

# Discourse Analysis on The Perceptions of Homosexuality in Botswana: A Case of Kanye and Gaborone

Dr O. Motladiile | Dr G. Galegane

<sup>1</sup>Assembly Bible College,

<sup>2</sup>University of Botswana,

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## Abstract:

Discourse analysis in perceiving homosexuality has a significant role in the general use of language within a particular society. The study aims to find out how Botswana perceived homosexuality by analysing the ways in which discourse was used in Gaborone and Kanye. Twenty (20) participants were sampled from both research sites and the sampling technique used was non-probability also known as convenience sampling. After collecting data, the interview results were coded in order to identify the themes of the study which were later used to present and analyse the results. The analysis employed Fairclough's dimensional model. Most of the discourse analysed in the current research reveals both the negative and the positive results on the perceptions of homosexuality. Most of the Botswana who participated in this study thought homosexuality was not a good practice because it is against the Setswana culture. However, there were glimpses of some Botswana showing accommodation of the practice as it was viewed as "a new phenomenon".

**Key words:** Discourse Analysis, Linguistics, Linguistic devices, Homosexuality, Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT)

## Introduction:

Homosexuality is one of the heated debates across the globe and its relationship with discourse has been studied, globally, for more than a century now (Weeks, 2007). Different scholars, locally, regionally and internationally, have studied homosexuality with their focus mostly, on the homosexual's rights and in other contexts, showing its relationship with language. Through the use of language, different perceptions regarding homosexuality have emerged and according to the above scholar, the perceptions are determined by several factors such as; language, people's history, social and cultural contexts. In addition to the ongoing debates on homosexuality and discourse, there is an increase in the study of the said practice.

This increase saw a number of scholars (e.g. Sivertsen, 2016; Gustara, 2018; Wilkinson, 2019; Stiebert, 2002, Ljunggren, 2022) gaining interest in analysing discourse and homosexuality. The above scholars agree with Weeks (2007) that discourse and homosexuality has been investigated around the areas such as; language, people's history, social and cultural norms.

Discourse analysis (DA) is broadly defined by scholars (e.g. Gee, 2004; Betti, 2021) as an approach that closely analyses written, vocal, or sign language use, in order to enact the social, cultural perspectives and identities. From a specific point of view, Jørgensen & Phillips (2002) defines DA as the analysis of patterns that peoples' utterances follow when they take part in different

domains of social life. The above authors' definitions suggest that discourse analysis occurs where there is a group of people. From the group, their way of life would be depicted by their use of language. For the current research, the Botswana's way of spoken language (based on Kanye and Gaborone research sites), would be explained in regard to how they perceive homosexuality.

Homosexuality on the other hand, is defined as a contradiction of divinely inspired gender roles (Cragun., Williams., Sumerau, 2015). For Morin (1977), homosexuality is not a unitary phenomenon, but it is a representation of a variety of phenomena that depicts the different behaviours that people portray. From the two scholars' observations, homosexuality is still perceived in various ways by different people depending on people's beliefs. For instance, some people identify themselves as gay and some lesbians. So, this study will use the discourse used to analyse how people perceive the different behaviours that people portray, such as homosexuality.

Generally, Botswana seem to perceive homosexuality as a bad cultural practice. The aim of this study, therefore, is to find out how Botswana perceive homosexuality by analysing the ways in which discourse was used. The study on the use of language, specifically discourse analysis, and the perception of homosexuality is important as it will shed some light on linguistic issues related to homosexuality from the Botswana context.

The study had the following overarching research question: "based on the use of language, what the kinds of discourse are used in perceiving homosexuality?"

- i) What are the textual features in the perception of homosexuality?
- ii) What are the interpretations of text in regard to the perception of homosexuality?
- iii) What are the current trends regarding the perception of homosexuality in Botswana?

#### **Literature Review:**

##### **Botswana's socio-cultural context:**

Botswana has a strong socio-cultural context dating back to the country's history. There are different

ethnic groups, in different communities and various family structures. Discourse analysts adopt the principle that people construct versions of their social world through the use of language (Lewis and Melendez-Torres, 2024; Potter & Wetherell, 2001). In an explanatory manner, Ghani and Hussain (2021) cited Woods (2006) who explained that discourse analysis finds out the relations between text and people. In this current study, therefore, the versions of the social world would be presented and analysed to show the perceptions of homosexuality in Botswana. For Gustara (2018), discourse analysis cannot be separated from intertextual relation and sociocultural knowledge. The above scholar's investigation suggests that the text, discursive and social practices are used to explain homosexuality. This current study shows the different ways in which discourse can be used to explain homosexuality in Botswana.

##### **Botswana's legal stance on homosexuality:**

This study was carried out in Botswana and over the years, the country's legal stance on homosexuality has gradually developed into two major phases. One of the phases is that of 'silently' living with homosexuality and the second phase was that of endorsing decriminalisation of homosexuality (Esterhuizen, 2019; Ngoni, 2016; Dinokopila, 2022). According to the above scholars, the decision to decriminalise homosexuality was taken by the Botswana government with a number of reasons. One of them being to exercise democracy and also make a contribution in the use of discourse and human sexuality. Secondly, decriminalization of homosexuality was permitted as a way of restoring the dignity of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons. Kanye and Gaborone were used as research sites in order to find out if there was any difference in the perception of homosexuality between an urban area such as Gaborone and a rural area such as Kanye after the decriminalization of homosexuality by the Botswana government.

##### **Linguistic view of homosexuality from international contexts:**

It is discussed that people's perception about a psychological phenomenon, such homosexuality, is not enduring and stable across situations and

time; instead, it can change to suit the context and purpose of discourse. Weeks (2007) elaborated that attitudes towards homosexual behaviour are culturally specific and have varied enormously across different cultures and through various historical periods. Trumbach, 1977, summarises the foregoing use of discourse on the perception of homosexuality as 'ethnocentric bias'. From all the scholars' views above, it shows that the perceptions of homosexuality vary from context to context and may also be guided by the different time frames.

It is also believed, by some scholars, that a position taken by a participant in a social discourse and interpersonal interaction may be informed by the rights and duties available to him/her and thus, the assumed position limits the "repertoire of possible social acts available to the individual" (Slocum-Bradley, 2009, p. 88). The above scholar further pointed out that an assumed position in discourse or social interactions is not static or enduring; it may change depending on situational factors or settings within which speakers are located. As also supported by Weeks (2007), the physical acts might be similar, but the social construction of meanings around them are profoundly different. This suggests that people's perceptions on homosexuality may change over time because of different factors, for instance, the context and age.

Discourse analysts contend that beliefs, attitudes, attributions and perceptions of people are not stable and enduring across contexts; rather, they are constructed in accordance with historical and socio-cultural contexts of discourse and interpersonal interaction. To fully understand the perceptions of people about a given psychological phenomenon, it is essential to understand how, within a given environment, people strategically draw on available discursive devices to negotiate and represent their reality of the phenomenon.

### **Linguistic view of homosexuality from the African context:**

As already noted earlier in this study, the linguistic view of homosexuality is determined by a number of factors such as: language, people's history, social and cultural contexts. From the African

context, homosexuality is viewed as Un-African from the West (Sivertsen, 2016). For Chitando and Mateveke (2017), homosexuality is negatively debated in Africa as the whole enterprise which is 'western' and that it lacks 'a true African flavour'. The above scholars maintain that homosexuality, in Africa, is still an institution that is not understood. The results of this study will, therefore, help find out Botswana's understanding of homosexuality.

### **Homosexuality and time factor:**

Some scholars have analysed homosexuality since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and related it to time factor. (Sathyanarayana and Jacob, 2014; Meyer, 2003) argue that there is a shift in understanding that homosexuality is sin, crime and a mental health issue, but instead explains the institution as a variant of human sexuality. This means that times, on how homosexuality is viewed, has changed. Some people no longer view the practice as bad but with time, their understanding and acceptance 'has been softened'.

On the other hand, homosexuality has been analysed basing on its causes. Regarding the causes of homosexuality, Balter (2015) asserts that homosexuality may be caused by chemical modifications to DNA. For Dresher (2015) homosexuality is a disease and a condition that deviates from normal heterosexual development which is caused by some internal defect or external pathogenic agent. From the above scholars' point of view, there are so many interpretations of homosexuality; others view it as sickness while for others, it relates to the DNA.

### **Gap in the literature:**

Homosexuality has been perceived in different ways depending on the context that it was studied. In a recent study by Agovino, et al (2022), language has been used to discriminate homosexuals and the findings of this study will be used to find out how language is used in Botswana regarding the perceptions of homosexuality. Seckinelgin (2018) studied the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) language use from African and

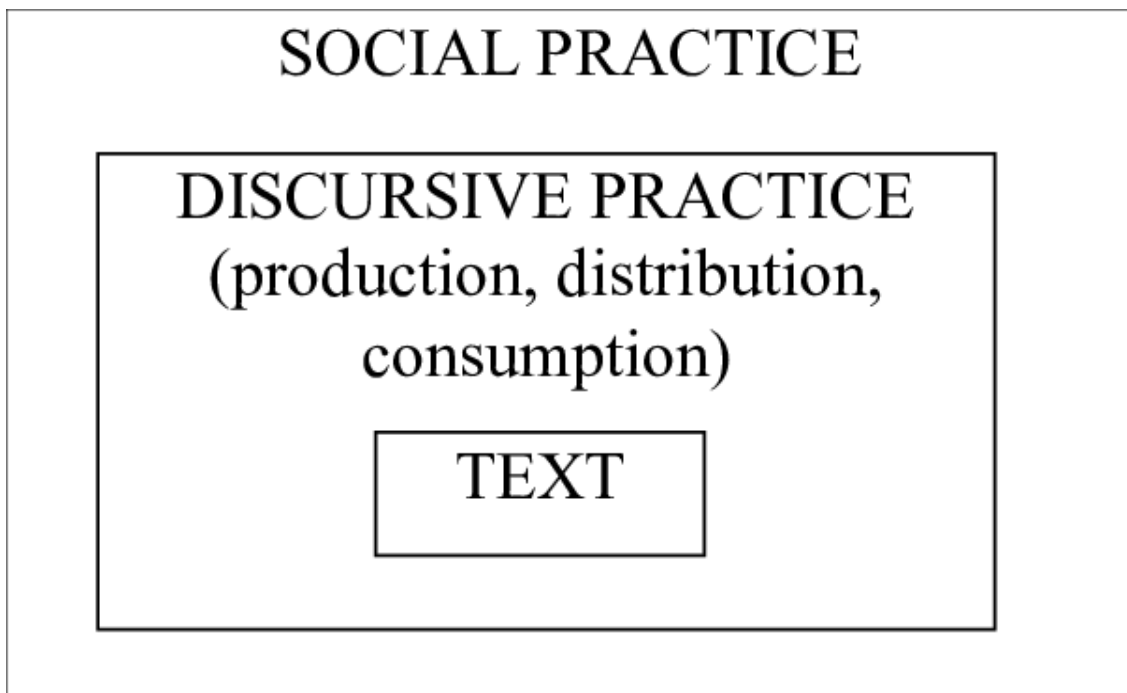
international political forums. For Martin-Anatias (2019), the scholar examined how language was used by Indonesian gay characters to come out and discuss their non-normative sexual orientations in positive and neutral ways in publicly accessible films. This study will establish Botswana’s stance in regard to homosexuality; whether the homosexuals ‘hide’ or they go public. In Botswana, Motswapong and Gaie (2022) studied the attitudes of homosexuality as a practice and not as a language.

For Iqbal., Danish and Tahir (2014), discourse was used to analyse beauty products advertisements. Zhuang and Liu, (2020), the discourse was used to analyse the power landscapes in Chinese universities. While for Esmaili and Amerian (2014), they analysed the discourse from English Textbooks in Iran. So, this current research

contributes to the existing literature in that it would enlighten the readership on how discourse is used in the perception of homosexuality from the Botswana context. Finally, according to the researchers’ knowledge, the studies investigating how discourse has been used to perceive homosexuality in Botswana are limited hence, the need for this study.

**Theoretical Framework:**

In examining the use of language to perceive homosexuality, this study employed Norman Fairclough’s model of analysis (Fairclough, 1989; 1992, 1995). According to the above scholar’s model, spoken or written information, goes through three dimensions which are, text analysis (description), discursive practice (interpretation) and social analysis (explanation). Fig 1 below depicts the above three dimensions.



**Fig 1: Three-Dimensional Conception of Discourse (Fairclough, 1992) – Adapted from Wong (2010)**

Fairclough’s model of analysis is also regarded as an umbrella for the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Iqbal, Danish & Tahir, 2014; Eriksson, 2024). Further, Fairclough’s model of analysis addresses issues such as how power, oppression and inequality are practiced and analysed in the discourse according to the different social and cultural contexts (Aazam et al, 2019). Based on the foregoing theory, the interview responses from the

residents of Kanye and Gaborone was analysed to find out the relationship between the language used and the perception of homosexuality. The textual, social and cultural contexts would be considered. The first dimension of Fairclough’s analytical model is the Discourse as the text (refer to fig 1.1). The text is also regarded as the micro level (Zhang and Liu, 2020) suggesting that it is normally at a smaller level. In this dimension, the analysis of



language covers the linguistic devices such as vocabulary and phrases. Ghani and Hussain (2021) supports the preceding point which highlighted that the vocabulary and phrases are used to show the value of the points being analysed. For this study, the vocabulary and phrases used within the text would be used in order to gauge how people perceive homosexuality in Botswana which will result in considering the value of the text.

Moving on to the Discourse as discursive practice, which is the second dimension of Fairclough's analytical model, a number of details are involved. Some of these are production and interpretation of a social phenomenon (Esmaini and Amerian, 2014). For Iqbal., Danish and Tahir (2014), the scholars referred to the aforementioned analytical model as processing analysis. This suggests that Discourse as discursive practice involves processing and interpreting the text by analysing the situational context and the intertextual contexts (Burhanudin; Sumarlam; Rakhmawati, 2021). This means that there is consideration of what is going on within a particular context. For this study, the discursive practice was shown by the participants' way in which they express themselves and make interpretations within the context of Kanye and Gaborone.

The third and last dimension of Fairclough's analytical model is the Discourse as social practice. According to Fairclough (1992) the foregoing dimension explains the current situation, trends and background information. For (Burhanudin; Sumarlam; Rakhmawati, 2021), this third dimension is regarded as the macro level suggesting that it is used at a broader level. This dimension focuses on analyzing the text from a large scale as one has to zoom from the local to the international setting. Referring to the Botswana context, discourse as social practice was considered by relating the results to the global world in order to see a pattern that emanates regarding the perception of homosexuality.

### **Research Methodology:**

#### **Research Design:**

This study adopted the qualitative approach which according to research scholars (e.g. Leedy &

Ormrod, 2010; Taherdoost, 2016), it is the type of research that focuses on a phenomenon that occurs in natural settings. The 'what?', 'why?' and 'how?' the phenomena occurs are explained during the use of the said research approach. For Winter (2000) cited in Adjei 2013, the qualitative method concerns itself with the meanings and experiences of the "whole" person or local culture and context. The qualitative approach was used in order to reveal in detail, 'what'? the participants say about homosexuality, 'how'? they perceive homosexuality and 'why'?. For this study, discourse was analysed in a natural setting of Kanye village and Gaborone city and the meanings drawn from the discourse were used to analyse the discourse used in the perception of homosexuality.

#### **Target population and sampling techniques:**

The target population for this study was all the adults between 21 and 75 years from Kanye village and Gaborone city. From the above population, 20 participants were sampled from each research site. The sampling technique used was non-probability sampling known as convenience sampling. Convenience sampling was used because, as observed by research methods scholars, (eg., Lavrakas, 2008; Farrokhi and Mahmoudi, 2012; Emerson, 2015; Taherdoost, 2016), the participants met a certain practical criterion of geographical proximity, availability at the planned time, easy accessibility or willingness to volunteer.

#### **The context:**

Kanye and Gaborone were the sites used for the current research. Gaborone is the capital city of Botswana; and it is situated in the South-West of Botswana. Gaborone was chosen because it is a metropolitan capital city of Botswana leading to its inhabitants being people from all walks of life and using the city as a research site helped shed some light regarding the perceptions of homosexuality in regard to the discourse used. On the other hand, Kanye was chosen because it is a village in the southern of Botswana, located 83 kilometres (52 mi) south-west of the capital, giving the village a peri-urban status (Lotha, 2015). Investigating the discourse from both contexts helped in drawing

‘solid’ conclusions regarding discourse analysis on the perspectives of homosexuality.

### Data collection:

The data were collected through the use of interview guides. The use of the interview for the qualitative approach was informed by scholars such as Cleland (2017) who pointed out that, “qualitative research is very important in educational research as it addresses the, “what?”, “how?” and “why?”. Based on this study’s research questions, the “what?”, “how?” and “why?” was used to enable a deeper understanding of experiences, phenomena and context studied. In conducting the interviews, visits were made to the different participants. The researchers made appointments with a total of 20 interviewees and the interviews were carried accordingly to both Kanye and Gaborone participants. Verbal and written consent were sought from all the participants before the data collection. After the interviews, common themes were identified by the researchers and were later used to present and analyse the results.

### Data analysis:

After collecting data, the interview results were coded in order to identify the themes of the study which were later used to present and analyse the results. The analysis employed Fairclough’s dimensional model. First, the Discourse as text was analysed and the themes were noted. Second, the Discourse as discursive practice was analysed and interpretations on homosexuality were made. Finally, there was the Discourse as social practice where the trends relating to homosexuality were identified. The data from the interviews were analysed so that discourse dimensions on the perception of homosexuality could be explained.

### Results of The Study:

The results of this study, from the interviews, show how language was used by the participants in their perception of homosexuality and a model adapted from Fairclough (1992) was used. Based on the above scholar’s analysis of language, three different aspects of language (discourse as text,

discourse as discursive practice and discourse as a social practice) were used in the perception of homosexuality in Botswana.

### Discourse as text

According to Fairclough’s (1992) discourse as text refers to the analysis of vocabulary, cohesion, and the text structure. So, the researchers focused on the foregoing linguistic devices and sentence structures to describe the perceptions of homosexuality in Botswana. The linguistic devices, for example, vocabulary and phrases, were used to perceive homosexuality in Kanye and Gaborone research sites. The said devices varied from NEGATIVE to positive (uppercase used to indicate that more negative points on the perception of homosexuality were used as opposed to the positive ones) and these were captured in the excerpts that follow:

From their use of the discourse, the participants perceived homosexuality in relation to culture. They thought that homosexuality was not a Setswana culture. Below are examples of excerpts from the participants to support the foregoing idea.

#### KANYE 1:

*“Ga se se garona, ke dilo tsa Makgoa”* (meaning that homosexuality is not according to Setswana culture, but it is for Western people)

#### KANYE 2:

*“I think it is not the Setswana culture. I also do not know if homosexuality exists or if any people engage in homosexuality. I do not know whether there are Batswana who are engaged in homosexuality; ke tllhabologo”* (meaning that homosexuality was brought by civilization).

#### GABORONE 1:

*“Homosexuality might be caused by civilization; this is something which happens in the cities and towns. In the olden days there were no people who were engaged in homosexuality.”*

#### GABORONE 2:

*“In Setswana, there is nothing like homosexuality, I believe homosexuality is introduced by foreigners”.*

The above results are in line with some scholars' views (e.g. Trumbach, 1977; Weeks, 2007), who argue that attitudes towards homosexual behaviour are culturally specific and have varied enormously across different cultures and referring to these type attitudes as "ethnocentric bias". As noted by the above two scholars, the Batswana's responses were skewed towards their beliefs hence showing biasness in the perception of homosexuality.

The results also indicate that the type of discourse used referred to the age categories. This is because the participants referred to the type of generation that currently exists. Some of the participants indicated that even if a national survey was to be carried out, the older generation will not support homosexuality while the younger generation will do. Based on Fairclough's analysis, the above point is a sentence structure that described homosexuality as a new generation's institution.

#### **KANYE 1:**

*"Ke tthabologo ke dilo tsa sesha"* (means that homosexuality is brought about by civilization as it is mostly practiced by the youth).

#### **KANYE 2:**

*"Dilo tse, mo dingwageng tse ke tshotsweng ka tsone dine di seyo. Ke di bona gompieno, monna a iphetola mosadi"* (meaning that homosexuality was not heard of during the early days he just come across this in recent years when a man can become a woman).

#### **GABORONE 1:**

*"Nowadays homosexuality is welcome, it used to be unheard of"*

From the above excerpts, the participants used the linguistic devices, in the form of vocabulary and phrases, that negatively show their perception of homosexuality in Botswana. Generally, the above results indicate that, for both Kanye village and Gaborone city, the participants used negative vocabulary and phrases, for example, "it used to be unheard of".

Another theme that emerged from the interview results was lack of information. The participants'

discourse described their lack of knowledge by the use of sentence structures such as, "I have never had intimate feelings for the people of the same sex"; "I have never heard of homosexuality"; "I have not seen a homosexual". Some of the participants indicated that they do not know about homosexuality but heard about it debated in the Botswana's national assembly.

#### **Examples of the negative language used to perceive homosexuality were captured below:**

##### **KANYE 1:**

*"I do not know anything about homosexuality and the cause of homosexuality. I think it is not the Setswana culture."*

##### **KANYE 2:**

Most of the people who were interviewed in Kanye noted that homosexuality was a new phenomenon which was not heard of in their early youth years. A 58-year-old man in Kanye village noted this in his Setswana vernacular. *"ke tthabologo dilo tsa sesha"* implying that homosexuality is a result of civilisation and its practiced mostly by the youth. He continued to note that in his Setswana vernacular *"dilo tse mo dingwageng tse ke tshotsweng ka tsone gone go seyo, ke di bona gompieno, monna a iphetola mosadi"* meaning that homosexuality was not heard of during his early days he just came across this in recent years when a man can become a woman.

#### **4. 2 Discourse as discursive practice**

There is another stage used to perceive the language of homosexuality which shows discourse as a discursive practice. According to Fairclough, (1992) in the discursive practice, there is interpretation of the text. For this study, the participants used the text that they already had to interpret the practices on homosexuality. The participants from Kanye and Gaborone stated that homosexuality was not a good institution. They produced interpretive examples such as:

##### **KANYE 1:**

*"There has never been something like that. This might be "things" carried out by young people"*

*because in the olden days (the 70's and 80's), I never saw one”.*

**KANYE 2:**

*“I believe homosexuality is not good; it is a curse”*

**GABORONE 1:**

*“People call homosexuality ‘botlhodi’ (omen). I believe homosexuality is a bad thing.*

**GABORONE 2:**

*“Batswana reject homosexuality; they see it as being abnormal”.*

**GABORONE 3:**

*“homosexuality is immoral, inhumane and against nature”*

The participants used phrases and words such as; homosexuality being an omen, a curse, being abnormal.

Still on the perception of homosexuality showing discourse as a discursive practice, some of the participants related the practice to Science as indicated thus:

**KANYE 1:**

*“Where will children come from if man marries another man or a woman another woman?”*

**GABORONE 1:**

*“I read something about homosexuality, and I think Scientists, who wrote the article I read, did not come with a concrete answer regarding what homosexuality is”.*

**GABORONE 2:**

*“In other countries they believe that homosexuality is as a result of misplacement of genes”.*

However, there were counter-ideas in Gaborone, regarding the explanation about homosexuality as indicated below:

**GABORONE 1:**

*“Genes cannot contribute to homosexuality. The decision to be a homosexual is taken by an individual.”*

Even though the majority of the participants perceived homosexuality as a bad practice, there were glimpses where some provided “open and neutral minds” in their perception and this is indicated in the excerpts below:

**KANYE 1:**

*“Homosexuality is a choice and I think some people engage in it because of joy”.*

**GABORONE 1:**

*“I believe homosexuality is a choice, one chooses to satisfy his/her feelings”*

**GABORONE 2:**

*“Some homosexuals believe they were born that way”.*

From the above responses, the Kanye participants strongly believe that homosexuality is not good. On the other hand, the Gaborone participants seem to be more knowledgeable on the practice and they seem to be accepting homosexuality.

Another point raised regarding homosexuality is that it was perceived by some as copied behavior. They thought that homosexuality takes place because someone got excited from seeing the homosexuals and decided to be part of them. This could be what Yarhouse (2004) terms, "the current language of “reorientation” “. This is because by seeing a homosexual, one reorientates by changing to the homosexual behavior.

### **4. 3 Discourse as a social practice:**

Fairclough (1992) stated that, “Discourse as a social practice”, involves explaining the situations, the trends and background information. In analysing the discourse used in this study, the participants related it to time frame. Some of the respondents thought that homosexuality is a practice that grew with the recent years (suggesting the 90's to the current years). Below are examples of the participants' responses.

**GABORONE 1:**

*“I have met some homosexuals from my generation, they are many nowadays. Some of them do not share much on homosexuality and they say,*



*“they are in closet” meaning they do not open up. However, some homosexuals are free to talk about the practice and end up going public about it. They share their opinions and experiences of the practice.*

From the above excerpt, the participant thought that some homosexuals are still “hiding” and addressing themselves as “being in the closet” while others are open about their homosexual practice. The use of the discourse, did not come with a concrete answer regarding what homosexuality is, could indicate that a comparison between the olden times (the 70’s and 80’s) shows that there are challenges regarding knowledge about homosexuality. This suggests that, homosexuality is Science related and ideas are not yet clear to support or explain what homosexuality is.

#### **KANYE 1:**

*“I just heard about homosexuality around the year 2000 and have never heard of it before”*

From another perspective, discourse was used to perceive homosexuality as a social system. This is because the participants viewed it as a practice found in developed places such as, towns and cities. This is captured in the excerpts below:

#### **GABORONE 1**

*“homosexuality might be caused by civilization; this is something which happens in the cities and towns. In the olden days, no people engaged in homosexuality.”*

#### **GABORONE 2:**

*“I believe homosexuality is influenced by one’s education and his/her circle of friends. These things can influence one’s behaviour”.*

#### **GABORONE 3:**

*“Nowadays homosexuality is welcome, it used to be unheard of”*

The above excerpt shows that even though homosexuality was generally not understood by most participants from both Kanye and Gaborone, some understand it and they are ready to change.

#### **Discussion of Results:**

The overall purpose of this study was to find out the kinds of discourse used in perceiving homosexuality and this purpose is shown below, against the research questions of the study.

#### **Research question 1: What are the textual features in the perception of homosexuality?**

The findings of the first research question showed that negative statements were raised regarding homosexuality. In describing this, the participants used textual features in the form of phrases and sentences. They thought that homosexuality was not a Setswana culture and viewed it as ‘something’ learnt from other cultures as indicated by the use of textual features such as;

*“Ga se se garona, ke dilo tsa Makgoa”* (meaning that homosexuality is not according to Setswana culture, but it is for Western people); *“Ke tlhabologo”* (meaning that homosexuality was brought by civilization). *I do not know whether there are Batswana who engage in homosexuality; “Homosexuality might be caused by civilization; this is something which happens in the cities and towns”; ““In Setswana, there is nothing like homosexuality, I believe homosexuality is introduced by foreigners”.*

The above textual features, which are in the form of a phrases and sentences, could suggest that Batswana perceive homosexuality as a practice against their culture. Further, Botswana is still influenced by traditional Setswana norms and culture, which leads to people associating much with where they are coming from and how they were raised. They view the practice as ‘something’ learnt from other cultures. This perception could be based on the fact that culture is dynamic hence, homosexuality has been spread to Botswana. In support, Weeks (2007) elaborated that attitudes towards homosexual behaviour are culturally specific and have varied enormously across different cultures and through various historical periods.

From another angle, lack of knowledge on homosexuality and the issue of age is an indication

that homosexuality is a new institution. Lack of knowledge also relates to the issue of the older generation not being aware of homosexuality while the new generation is aware of such. It can also be claimed that as a result of the upcoming younger generation, there are some glimpses of positive thoughts about homosexuality.

### **Research question 2: What is the interpretation of text in regard to the perception of homosexuality?**

As already observed under the findings of the study, it emerged that homosexuality was viewed as not good because it is against the Setswana culture. This is an indication of how Batswana value their culture and the same value was emphasised by the first president of the Republic of Botswana -Sir Seretse Khama when he pointed out that, “a nation without a culture is a lost nation”. As also noted by Chavez and Ceneciro (2023), another reason of homosexuality not being good could be related to religion. Because of the people’s religious beliefs, they feel the practice was a sin as presented by some participants. However, it can be argued that the introduction of homosexuality is part of culture as culture is dynamic. Further, the interpretation of homosexuality as against the Setswana culture was also highlighted under research question 1. This could mean that Batswana greatly view homosexuality as against the Setswana culture.

Another key point from this study is that homosexuality is related to Science where there was mention of genes and DNA. This could mean that because of education, the people can now interpret homosexuality. This is one of the points that contribute to the positive points about homosexuality. People are knowledgeable nowadays, they are aware that with time some of the things, for instance, the perception on homosexuality, should change.

### **Research question 3: What are the current trends regarding the perception of homosexuality?**

Regarding the trends of homosexuality, the practice can be regarded as copied behavior because

nowadays different people, from different cultures, interact, giving room for copied behavior. As already indicated at the beginning of the discussion of this study, “culture is dynamic”. Another reason for copied behavior, which leads to homosexuality is that nowadays people are believed to live in a global village where the use of new media technologies enables people to easily connect to each other resulting in copied behaviour. It is worth mentioning that, a relationship exists between homosexuality being regarded as copied behaviour and it being regarded as a Scientific phenomenon. It could thus, be argued that both the two perceptions gradually contribute to some people’s positive views about homosexuality.

The claim that the respondents from Gaborone knew about homosexuality from their childhood years indicates that the trend in the knowledge about homosexuality varies from the different contexts. It can be argued that the people in towns are more knowledgeable on the changes that take place around them as compared to those in the villages like Kanye. Even though some of the results showed the participants from Gaborone being a little bit knowledgeable on the use of homosexuality, generally, the facts noted from the two research sites, the observations are in most cases the same.

Some claims could be drawn from the results of this study on language use and the perceptions of homosexuality in Botswana. One is that even though negative language was used in perceiving homosexuality, there are some positive linguistic devices used, for example, the discussion of homosexuality in the Botswana national assembly, considers homosexuality in a good light, bringing consideration to what Yarhouse (2014) referred to as, “the current language of reorientation”. This is because by debating on the matter at the national assembly- the house of parliament and the principal legislature in the country, perceptions changed for the better. It can be argued that the decriminalisation of by the Botswana government is gradually contributing to positive views on homosexuality.

## Conclusion:

The current study sought to find out the kinds of discourse used in perceiving homosexuality among the residents of Kanye village and Gaborone city. From the discussion, most of the linguistic features used were negative because in most cases, words, phrases and sentences used “turned down” the people’s engagement in homosexuality against the Setswana culture. How the discourse was interpreted and explained on the trends of homosexuality was also negative as the discourse used showed that homosexuality was not good as it is against the Setswana culture. It was also thought that it was copied behaviour. The results indicated a life style trend where some homosexuality still hide for fear of stigmatization while others are free to reveal their status because the government of Botswana decriminalized homosexuality in 2019 (Dinokopila, 2022).

Thus, it can be concluded that most of the discourse analysed in the current research reveals both the negative and the positive results on the perceptions of homosexuality. Most of Batswana who participated in this study thought homosexuality was not a good practice. However, there were glimpses of participants’ accommodation of the practice in Botswana as it was viewed as a new phenomenon. The above conclusion relates with the following description from Al-Abbas and Haider (2020) when they stated that from time immemorial, homosexuality has been an unacceptable behavior but currently attitudes are changing.

The study has some implications, for social interaction and for future research. For social research, the findings could help people in different contexts to be mindful of linguistic devices they use in regard to homosexuality. It will also add to the repertoire of knowledge as more details would be collected in regard to homosexuality. As regards implications for future research, the current study investigated discourse and the perception of homosexuality in Kanye and Gaborone. There is a need to broadly reach out to other parts of Botswana for further research. For instance, the

research could cover districts such as Bobirwa, Chobe, Charles Hill and Good Hope. The broader context would give more perspectives on discourse and homosexuality.

Another point worth highlighting is that there were some limitations to this study. Firstly, the researchers had difficulty in locating the people who are engaged in the homosexual practice because of time constraints. Secondly, the research was challenging because, culturally, most people do not want to openly discuss sexual matters. This animosity to the topic of homosexuality was realised and the study ended up not having collected enough data as initially intended. Thirdly, this study was mainly qualitative. May be different results could be drawn by using Mixed Methods approach. Finally, the results of this study cannot be generalized to the whole nation of Botswana because of the small sample size that was used. Given the aforementioned limitations, further studies need to be carried out in order to examine more factors in regard to discourse analysis and the perceptions of homosexuality.

In conclusion, the above expressions on homosexuality show that the participants negatively viewed homosexuality. In most responses, homosexuality was viewed as being against the Setswana culture. However, there were also some language excerpts, though minimal, that portrayed the positive side of homosexuality. So, it can be concluded that most of the discourse analysed in this study, was against homosexuality with glimpses of some Batswana’s accommodation of the practice as it was viewed as “a new phenomenon”

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