A Semantic Analysis of Sesotho Place Names: Evidence from Bus Stop Names

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ABSTRACT

Naming is not just an act of linguistic labeling by which speakers of a language identify the entities they are referring to in the real or imaginary world. A name is not chosen arbitrarily but is chosen based on a combination of socio-cultural factors. This is because language cannot be divorced from culture, for it is through language that speakers reflect their cultural and sociolinguistic etiquette. This study examines the names of bus stops in Lesotho with a view to unveiling the factors that could have motivated the awarding of such names. Findings indicate that the names could be classified into the following categories: descriptive, metaphorical, experiential and mythological. The study concludes that through the names of bus stops, Basotho narrate their experiences, emotions and belief systems, among other things.

Keywords:
Bus stop names, Onomastics, Naming system, Sesotho place names, Semantic Analysis

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