

The morphological analysis of Setswana nouns

A B S T R A C T This article proposes and demonstrates a method for the morphological analysis of Setswana nouns that could be used in the teaching of Setswana morphology. It provides a brief overview of the morphological structure of the Setswana noun in which the different morphemes of the Setswana noun as well as their arrangement are discussed. These morphemes are grammatical morphemes (prefixes and suffixes), roots and stems. Subsequently the proposed technique of analysis is described with suitable Setswana examples. A hierarchical analysis is employed to illustrate the arrangement of the various nominal morphemes. The focus is on the systematic development of appropriate frameworks by means of various arrangement techniques to analyse the probable components of the Setswana noun.

Key words: noun, Setswana, morphemes, morphological analysis

O P S O M M I N G In hierdie artikel word 'n metode vir die analise van Setswananaamwoorde voorgestel wat in die onderrig van Setswanamorfologie gebruik kan word. 'n Kort oorsig van die morfologiese struktuur van die Setswananaamwoord word gegee en die verskillende morfeme waaruit die Setswananaamwoord bestaan sowel as hul ordening word bespreek. Hierdie morfeme is grammatiese morfeme (prefikse en suffikse), wortels en stamme. Die voorgestelde ontledingstegniek word dan met behulp van toepaslike Setswanavorbeelde bespreek. 'n Hierargiese analise word gebruik om die rangskikking van verskillende naamwoordelike morfeme te illustreer. Die fokus val op die sistematiese ontwikkeling van toepaslike raamwerke met behulp van verskillende ordeningstegnieke om sodoende die moontlike komponente van die naamwoord te analiseer.

Sleutelwoorde: naamwoord, Setswana, morfeme, morfologiese analise

1. Introduction

Education in South Africa has in recent years moved from teaching students facts and evaluating them on the representation of these facts to an outcomes-based system. When it comes to assessment the focus currently falls on what learners can do (Murray; 2003: 1).

At the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University, third language learners as well as mother tongue learners of the subject Setswana study morphology as a scientific discipline in their third year. When they enter their third year they will have been introduced already to the morphological structure of various word classes.

Since the university follows a structural-functional approach in the study of Setswana linguistics, it is important to name and describe briefly here the basic principles that are followed in the study of morphology as a scientific discipline. The term *structure* in general indicates a meaningful arrangement of various types of constituents in the relevant frameworks. An investigation of structure and arrangement in language must address these aspects because they are prerequisites to the formation of a structure. For instance, the university introduces third language learners to the basic morphological structure of the noun in their first year. This basic structure is extended in the first and second year. The outcome of the morphology course in the third year is a basic introduction to morphology as a scientific discipline and its employment with a view to the different word classes in Setswana. The learner must also be able to describe a noun's morphological structure, focusing on its different morphemes, followed by a morphological analysis of given nouns. Laas (1974: 78) describes a morphological analysis as the manner in which complex words are analysed systematically into their immediate components, a procedure that will reflect the word's structure.

In the teaching of morphology it has been observed that learners encounter problems with the analysis of nouns and they also find it difficult to identify the meaning of nouns that are structured with various morphemes. In the case of Setswana, the meaning of a noun can be changed by adding different morphemes. For instance, the meaning of the word **motse** (village) can be extended by adding the diminutive suffix **-ana**, thus forming the word **motsana** (small village). The meaning of this word can be extended further by adding the locative suffix **-ing**, thus forming the word **motsaneng** (small village – locality). This adding of more than one suffix to the noun confuses students and it is therefore important to introduce them to the arrangement of the different morphemes as well as the hierarchical analysis of these morphemes.

This article proposes and demonstrates a method for the morphological analysis of Setswana nouns. This method is based on the views of among others Krüger (1994) and Posthumus (1994). It is important to remember that a learner should have a thorough knowledge of nominal suffixes as well as the phonological influences that occur when these suffixes are added to a noun. The term *morphological structure* refers to the different morphemes of which the noun consists and their arrangement.

The aims of this article are as follows:

- to give an overview of the morphological structure of the Setswana noun,
- to describe the technique of analysis and
- to give appropriate examples of analysis that will illustrate the arrangement of the various nominal morphemes.

An important objective of this article is to help learners to analyse Setswana nouns in such a way that they can derive the most basic structure of a noun.

2. The morphemes of Setswana nouns

Krüger (1994: 17) describes a morpheme as "a meaningful part of a word expressed by form and which exists as an integral part of the word meaning and the word form". For example, the word

monna (man) consists of **mo-** and **-nna** and the word **dithhare** (trees) consists of **di-** and **-tlhare**. The **mo-**, **-nna**, **di-** and **-tlhare** in these words are morphemes.

The primary function of a morpheme is to make a root or stem word efficient (Laas, 1974: 7). For instance, nominal morphemes occur in morphologically complex words and compounds, and the framework in which they appear is the Setswana noun.

To present a coherent picture of the distribution and arrangement of the morphemes of the noun in Setswana, a general classification of the various types of morphemes as well as a list of morphemes which can be identified will be presented next. This classification and description makes it possible to illustrate the order of morphemes.

The Setswana noun may include morphemes such as grammatical morphemes (prefixes and suffixes), roots and stems (Krüger; 1994: 18).

2.1 Grammatical morphemes

Grammatical morphemes constitute a closed class expressing various grammatical semantic values in word class categories and are always attached to roots and stems which in turn constitute open classes, known as word class categories. Every *word class category* has, if suitable, its own set of grammatical morphemes or categories as well as lexical items (Dik & Kooij, 1970: 129-130).

Semantically, grammatical morphemes indicate a certain category such as number, diminutive, locative, et cetera. Grammatical morphemes cannot appear in an autonomous manner like words. They are word bound in form and meaning: **mo-** and **-(i)ng**, for example, are the grammatical morphemes in **motseng** (village – locality) and **se-** and **-nyana** are the grammatical morphemes in **setlhakonyana** (small shoe).

Morphemes are classified according to their position in a word. The categories of prefixes and suffixes are therefore derived. They are grammatical morphemes. Placement requires a central point in the word structure and the only morpheme which may qualify as the fixed point is either the root or the stem as the semantic core (Krüger, 1994: 18). For example, in **mothwana** (small person), **mo-** is the prefix and the **-ana** is the suffix; and in the word **setlhakonyana** (small shoe) **se-** is the prefix and **-nyana** is the suffix.

A grammatical morpheme is thus "an inherent meaningful part of a word and exists only by grace of the word form and word meaning" and "the semantic values of grammatical morphemes are dependent, because they can only be activated by the meaning of a stem or root" (Krüger, 1994: 18).

2.1.1 Prefixes

The exposition of the noun classes of Setswana in this article employs Cole's (1955: 69) order and numbering. The nouns are grouped into nine noun classes and one sub-class. The different noun classes in Setswana are marked by the different noun class prefixes. Consider the following examples: **mo-** in **mosetsana** (girl), **se-** in **setlhare** (tree), **bo-** in **bomalome** (uncles) and **mo-** in **molelo** (fire). These prefixes are generally referred to as noun class prefixes. In the case of several noun classes the noun class prefix has one or more variants. This is the result of inadmissible sound combinations and resultant phonological processes. For example: **ngw-** in the word

ngwana (child) is a variant class prefix in class 1 singular. The class prefixes indicate genus (type) and number (singular, plural and mass). Class prefixes also refer to different categories of meaning. All the noun class prefixes of Setswana are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Noun class prefixes of Setswana:

Noun class	Singular/ Plural	Norm prefix	Variant prefix	Examples
1	Singular Plural	mo- ba-	m- ngw- b-	mosadi (woman), mmusi (ruler), ngwana (child) basadi (women), bana (children)
1a	Singular Plural	(-) bo-		malome (uncle) bomalome (uncles)
2	Singular Plural	mo- me-	m- ngw-	molelo (fire), mmuso (government), ngwedi (moon) melelo (fires)
3	Singular Plural	le- ma-	(-) m-	legae (home), gae (home) makwalo (letters), metsi (water)
4	Singular Plural	se- di-		seatla (hand) diatla (hands)
5	Singular Plural	(ne-) di-	n- m- din- dim-	tsela (road), ntšwa (dog), mpa (stomach, belly) ditsela (roads), dintšwa (dogs) dimpa (stomachs, bellies)
6	Singular Plural	lo- di-		lonao (foot) dinao (feet)
7	Singular Plural	bo- ma-	b-	bojalwa (beer) majalwa (different kinds of beer)
8		go-		go opela (to sing, the singing)
9		fa- go- mo-	(-)	fatshe (on the ground), godimo (top, above), morago (behind, back part), pele (in front)

Consider that in the case of nouns in class 1a singular, class 5 singular and class 9 the class prefix does not appear physically. With regard to nouns in class 3 singular the class prefix is **le-** but it can also not appear physically. These absent class prefixes are indicated by **(-)** in the case of class 1a singular, **(ne-)** in the case of class 5 singular, **(-)** in the case of class 3 singular and

(-) in the case of class 9. Some scholars refer to these prefixes which do not appear physically as zero prefixes or morphemes (Poulos & Lourens; 1994: 11 & Louwrens; 1994: 215).

2.1.2 Suffixes

he deverbative suffix, the augmentative suffix, the feminitive suffix, the diminutive suffix and the locative suffix are distinguished as the suffixes of the Setswana noun.

(a) Deverbative suffix (i-, o-, a-)

The term *deverbative* refers to nouns that are derived from verbs. A nominal class prefix of one of the noun classes is prefixed to the verbal root and the verbal suffix **-a** is replaced by the deverbative suffixes **-i**, **-o** or **-a**. Deverbative nouns with the suffix **-i** are personal in significance, for example **modudi** (chair person), **moopedi** (singer), **batsadi** (parents), **mokwadi** (writer) and **baruti** (teachers). Deverbative nouns with the suffix **-o** are impersonal, for example **tiro** (job), **moago** (building), **mmuso** (government), **mpho** (gift) and **puo** (speech, language). There is no change to the verbal suffix **-a** when deverbatives are formed from passive verbs, for example **modiswa** (detainee), **morongwa** (messenger) and **letagwa** (drunkard) (Doke, 1955: 113-116 & Louwrens, 1994: 53).

(b) Augmentative suffix (-gadi)

This suffix is very rare in Setswana. The augmentative suffix is **-gadi** and it indicates the augmentative of certain nouns (Cole; 1955: 111). Consider the following examples: **podigadi** (a big goat) and **Kgalagadi** (the great dried-up place – Kalahari Desert).

(c) Feminitive suffix (-gadi)

The feminitive suffix is **-gadi** and refers to "the feminine, the marriage institution or the idea of the opposite sex" (Cole; 1955: 110). Consider the following examples: **kgosigadi** (queen), **mohumagadi** (lady) and **motlhologadi** (widow).

(d) Diminutive suffix (-ana, -nyana, -anyana)

When the diminutive suffix is added to a noun it indicates a diminutive form corresponding to the noun, or a young one corresponding to the noun, or a small quantity of what is expressed by the noun. Diminutives may sometimes be used to convey insult. The diminutive is formed by suffixing the suffixes **-ana**, **-nyana** or **-anyana** to a noun (Cole; 1955: 105-110). Consider the following examples: **tselana** (small road), **motsana** (small village), **tawana** (lion cub), **molongwana** (small mouth), **mosimanyana** (little boy) and **kgetsananyana** (very small bag).

(e) Locative suffix (-ing, -nyye, -nyeng)

The locative suffix indicates "the place or locality in connection with which some action is carried out" (Cole; 1955: 341). The locative is formed when the suffixes **-ing**, **-nyye** or **-nyeng** are suffixed to a noun (Cole; 1955: 341-345). Consider the following examples: **ntlong** (house – locality), **letsatsing** (sun – locality, day – locality), **thabeng** (mountain – locality), **setlhareng** (tree – locality), **nokeng** (river – locality) and **bojannye/bojannyeng** (grass – locality).

2.2 Roots and stems

Lyons (1990: 59) claims that there is a difference between a root and a stem and he describes the difference as follows: "roots are morphologically unanalyzable, whereas stems may include

in addition to their root, one or more derivational affixes". Lyons (1990: 101) also stresses the importance of the stem, using the term *base form*: "The base form is that form, if any from which all other forms of the lexeme can be derived by morphological rules of the language".

According to Krüger (1994: 18) there is "a quantitative and a qualitative difference between a root and a stem" in that "the former never has a word correlate whereas the latter must always have a word correlate in the lexicon". Krüger (1994: 18) also states that a stem is "that part of a morphologically complex word which has a word correlate, and which may include one or more grammatical morphemes" and can "therefore be a simplex or a complex". Posthumus (1994: 30) supports this viewpoint when he defines the root as "the lexical morpheme of the word (which is morphologically unanalyzable) to which any affixes can be affixed". Posthumus (1994: 30) states with regard to the stem that "it has a word correlate in the lexicon" and that this refers "to any and all the intermediate word-forms within the morphological analysis from the base-form to the derivand".

The difference between a root and a stem can be summarised as follows: A root is the semantic core of a word, it does not include a grammatical morpheme, it has no word correlate and it is dependent like the prefixes and suffixes. Consider the following examples: **-sadi** in **mosadi** (woman), **-tse** in **motsana** (little village) and **-tsatsi** in **letsatsing** (sun – locality) (Krüger; 1994: 18, Posthumus; 1994: 30 & Pretorius; 2000: 55-57).

A stem on the other hand has a word correlate and may include one or more grammatical morphemes. Consider the following examples: **letsatsi** (sun) in **letsatsing** (sun – locality) and **motse** (village) in **motsana** (small village) (Krüger; 1994: 18, Posthumus; 1994: 30 & Pretorius; 2000: 55-57).

Simple, complex, reduplicated and compound stems are distinguished.

(a) **Simple stems**

A simple stem is a word or word correlate that does not include any grammatical morphemes (Laas; 1974: 16). Consider the following examples: **mma** (mother) in **bomma** (mothers), **podì** (goat) in **dipodi** (goats) and **nonyane** (bird) in **dinonyane** (birds).

(b) **Complex stems**

A complex stem is a word that includes a root or a simple stem with one or more grammatical morphemes (Laas; 1974: 16). Examples include the following: **motse** (village) in **motsana** (small village) and **banna** in **banneng** (men – locality).

(c) **Reduplicated stems**

A reduplicated stem is a partially or fully reduplicated version of a word (Laas; 1974: 17). Consider the following examples: **mosadisadi** (many women), **dithharethhare** (many trees) and tautau (captain, leader).

(d) **Compound stems**

Compound stems can either be formed as a result of the combination of two different words or of the combination of a word and a word group (Laas; 1974: 17). Examples include: **modulasetulo** (chair person), **khudutlou** (big tortoise) and **leebaro** (rock pigeon).

This exposition can subsequently be utilised to describe the linear arrangement of morphemes.

3. Proposed technique for analysis

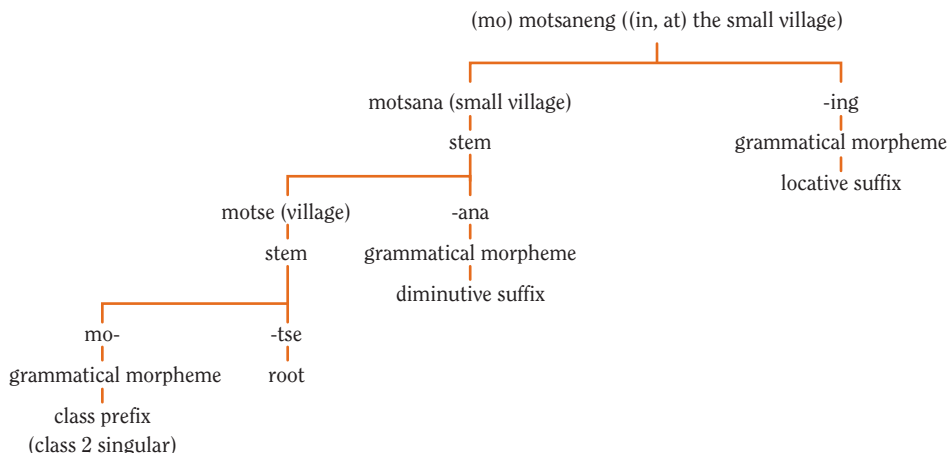
The article uses hierarchical analysis to indicate the status of the different morphemes of the noun. The focus is not on a grammatical (neutral) analysis of the noun because this type of analysis does not take into account the mutual relation of the morphemes. A grammatical analysis does not include any hierarchical intermediate levels and the syntagmatic structure is not considered; for example, **monna** (man) consists of **mo-** + **-nna** and **ditlhare** (trees) consists of **di-** + **-tlhare**.

In contrast to a grammatical analysis, a hierarchical analysis focuses on the systematic development of structures along a trajectory of appropriate frameworks by means of the various arrangement techniques into more extensive structures. Hierarchical arrangement functions on to the paradigmatic level and is therefore not a linear arrangement technique.

This description relates to the following definition of hierarchical analysis: "Dit is die orde waarvolgens die grammatiese morfeme onderling ten opsigte van die wortel georden word en waarvolgens die struktuur van meerledige woorde tot stand kom deur die sistematiese spreiding van die onmiddellike komponente. Die hiërargiese ordening behels dus die orde waarvolgens morfeme in meerledige woorde gestruktureer word. 'n Skommeling van hierdie orde resulteer in 'n onbestaanbare morfeemreeks of 'n verandering van betekenis" (Laas; 1974: 80). [It is the order according to which grammatical morphemes are sequenced in terms of the root as well as the sequence according to which the structure of morphologically complex words arise by means of a systematic distribution of the immediate components. Hierarchical sequencing therefore involves the order according to which morphemes are structured in morphologically complex words. Scrambling the order results in an incomprehensible series of morphemes or an alteration of meaning.¹]

¹ Translation: J.E. Terblanche

The broad order of prefix, root, stem and suffix is important as prefixes are taken out to the left or front of the word while suffixes are taken out to the right or end of the word. This implies that the analysis is root- or stem based. Apart from that, a specific order is also evident for nominal suffixes. Consider the following example:



A very important condition for the proposed technique is that every intermediate level must be semantically sensible and independent. In the structure above, the first intermediate level of **motsaneng** (little village – locality) consists of **motsana** (the little village) and **(-i)ng**, which is the locative suffix. The intermediate level of **motsana** consists of **motse** (village) and **-ana**, which is the diminutive suffix.

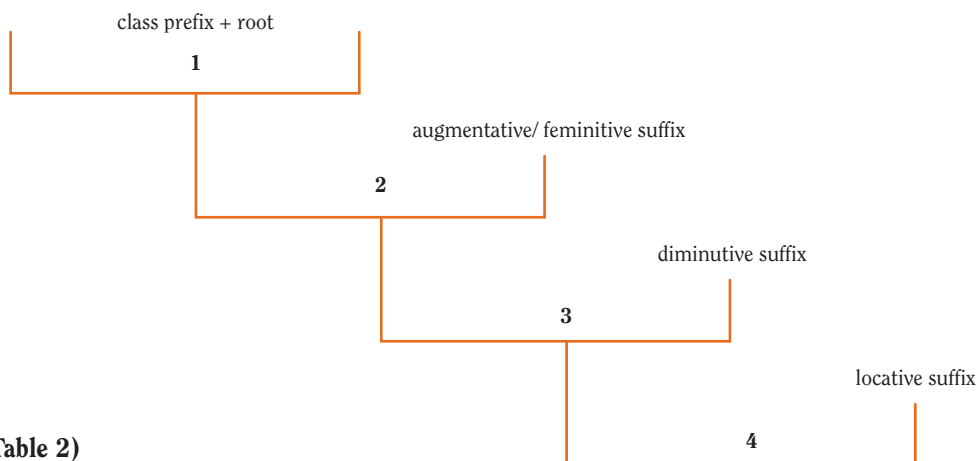
To help learners in the process of analysis, morphological constituents are numbered. These numbers indicate the hierarchical order of the different prefixes and suffixes. The numbering of these prefixes and suffixes represents their hierarchy to the root or stem. That implies that the highest number should be analysed first and the lowest number last. Thus, by identifying and numbering the morphemes, the learner will know where to start and how to progress (See to Tables 2, 3 and 4). The learner should also:

- (a) know the distinction between root, stem and grammatical morpheme,
- (b) know the distinction between simple, complex, reduplicated and compound stems and
- (c) know and be able to identify the grammatical morphemes.

A distinction is also made between the hierarchical structure of the morphemes of non-deverbatives and deverbatives, due to the fact that deverbatives are derived from a verb.

3.1 Non-deverbative

The hierarchical structure of the morphemes of the complex stem can be presented as follows:



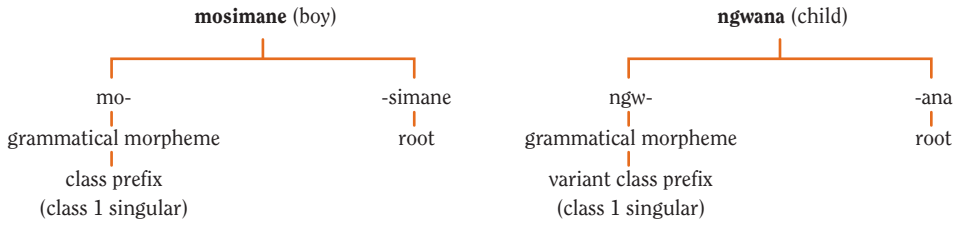
(Table 2)

Thus, the analysis of complex stems is done from the highest number to the lowest number with intermediate levels. The basic structure of the complex stems always consists of a class prefix and a root.

The hierarchical structure of morphemes in given examples will be analysed next:

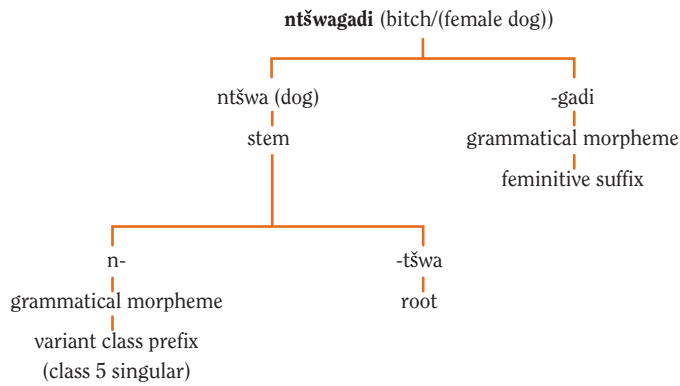
(a) Nouns without any suffixes

In the following two examples the nouns do not include any suffixes and both nouns have the basic structure of class prefix and noun root.



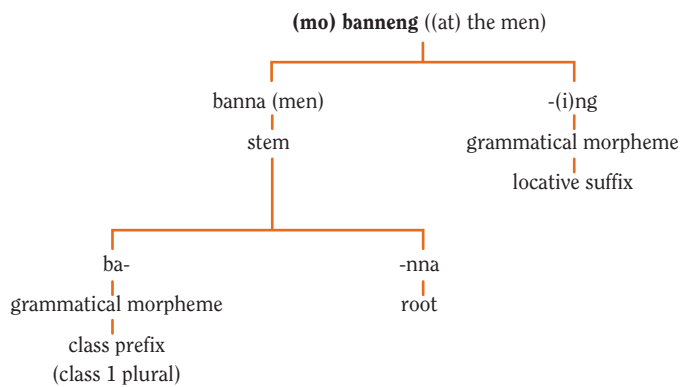
(b) Nouns with a feminine suffix

In an analysis of a noun consisting of the basic structure and a feminine suffix, this suffix is analysed first.

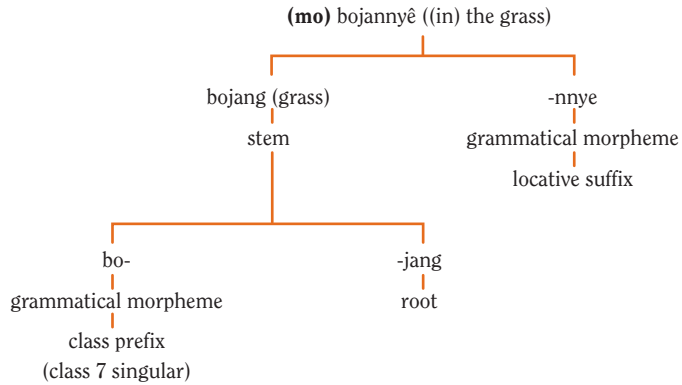


Thus the first intermediate level in the hierarchical analysis of **ntšwagadi** (bitch) consists of the stem **ntšwa** (dog) and the grammatical morpheme **-gadi** which is the feminine suffix.

(c) Nouns with a locative suffix

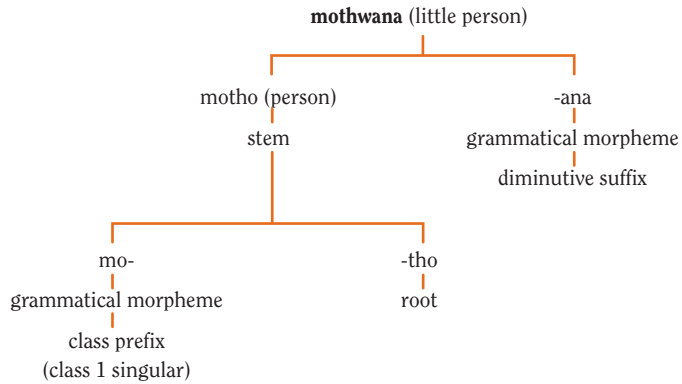


Thus the first intermediate level of (mo) **banneng** ((at) the men) consists of the stem **banna** (men) and the locative suffix **-(i)ng** acts as the grammatical morpheme.

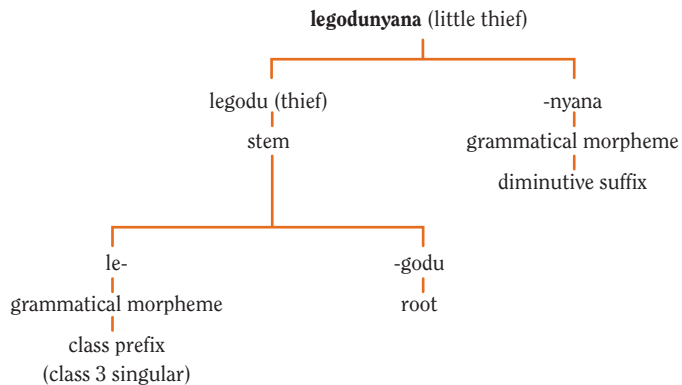


Thus the first intermediate level of (mo) **bojannye** ((in) the grass) consists of the stem **bojang** (men) and the locative suffix **-nnye** acts as the grammatical morpheme.

(d) **Nouns with a diminutive suffix**

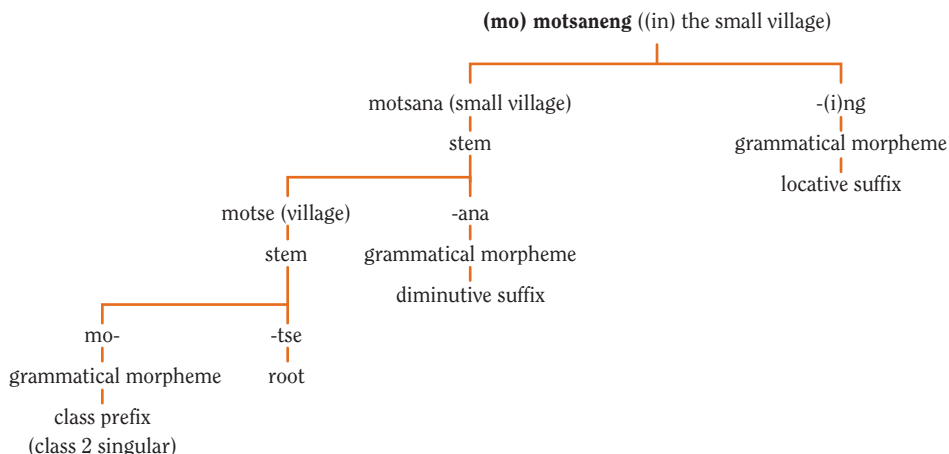


The first intermediate level of **mothwana** (little person) consists of the stem **motho** (person) and the diminutive suffix **-ana** acts as grammatical morpheme.

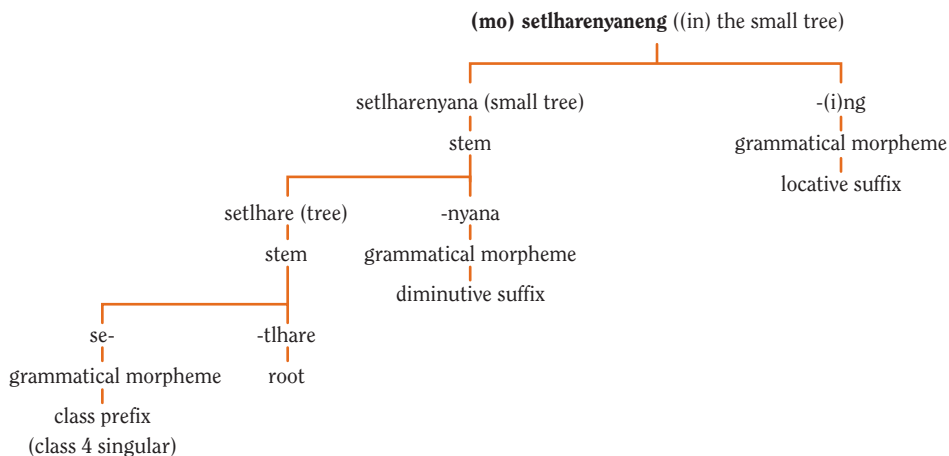


The first intermediate level of **legotswana** (little thief) consists of the stem **legodu** (thief) and the diminutive suffix **-ana** is the grammatical morpheme in this example.

(e) Nouns with a diminutive and locative suffix



In (mo) **motsaneng** ((in) the small village), the first intermediate level consists of the stem **motsana** (the little village) and the locative suffix **(-i)ng**. The intermediate level of **motsana** (little village) consists of the stem **motse** (village) and the diminutive suffix **-ana**.



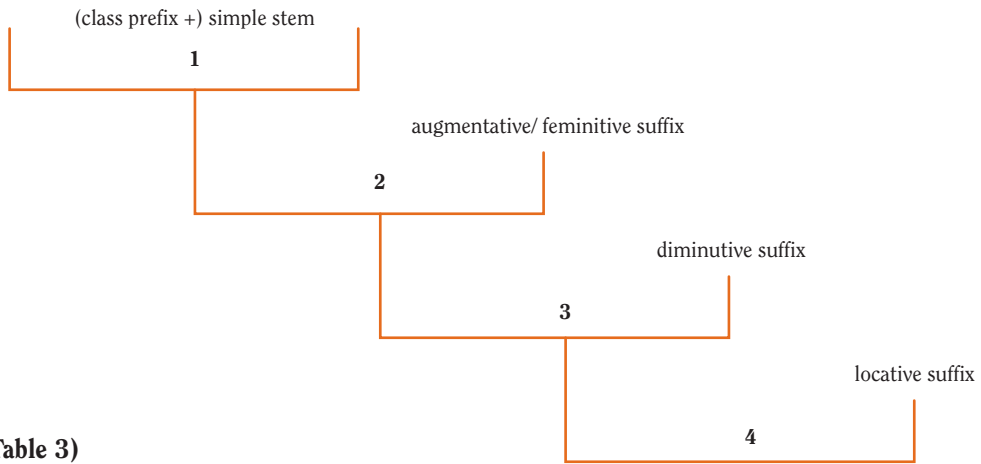
In (mo) **setlharenyana** ((in) the small tree), the first intermediate level consists of the stem **setlharenyana** (the small tree) and the locative suffix **(-i)ng**. The intermediate level of **setlharenyana** (little tree) consists of the stem **setlhare** (tree) and the diminutive suffix **-nyana**.

3.1.2 Simple stem

The simple stem is a prominent feature in:

- (a) the nouns of noun class 1a singular, for example **malome** (uncle), **rra** (father), **mma** (mother) and proper names such as **Jimmy**.
- (b) some nouns of class 3 singular, for example **gae** (home), **lapa** (courtyard) and **tsatsi** (day/sun).
- (c) some nouns of noun class 5 singular, for example **thipa** (knife), **tafole** (table), **tau** (lion), **foroko** (fork) and **katse** (cat).
- (d) some nouns of class 9, for example **pele** (in front), **teng** (inside) and **tlase** (under).

The hierarchical structure of the morphemes of the simple stem can be presented as follows:



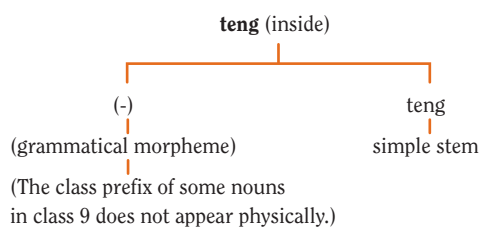
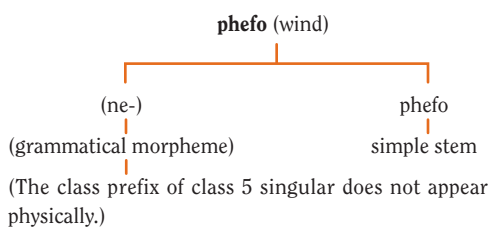
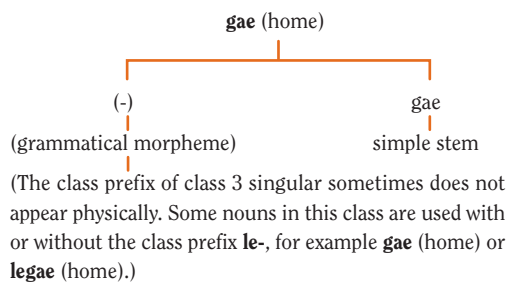
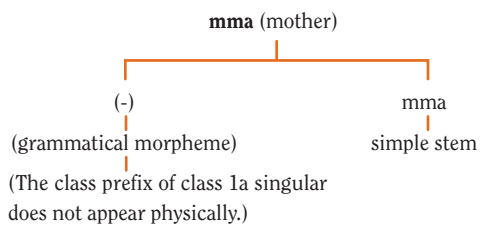
(Table 3)

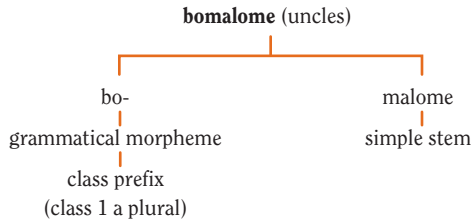
Thus the analysis of simple stems is also done from the highest number to the lowest number and consists of intermediate levels. The basic structure of the simple stem consists of a class prefix and a simple stem. For example, the basic structure of **bomma** (mothers) consists of a class prefix **bo-** and the simple stem **mma** (mother).

Consider that the hierarchical analysis with regard to the suffixes as explained in Table 3 agrees with the hierarchical analysis of the suffixes of the complex stem as explained in Table 2.

In the following examples the analysis of simple stems will be demonstrated:

(a) **Nouns without any suffixes**



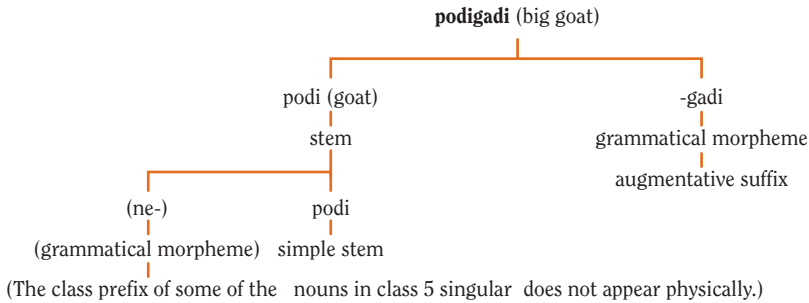


Nouns in class 1a plural always include the class prefix **bo-** and a simple stem.



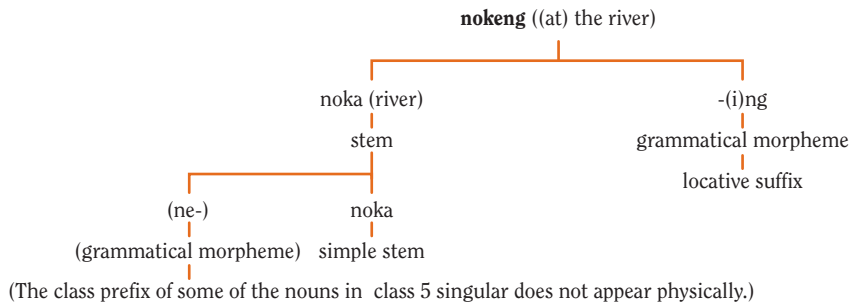
Nouns in class 5 plural always include the class prefix **di-** and a simple stem.

(b) **Nouns with an augmentative suffix**



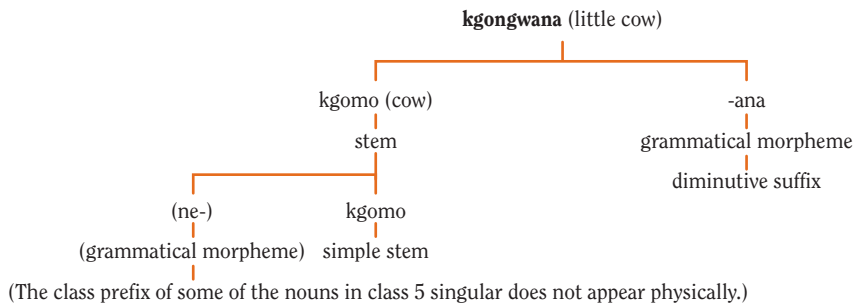
The first intermediate level in the hierarchical analysis of **podigadi** (big goat) thus consists of the stem **podi** (goat) and the augmentative suffix **-gadi**.

(c) **Nouns with a locative suffix**



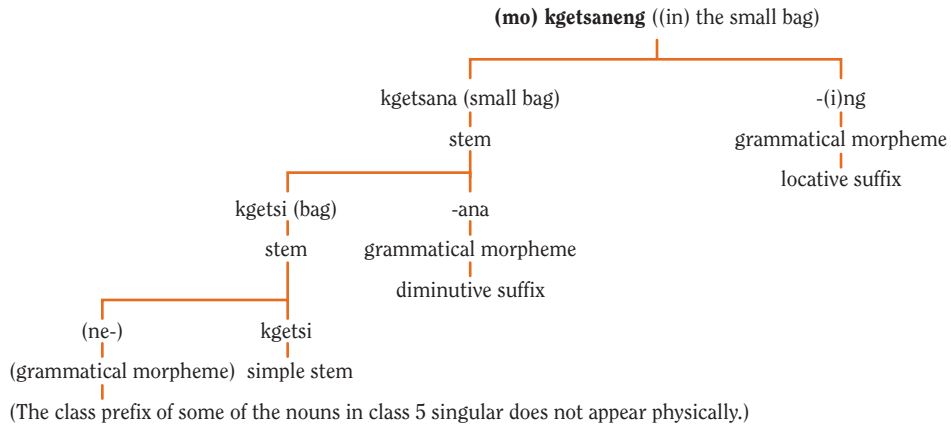
The first intermediate level of (mo) **nokeng** ((in, at) the river) consists of the stem **noka** (river) and the locative suffix **-(i)ng**.

(d) **Nouns with a diminutive suffix**



The first intermediate level of **kgongwana** (little cow) consists of the stem **kgomo** (cow) and the diminutive suffix **-ana**.

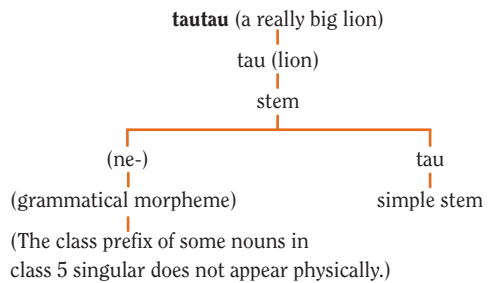
(e) **Nouns with a diminutive and locative suffix**



In (mo) **kgetsaneng** ((in) the small bag), the first intermediate level consists of the stem **kgetsana** (the little bag) and the locative suffix **(-i)ng**. The intermediate level of **kgetsana** (little bag) consists of the stem **kgetsi** (bag) and the diminutive suffix **-ana**.

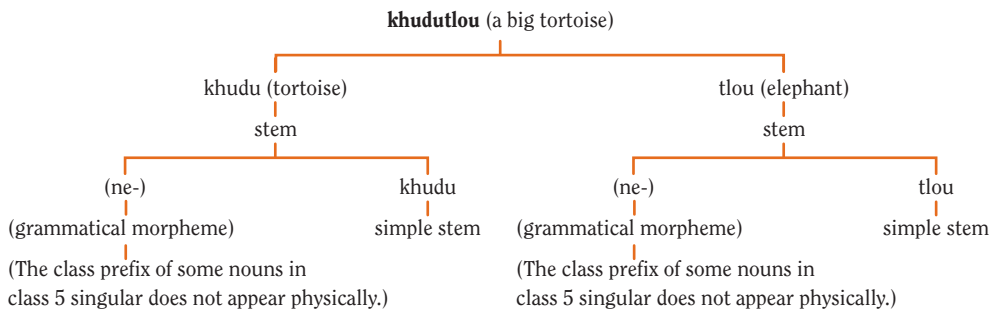
3.1.3 Reduplicated stems

The first step in the analysis of a reduplicated stem is to identify the stem which is reduplicated. This word is then analysed. The same steps that are employed in the analysis of simplex and complex stems are suitable when it comes analysing these words (See Tables 2 and 3). Consider the example:



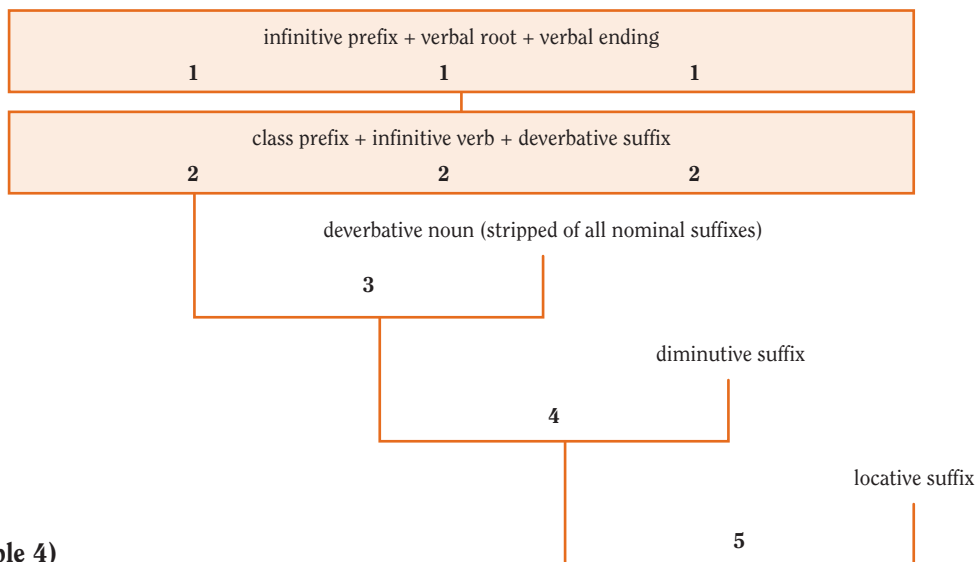
3.1.4 Compound stems

On analysing a compound stem the first step is to identify the stems that constitute the structure. These words are then analysed separately. The same steps that are employed in the analysis of simple and complex stems are applicable when analysing these words (See Tables 2 and 3). Consider the following example:



3.2 Deverbatives

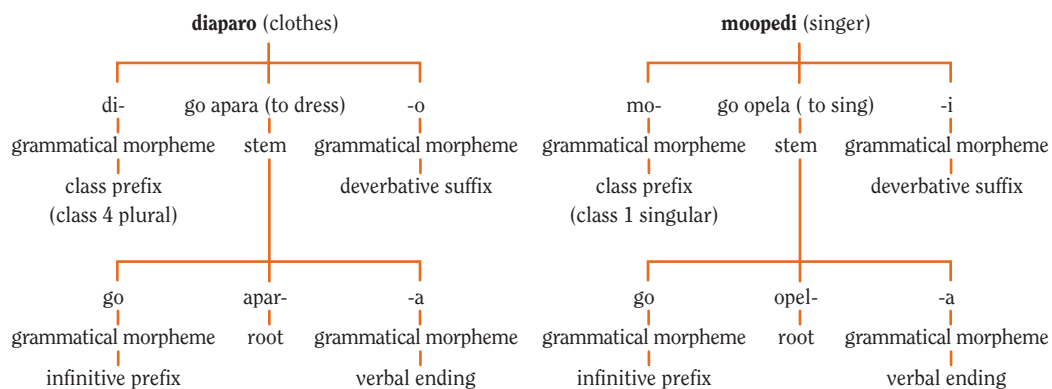
The following hierarchical analysis is proposed with regard to deverbative nouns:



(Table 4)

It is important to consider here that the class prefix and the deverbative suffix are analysed simultaneously since they have the same value (nr. 2) in the hierarchy. This procedure is in line with the derivation of deverbatives. Learners may thus be reminded that the analysis of deverbative nouns is the reverse process of their derivation.

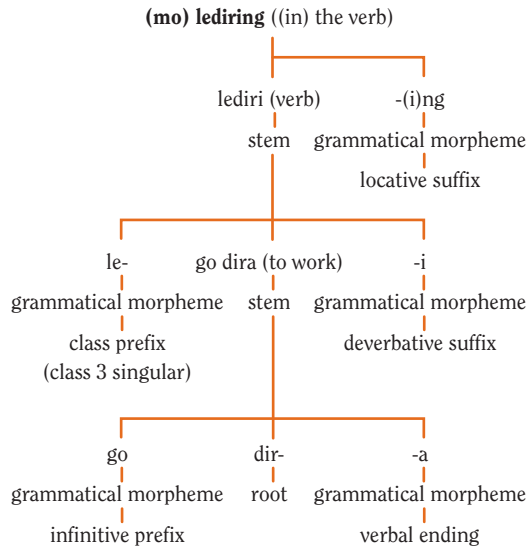
Compare the following examples:



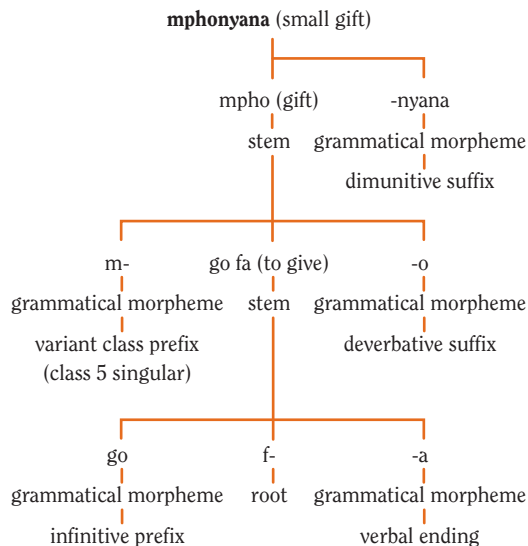
The first intermediate level of **diaparo** (clothes) consists of the class prefix of class 4 plural plus the infinitive verb **go apara** (to dress) plus the deverbative suffix **-o**, indicating an impersonal noun. The intermediate level of the infinitive verb consists of the infinitive prefix **-go** plus the verbal root **apar-** plus the verbal ending **-a**.

The first intermediate level of **moopedi** (singer) consists of the class prefix of class 1 singular plus the infinitive verb **go opela** (to sing) plus the deverbative suffix **-i**, indicating a personal noun. The intermediate level of the infinitive verb consists of the infinitive prefix **-go** plus the verbal root **opel-** plus the verbal ending **-a**.

The following two examples involve analysis in which deverbatives include the diminutive suffix:

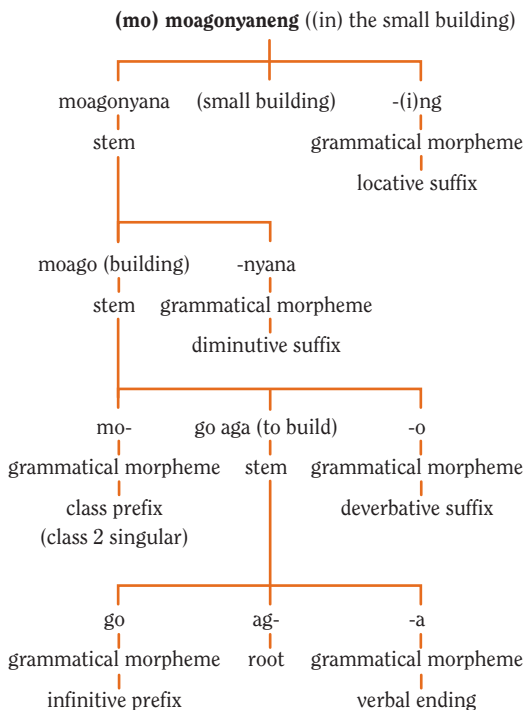


The first intermediate level of **(mo) lediring** ((in) the verb) consists of **lediri** (verb) and **-(i)ng** (the locative suffix). The intermediate level of **lediri** (verb) consists of the class prefix of class 3 singular plus the infinitive verb **go dira** (to work) plus the deverbative suffix **-i**, indicating a personal noun. The intermediate level of the infinitive verb consists of the infinitive prefix **-go** plus the verbal root **dir-** plus the verbal ending **-a**.



The first intermediate level of **mphonyana** (small gift) consists of **mpho** (gift) and **-ana** (the diminutive suffix). The intermediate level of **mpho** (gift) includes the stem **go fa** (to give). The intermediate level of the infinitive verb consists of the infinitive prefix **-go** plus the verbal root **f-** plus the verbal ending **-a**.

The following example indicates the analysis of a deverbative noun which includes a diminutive and a locative suffix:



The first intermediate level of (mo) **moagonyaneng** ((in) the small buildings) consists of **moagonyana** (small buildings) and **-(i)ng** (the locative suffix). The intermediate level of **moagaonyana** (small buildings) consists of **moago** (buildings) and **-nyana** (the diminutive suffix). The intermediate level of **moago** (buildings) includes the infinitive verb **go aga** (to work/do). The intermediate level of the infinitive verb consists of the infinitive prefix **-go** plus the verbal root **ag-** plus the verbal ending **-a**.

4. Conclusion

This article has examined the morphological structure of the Setswana noun. This relates to the various morphemes found in the word structure, their classification and their hierarchical arrangement.

In accordance with a hierarchical analysis as summarised in Table 2 and Table 3, the Setswana noun is analysed in intermediate levels. These intermediate levels consist of components such as stems, roots and grammatical morphemes. The basis of this manner of analysis is that meaningful relations must exist between these components.

Important factors to consider in the analysis of Setswana nouns are, among others, the distinction between non-deverbative and deverbative nouns and the composition of the noun with regard to its basic structure (class prefix and root), which entails either the inclusion of a simple stem, or the inclusion of a stem with one or more grammatical morphemes added to it.

The hierarchical method of analysis should provide learners with a more systematic and hopefully understandable method of analysing Setswana nouns.

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