' speaking skill improves tremendously when they are allowed to think and talk about the things they know, the things they like as well as the things around them.
- After marking the essays, the teacher should discuss the mistakes found in the essays so as to help even those who do not have such errors. Learners should not be required to rewrite the whole essay, but should concentrate only on the language errors they made so that in future they do not repeat the same mistakes.
- The importance of standard Sepedi cannot be overemphasized. Loan words as well as those isiNdebele phonemes which are infiltrating the Sepedi sound system (see Chapter Three) should be discouraged.
- Conducting annual Olympiads on creative writing in African languages amongst primary school learners may help to improve their writing skills, especially when there are good prizes in the process. Dramas in the medium of Sepedi in the foundation phase, intermediate and the senior phases at

schools will also enhance the dignity of this language and the correct use thereof.

- Code-switching and code-mixing by the teachers during Sepedi lessons tend to confuse the learners, and that may tempt them to do the same.
- Extensive reading as recommended by Malimabe (1990:78) of as many books written in their mother tongue will help to enrich the learners' vocabulary.

5.6 The researcher's recommendations to parents

Parents also form an important component in the teaching and learning of the learners. It is therefore important that they fully engage themselves in this process and that they note the following:

- Standard language should be spoken at home by both parents on a daily basis.
- Learners should further be exposed to cultural practices including rituals, traditional food and drinks, traditional utensils, songs, and clothing.
- Sometimes parents should replace television time with quality parent to child contact time where stories such as folktales are told and what these stories imply in real life be explained. Learners will retell such stories in class when oral work is done.
- Reading Sepedi books and magazines will help to develop and improve the Sepedi vocabulary of the learners. Therefore, parents should create an environment which is conducive for reading. Surely reading should always be pleasurable at home.
- Parents and teachers should work together, i.e., parents should have the programmes that are being done at school so that they are able to assist their children to catch up with such programmes. Parents can also be guided by the

teachers on how to help their children with homework that deals with language use.

5.7 Conclusion

It is worth noting that isiNdebele and Sepedi have long been living alongside each other in the Dennilton region. However, now that isiNdebele is officially a written language, all those who use these languages including managers, teachers, parents as well as learners should be able to draw a line between what is isiNdebele and what is Sepedi.

IsiNdebele has been seen to have some influence on Sepedi for a number of reasons, such as

- Most isiNdebele learners were in Sepedi classes before isiNdebele could be introduced as a language of teaching and learning in this region.
- The Sepedi and isiNdebele learners continue to be in contact inside and outside the classroom situation.
- Deployment of educators to teach these languages (Sepedi and isiNdebele) cannot be divorced from language influence as indicated in Chapter Two.
- Some learners come from multilingual families where either the mother or the father speaks isiNdebele or Sepedi as discussed in Chapter Two.
- Some isiNdebele or isiZulu speaking learners remain in the Sepedi classes, because there are no isiNdebele or isiZulu classes at the secondary schools where they want to further their studies when they have passed Grade Seven.

It is therefore the challenge that we face as parents, teachers, learners, managers, and everybody involved in the teaching and learning of African languages to help maintain the dignity and autonomy of these languages. This means that parents should put

their children in the right classes. They should support them by speaking the right language at home. Educators should discourage the use of incorrect vocabulary where suitable words are available for use in their own language. Language practitioners should update the orthography of African languages as these languages are growing. Education managers should make sure that all schools have the necessary teaching and learning materials and learners should pursue their obligation of learning. It stressed by Khumalo (1995:126,127) in Calteaux (1996:171) that,

Role-models in society, such as professionals, language experts, sociolinguists, and language planners should be open-minded about the non-standard varieties. Bearing in mind that the function of a language may change over time, these people should recommend a high degree of autonomy for these non-standard varieties

REFERENCES

Ansre, 1971. Language Standardization in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Current Trends in Linguistics*, 7:680-698.

Blench, R. 2006. *Archeology, Language and African Past*. Lanham, MD: Altamira Press.

Bokamba, E. 1988. *English-Lingala, Anthropological Notes on the Bangala of the Upper Longo River*. Moino Virginia.

Calteaux, K. 1996. *Standard and non-standard African Language varieties in the urban areas of South Africa*. Pretoria: HSRC.

Coulmas, F. 1985. Language Adaptation. Paper Presented at a Conference on Vernacular Languages for Modern Societies. West Germany: Bad Hamgurg.

Crystal, D. 2010. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Department of Education. 2010. Education Statistics in South Africa. RSA: Department of Education.

Engelbrecht, E. 1994. Mood and Modality in Zulu, Unpublished M.A. dissertation. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

Gumperz, J.J. [1982]1993. *Conversation Code-Switching In Discourse Strategies*. London: Cambridge University Press.

Grobler, E. et al. 1990. *Language Atlas of South Africa*. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.

Heine, B. and Derek, N. 2000. *African Languages, an Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jiyane, D. M. 1994. *Aspects of isiNdebele Grammar*. Unpublished M.A. dissertation. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

Kembo, J. 2000. Language in education and language learning in Africa, in V. Webb and J. Kembo-Sure. *African Voices*, Cape Town, Oxford University Press

Khumalo, N.H.E. 1995. The language contact situation in Daveyton. Unpublished M.A. dissertation. Soweto: Vista University.

Knappert, J. 1970. *Language and History in Africa*. Contribution from the study of Loan words to the Cultural History of Africa. A volume of collected papers presented to the Seminar on Language and history in Africa. London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd.

Kosch. I.M. 2006. *Topics In Morphology in the African Language Context*. Pretoria: Unisa Press.

Leedy, P.D. Ormrod, J.E. 2001. *Practical Research: Planning and Design*. Upper Saddle River: N.J. Meril.

Lehiste, I. 1998. *Lectures on Language Contact*. Boston: MIT Press.

Lombard, D.P. 1985. *Introduction to the Grammar of Northern Sotho*. Pretoria: Van Schaick Ltd.

Louwrens, L.J. 1985. Contrastiveness and the so-called absolute pronoun in Northern Sotho. *South African Journal of African Languages*. Vol.5, No.2.

Madiba, M.A. 1994. Linguistics Survey of Adoptives in Venda. Unpublished M.A. dissertation. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

Mahlangu, K.S. 2007. *Adoption of Loan Words In IsiNdebele*. Unpublished M.A. dissertation. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

Malimabe, R.M. 1990. The influence of non-standard varieties on the standard Setswana of High School pupils. Unpublished M.A. dissertation. Johannesburg: Rand Afrikaans University.

Masinge, 1997. The status of Tsonga as a language and its position as a school subject. Unpublished M.A. dissertation. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

Mesthrie, R. 1991. *Language in Indenture*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.

Meyer-Scotton, C. 1993. *Social Motivation for Code-Switching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mokgokong, P.C. 1975. Context as a Determinant of meaning with special Reference to Northern Sotho. Unpublished doctoral Thesis. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Mutaka, N.M. 2000. An introduction to African linguistics. Muenchen: LINCOM Europa.

Nontolwane, N. 1992. Code-switching and Code-mixing in IsiZulu. Unpublished M.A. dissertation. Johannesburg: Rand Afrikaans University.

Ntshangase, K.D. 1993. *The Social History of Iscamtho*. Unpublished M.A. dissertation. Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand.

Pettman, C. 1913. *Africanderism*. London: Longman, Green & Co.

Poplack, S. 1979. Sometimes `i`ll start a sentence in Spanish Y Termino En Espanol: Towards a typology of code-switching. *Linguistics*, 18 (7/8): Working paper for New York.

Poulos, G. 1994. *A Linguistic Analysis Northern Sotho*. Pretoria: Via Africa.

Raubenheimer, N. 1983. Some thoughts on Language contact between White and Black Africa. *Africa Lamp pp.* 101-106.

Richard, J.C. 1992. *Dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics*. Essex: Longman.

Scotton, C.M. 1982. The possibility of code-switching: Motivation for maintaining multilingualism. *Anthropological Linguistics*, 24:432-444.

Skhosana, P.B. 1998. *Foreign interference in the sound, grammatical and lexical system of Southern Ndebele*. Unpublished M.A. dissertation. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

Skhosana, P.B. 2002. Names and Naming Practices Amongst Southern Ndebele Male Persons, in Moller, L.A and Jacobs, J.U: *A World of Names 2*. Special Issue, *Nomina Africana*, 16:1-2.

Skosana, N.J. 2002. *Aspects of the Copulatives in Ndebele*. Unpublished M.A. Mini-dissertation. Johannesburg: Rand Afrikaans University.

South African Government. 1996. *The new Constitution of the RSA*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Statistics South Africa, 2004. *The People of South Africa Population Census, Report No. 03-01-11*. Pretoria: The Government Printers.

Taljard, E. 2000. *The languages of Africa, Volume III, Addendum N*. Unpublished study notes. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

The Concise Oxford English Dictionary. 1990. New York: Oxford University Press.

Trudgill, P. 1983. *Sociolinguistics; An Introduction to Language and Society*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Van Vuuren, 1983. *Die Vestigingspatroon van Suid-Ndebele*. Unpublished M.A. dissertation. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

Van Warmelo, N.J. 1930. *Transvaal Ndebele Texts, Volume 1*. Ethnological Publication. Pretoria: The Government Printers.

Van Wyk, E.B. 1989. *Sociolinguistics and Standard Languages*. Unpublished Paper. Johannesburg: Rand Afrikaans University.

Webb, V.N. 1999. *Language in South Africa: the quest for a future*. Unpublished manuscript. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

Webb, V.N. and Kembo-Sure, 2000. *African Voices, An introduction to the languages and Linguistics of Africa*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

White , C.J. 2003. *Research Methods and Techniques*. Pretoria: Pierre van Ryneveld.

Whitely, W.H. 1974. *Language in Kenya*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.

Wilkes, A. 1997. Language Contact and Language Change, the case of Transvaal Ndebele. *South African Journal of African Languages*, 17 (2):75-80.

Wray, A. Trott, K. & Bloomer, A. 1998. *Projects in Linguistics, A Practical Guide to Researching Language*. London: Edward Arnold.

Ziervogel. D. 1959. *A Grammar of the Northern Transvaal Ndebele*. J.L. van Scaik, Pretoria

SUMMARY

Language contact is a universal phenomenon found in bilingual or multilingual societies. It is the basic and distinct quality of every culture. Language is the means by which people communicate, express their points of views, say what their feelings are and attach names to objects. As multicultural as South Africa is, it is almost impossible for one not to have an encounter with other people's languages. This study therefore aims at investigating the influence of IsiNdebele on Sepedi learners at the primary schools around the Dennilton region in the Limpopo Province.

Much has been said about language contact and its influence in urban areas but no study has yet been conducted in rural areas focusing on Sepedi and IsiNdebele speakers. In their works, researchers such as Malimabe (1990:12), Pettman (1993:3), Calteaux (1996:187) point out that urbanization has brought diverse cultures together in the townships and workplaces. To curb their language differences, lingua franca like Tsotsitaal, Iscamtho, Fanagalo and others inevitably emerged. The same happened in the Limpopo Province when the AmaNdebele came to the farms and mines seeking employment at the Marble Hall and Groblersdal areas, and some did find a place of refuge in these areas. As Pettman (1993:3) notes, various races, using different languages cannot occupy the same territory and live in daily contact without being mutually affected; each will acquire something from and in turn give something to the other.

In Chapter One, the Constitutional requirement as well as the progress made in the teaching and learning of isiNdebele at the primary schools in the Dennilton region is explored. The findings in Chapter Two reveal that Amandebele children still speak isiNdebele at home but Sepedi at school. At some schools, the learners who take Sepedi first language and those who take isiNdebele first language are accommodated in one class and only separate during their first language instruction periods. This is done because of the shortage of classes but will obviously promote cross language influence, such as code-switching and code-mixing.

The findings reveal that language influence is also perpetuated by multilingual families and educators. The isiNdebele speaking learners and teachers bring isiNdebele to the learning environment; hence the Sepedi speaking learners in these schools experience difficulties adjusting to the use of appropriate, standard Sepedi when they speak or write essays.

The isiNdebele phonological sounds as in [z] mzala for Sepedi [ts] motswala 'cousin', [dl] dlala for Sepedi [b] bapala 'play', [v] vula for Sepedi [β] bula etc. are observed to be infiltrating the Sepedi sound system and are outlined in Chapter Three. After examining the learners' written work in Chapter Four, it is observed that there is the adaptation of phonemes on the morphological, semantic and the syntactical disciplines from isiNdebele into Sepedi lexical stock.

Chapter Five recapitulates the whole study. Recommendations by the language teachers and the researcher to the Limpopo Education Department, the parents and all stakeholders involved in the teaching and learning of languages are stated in this concluding chapter.

KEY TERMS

Borrowing

Code-mixing

Code-switching

Infiltration

Language shift

Lexical stock

Multilingualism

Recommendations

Standard language

Vocabulary

OPSOMMING

Taalkontak is 'n universele fenomeen in tweetalige of veeltalige gemeenskappe. Dit is die basiese en onderskeidende kwaliteit van enige kultuur. Taal is die instrument waarmee mense kommunikeer, hul menings lug, hul gevoelens uitdruk en objekte benoem. Dit is byna onmoontlik om in 'n multikulturele Suid-Afrikaanse konteks nie kontak te hê met ande tale nie. Dié studie stel ondersoek in na die invloed van IsiNdebele op Sepedi leerders in laerskole rondom die Dennilton area in die Limpopo provinsie.

Baie is al gesê oor taalkontak en die invloed daarvan in stedelike areas, maar geen studie is al onderneem in plattelandse gebiede wat fokus op Sepedi en IsiNdebele sprekers nie. In hul ondersoeke het navorsers soos Malimabe (1990:12), Pettman (1993:3), Calteaux (1996:187) daarop gewys dat verstedeliking diverse kulture saambring het in informele nedersettings en werkplekke. Om taalverskille te oorkom, het lingua francas soos Tsotsitaal, Iscamtho, Fanagalo en ander ontwikkel. Dieselfde het in die Limpopo provinsie gebeur toe die AmaNdebele na plase en myne in die Marble Hall en Groblersdal areas gekom het om werk te soek. Sommige het 'n tuiste in hierdie areas gevind. Pettman (1993:3) noem dat verskillende rasse wat verskillende tale gebruik nie dieselfde gebied kan bewoon sonder om ondeling beïnvloed te word nie; elk sal iets van die ander nodig hê en beurtelings iets aan die ander gee.

In hoofstuk 1 word die konstitusionele vereiste en die vordering wat gemaak is met die onderrig en leer van isiNdebele in laerskole in die Dennilton area ondersoek. Die bevindinge in hoofstuk 2 wys daarop dat Amandebele kinders steeds isiNdebele tuis gebruik, maar Sepedi in die skoolopset. By sommige skole word leerders wat Sepedi en isiNdebele onderskeidelik as 'n eerste taal neem in een klas geakkommodeer en word hul slegs geskei gedurende eerste taalonderrigperiodes. Dié word gedoen weens 'n tekort aan klasse, maar sal vanselfsprekend kruistaal beïnvloeding bevorder soos kodewisseling en kodevermenging.

Die bevindinge dui daarop dat taalbeïnvloeding ook aangewakker word deur veeltalige families en opvoeders. Die IsiNdebele leerders en opvoeders bring isiNdebele na die leeromgewing; daarom ondervind die Sepedi leerders in hierdie skole probleme met die gebruik van aanvaarbare standaard Sepedi as hul praat of opstelle skryf.

Die isiNdebele fonologiese klanke soos [z] vir Sepedi, [ts] motswala, [dl] dlala vir Sepedi, [b] bapala, [v] vir Sepedi [β] bula ens. is besig om die Sepedi klanksisteem te infiltrer en word in hoofstuk 3 aangedui. Nadat die leerders se geskrewe werk in hoofstuk 4 geëksamineer is, is bevind dat 'n aanpassing van foneme op die morfologiese, semantiese en die sintaktiese dissipline van die isiNdebele na Sepedi leksikale standard plaasvind.

Hoofstuk 5 neem die algehele studie in oënskou. Voorstelle deur taalonderwysers en die navorser aan die Limpopo Onderwysdepartement, die ouers en alle rolspelers betrokke by die onderrig en leer van tale word in die slothoofstuk gestel.

SLEUTELWOORDE

Ontlening

Kodewisseling

Kodevermenging

Infiltrasie

Taalverskuiwing

Leksikale standard

Veeltaligheid

Voorstelle

Standaardtaal

Woordeskat

LEARNER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

DIPOTŠIŠONYAKIŠIŠO TŠA MOITHUTI

PLEASE COMPLETE.

KA KGOPELO, TLATŠA:

1. The school's name/ **Leina la sekolo**-----
2. The learner's name and surname/ **Leina le sefane sa moithuti**-----

3. Your age/ **Naa o na le mengwaga ye mekae?** -----
4. Who are your friends at school? /**Naa bagwera ba gago mo sekolong ke bomang?** -----

5. Which language(s) do your friend(s) speak? **Naa bagwera ba gago ba bolela dipolelo dife?** -----

6. When playing with your friend(s) which language do you speak? /**Ge o bapala le bagwera ba gago le bolela dipolelo dife?** -----

7. Which language do you speak in the classroom? /**Mo sekolong o bolela polelo efe?**-----
8. Which language do you speak at home? /**Naa ge o le gae o bolela polelo efe?**

9. Which language(s) do your neighbour(s) on both side of your house speak?
/ **Naa baagišane ba gago ba bolela dipolelo dife?** -----

----My neighbour on the right hand side speaks/ **Moagišane wa ka, ka letsogong la go ja o bolela polelo ya** -----

a) My neighbour on the left hand side speaks / **Moagišane wa ka, ka letsogong la ngele / mpati o bolela polelo ya** -----

- -----
- b) My neighbour across the road at the front speaks/ **Moagišane wa ka, ka pele o bolela polelo ya**-----

- c) My neighbour across the road at the back speaks/**Moagišane wa ka, ka morago o bolela polelo ya**-----

- d) What is your mother's sub-group (tribal) nationality? / **Naa mmago ke mohlobo mang?** -----
-
- e) What is your father's sub-group (tribal) nationality? **Naa rrago ke mohlobo mang?**-----

EDUCATORS 'S QUESTIONNAIRES

DIPOTŠIŠONYAKIŠIŠO TŠA MORUTI

PLEASE COMPLETE

KA KGOPELO, TLATŠA

1. The name of the school / **Leina la sekolo**-----

2. The educator's name and surname /**Leina le sefane sa morutiši**-----

3. Educator's maiden name/ **Sefane sa pele ga lenyalo**-----

4. What is your sub-group (tribal) nationality/ **Naa o mohlobo mang?** -----

5. Which languages do you speak at home? / **Naa o bolela polelo efe gae?**-----

6. Which learning area (s) do you facilitate? / **Naa o ruta thuto efe?** -----

7. For how long?/ **Ke lebaka le lekae ?**-----

8. What were your major courses at college or university?/**Dithutokgolo tša gago e be ele dife kua kholetšheng goba yunibesithing?**-----

9. Which major language problem (s) are you encountering in the learner's written work?/ **Ke mathata afe a polelo ao o a hwetšago mo mešomong ya go ngwala ya baithuti?**-----

10. Give recommendations (especially to the Department of Education concerning language problems) **Efa ditshwanotshwao tša gago (kudu go kgoro ya thuto ka ga polelo)** -----

Your signature/ **tshaeno** -----

Date / **Tšatšikgwedi** -----