

Linguistic variations among the dialects of Shekgalagari

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Shekgalagari belongs to the Sotho-Tswana language phylum and is classified as western Sotho-Tswana (Bantu Zone S), quite distinct from Setswana, which is a sister language. It trans-borders Botswana and Namibia with the majority of its speakers found in Botswana where it is geographically widespread. Roughly eight sub-groups of people speak Shekgalagari as their mother tongue. Except two, the dialects spoken by these sub-groups manifest some peculiarities that distinguish the dialects from each other. This article describes some of these features, including phonological and lexical peculiarities. The focus is to highlight variations and, where applicable, present sociolinguistic factors that caused and causes them.

Keywords: Shekgalagari, dialects, sound variation, morpho-phonological variation, lexical variation

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Classification and distribution. Shekgalagari belongs to the Niger-Congo language family, a larger family group under which the Southern Bantu Zone of the African phylum falls. It is within the S30 group and is specifically classified as S31d (Maho, 2009, Cole, 1959). A further clarification is made that Shekgalagari belongs to the Sotho-Tswana sub-family of South-Eastern Bantu and is classified as Western Sotho-Tswana (Chebanne, 2003). Related languages include Setswana (S31a) Sepedi (S32b) Lobedu, (S33), and Sesotho (S301). It is closely related to Southern Sotho (Sesotho) and Northern Sotho (Sesotho *sa* Leboa), as well as Lozi. Shekgalagari has at least eight dialects including Shengologa, Sheshiwana, Shekgwatheng, Sheshaga, Shetjhauba, Shelala, Shegyegwana, and Shekhena. Whereas splinter groups of speakers of these dialects could be found in areas where Bakgalagari may be found, the dialects may be concentrated in a particular area or areas, with language contact dynamics that give it a particular flavour.

Shengologa is spoken in three regions of Botswana: Northern Kgalagadi (Matsheng villages), Gantsi and Ngamiland. Shekgwatheng Sheshiwana and Shelala varieties are also spoken in Northern Kgalagadi but there is a considerable shift from Shekgwatheng and Sheshiwana in the area to the Shengologa. Shengologa in Northern Kgalagadi is one of (if not) the most conservative form(s) of the language mainly because contact with the dominant language which could trigger a shift, Setswana, had been very minimal. However, contact languages include !Xóǀ and Nama. Shengologa in Gantsi has been influenced by contact with dominant languages in the areas including Setlharo, Serolong, and Afrikaans, and also with various local Khoesan communities such as the !Xóǀ, Naro, !Gui, !Gana, #Kx'au||'ein. In Ngamiland this variety is heavily influenced by the Setawana dialect of Setswana. Other contact languages include Shiyeyi, Thimbukushu, Ju|'haonsi, and Khwedam.

Sheshiwana is spoken in Northern Kgalagadi and in Ngwaketse-West. In Matsheng however there is considerable shift to Shengologa dialect. In Ngwaketse-West Sheshiwana is heavily influenced by Sengwaketse dialect of Setswana as its speakers tend to integrate a lot of Setswana words and sounds into their speech, and some are bilingual in Sengwaketse and Sheshiwana. Furthermore, the !Xóǀ are a local San communities in the area.

Sheshaga is spoken in Northern Kgalagadi in Matsheng villages and in the Ngwaketse-West area. Unlike the Sheshaga spoken in Matsheng area, the one in Ngwaketse-West exhibits a significant degree of borrowings from Serolong¹ and Sengwaketse dialects of Setswana. !Xóǒ is the other language of contact in the area.

Shekgwatheng is spoken in Lethakeng East and in Lethakeng West. These areas are also known as Kweneng West. In Lethakeng East Shekgwatheng variety shows a tendency to shift towards Sekwena variety of Setswana, with heavy lexical borrowing, and with some speakers being bilingual in Shekgwatheng and Sekwena. Shekgwatheng here is in contact with Khoesan languages in the area including Sasi, Kua, !Gwi, and ǀHua.

Shetjhauba is spoken in Ngamiland in villages like Xamasere, Samochima and Xaoga and other villages along the Okavango. This variety has significant phonological and lexical peculiarities that make it almost incomprehensible to speakers of other Shekgalagari varieties. With approximately 80% of lexical variation between it and the other variants of Shekgalagari, Shetjhauba shows that its speakers have been separated from the others for centuries. It now has a significant number of click phonemes borrowed from neighbouring languages such as Ju|'haonsi, Khwedam, Shiyeyi, and Thimbukushu.

Shelala that is discussed in the article is found Matsheng villages, especially Lokgwabe, and the !Xóǒ settlement of Zutshwa, in the Kgalagadi North District. This variety is believed to be spoken by a group of people who were originally a !Xóǒ group of the !Ama Pfani variety but which had conflicts with a Nama group known as the !Kam in Mabuashegube area (Traill, 1974). They migrated north towards Matsheng and settled among some Bakgalagari people in the area and adopted their language but with a very interesting phonological effect. This variety is nonetheless losing much ground through massive assimilation.

1.2 Variability with languages. Languages, and even language varieties, exhibit inherent variability (Fasold & Connor-Linton, 2017). Variation within a language is attributable to parameters such as geographical location, gender, social status, age, ethnicity, profession, and economic status, among others (Tegegne, 2015). A language variety is defined based on distinct phonological, morphological, semantic, and grammatical features, among others. Manifest variability among the dialects of a language is systematic and not haphazard or disorganized. A dialect is commonly defined as a regionally (and socially) distinctive variety of a language that is different from other dialects of the same language and that systematically and habitually manifests peculiar lexical items and grammatical structures, and peculiar pronunciation in the spoken form (Solano-Flores, 2006; Edwards, 1979). According to O'Grady and Archibald (2019), a dialect is "a regional or social variety of a language characterized by its own phonological, syntactical, and lexical properties." These systematic and habitual linguistic features identify "the regional ... background of the user" Crystal (1992, p. 101). Dialect in this article is defined as variation in a language due to the geographical location of the speakers. Standard variety is the codified form of the language and is the one used in official domains such as school, media, commerce, aviation, business, etc (Heck, 2012). This variety is the one usually described in grammars, dictionaries, and used in any formal written works of any type. Because its lexicon, morphology, syntax, and usage have been settled, the standard variety undergoes a lengthy process for it to be standardized.

1.3 The objective of the paper. The objective of the article is to describe some of the phonological, morpho-phonological, and lexical variations among some of Shekgalagari dialects. This would

¹ Barolong are found predominantly in Mabutsane village.

contribute to addressing acute paucity of studies in comparative phonology among these dialects. The description does not include the standard form of the language.

2.0 Data

Data analysed in the paper was obtained partly through an in-depth study of research articles and studies and partly through data collection from the field. Reviewed literature included Gunnink (2022) for Shetjhauba, Dickens (1978), Kalasi (2003) for Shengologa, Sheshaga and Sheshiwana dialects in Matsheng and Ngwaketse-West, du Plessis & Kruger (1968)², Monaka and Lepekoane (2006) for Shelala, and Lukusa and Monaka (2008) which is a description of Shengologa dialect. Data collection was collected by Kalasi (2003) in Matsheng and Ngwaketse-West, Monaka, and Chebanne (2004, 2006). Field documentation by Monaka and Chebanne was funded by the Office of Research and Development at the University of Botswana in 2004 (*Research on Shekgalagari Dialects*) and 2006 (*Shekgalagari Text Development*) and was extensive in geographical coverage spanning several regions including Kweneng-West, Ngwaketse-West, Matsheng, Gantsi, North-West, Maun, Boteti, and Central, among others. For the 2004 data collection, a 330+ list of vocabulary items was prepared by the Department of African Languages and Literature³ with words provided in Setswana and English, and the informants were required to provide cognates in their dialect. Two lists were populated for each dialect. However, because of inconsistencies in the transcription data from the list is used minimally in this article. The method of analysis was largely descriptive and sought to observe phonological, morpho-phonological, and lexical variations peculiar to some of Shekgalagari dialects, and to compare these phonological peculiarities among the dialects. Brief comparative observations made in this article are important given the limited linguistic study of some of the dialects of Shekgalagari and could be used as a springboard for comprehensive research on the dialects in the future.

3.0 Phonological variation

3.1 Vowels: Shekgalagari has seven phonemic vowels namely /i, e, ε, a, ɔ, o, u/ (Dickens, 1978, Monaka & Chebanne, 2022). All these vowels are short monophthongs. There are no long monophthongs and there are no diphthongs as well. Perceived vowel length in Shekgalagari occurs in the penultimate syllable position of a word when it is pronounced in isolation or when it occurs at the end of the sentence. Seven vowel phonemes mentioned are attested in all varieties of the language which have been studied, with slight variation for the Shetjhauba dialect which has /ɪ/ and does not have /ε/ /i, ɪ, e, a, ɔ, o, u/ Gunnink (2022).

3.2 Consonants. Table 1 presents the consonants found in Shekgalagari, together with secondary articulations of aspiration (for plosives and affricates) and labialization associated with the consonants.

² du Plessis and Kruger (1968) report that the varieties of Shekgalagari they studied were Siwane, Koma, Kenye, Rhityi, Khakhea, Saga, Bolaongwe and Ngologa. However, Koma, Kenye and Khakhea are names of villages in the Ngwaketse-West region; Siwane, Rhityi, Saga, Bolaongwe and Ngologa are some of the varieties of Shekgalagari.

³ This was a 330+ wordlist comprising various domains including categories of people, kinship words, body parts, domestic and wild animals, crops, natural and geographical phenomena and many others.

Table 1: Shekgalagari Consonant System

	Bil	Labio- dent	Dental	Alv (apical)	Post- alveolar	Palat	Velar	Uvula	Glottal
Plosive	p p ^h b		t̪ t̪ ^h d̪	t t ^w t ^h t ^{hw} d		c c ^h c ^w c ^{hw} ʃ	k k ^w k ^h k ^{hw} g	q q ^h	(?)
Affricate				ts ts ^w ts ^h ts ^{hw}	tʃ tʃ ^h tʃ ^{hw} dʒ			kʃ ^h kʃ ^{hw}	
Fricative		(f)		s z z ^w	ʃ ʒ			χ	h
Nasal	m			n n ^w		ɲ, ɲ ^w	ŋ, ŋ ^w		
Trill				r r ^w					
Approximant	w					j			
Lateral Affricate				(t ^h)					
Lateral Approximant				l l ^w					

Note: The glottal stop, (?), is not phonemic, and (f) and t^h occur marginally.

3.3 Shetjhauba vs other dialects. Shetjhauba manifests considerable variation in the consonant inventory relative to other dialects of the language. These variations are discussed in the following sections, with Shetjhauba examples obtained from Gunnink (2022) who did an extensive study of this dialect. Consider Table 2.

Table 2: Shetjhauba consonant inventory (Gunnink, 2022)

	Bilabial	dental	Alveolar	Post- alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Glottal
Plosives	p ^h p b	t̪ t̪ ^h d̪	t ^h t			(k ^h) k g		
Affricate			ts ^h ts	tʃ ^h tʃ dʒ			qχ	
Fricative			s z	ʃ			χ	h
Trill			r					
Approximant	w		l		y			
Nasals	m		n		ɲ			

That palatal plosives are largely absent from Shetjhauba dialect is attested. However, there are at least two examples from Gunnink (2022) with a voiced palatal plosive as can be seen from example (1).

- (1) Jé = demonstrative pronoun (Cl 10)
t̪^hoʃi = hare

In most cases where other dialects use the palatal plosives, Shetjhauba uses the alveolar or dental plosives as illustrated in example (2).

(2)

Other dialects	Shetjhauba	Gloss
ròcà	ròtà	urinate/pee
ec ^h ó	nt ^h ó	wound
mòc ^h ò	mòt ^h ò	person
rácà	rátà	love
rúcà	rótà	teach
ícúmèla	ítúmèla	be happy
t ^h wísa	t ^h úsa	help

The labio-velar approximant /w/ may occur as a secondary articulation with most consonants across the dialects of the language. In Shetjhauba, however, /w/ may also occur with the /b/, mostly in the base word /bóna/ and its derivatives, and marginally in other words. This is not the case with other dialects. Consider example (4) (Gunnink, 2022 for Shetjhauba data).

(4)

Other dialects	Shetjhauba	Gloss
bóna	b ^w ála	look/see
bónána	b ^w álála	see each other (present)
bónáɲe	b ^w áláɲi	see each other (past)
ha ké bónɛ	ha kí b ^w álɪ	I cannot see
χò ʃa bóna	χò sa b ^w ála	to not see
χò bónána	χò b ^w íí	to appear
	!ùb ^w é	lily
m̀bàjà	m̀b ^w àlá	them/those ones (pron)

/l/ versus /n/ variation. Where other dialects use /n/, Shetjhauba uses /l/ as example (5) illustrates. See Gunnink (2022, p.30).

(5)

Other dialects	Shetjhauba	Gloss
n ^w á	l ^w á	drink
monóna	molóla	man/male person
tʃéna	tʃéla	go in
tʃóná	tʃólá	we/us

Clicks: Only the dental, the (post) alveolar and the lateral clicks occur in other dialects of Shekgalagari. They are used very marginally and are largely voiceless. Compared to the voiceless glottalized dental click and the voiced glottalized dental click, the voiceless prenasalized dental click is relatively more attested. Consider examples (6) and (7) (Monaka & Chebanne, 2004 field notes).

(6) The dental /l/

(a) Voiceless prenasalized

nú	‘small’
monú	‘he/she is small/little’
mon ^w ana	‘he/she is really small/little’
inl ^o q ^o d ^e la	‘lean on/ steadying oneself with a stick while walking’
ní	‘really, verily’
sheñhubu	‘grass and stick shelter traditionally used by the San in the bush as a dwelling place’

(b) Voiceless glottalized

lomóla	‘remove something that is sharp/pointed.’
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(c) Voiced glottalized

g ^ʔ i	‘onomatopoeic word for landing from a jump’.
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(7) (post) alveolar /!/ (and lateral //)

she!anana (sometimes pronounced shellanana)	‘type of tree’
ha! ^w aléŋ	‘forget about it’
lla (sometimes prenasalised as nlla)	‘sound made to indicated annoyance/irritation’

Other peripheral use of clicks in Shekgalagari includes calling various animals as illustrated in example (8)⁴.

(8)

Name of click	Symbol	Use
labial (with lips protruded)	⊙ ^w	call a dog
labial (lips not protruded)	⊙	call a dog or cat
dental		call a cat
(post) alveolar	!	call chickens
lateral		catch a goat in order to milk it

Shetjhauba on the other hand has relatively more clicks as example (9) illustrates.

(9)

Name of click	Symbol		Examples
	voiced	voiceless	
Dental	g		g wèé (tortoise) ⁵
(Post) alveolar	g!	!	mòn!ónì (date palm)
Lateral	g		glóbò (mud), làbú (shoes)

(Gunnink, 2022).

In addition to the voice-voiceless distinction, there are other types of articulations accompanying clicks in Shetjhauba including nasalization, glottalization, and glottalized nasalization. There are also uvular fricative clicks. Clicks in the dialects of Shekgalagari are believed to be borrowings from contact

⁴ The use of clicks to call animals is not limited languages that use clicks phonemically but also occurs in other languages which do not use clicks phonemically (Karani & Andrason, 2021).

⁵ Monaka and Chebanne (2004) field notes also record the dental click in the word /lilere/ (small child) but does not provide tone markings.

languages. Those in Shetjhauba are believed to be borrowings from languages such as Ju|'haonsi, Khwedam, Shiyeyi, and Thimbukushu which have occurred over decades (Gunnink, 2022). Those in the other dialects are also believed to be borrowings from contact click languages such as Nama, !Xóǀ, Sasi, !Gui, Kua, and Ju|'haonsi, among others, as mentioned in section 1.1 above.

4.0 Formation of the locative

Variation is observed between Shetjhauba and other dialects in the derivation of locative adverbials. In all dialects of Shekgalagari, locative adverbs can be formed by attaching a noun to class 16 (ha-) and class 18 (mǝ-) locative prefixes. While in the other dialects the locative /-ŋ/ is then suffixed to the noun, in Shetjhauba, two scenarios are observed. There may be no suffixation as indicated in example (10) (Gunnink, 2022, Neumann, 1999, Lukusa & Monaka, 2008).

(10)

Class	Other dialects	Shetjhauba	Gloss
16	ha lerúriŋ/ lehúdiŋ	ha líhúdi	on the shoulder
18	mǝ ítuŋ	mǝ t̪ʰóto	in the house

Suffixation in Shetjhauba may also be observed. Here the suffix 'is identical to the final vowel of the noun it attaches to' (Gunnink, 2022, p. 41), as illustrated in example (11).

(11)

Other dialects	Shetjhauba	Gloss
mezeŋ	mizu	at the villages
ha mezeŋ	ha mizu	by the villages
ituŋ	t̪ʰo _ŋ to	at the house
mǝ ituŋ	mǝ t̪ʰo _ŋ to	in the house
ts ^h ímóŋ	ts'ímó	at the field
mǝ ts ^h ímóŋ	mǝ ts'ímó	in the field
tsiléŋ	tsilée	at the road
ha tsiléŋ	ha tsilée	by the road

4.1 Shelala and other dialects. /l/ versus /n/ variation in Shelala: Variation can be observed in the use of /n/ in Shelala which corresponds to /l/ in the other dialects of Shekgalagari. Consider example (12).

(12)

Other dialects	Shelala	Gloss
lába	nába	look
lála	nána	sleep
lohála	nóhána	baldness
leléka	nenéka	chase after
lésa	nesa	herd
loqá	noqá	season (e.g., with salt)
mǝlǝmǝ	mǝnǝmǝ	mouth
l ^w á	n ^w á	fight

lelá	nená	cry
lésa	nésa	herd
loqá	noqá	season (e.g., with salt)

Note: Other dialects exclude Shetjhauba.

Example (14) illustrates observed homonyms in Shelala resulting from the use of /l/ in the language.

(14) Homonyms in Shelala

n^wá = drink/fight

nená = cry/you (plural)

nésa = herd/cause to rain

noqá = season (e.g., with salt)/ river

Example (15) shows that /l/ and /n/ are otherwise contrastive in the other dialects.

(15) Contrastive distribution in other dialects

l^wá = fight

n^wá = drink

lelá = cry

nená = you (plural)

lésa = herd

nésa = cause to rain

loqá = season (e.g., with salt)

noqá = river

4.2 Sheshiwana. /r/ and /ɽ/ variation in Sheshiwana versus other Shekgalagari dialects. Although the alveolar lateral fricative /ɽ/ appears to be losing ground these days, it is still found among splinter groups of Bashiwana in the Ngwaketse-West in the villages of Sekoma, Khonkhwa, Khakhea and surrounding areas. It corresponds to the alveolar trill /r/ in the other dialects of Shekgalagari. Consider example (16).

(16) /r/ and /ɽ/

Other dialects	Sheshiwana	Gloss
boróqo	boɽóqo	pain
márc	máɽc	eyes
réqa	ɽéqa	buy
loráqóri	loɽáqóri	a side (of something)
maráma	maɽáma	cheeks

Phonological peculiarities in Sheshiwana of Lokgwabe in Kgalagadi North, if ever there was any, seem to have been lost because of the large-scale shift towards Shengologa.

4.3 Sheshiwana, Shetjhauba and Shekgwatheng. /r/ versus /d/ morpho-phonological variation in plural alternations. The plural forms of Class 9 nouns (singular prefix V- or Ø-) and *some* of Class

11 nouns (singular prefix *lɔ-*) in Shekgalagari are found in Class 10. The prefix for most dialects of the language is *ri-(N)-*. However, Class 10 prefix for Sekoma, Khonkhwa, Khakhea variety of Sheshiwana, for Shetjhauba, and for Shekgwatheng variety in Lethakeng area is realised as *di-(N)-* (Cf. example (17), Kalasi, 2003). Shetjhauba however has shifted all Class 11 (*lɔ-*) nouns to Class 5 (singular prefix *lɔ-*) with the plural forms found in Classes 6 (*di-*) and 10 *di-(N)* (Gunnink, 2022).

(17)

Class	Other dialects <i>ri-(N)</i>	Shekgwatheng <i>di-(N)</i>	Sheshiwana <i>di-(N)</i>	Gloss	Shetjhauba <i>di-(N)</i>	Gloss
10	<i>ríkéléri</i>	<i>dikeledi</i>	<i>dikeledi</i>	tears	<i>dinǽhɔ</i>	spoons
	<i>rikíká</i>	<i>rikíká</i>	<i>rikíká</i>	mortars	<i>dinǽhú</i>	deaths
	<i>ripeló</i>	<i>dipeló</i>	<i>dipeló</i>	hearts	<i>dinǽkú</i>	sheep
	<i>rip^héhɔ</i>	<i>dip^héhɔ</i>	<i>dip^héhɔ</i>	winds	<i>dinǽǽ</i>	noses
	<i>ritúku</i>	<i>ritúku</i>	<i>ritúku</i>	headscarves		
	<i>rikχóŋ</i>	<i>dikχóŋ</i>	<i>rikχóŋ</i>	pieces of wood		
	<i>rikχarimá</i>	<i>dikχadimá</i>	<i>rikχarimá</i>	lightnings		
6 (lɔ-)	<i>rip^húka</i>	<i>dip^húka</i>	<i>dip^húka</i>	wings		
	<i>ripá</i>	<i>dipá</i>	<i>dipá</i>	yards	<i>dipá</i>	reed fences
					<i>dinála</i>	(finger) nails

4.0 Lexical variation

Lexical variation may also be observed between dialects. This variation mostly indicates a shift towards the dominant Setswana language, which is the national language of the country (cf. example (18)).

(18)

Shengologa (Matsheng)	Sheshaga (Kang)	Shekgwatheng (Lethakeng)	Sheshiwana (Sekoma)	Setswana	Gloss
<i>pítúnóna</i>	<i>pítúnóna/ holóǽ</i>	<i>holóǽ</i>	<i>holóǽ</i>	<i>folóǽ</i>	unload
<i>moǽéla</i>	<i>moǽéla</i>	<i>moχatá</i>	<i>moχatá</i>	<i>moχatlá</i>	tail
<i>lokóbó</i>	<i>loχɔχɔ</i>	<i>loχɔχɔ</i>	<i>loχɔχɔ</i>	<i>loχɔχɔ</i>	hard top layer
<i>ǽikχáú</i>	<i>ǽikχáú</i>	<i>mots^híχarí</i>	<i>mots^híχarí</i>	<i>mots^híχarí</i>	daytime
<i>hítǽa</i>	<i>hítǽa/ ts^walá</i>	<i>ts^walá</i>	<i>ts^walá</i>	<i>ts^walá</i>	shut
<i>kumá</i>	<i>ǽic^wa</i>	<i>ǽic^wa</i>	<i>ǽic^wa</i>	<i>sít^wa</i>	feel cold
<i>mháqa</i>	<i>c^hipá</i>	<i>c^hipá</i>	<i>c^hipá</i>	<i>t^hipá</i>	knife
<i>kh^wá</i>	<i>k^hamá</i>	<i>k^hamá</i>	<i>k^hamá</i>	<i>lwála</i>	kh ^w a
<i>shína</i>	<i>khelé</i>	<i>ts^hámíka</i>	<i>ts^hámíka</i>	<i>ts^hámíka</i>	play
<i>c^hina</i>	<i>c^hina</i>	<i>leǽwí</i>	<i>leǽwé</i>	<i>les^wé</i>	dirt

Shetjhauba manifests the most considerable variation in lexical item relative to other varieties as can be observed in example (19).

(19)

Shengologa (Matsheng)	Shekgwatheng (Lethakeng)	Sheshiwana (Shekoma)	Shetjhauba	Setswana	English
ítu	ítu	ńtlo	ᵗᵗᵒᵗᵒ	ńtlo	house
rinamáńı	rinamáńı	dinamáńı	riᵗᵗᵂána	dinamáńı	calf
mhó	kχomó	kχomó	mohó	kχomó	cow
lonɔɔ	len ^w ajɔ	leneu	lletʃε	lɪnao	foot
ʃeraqú	ʃet ^h akú	ʃet ^h akú	sεéʃε	sit ^h akú	shoe
tʃ ^h olá	tʃ ^h olá	tʃ ^h olá	háχólá	ts ^h olá	serve
leʃáda	leʃáda	liχétla	ʃipáqa	liχétla	shoulder
mucogú	mutogú	mutogú	mpoχú	mutogú	porridge
máɔ	mát ^h ɔ	málɔ	máho	mat ^h ó	eyes
leráɔ	leráɔ	leʃáɔ	liháɔ	liráɔ	bone
leselo	leselo	leselo	ʃiχoba	liʃelo	winnower
mo ^h wana	ᵗᵗána	ᵗᵗána	liʃere	ᵗᵗaná	new baby
iró	rraaxɔ	iró	ihó	rrááχɔ	your father
biraqú	dit ^h akú	dit ^h akú	di abú	dit ^h akú	shoes
leráma	leráma	leráma	likápu	liráma	cheek

(Kalasi 2003, Monaka & Chebanne, 2004)

5.0 Conclusion

This paper made a synopsis of variation observable in Shekgalagari dialectology. Like all languages, Shekgalagari has changed over time due to various factors most notable of which is geography and contact with other language groups. The paper makes preliminary description of some of the sound and lexical variations, which can provide the basis for a detailed study of Shekgalagari dialectology. Furthermore, observable variation could be informative in any update on Shekgalagari orthography that could be necessary in the future. The development of any language always requires harmonization of sounds within its variants. Both orthography and dialectal variation are crucial and good especially and opportune at this time with determined decision by the Government of Botswana to address learner problems at formative years of schooling by introducing mother-tongue instruction at Reception and Standard One. The Government of the Republic of Botswana has embraced recommendations made by Millennium Development Goals, UNICEF, National Development Plans, Revised National Policy in Education 1994 (recommendation 1), Vision 2016, Vision 2036, ETSSP (2015-2020) and many other national policies related to realize an educational environment that promotes equitable learning for all children. Development of literacy materials would of necessity need to use harmonized orthography and inclusive in diversity within the language.

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