"Kea patlotsa hela lona," a Turn around on Basotho Hip-Hop Hits: A Case of Tshepe Music

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Abstract

This study reports on the transformation of *famo* (accordion) music into modern Sesotho hip-hop known as *tshepe*. Research in Basotho music seems to have focused mainly on *famo* music. Little has been done to explore the evolution of *tshepe* music and how it emerged as suitable to be named Basotho popular music. The current study aims to explore the nature of *tshepe* music and how it relies heavily on both American hip-hop and *famo* music. For the purpose of this study, one *tshepe* song by Ntate Stunna, aka Megahertz, featuring Phephela, known as "Kea patlotsa" is analysed. This is a case study of one song as it is not possible to discuss all *tshepe* songs in a paper of this nature. The study is framed within a socio-semantic framework. It is a qualitative research study guided by an interpretivist paradigm. The study reveals that as an emerging and growing genre, *tshepe* music has taken over as one of the most popular forms of music for Basotho and it is rooted within traditional genres such as *famo* and *mangae* (initiates' songs) in its composition. In this article, I propose that the promotion of *tshepe* music brings both the promotion of Sesotho as a language and the genre itself. For this reason, more research should be conducted to tackle different topics that will help in understanding and appreciating this music genre and its contribution towards preserving and promoting Sesotho as a language.

Keywords: accordion music; Basotho indigenous knowledge systems; interpretivist paradigm; socio-semantics; *tshepe* music; oral tradition

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Introduction

It seems that Basotho cultural music has evolved through a pattern of different transitions. The genre originated in initiation schools "where song composition skills were one of the traits the initiates were supposed to acquire. In these schools, the eloquent ones would sing about their achievements, and the experiences of their daily lives in general" (Mokala and Chapole 2020, 57). Following the introduction of mines in South Africa, Basotho men were employed there, and had to travel long distances to reach the mines. This is the time when *difela tsa ditsamaya-naha* also known as *difela tsa diparola-thota* (songs of the inveterate travellers) began. According to Makobane (2000), *difela tsa diparola-thota* is a form of poetry that emerged in the context of migrant labour. Coplan (2006, 225) explains that Basotho migrants "used the resources of Sesotho song and spoken art to beguile the time, boost their courage and seek common understanding of the changes in Basotho life of which they were both the subjects and the objects."

Towards the beginning of the 21st century, hip-hop engulfed Basotho youth. This movement appears to have been copied from both American hip-hop and South African hip-hop, which was on the rise at that time. It is important to note that like American hip-hop, this genre started off in the streets, with vulgar language mainly dominating the lyrics. A turnaround time began in the late 2000s when some hip-hop artists started incorporating Sesotho into their songs, thus code-switching between English and Sesotho. This brought about a great change in attitude and a high demand as followers started to relate to this music (Kuanda 2020).

In an interview on SABC News on 16 November 2019, Megahertz, aka Ntate Stunna, whose music career started back in 2004, talked about the influences that led him to choose to sing *tshepe* music. He indicated that he grew up listening to hip-hop and was influenced by the likes of 50 Cent and Ice Prince, to name a few, and fell in love with African hip-hop. His first official single was released in 2014. A promo video of his album went viral and was released later in 2014, but only received recognition in 2019. He explains his genre as being a fusion of trap and *famo* music, which is original music that originates from Lesotho, and he raps in Sesotho.

It is worth noting that in his interview with Kuanda (2020), Malome Vector, a famous artist of the *tshepe* movement, indicated that he is proud of his culture, and his aim is to share it with the world and "show everyone that being a rapper can be culturally cool." He further indicated that he wants to conquer the world with his heritage at the centre of his art. Lastly, the artist explained that his music is a fusion of sounds that can be welcomed across all cultures, as it is rooted within Sesotho rhythms with an extra layer of African hip-hop and Afropop. Interestingly, Malome Vector is proud of his fusion of *famo* music as "it gives it a unique flavour. Its exclusive nature means you'll know which country to associate it with, wherever you hear it in the world" (Malome Vector quoted in Kuanda 2020).

Tshepe Music

The singers of this music genre refer to themselves as *dithuamajwe* (rock crushers), thus comparing the "tshepe movement to the miners who go into the earth to crush rocks in search of gold. In comparison, *dithuamajwe* use tshepe to create a new identity for themselves and the Basotho people through music and art" (Commando Obbs quoted in an interview with Kuanda 2020). *Tshepe* in Sesotho simply means "steel." Sometimes a person may be named *tshepe* because of their resilient character. For this reason, they are hard, strong-willed, persistent and self-driven individuals. The need to examine *tshepe* music is urgent for the understanding of indigenous Sesotho culture. It combines *mangae* (initiates' songs) and *mokorotlo* (war songs) with hip-hop. According to Kunene (1971, 5), *mokorotlo* were traditionally used "when the armies were about to go for the enemy, songs that stirred the feelings of the warriors, that made war a noble thing, and death in the heat of battle something of no personal consequence but for the glory it brought to the fatherland." Martins (2020, vii) defines *mokorotlo* as "a celebratory or worship song sang when the initiates are incised." *Tshepe* music therefore instils Basotho values in the younger generation, lest they forget who they are. This music speaks to the young ones not to conform to Western norms and not to be embarrassed of who they are. In other words, this music helps to promote patriotism in the younger generation.

Some say the music is akin to the style that has been perfected by the long-standing tradition of Basotho *diroki* (freestyle rappers) and replete with call-and-response chants that have become a staple of Basotho music. Having deliberated on the background to *tshepe* music, I now turn my attention to related literature that informs this study.

Previous Studies Related to the Topic

This section focuses on literature related to the topic. It seems that nothing has been done by scholars as far as *tshepe* music is concerned. Related studies have focused mainly on accordion music, which has had a big impact on the development of *tshepe* music. Scholars such as Mokala and Chapole (2020), Ditsele (2017), and Phafoli (2009) have focused mainly on Basotho accordion music.

Mokala and Chapole (2020) conducted a study entitled "*Lerato la favour*: The Revival of Basotho Pride and Love for their Cultural Accordion Music." In their study, the researchers investigated the use of language in accordion music. They looked at different themes inherent in the song chosen for analysis. The study is deemed relevant to the current article as it looks at the origin of *tshepe* music, which is influenced heavily by *mangae* (poems sung by the initiates). Mokala and Chapole's study does not address how *famo* music has influenced the development of *tshepe* music, which is the focus of the current paper. In line with the current topic under investigation, the study reveals that "for Basotho, accordion music today is a form of music that preserves Sesotho as a language and culture of Basotho" (Mokala and Chapole 2020, 60).

Phafoli (2009) conducted a study entitled "Analysis of the Language, Techniques and Thematic Aspects of Basotho Accordion Music." The current research paper finds Phafoli's study relevant as it looks at the language used in the composition of Basotho accordion music. Phafoli's study aimed to investigate how Basotho perceive their accordion music. According to Phafoli (2009), Basotho feel that accordion music is part of their oral literature, and it needs to be preserved. For this reason, the aim of his study was to compare accordion music and other oral art forms to justify why it should be regarded as Basotho oral literature (Phafoli 2009). The current study leans on Phafoli's study as it attempts to analyse themes found in accordion songs, the language used, "and the rationale behind the employment of such language" (Phafoli 2009, 4). Nonetheless, Phafoli's study differs from the current one as it focused heavily on Basotho accordion music while the present article focuses on *tshepe* music. There is a knowledge gap left by Phafoli for further research to investigate, hence the relevance of the current paper that translates *famo* music into the modern hip-hop movement known as *tshepe*.

In a study closer to this article, Ditsele (2017) draws from Setswana hip-hop known as *motswako* (mixture) to illustrate how *motswakolistas* (motswako rappers) went against the trendsetting in South Africa (Ditsele 2017). Although the study focused on *motswako*, the current study draws heavily on it as it touches on the etymology of *motswako* music, which informs this study on the similar trends found in the evolution of *tshepe* music. Further, Ditsele (2017, 12) observes that "the growing popularity of *motswakolistas* and their significant presence in the public space promote Setswana's status in society." For this reason, it informs the current study on how Basotho can use *tshepe* music to preserve both their language and culture "at least at the level of societal awareness of the language" (Ditsele 2017, 12).

I want to contend that Ditsele's study is different from this one in many ways. First, the researcher employed multiple cases by sampling five *motswakolistas*. Contrary to this, the current paper uses one case study since the analysis focuses on one *tshepe* song. Second, Ditsele's study analysed *motswako* and *motswakolistas* while the present study focuses on the analysis of *tshepe* and *dithuamajwe*. Third, Ditsele's study analysed a number of songs while the current paper focuses on one song. However, the two studies are similar in that they both employ content analysis as a method of analysis for the lyrics and are both framed within a qualitative research method. Ntate Stunna's song "Kea patlotsa" was selected as it captures issues pertaining to language, culture, identity, and tradition, which are of interest to me as a Sesotho language practitioner and a researcher.

To this end, it seems that much still needs to be known about *tshepe* music. It makes reasonable research sense, therefore, for this study to investigate the evolution of *tshepe* music and how it came to incorporate both hip-hop and accordion music in its composition. The succeeding section features the theoretical framework that guides this study.

Theoretical Framework

The present study is principally underpinned by a socio-semantic theory. This framework is a combination of sociolinguistics and semantics as theoretical lenses. As Khotso and Mashinge (2011) suggest, whenever one theoretical framework does not address fully the researcher's aims, one is at liberty to merge theories. In line with this view, Matee (2019) adds that a dual theoretical framework is used when the two lenses have overlapping principles. Therefore, to respond fully to the research question put forward in this study, I merged sociolinguistic and semantic theories to come up with a theoretical tool relevant to the study. According to Mokala (2020, 221), "sociolinguistics is a field that studies the use of language in context." I am adopting this theoretical base as I feel that the use of language in the song promotes and retains some important aspects of Sesotho that include proverbs, rhyme, idioms and poetic features. Therefore, the analysis of the words used in the song is deemed important as it reveals how the artists play around with language, promoting the use and appreciation of the language by the youngsters following this genre. Semantics is the field of linguistics that studies meaning. It is employed in this paper to investigate the meaning of words used to compose the song and also to find out the socio-cultural meaning of the words (Possa and Khotso 2015). Having justified the theoretical base that underpins this study, the section that follows explains the methodology.

Methodology

This exploratory research made use of a qualitative method. Qualitative research is deemed most relevant for this study as it focuses on looking into the use of language in the composition of *tshepe* lyrics. From Matee's (2019, 17) view, qualitative research "seeks to deeply understand the phenomena in their natural setting." In this manner, the reader is provided with a profound understanding of the nature of *tshepe* music and how it influences the use of language in its composition. This is a case study as the lyrics of one *tshepe* song entitled "Kea patlotsa" are used as data for analysis. I purposely selected this song as it is very popular among the youth and because it is a blend of *mangae* and modern hip-hop. In analysing the data, I employed content analysis to make meaning of the words and phrases used in the song. The subsequent section spells out the findings and discussions of the study.

Findings and Discussions

The title of the song itself suggests the artist's pride and confidence in himself to produce the best hits born of his singing talent. *Kea patlotsa*, simply translated, means "I hit hard," suggesting that the subject is proud of his abilities and strongly believes that he outperforms his competitors. The statement may be ambiguous in that one could assume the artist literally means he beats others physically as *patlotsa* in Sesotho simply means "to beat." Here, it has been used figuratively to mean "to outperform" or "outsmart'" other singers. The featured singer further indicates that he is feared by the eloquent ones. The lyrics in the song are clear; the artist warns his opponents that *o a*

patlotsa, meaning he "hits hard." He does not just say *o a otla* (he beats), which is less forceful compared to *patlotsa*. This sends a stronger message than just *ho otla* (to beat). This emphasises both his strength and bravery (Rapeane 2003). It is an affirmation that the artist "earned his status because of his fearlessness" (Rapeane 2003, 186). The lyrics of the song below form the data for analysis.

Megahertz aka Ntate Stunna Featuring Phephela

"Kea patlotsa"

Verse 1

1. *Ke theile moriti na?* (moriti na?) (Am I alert?)
2. *Ke qamaka kwana le kwana* (I am looking around)
3. *Hela boo kwana le kwana* (Yes, all around)
4. *Kgeleke tsa lefatshe di ntshaba tsho! di ntshaba tsho!* (The eloquent ones of this world fear me extremely)
5. *Kea patlotsa hela lona, hela lona*. (I hit hard hey you, hey you)
6. *Ha ke hata, lefatshe lea reketla hee*! (The earth rattles under my steps)
7. *Phepela a re Stunna hata ka bothata* (Phepela told me to step hard)
8. *Ne ke se thaabe nka be ke reuwe bothata ee* (If I were not a hiccup, I would be called trouble/ troublemaker)
9. *Namane ya makonyane ke sekalakati* (The light complexioned young calf is full of energy)
10. *Ke kena ka mulamu ntweng ya karati* (I fight with a stick in a karate bout)
11. *Koriana ha e lla nka qala party* (With the sound of the accordion, I can start a party)
12. *Ke shwela manothi, pelo e ja serati* (I will die for accordion music as it is my love)
13. *Sedi la ka mponesetse tsela* (God light up my way)
14. *O ntlatse ka matla tle ke tshwele difela* (Fill me with strength so I can sing hymns)
15. *O mpetlele ditsela ke tla fihla ke jele lesela.* (Brighten my way and I will arrive dressed to kill.)

Chorus

1. *Ke theile moriti na? moriti na?* (Am I alert?)
2. *Ke qamaka kwana le kwana, kwana le kwana* (I am looking all around)
3. *Hela lona, hela lona* (Hey you all)
4. *Kea patlotsa hela lona, hela lona*. (I hit hard hey you, hey you all)

Verse 2

1. *Ke thaabe, ke tshepe, ke boima ba ketane* (I am a hiccup, I am steel, heavy like a metal chain)
2. *Ke kgitla banna ba nwe metsi ka nkane* (I hit men and force them to drink water)
3. *Ke ramo e tjhitja kahara dihlehlane* (I am a ram without horns amongst a useless breed)
4. *Hao, ya ba sotla poho ya mokgerane* (Hey, I torment them, for I am a strong bull)

5. *Ho moferefere feela banna ba hatane* (It is a mess; men are all over on top of one another)
6. *Koriana ha e lla tjena e nkgopotsa mofu Hatlane* (The sound of the accordion reminds me of the late Hatlane)
7. *Tshepe kokotane, Moshe o ntsa tshwere molamu ho ba tshedisa Jorotane* (A heavy metal, like Moses who had his stick to help the Israelites to cross river Jordan)
8. *Ha se jwale ke kgakgatha ha ke kgathale* (I have been singing for long, but I do not get tired)
9. *Mahipi a tseba ho thwita mare divese kgatane* (The fast-forwards, all they know is to tweet but nothing about the verses)
10. *Utlwa o a baba mohalakane* (Taste me I am a bitter plant)
11. *Ke shapa shephard ke siye nku di qhalakane* (I hit the herd boy and leave his herd scattered)
12. *Ke jwetsitse dikgeleke hore ntefeleng ke janki* (I told the eloquent ones to pay a bribe)
13. *Haeso k'harensi e ntse le tanki* (In my hometown currency is a thank you)
14. *Ke hitman, lebetsa bullet wa bo Lampi* (I am a hitman, a bullet thrower)
15. *Ke ntate ya binang k'hotho, nka se hlolwe ke ditampi* (I am that man who sings a quart, I will never be defeated by dumpies)

Verse 3

1. *Ke kokometse hodima kotsi, kea kekela* (I am seated on top of danger, I am sliding away dangerously)
2. *Ke kgohlopa ke o ferola morearea* (I stir up trouble without any care)
3. *Setsokotsane sa mophato se lla ditlwebelele* (A whirlwind of an initiation school is fierce)
4. *Mmeke! Ke rutla tlelenke ya kgaoha qanti e fophe mafome* (Folk, I swiftly shake and break the clamp to make it drip of rust)
5. *Ke phamola bo-nkokoto ke phaela kea foufatsa* (I snatch heroes repeatedly and leave them blind)

Verse 4

1. *Kgale ke tlola topo dikgethetsaka makweba* (I've been running on sweaty gumboots)
2. *Ho mafupufupu ke titima kgoohlo* (It is windy, I am running down the valley)
3. *Matheke-theke ke toronko kapa mokgohlane?* (I am thick like blood clots; Am I jail or death itself?)
4. *Kwata di ntshaba tsho, di ntsha tsho!* (The uncivilised ones extremely fear me)
5. *Kea patlotsa hela lona, hela lona* (I hit hard, hey you, hey you)
6. *Kea patlotsa hela lona* (I hit hard, hey you)

Verse 5

1. *Ke thaabe ke tshepe ke boima ba ketane* (I am a hiccup, I am steel, heavy like a metal chain)

2. *Ke theile moriti na? moriti na?* (Am I alert?)
3. *Ke qamaka kwana le kwana* (I am looking around)
4. *Hela boo kwana le kwana* (Yes, all around)
5. *Kgeleke tsa lefatshe di ntshaba tsho! di ntshaba tsho!* (The eloquent ones of this world fear me, they fear me extremely)
6. *Ke a patlotsa hela lona, hela lona* (I hit hard, hey you, I hit hard)
7. *Ha ke hata lefatshe le a reketla hee!* (When I take a step the earth trembles under my feet)

Analysis of the Song: "Kea Patlotsa, Hela Lona"

The analysis of the song "Kea patlotsa, hela lona" will focus on four areas. First, I will look at the title of the song, and this will be followed by the themes that emerge. The third aspect will be a close look at the figurative language used in the song, especially metaphors. Lastly, I present a summative narrative of the entire song.

The Title of the Song

Renza (1980) says that a text, including a song, can be a unique, self-defining mode of self-referential expression. It can allow its project (the song) of self-representation to convert the singer into the present. The first point I wish to claim is that the title of the song is self-referential. The singer is both the author and subject of the song. Put differently, he is at once the *narrator* and the *narrated* in the song. The /Ke/ in *Ke a patlotsa* creates a double persona: the article is telling the story of the song as the author and enacting it as a character, a hero. There is no doubt then that the song is about the singer in more ways than one. The singer clearly defines and refers to himself.

Themes that Emerge in the Song

The theme is ordinarily described by students of literature (in training) as the overall meaning of a text. It does happen at times that a given text can be anchored on one major theme and sub-themes as supporting little bits.

The major theme I identify in the song is that of *self-praise*. Even here, I am referring again to the self. Phafoli and Martins (2015, 476; emphasis added) observe that the artist "considers himself *too talented* for his contemporaries to compete with him." The singer says:

> *Ha ke hata, lefatshe le a reketla*
> (When I stamp my feet, the world trembles)

There is a saying in Sesotho that:

> *Nngwana kgwale se nna o ipolela, motho o motle a bolelwa ke ba bang.*
> (Do not blow your own trumpet, let others do it for you.)

It has to be mentioned though that in the context of the song, it is no shame or disgrace to "blow one's own trumpet." The song under discussion bears a close affinity to *mangae* (songs of initiates), where self-praise is the order of the day.

The Sub-Theme of a Bully/Fighter

The singer says:

Ke kgitla banna ba nwe metsi ka nkane
(I hit men and force them to drink water)

Ke shapa shephered, ke siye dinku di qhalakane
(I hit the herd boy and leave the herd scattered)

In the two examples just given, the singer clearly describes himself as a bully, alternatively as a fighter. It has to be mentioned here that bullying goes back to the boys' game of *mokallo* (stick fighting). Khotso (2017, 33) believes that *mokallo* provided the boys with fighting skills that stood them in good stead later in life when they had to be chosen as regiments to defend their country.

Figurative Language

Here I speak of *mekgabisa-puo* **(**language adornments), and the focus is on metaphors. Once again, the singer borrows *ostranenie* from the Russian Formalists to defamiliarise everyday language and use it in an unfamiliar manner. I shall pick out one or two examples to show how the singer describes himself in unusual ways. In an unusual metaphor, the singer says:

Ke thaabe, ke kgitla banna ba nwe metsi ka nkane
(I am a hiccup, I force men to drink water)

How on earth can a man be a hiccup? It is only Ntate Stunna who can be a "hiccup." What are the qualities of a hiccup? If it happens to you, you must go for a drink of water to break the build-up of wind in the system. Legend has it that a hiccup can kill a person. If this is anything to go by, Ntate Stunna can suffocate and kill men, musically speaking. All in all, the singer is in control, and has no competition.

The other metaphors include:

Ke ramo e tjhitja
(I am a hornless male sheep)

Poho ya mokgerane
(I am a strong bull)

Ke mohalakane
(I am a bitter plant)

In the first stanza, the lead singer warns his fellow mates that he is dangerous, daring them not to even come close to him. He looks on all sides, to make sure that he does not make any mistakes. This marks his attention to detail. Like all Basotho poets, the lines are about self-praise. Coplan (2006) asserts that these are the "cries from the heart" in which the poets delight in the strength they have acquired through painful life experiences. The singer further explains that he wants to see all sides as he wants to be alert in case they strike. He draws attention to the fact that other singers fear him; he warns them and even pities them, because if they dare start, they will be in trouble. Phafoli and Martins (2015, 476) assert that the artist "considers himself too talented for his contemporaries to compete with him. All attempts they make to catch up with him fail."

He claims at his footsteps, the whole world rattles, to show how dangerous and powerful he is. Phephela commands Stunna to work hard. He calls himself *thaabe* (hiccup) and says if he was not a *thaabe* (hiccup), he would be called *bothata* (trouble). This implies that he sees himself as dangerous and capable of killing his opponents, just like *thaabe* can kill. I argue that he does not necessarily mean literal death. Rather, figuratively he means that his presence in the industry prevents other artists from flourishing—they are as good as dead. "The metaphor here is used to display his achievement as compared to other artists" (Phafoli and Martins 2015, 476).

In lines 10–12 in the first verse, the singer prides himself on being a true Mosotho. As Phafoli and Zulu (2014, 184) observe, "It shows that the artist upholds Basotho culture." He indicates that he fights with his *molamu* (a heavy stick). Basotho men are mostly seen walking around carrying their sticks. For them, *molamu* is both a form of identity and a weapon. He fights with his *molamu* and does not care whether his opponents fight with karate moves—if he has his *molamu*, he knows he will defeat them. The use of *molamu* in fighting can be traced back to the time when Basotho boys are growing. In the veld, while they look after animals, they engage in different games. Among these games, *mokallo* (stick fighting) is one of the outstanding Basotho boys' games that prepare them for when they are chosen as warriors, and the game "trains players to acquire fighting skills" (Khotso 2017, 33). I surmise that in bringing this up, the artist recalls his life as a herd boy. Phafoli and Zulu (2014, 186) note further that this is seen in most accordion songs wherein the artists "find it compelling to recount their harsh conditions during their juvenile years. They are full of pride about their hard past, because that hard past made them good Basotho. The message they want to put across to society is that a hard past can be educational." The singer shows his love for accordion music to the extent that he is willing to die for it.

In lines 13–15 in the first verse, he is praying for light and divine guidance. It is his prayer for a bright future, so that he can succeed. This implies his reliance on God and his belief that his success comes from Him. The artist's mention of God is suggestive of the notion that because of his Christian background, he is aware that in this industry

he is fighting a spiritual war, and to survive, he will be empowered and "influenced by Christian teachings, mainly that God fights wars for Christians" (Rapeane 2003, 194).

In verse two, the poet has used striking metaphors. Phafoli and Martins (2015, 464–65) are of the opinion that "a metaphor is an important device because it adds and enriches meaning and weight of poems and plays." For this reason, metaphors add some flavour to the lyrics as they "convey messages in a vivid and meaningful manner" (Phafoli and Martins 2015, 467). In his paper entitled "'I've Worked Longer than I've Lived': Lesotho Migrants' Songs as Maps of Experience," Coplan (2006, 224) explains that "through the performative process, the collective metaphors of a regional but highly mobile culture are given new meanings and extended into new, sometimes incommensurate domains." The artist calls himself *thaabe* (a hiccup), which is very dangerous and can lead to death. When one has hiccups, the best possible remedy is to drink water, and just as one is forced to drink water when suffering from hiccups, his presence in the music industry makes men drink water, meaning they are very unsettled. He brings a lot of discomfort, and he is very disturbing to his opponents. He also calls himself (*tshepe)* a steel because he is hard. He further calls himself *ketane* (a chain). A chain is heavy and made of steel, thus he sees himself as heavy for other singers to handle. It is interesting to note that he compares his achievements in music to these hard metals to show appreciation for his efforts in making his music career a success. Phafoli and Martins (2015, 469) explain that the artist's boasting can be said to be a form of "self-praise used when one thinks highly of oneself."

He also calls himself *ramo e tjhitja* (a male sheep that is uncircumcised and does not have horns). When it is with other sheep, it never rests; it is always fighting, and it is considered dangerous to humans. In line with Rapeane's (2003) argument, I concur that the artist reaffirms his confrontational message to emphasise that he is not scared of his competitors and warns them that they will never win. The use of these metaphorical statements can be attributed to an appreciation of Sesotho. Thus, "the lyrics in this music contribute towards the enrichment of one's language. It is a language tank which spills over to quench Sesotho speakers' thirst" (Phafoli and Martins 2015, 466).

The artist also defines himself as *poho ya mokgerane* (a thin but very dangerous bull). As much as it is small by size, this kind of *poho* never gives others any rest in the kraal. It is not well fed, but it likes fighting. He says that his opponents end up stepping on each other while trying to run away from him—thus they drip and fall. The artist identifies himself with rebellious animals to stress the bravery and confidence brought on by his success in the industry. This is a confrontation that signals "to his counterparts that he is dangerous, and they should not attempt to cross his path" (Phafoli and Martins 2015, 470). Furthermore, he calls himself *poho* because a *poho* chases other bulls to mark its territory so that it remains the "king" of the land.

In line 7 in the second verse, he calls himself Moses because he has come to rescue the Basotho nation. Just like Moses took the Israelites to the Promised Land, he is bringing

good music to his followers. In my opinion, he is rescuing the nation from the bad taste of music that has been presented by other artists. His arrival in the music industry is a turnaround, taking the listeners to the land of Canaan. He sees other artists as *mahipi* (those who behave and have adopted the hip-hop lifestyle and dress code), who are only interested in looking good and fail to deliver quality music to their followers. As much as they look glamorous and fashionable, to him, they are useless because all they know is how to post on Twitter, but they have no talent in song composition.

He calls himself *mohalakane*, which is a very bitter plant. This is an expression of how dangerous he is. He brings a bitter taste to his opponents as they are aware of his talent and can never defeat or replace him in the music industry. Phafoli and Martins (2015, 476) stress that the artist makes use of plant metaphors to "refer to a variety of plants that are known to the artist and that could be used to describe aspects that the artist wants to sing about. The use of plant metaphors serves to show that the artist is very observant and knowledgeable about his environment." Therefore, he is confident that his music cannot be matched by any musician.

I find it important to highlight that there is an affinity between *mangae* and *tshepe* music. Martins (2020, 6) explains that "mangae is a component of oral tradition that falls under music." For this reason, I strongly believe that *tshepe* music is a modern version of *mangae*. Martins (2020, 6) concludes that

> mangae are themselves music. They are part of the Sesotho oral traditions. Like most Sesotho oral traditional narratives, mangae are assumed to be a society's valuable literature upon which multi-faceted subjects can be revealed. They are also believed to share characteristically the similar communicative and verbal cues found in other components of oral or cultural artifacts of the Basotho.

Conclusion

This article has considered the evolution of *tshepe* music and how it was influenced by both *famo* and *mangae* in its conception. It examined one *tshepe* song and identified different themes emerging from its lyrics. The analysis revealed that the use of different metaphors in the song promotes an appreciation of Sesotho as a language. The paper argues that Sesotho is now well-recognised within the music industry and Basotho youth pride themselves in it more since they have their own genre they identify with. Furthermore, the article recommends that more research should be conducted to help establish ways in which other people from different ethnic groups could start to learn and appreciate Sesotho as a language through its music. This is much needed within a multilingual South African context. It is concluded that it would be fruitful if more research is done to establish how this genre can be used to retain words that are fading to prevent language death.

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