BACK TO BASICS

comparing the orthographic, phonic and grammatical features of English and African languages to improve literacy teaching

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IMPROVING READING AND WRITING

- **Knowledge of the orthography, phonics and grammar of one language can assist significantly and meaningfully with the teaching and learning of another.**

- **Draw attention to what is <u>similar</u> and then focus on what is <u>different</u>.**

ORTHOGRAPHY: the conventional spelling system of a language

PHONICS: correlation of sounds with symbols in an alphabetic writing system

GRAMMAR: the system and structure of a language

	ENGLISH	NGUNI LANGUAGES (ISIXHOSA, ISIZULU, ISINDEBELE, SISWATI) With relevant examples in Xitsonga and Tshivenḓa	SOTHO LANGUAGES (SESOTHO, SETSWANA, SEPEDI) With relevant examples in Xitsonga and Tshivenḓa
Vowel sounds	Many complex sounds, including digraphs (*ai, ea, aw, oy*), trigraphs (*igh, ear, oor*) and quadgraphs (*eigh*)	Five simple, consistent vowel sounds: **a, e, i, o, u** In isiXhosa and isiNdebele, double vowels like ***ii*** also exist in the plural form of some nouns, e.g. isiXhosa: *intake* (bird) → ***ii****ntake* (birds) isiNdebele: *indlebe* (ear) → ***ii****ndlebe* (ears)	Usually simple, consistent sounds (**a, i, u** and two different sounds for **e** and **o**) Vowel digraphs and blends also exist such as *ee, aa, oo, oi, au, oa, oe* Tshivenḓa also has vowels occurring next to each other as in *dai*s*i* and *golo*i and *ti*e

In Nguni languages there are **FIVE** main vowel sounds:

(examples below from isiXhosa)

a as in **amanzi** *(water)*
*(English short 'u' sound as in **u**mbrella)*

e as in **iemele** *(a bucket)*
*(English short 'e' sound as in **e**gg)*

i as in **iliso** *(an eye)*
*(English short 'i' sound as in **i**nk)*

o as in **iorenji** *(an orange)*
*(English short 'aw' sound as in s**aw**)*

u as in **ufudo** *(a tortoise)*
*(English short 'oo' sound as in b**oo**k)*

There are **SEVEN** vowel sounds in Sotho languages. These five plus:

e
similar to the 'ee' sound as in f**ee**t

o
similar to the 'u' sound as in p**u**t

Problems arise when pronunciation affects spelling and meaning:

b**e**d   =   `known` sound and mouth position
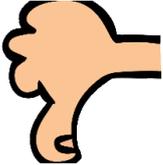
b**a**d   =   `unknown` sound and mouth position

b**ir**d   =   `unknown` sound and mouth position

English vowel sounds a, o and u (and vowel-consonant blends such as ir and ur) will therefore need special focus and practice.

Consonants that are different also need to be practised:

- **Nguni: c, q and x** (different in English and don't exist in Setswana)
- **Setswana & Sepedi: g and š**

	ENGLISH	NGUNI LANGUAGES	SOTHO LANGUAGES
Consonant digraphs and trigraphs	Usually made up of only **2-3 consonants** e.g. *sh, ch, th, wh, ph, kn, wr, -ck, -ng, -tch*	2-3 letter sounds that can be made longer and more complex **(up to 5 consonants)** by blending with **n-** and/or **-w**, but also always followed by a vowel e.g. *hl, nq, gc, tsh, ngcw, ntshw* More examples in isiXhosa, isiZulu, isiNdebele, Siswati: *ch, kh, ph, th, gc, dl, hl, ts, ng* Tshivenḓa: *ng, dz, vh, kh, ṱh, tsh*; Xitsonga *ng, dz, ny, ch, hl*	2-3 letter sounds that can be made longer and more complex **(up to 5 consonants)** by blending with **n-** and/or **-w**, but also always followed by a vowel e.g. *sh, tl, kg, ng, ph, tsh, tšh, tjh, ntlh*

	ENGLISH	NGUNI LANGUAGES	SOTHO LANGUAGES
Word structures: letter patterns	CVC pattern (**c**onsonant-**v**owel-**c**onsonant) e.g. *cap, net, bin, dog, hut*	(V)CVCV pattern ([**v**owel]-**c**onsonant-**v**owel-**c**onsonant **v**owel) pattern e.g. *nazi, siya, wabo, ikati, umama, amasi* isiZulu/isiNdebele: *idada, irula, itafula* isiXhosa: *idada, irula, itafile* Siswati: *lidada, irula, litafula*	CVCV(CV) pattern e.g. *bona, dula, rata* Sepedi: *lepidipidi, rula, tafola* Sesotho: *letata, rula, tafola* Setswana: *pidipidi, rula, tafole* Tshivenḓa: *ruḽa, forogo, gunubu* Xitsonga: *tafula, foroko, dokodela*

Cc

cat

Dd

dog

SETSWANA

Bb

buka

ENGLISH

Hh

hat

F f

folaga

ISIZULU

Dd

idada

Jj

uju

Kk

ikati

	ENGLISH	NGUNI LANGUAGES	SOTHO LANGUAGES
Word structures: prefixes	Later introduction of prefixes in the Intermediate Phase (***auto***matic, ***dis***appear, ***tri***cycle, ***sub***marine)	Early use of prefixes for pronouns and plurals e.g. *u-, ngo-, ngu-, uku-ndi/ngi, ama-, izi/ii, ezi* and also for agreement	Early use of prefixes, especially for plurals e.g. ***le***oto-***ma***oto, ***bo***rikgwe-***ma***rikgwe, ***se***gwete-***di***gwete

	ENGLISH	**NGUNI LANGUAGES**	**SOTHO LANGUAGES**
Word structures: plurals	*plural indicated by <u>suffix</u> (usually -*s* or -*es*) e.g. sock*s*, brush*es*	*plural indicated by <u>prefix</u> and there is more than one indicator of plural depending on the noun, e.g. ***ama-***, ***izi-***, ***ii-***, ***aba-***, ***vha-***, ***imi-***, ***swi-*** isiXhosa: *utata* (father) → ***oo**tata* (fathers) isiZulu: *umuthi* (tree) → ***imi**thi* (trees) isiNdebele: *ilihlo* (eye) → ***ame**hlo* (eyes) Siswati: *lishiya* (eyebrow) → ***ema**shiya* (eyebrows) Tshivenḓa*: nḓevhe* (ear) → ***dzi**nḓevhe* (ears) Xitsonga: *yindlu* (house) → ***ti**yindlu* (houses)	*plural indicated by <u>prefix</u> and there is more than one indicator of plural depending on the noun e.g. ***ba-***, ***bo-***, ***di-***, ***me-***, ***ma-*** Sepedi: *sehlare* (tree) → ***di**hlare (*trees*)* Sesotho: *sefate* (tree) → ***di**fate (*trees*)* Setswana: *setlhare* (tree) → ***di**tlhare (*trees*),* monna (man) → ***ba**nna (men)

|	ENGLISH	NGUNI LANGUAGES	SOTHO LANGUAGES
Word length: phonics and syllabication	Disjunctive, opaque, deep orthography: short words when beginning reading e.g. *I can run and hop but I can't skip*. <u>Phonic</u> skills are important and sight word knowledge.	Agglutinative, conjunctive, transparent, shallow orthographies: unavoidable long words when beginning reading e.g. *Ngipenda ngombala oluhlaza njengesibhaka-bhaka.* *Ngiyamthanda.* means a greater need to <u>syllabicate</u> Short sight words are very uncommon and, unlike English, sight words are usually high-frequency words, e.g. *kakhulu, futhi, lapha*	Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Tshivenḓa, Xitsonga: agglutinative, disjunctive, transparent, shallow orthographies: mixture of mostly shorter words with some long words e.g. *Selemo re qala ho jala.* so phonic skills are important but still some need to syllabicate e.g. *morutabana, diphoofolo, futhumetse* Sight words are short, phonically regular, high-frequency words e.g. *monate, tharo, legae*

Sight words vs high-frequency words

ENGLISH

but
can
went

one
where
are
come
could

yacht

ISIXHOSA

ukuba
umama

kakhulu
wakhe
kodwa
watsho
incwadi
abantwana

Examples of high frequency words in ISIXHOSA

1.	ukuba	56.	ngayo
2.	kakhulu	57.	wonke
3.	watsho	58.	wabuza
4.	kodwa	59.	ezi
5.	xa	60.	la
6.	ke	61.	abantwana
7.	kwaye	62.	zakhe
8.	le	63.	wam
9.	wakhe	64.	izilwanyana
10.	kunye	65.	phezulu
11.	emva	66.	kutheni
12.	umama	67.	ibali
13.	yakhe	68.	kukho
14.	ngoku	69.	esikolweni
15.	nje	70.	bonke
16.	ukuze	71.	imini
17.	kuba	72.	indlela
18.	abantu	73.	umnumzana
19.	apha	74.	njani
	nto	75.	Afrika
20.	bhala	76.	yena
21.	lo	77.	umfanekiso

	ENGLISH	NGUNI LANGUAGES	SOTHO LANGUAGES
Pronouns	Short, separate words e.g. *I, we, it, she, our, his* Many denote gender *he/him/his* and *she/her/hers*	Prefix added to root word; non-gender specific: e.g. isiXhosa: *ndi*yahamba, *si*nxiba, *u*faka isiXhosa/isiZulu*:* *ba*yasebenza isiZulu*:* *ngi*yadla, *u*funa, *ngi*gqoka, *si*gqoka isiNdebele: *Ngi*thanda Siswati: *Ngi*yakutsandza	Like English, short, separate words, non-gender specific e.g. *ke, nna, a, o, re, rona, hae, wena, lona* Setswana/Sesotho: *Ke* a tsamaya. Setswana/Sepedi: *O* ja bogobe. Tshivenḓa*: Ndi* funa. Xitsonga: *Ndzi* rhandza.

	ENGLISH	NGUNI LANGUAGES	SOTHO LANGUAGES
Adjectives	Adjective usually comes *before* the noun – same form for singular and plural e.g. *red* car-*red* cars	Adjective comes *after* the noun singular and plural form agreement e.g. ***i**jezi **o**bomvu - **ii**jezi **ezi**bomvu / **ama**jezi **a**bomvu* IsiXhosa: *intliziyo **o**pinki* (pink heart) isiZulu*: inhliziyo **e**phinki* isiNdebele: *ihliziyo **e**pinki* Siswati: *inhlitiyo **le**pinki*	Adjective comes *after* the noun. Same form is used for singular and plural, with a prepositional change e.g. *kgoho **e** kgubedu, dijeresi **tse** kgubedu* Sepedi: *pelo **ye** pinki* (pink heart) Sesotho/Setswana: *pelo **e** pinki* Tshivenḓa/Xitsonga: *mbilu **ya** pinki*

Shapes and colours
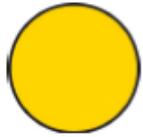
a yellow circle	a red square	a blue triangle	a green rectangle	an orange diamond	a purple oval
a pink heart	a black star	a white cross	a brown box	a turquoise ball	a grey cone
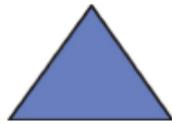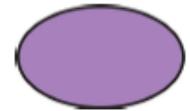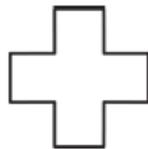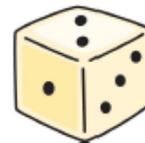
Vula Bula ENGLISH

Izimo nemibala

isiyingi esiphuzi	**isikwele** esibomvu	**unxantathu** oluhlaza okwesibhakabhaka	**unxande** oluhlaza okotshani	**idayimani** elisawolintshi	**i-ovali** esomi
inhliziyo ephinki	**inkanyezi** emnyama	**isiphambano** esimhlophe	**ibhokisi** elinsundu	**ibhola** eliluhlazana	**ikhowuni** empunga
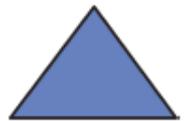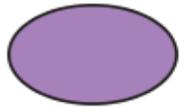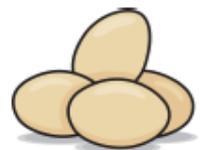
Dibopego le mebala
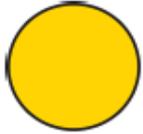
sediko se **serolwane**	khutlonne ye **khubedu**	khutlotharo ye **botalalerata**	khutlonnethwi ye **tala**	taamane ya **mmala wa namune**	sekalee sa **boperese**
pelo ye **pinki**	naledi ye **ntsho**	sefapano se **sešweu**	lepokisi le **letsothwa**	kgwele ye **thekoise**	khouni ye **tshehla**
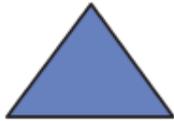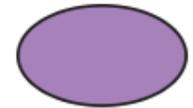
	ENGLISH	**NGUNI LANGUAGES**	**SOTHO LANGUAGES**
Articles	<u>Definite article</u> ***the*** appears before a singular and plural noun e.g. *the* children*, the* dog*, the chairs* <u>Indefinite articles</u> ***a/an*** come only before a singular noun e.g. *a* dog*, an* apple	Article appears as a prefix before the noun and depends on human or non-human characteristics. Prefix often starts with a vowel e.g. *u-*; *i-*; a-. For example: isiXhosa/isiZulu/isiNdebele: ***ama***nti; Siswati: ***ema***nti *In English, the article is not used before a proper noun (name). In the Nguni languages, the article appears before proper nouns unless used in direct speech (e.g uSindi)*	Article appears as a prefix before some nouns and depends on human or non-human characteristics. * *Proper nouns (names) do not usually receive a prefix, as in English* Setswana/Sepedi: ***mo***tho (the person), ***ba***tho (the people), ***le***gapu (the watermelon), ***ma***gapu (the watermelons), *katse* (the cat), ***di***katse (the cats) Sepedi: ***me***etsi Tshivenḓa: ***ma***ḓi Xitsonga: ***ma***ti

	ENGLISH	**NGUNI LANGUAGES**	**SOTHO LANGUAGES**
Verbs and tenses	Tenses are used in a consistent manner – either present tense, or present progressive or past tense	Different tenses can be used together in a piece of writing	Different tenses can appear together in a piece of writing

	ENGLISH	NGUNI LANGUAGES	SOTHO LANGUAGES
Rhyme	Concepts of <u>onset</u> and <u>rime</u> very important for phonemic awareness, emergent phonic learning and spelling, e.g. *dog, jog, log, frog* d-***og***, j-***og***, l-***og***, fr-***og*** *ball, tall, wall, small* b-***all***, t-***all***, w-***all***, sm-***all*** *lick, tick, quick, brick, stick* l-***ick***, t-***ick***, qu-***ick***, br-***ick***, st-***ick***	Concepts of <u>onset</u> and <u>rime</u> do not exist – patterning is syllabic and rhythmical instead. Any rhyming is incidental and grammatical e.g. *lami, wami, zami; bakhe, lakhe, wakhe; bonke, sonke, zonke*	Concepts of <u>onset</u> and <u>rime</u> do not exist – patterning is syllabic and rhythmical instead. Any rhyming is incidental and grammatical e.g. *bona, lona, rona, tsona; eng, leng, seng, teng*

	ENGLISH	NGUNI LANGUAGES	SOTHO LANGUAGES
Tone	Important for emphasis and expression	Very important for meaning but not marked in writing e.g. *ubulele* (s/he killed) and *ubulele* (s/he thanked) isiXhosa: *uyamthanda* (you love him) and *uyamthanda* (s/he loves him)	Very important for meaning but not marked in writing: Setswana: *go rêma* (to chop) and *go rema* (to become thick as milk) Sepedi: *legâga* (cliff) and *legăga* (sloughed skin) Sesotho: *noka* (river) and *nôka* (hip)

PROMOTING MULTILINGUALISM

"You can never understand one language until you understand at least two."

Geoffrey Willans

Thank you!