



Translation Guide

This is a guide to thinking about, discussing, and doing translation work. It is informed by the experiences and reflections of translators working with African Storybook – an open licence digital publishing initiative using storybooks to promote literacies in the languages of Africa.

As you read through the guide you are asked to consider questions, explanations, examples and issues related to translation. These all reflect the valuable lessons and insights gained from African Storybook translation work in many languages.

It will be useful to make a note of your answers and other thoughts as you read. The notes can serve as your own guide for your translation practice. It will also be useful to work through the resources with other translators, and to share practical examples of translating, as well as knowledge and experience.



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What is “translation” all about?

Translation is a complex activity, and it is useful to think about the meaning of the word itself as a way of thinking about the activity. Below are six explanations of the English word “translate”. Which explanation best describes what you think “translate” means? Are any explanations surprising to you?

translate

verb

1. To **carry or move** from one place or condition, to another place or condition.
2. To **express** the **sense** of something in another language.
3. To **explain** in terms that can be more easily understood.
4. To **change** into another form or medium.
5. To **transfer** from one language into another language.
6. To **change** the words of one language into the words in another language that have the same meaning.

All of the explanations above are taken from or adapted from entries in a range of online English dictionaries. They are all acceptable meanings of “translate”, although it might seem surprising that the word includes the idea of carrying and moving.

The word “translation” was created over a long time and it has layers of meaning to it, as well as traces of other languages in it. Like many words in English, it is a borrowed word – it was borrowed from another language and adapted to an English word form.

“Translation” is originally from a Latin word *translatio*, meaning ‘carry across’ or ‘bring across’. The Latin word was adapted into the old French language as *translacion*, and from old French into old English as *translacioun*. As English changed over time, the word became **translation**.

What is the word (or words) for “translate” in another language that you know?

- How would you explain that word?
- Does the word reflect any of the ideas in the explanations above, or does it add something new to how we understand the activity of translating?

The ideas contained in all the explanations on this page suggest that **translating involves these activities**, usually in relation to words and language:

- Move
- Transfer
- Change
- Express
- (Make) sense
- (Making) meaning

Are there any activities and ideas you want to add to this list?

Translation

Here is a technical description of the **process of translating**:

A careful analysis of exactly what goes on in the process of translating, especially in the case of source and receptor languages having quite different **grammatical and semantic structures**, has shown that, instead of going directly from one set of surface structures to another, the competent translator actually goes through a seemingly roundabout process of analysis, transfer, and restructuring.

That is to say, the translator first **analyses the message of the language into its simplest and structurally clearest forms, transfers it at this level, and then restructures it** to the level in the ... language which is most appropriate for the audience ...

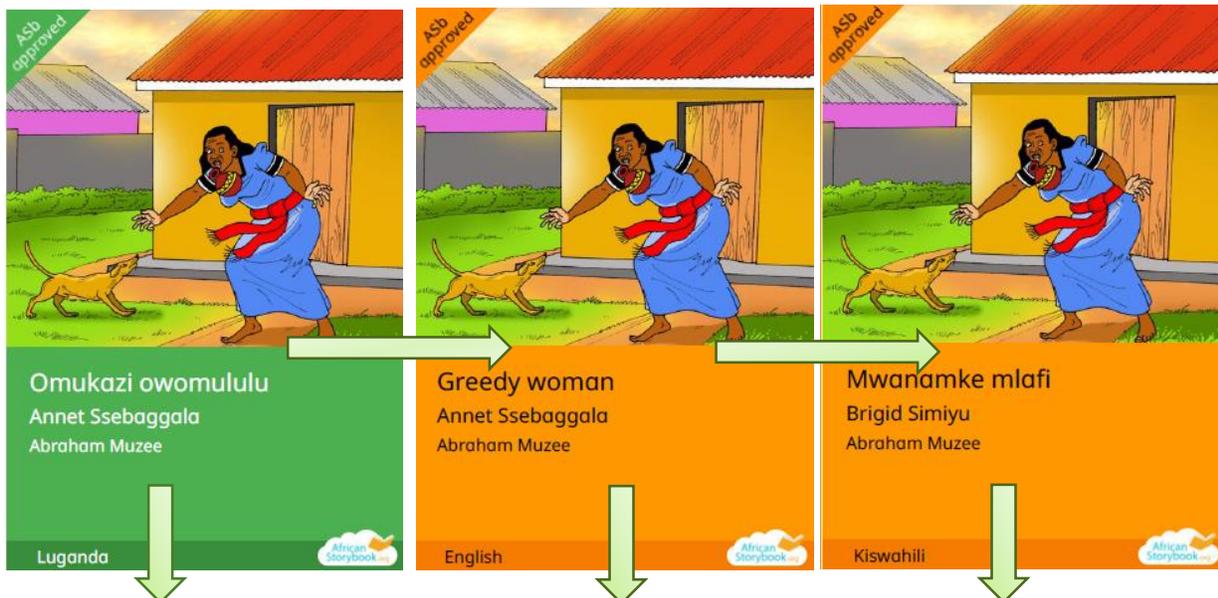
(Source: Nida, E. A and Charles, R. Taber (1984), *The Theory and Practice of Translation*. 4th Impression: Brill-Leiden: The Netherlands (bold added))

This describes a useful approach to translation, and there are some important terms to consider:

- A **grammar** of a language consists of its **formal patterns or conventions** (often expressed as “rules”) **for creating sentences and phrases** and other expressions that can be understood.
- Semantics is the study of meaning, and **semantic structures** are **the principles for making meaning with language in specific contexts**.

Both spoken language and visual language (which includes writing) have grammatical and semantic structures. Translators need to pay attention to both aspects – to the form and to the meaning.

Below is an example of a translated storybook where the source language and receptor languages are from very different language families and have very different grammatical and semantic structures. The story was written in Luganda (source language), *Omukazi owomululu*. Then it was translated by the author into English (receptor language, also known as the target language or goal language), *Greedy Woman*. English was the source language for the Kiswahili translation, *Mwanamke mlafi*.



The English and Kiswahili translations are both potential source languages for wider translation of the storybook, especially in East African contexts (where the structures and vocabulary of Kiswahili might be more familiar to local translators than English structures and vocabulary). Luganda remains another source language for those able to read the original source language.

Translation

Resource 1 is about a planning meeting for a translation project to create reading material for early literacy (Early Readers). As you read, notice the specific aspects of language that the translators focus on, and the decisions they make about shared approaches to the work. Are the same aspects and decisions relevant to your work?

Resource 1: Case study about planning for translation

CAPOLSA (Centre for Promotion of Literacy in sub-Saharan Africa) is a literacy organisation that publishes material in some of the indigenous Zambian languages. CAPOLSA's first Early Grade Readers were published in *iciBemba, siLozi, ciNyanja and chiTonga* in 2013, and in *kiKaonde, Lunda and Luvale* in 2015. These languages have closely similar grammar and phonology (system of sounds) as well as some word forms in common. The conceptual transitions involved in translations among similar languages are easier than when translation is between languages with completely different structures and vocabulary. Translators decided to translate from the English source text into four of the African languages, and then translate the remaining material from those African languages into the related African languages. The planning meeting brought together four expert translators. In addition to discussing the ideal approach to translation, the agenda included:

Orthography: Zambian languages are mutually intelligible so it is possible to have words spelled in a similar way across the languages. Together with language academics and other experts, CAPOLSA has developed a simplified orthography (spelling system). The text is written in a manner that the language is spoken, to help young readers to connect the letters and sounds more easily. Each translator was given a guide with the rules for spelling in the specific languages.

Content, Style, Grammar and Vocabulary: The meeting strongly emphasized the need to have content that is appropriate for young minds: the style of writing and vocabulary should be suitable for developing minds. The work should be free of grammatical errors. They also agreed that certain core words or word forms – which carried particular meaning – should be retained from one African language to another.

Names of characters: One major issue was about whether to maintain in the translated stories the names that were in the original language. It was agreed that it would be ideal to keep the original names to retain the sense of originality of the story. It would also support children's recognition of the stories if they came across them in the other languages. Where young readers might have problems with names with unfamiliar spelling (e.g. 'Bontle'), similar names in local languages should be used.

It was also noted that the stories in the English version might appear shorter than the translated ones. This was because translating the stories exactly as they were in the source language would have made the stories in the target languages appear disjointed. Translators need to read and understand the story, and write it in a way that is fitting and meaningful to the Zambian audience.

Mode of translation: There were several stages for completing the translations. The first stage involved each translator translating 5 to 8 stories from the English version to their language of expertise. Meaning is more likely to be retained as only a small number of stories was translated from source language to receptor language, and then to two other receptor languages (at a later stage).

(Source: "Quality assurance report: CAPOLSA story translation activity for Saide" (2017) by Ephraim Mhlanga)

On page 10 of this guide you will find nine illustrated pages from a storybook called *Chicken and Millipede* (Resource 4). Translate the story page by page and discuss the sentences with other translators. This will provide a practical context for the topics and issues in this guide.

Translating for meaning

The focus in translation should be on **transferring meaning from one language to another language, using the structures that are appropriate for each language**. Sometimes that means that a translated sentence will be longer or more complex than the sentence in the source language. Look at these examples of translation from English into isiZulu, isiXhosa, Setswana, Kiswahili and Lubusuku.

<i>English:</i>	<i>Translated to isiZulu as:</i>
I use blue. (e.g. a blue colour pencil/paint)	Ngipenda ngombala oluhlaza njengesibhakabhaka.
	<i>Translated to Setswana as:</i>
I use yellow. (e.g. a yellow colour pencil/paint)	Ke tshasa mmala o serolwana.
	<i>Translated to Kiswahili as:</i>
I use red. (e.g. a red colour pencil/paint)	Ninatumia ya rangi nyekundu.
	<i>Translated to Lubusuku as:</i>
I use green. (e.g. a green colour pencil/paint)	Ndumikhila ye lukondo lwe lunyasi.

(Source: Molteno, Vula Bula and African Storybook)

In the above example, conveying the meaning of the English sentences – with a colour adjective and implied noun – resulted in long words and complex structures in the African language translations. Long complex words are challenging for early literacy, so the above translations may not be ideal for young readers – direct, literal translations might have been better. In the example below, due to the structure of the verbs in Kiswahili (as with many other African languages) the English translations resulted in more words and longer sentences than in the source language:

<i>Kiswahili:</i>	<i>Translated to English as:</i>
Nitakuja kesho.	I will come tomorrow.
Ulilala?	Did you sleep?
Alilala?	Did she/he sleep?
Anakula?	Is she/he eating?

(Source: African Storybook)

English and Kiswahili also differ in how they deal with gender in their structural forms (she/he). A translator would understand the gender from the surrounding words and overall story text (and pictures), and then express it in English structures (for example, pronouns). Are there language structures that present specific challenges in translating between the languages you know?

Sometimes it can be difficult to find in the target language an equivalent word or expression that accurately conveys the meaning of something in the source language. This can apply to:

- **Words used in daily language**, for example, how would you translate: ‘cellphone’, ‘kraal’; ‘hijab’, ‘pap’; ‘pizza’; ‘uhuru’; ‘ubuntu’?, and to
- **Specific terms in content subjects** such as Maths and Science (for example, names for shapes: quadrilateral, rhombus, scalene, isosceles).

Translating **figurative expressions** – for example, metaphor, symbolism and personification – from one language to another also presents specific challenges. For each of the following examples, identify the meaning of what is expressed, and why it requires more than literal translation to convey the meaning:

<i>English:</i>	<i>Meaning?</i>	<i>Translation?</i>
The flames in the fireplace crackled and roared.		
I told you a thousand times! Have you got ears?		
The room was freezing so she lit a fire.		
You’re a star!		

Translation

An important lesson from African Storybook experience is that direct, literal translation is usually not enough on its own. Generally, direct translation is only a first step of a translation process – that is, analysing the message of the language into its simplest and structurally clearest forms. More work has to be done by the translator so that the translation appropriately conveys the meaning of the source language to the new audience.

Resource 2 reflects a few of the experiences of African Storybook translators. The comment in bold describes translation as an activity that requires a translator to negotiate between languages.

- What do you think of this description?
- Consider the text in italics in paragraphs 3 and 4 – how would you respond to these questions?

Resource 2: African Storybook translators' experiences

I translated stories from Sesotho into Setswana. I found the process to be more interesting, less time consuming and easier than when English is the source language. Sesotho, Sepedi and Setswana are grouped as Sotho languages and some words are related and mean the same things, whereas some words mean opposite things and/or have totally different meanings, for example, in South Sotho 'Ke lapile' means 'I'm hungry' and in Sepedi and Setswana it means 'I'm tired'. In isiXhosa and isiZulu, 'Lambile' means hungry, just as it means in South Sotho. There is some inter-connectedness to African languages even if they do not fall under the same language group. When translating from one African language to the other, the translation is based more on the cultural aspect of the language and its people, unlike in English.

Xolisa Guzula, a UCT Doctoral student in language and literacy and bilingual education, translated 21 African Storybook stories from isiZulu to isiXhosa. Xolisa said that this form of translation is re-telling the story for the target group and it did not feel like she was translating. Xolisa explains that isiXhosa translation is riddled with complexities. "There are issues of literal translation and of imposing English onto isiXhosa in ways that just do not make sense in the language. **Translation is a constant negotiation between the source language and the target language,**" she says.

(Source: "What are the issues in translating and versioning stories for early reading in local African languages?" (2017) by Lorato Trok)

One of the first things we noticed at the start of the project was that when a story is translated into some languages, the text is much longer than in the original language. This meant that text couldn't fit into the textbox on the page, and the font size of the text had to be reduced in order to facilitate this. *When a story is translated from English into African languages, often the story becomes more difficult because it becomes longer (with more words/sentences). Does this become an adaptation because the translation changes the level of the language?*

(Source: "Translating and adapting stories" (2014) by Lorato Trok and Tessa Welch)

In translation, how does someone translate a story that is context-specific? Does translating perhaps go very much hand in hand with versioning (adapting)? If I translate a story from a different cultural background, I may find it necessary to version in simple ways affecting only names and activities in the story to enhance its meaning in the new language. But cultural translation is also more complex than choosing names for characters and activities which are more suited to the target language.

(Source: "What are the issues in translating and versioning stories for early reading in local African languages?" (2016) by Dorcas Wepukhulu)

What is “translation” and what is “adaptation”?

On the African Storybook website it is possible to translate and adapt storybooks (as well as create storybooks). Within the context of the website, the difference between translation and adaptation is explained by African Storybook as follows:

- Storybooks are *translated* in order to have stories available in many African languages – one storybook can be translated many times, into many different languages. Translation is usually from one language to another language, and the story stays the same.
- Storybooks are *adapted* so that they can be made more familiar to readers in a particular place, or easier to read for children that are at a lower reading level, or more challenging at a higher level.

Adaptation might be from one reading level to another reading level, **in the same language**; or the new storybook might be **another level and language** (see page 14 of this guide for an example of storybook reading levels). Below is an African Storybook translator’s description of the process of adapting a story. She raises an important point about adapting a more complex story or text to a simpler one:

It's important when adapting a story that is more complex and has more words to a story that is simpler and has fewer and simpler sentences/words, to ensure that the version you work on still makes sense as a story and not become disjointed. Often when I adapt a story down for a lower reading level, I find that it becomes somehow bare so I need to do something else to still make it interesting, flowing and meaningful. (Dorcas Wepukhulu)

Changing a text to a simpler level is one type of adaption that could be required as part of translating a story. Sometimes a different type of adaptation of the story is required to make it more appropriate for the new audience, especially to make it **culturally appropriate**: “If I translate a story from a different cultural background, I may find it necessary to version in simple ways affecting only names and activities in the story to enhance its meaning in the new language.”

- What decision did the translators in Resource 1 make about character names in the material that they were translating? What decisions have you made about using or changing the **original names** of characters when you translate into another language?
- What decisions have you made about the original names for **places, games, songs, and special days**?

Here is an illustrated page from a storybook *Shepherd and his best friend*.

What decisions did the translator make about the character names when he translated into English? What decision did the translator make about the name of the game?

How would you translate this page?



"Don't worry, we will study soon. Please play!" Bedilu begged Tarik. In the end, the boys played kisara.

(Kisara is a game in which players take turns throwing flat stones or coins into a small hole, standing about a meter and half from the hole.)

What if a language has more than one version?

In the box below are four quotations from English literature texts – four versions of English that also reflect geographical and historical versions of the language. There are many dialects and versions of English in England and across the world. What dialects or versions do you know of other languages?

English?

Ah seemed tae leave ma body fir a while, watching a game show on the box. Ah could hear ma auld auld man talking tae ma auld girl, but ah couldnae take may eyes fae the ugly-looking game-show hose and turn ma heid tae face ma parents. (*Trainspotting* Irvine Welsh)

As I remember, Adam, it was upon this fashion bequeathed me by will but poor a thousand crowns, and as thou sayest, charged my brother on his blessing to breed me well. And there begins my sadness. (Act 1, Scene 1, *As you like it*, William Shakespeare)

He took his vorpal sword in hand;
Long time the manxome foe he sought—
So rested he by the Tumtum tree
And stood awhile in thought. (*Jabberwocky*, Lewis Carol)

All me life I have been lived among them but now they are becoming lothed to me. And I am lothing their little warm tricks. And lothing their mean cosy turns. And all the greedy gushes out through their small souls. (*Finnegans Wake*, James Joyce)

Every language has different versions. But not all versions of a language are equal in terms of status and how users value them (or don't value them). Some languages and language versions have been given more resources by powerful groups in society – resources such as promotion in schools and universities, dictionaries, newspapers and other media. This is a social and a political issue, but what does it mean for translation?

The other challenge that constantly comes up is issue of dialects and regional preferences. There are language groups that have several dialects, some more prominent than others. Some have established **orthographies** while others don't have. For example, the Kiswahili spoken in Tanzania is different from that spoken in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, DRC and Burundi. Although Tanzania and Kenya are closest in terms of accepted **grammar**, there are still differences in **spellings and vocabulary**. There is the **spoken and the written**. Children growing up are exposed more to the spoken than the written so in translating, the question is which one should be used? Does one go by what experts lay down or by what contemporary children are familiar with? Language is alive, it evolves as user needs arise.

(Source: "What are the issues in translating and versioning stories for early reading in local African languages?" (2016) by Dorcas Wepukhulu)

What particular issues around language versions – especially geographical or regional versions – have you encountered in your work? How have you addressed these issues?

Also see Resource 5 (page 13) for an interesting perspective on "pure languages".

Translation

To an extent, the versions of the languages that translators work with depend on what they are translating and for whom they are translating. It can be very useful to work as a translation team to compare approaches, share decisions and best practices – as was the case in Resource 1.

It is also important for translators to compare interpretations and to have a checking process to **quality assure** their work (see Resource 7 on page 16 of this guide). But sometimes it can be difficult for translators – and other language professionals – to agree on one version of a translation. Resource 3 shares the experience of a group of translators re-translating a particular storybook into isiZulu (from English).

Resource 3: Case study about *Chicken and Millipede (uNkuku noShongololo)*

In a recent workshop with subject advisors in KwaZulu-Natal, the subject advisors were quite critical of the translations into isiZulu of some of our stories. So we decided to do a collective translation exercise using *Chicken and Millipede* (Level 1). This story has one sentence per page. (See page 10 of this guide for the storybook pages.)

As the illustration and English sentence was projected page by page, each of the 21 participants was asked to translate sentence by sentence. When they were done, they passed their translation to the person sitting on their left to review. Each translation was different. And there was considerable debate about what was correct. Here is a summary of the issues raised:

1. There is a difference between the written and spoken forms of the language: whereas one would write, 'Baya ukuyodlala ibhola', one would probably say 'Baya ko dlala ibhola'. (Page 2)
2. There are more expressive and less expressive ways of saying things. For example, for the sentence, 'Chicken was annoyed', the word 'wacasuka' could be used for 'annoyed'. But a more expressive phrase would be 'wadinwa wafa'. (Page 5)
3. Translations will vary according to dialectal differences. For example, for the sentence 'Millipede tasted bad', one person translated it, 'UShongololo unambitheka kabi', and another 'UShongololo akanambitheki kamnandi'. (Page 9)
4. The translator has to be very aware of the context in order to choose the correct word. For example, 'Chicken feels sick'. The sense that needs to be conveyed is that he is nauseous ('ukucanusela') – not simply that he generally feels unwell ('ukugula').
5. Punctuation, punctuation, punctuation! Many of the translators didn't get round to inserting the quotation marks into the sentences.

There was no single translation that could be taken in its entirety and used as the official translation. So we put together the efforts of various participants. You can view the translation at <http://www.africanstorybook.org/index.php?id=15102>.

(Source: "In even the simplest stories, there are translation issues" (2016) by Tessa Welch)

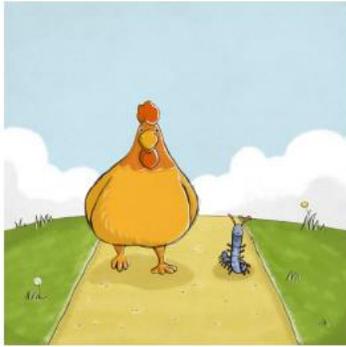
- Identify the advantages and disadvantages of a group approach to a translation.
- How can translators make the most of shared expertise and resources in order to agree that a translation is 'good enough'.

Sometimes translators need to find a way to **agree to disagree** about which version is the perfect version. By focusing on translating the **meaning and spirit of the source language**, it is easier to establish whether a translated word or sentence is 'good enough'.

Translation

Resource 4: *Chicken and Millipede* (Level 1) pages 1 to 9 of 12

To read the ending, search for this storybook at www.africanstorybook.org.za



Chicken and Millipede were friends.

Page 1



They went to play football.

Page 2



Chicken was the goal keeper.

Page 3



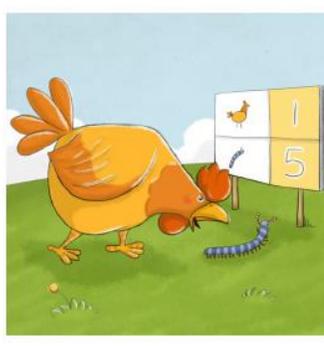
Millipede scored three goals!

Page 4



Chicken was annoyed.

Page 5



Chicken swallowed Millipede.

Page 6



Then, Chicken met with Millipede's Mother.

Page 7



"Help Mother! Chicken swallowed me!" cried Millipede from inside Chicken.

Page 8



Millipede tasted bad.

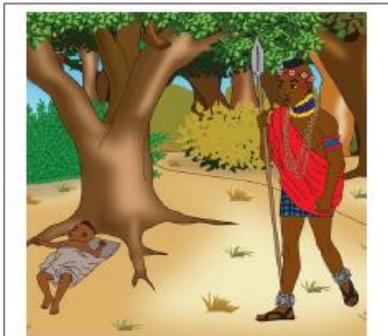
Chicken felt sick.

Page 9

Translation and pictures

In an illustrated storybook, each page has information in writing and a picture. The written words and the associated picture should work together to create the meaning of the story. Do you think the pictures for *Chicken and Millipede* (Resource 4) support the meaning of the sentences? And do the sentences support the meaning of the pictures?

Here are three single pages from different storybooks on the African Storybook website.



An erotot from another community came by. He saw the baby. He was surprised. He asked himself, "Where is the mother?"

Child as peacemaker



Nonkungu took off her clothes and gave them to the girl. When the girl took off her rags, Nonkungu saw that she had a tail! Nonkungu was afraid. She realised that the girl was really an imbulu. They walked a little further, and then Nonkungu asked, "Please give me back my clothes and beads."

Nonkungu and the imbulu



Akai also knew where her grandmother's manyatta was located. She often went to drink camel milk with her grandmother.

Akai's special mat

What do you think an erotot is? What is an imbulu? What is a manyatta? The translators decided to use words from the source language in the English translations. This is possible because the pictures help the reader to understand what the borrowed word means.



Details in pictures

Left is the final picture in a set of 12 pictures for a storybook called *Advice from an old man*. The picture shows a family of mother, father and two sons.

From looking at the picture, would you say this is a happy family, and why or why not? (Consider their body language and facial expressions.)

What other information can you observe in the picture? Where does it take place? For example, does it take place in a city? Does it take place in the present time or the past?

What translation decision would you make if the source sentence with this picture was:

Father left home one night during a bad storm.

Translator's checklist

Here is a summary of a useful **process for translating**, and the main aspects involved:

1. Start by **READING** the source text from start to finish.
2. Understand the whole text, for example, the whole story.
3. Look carefully at images (illustrations, photographs) to see if they have the same meaning as the written text does. Pay attention to the details in the pictures.
4. Translate for meaning – begin by analysing the structures into their simplest forms.
5. Then transfer the meaning into new structures in the target language. Check grammatical and semantic structures (see page 3 of this guide).
6. Pay attention to words and sentences, and punctuation. (See below.)
7. Don't forget to translate the title or heading of the source text!

Words and sentences

- ✓ Keep your own **spelling list** (style sheet) for consistency – make a note of your decisions about spelling and other word conventions.
- ✓ Choose words that are appropriate for the **audience** (for example, simple vocabulary for early literacy). Try to use **varied vocabulary** (for example, interesting and different adjectives).
- ✓ Create sentences that are generally the right length for the reading **level**.
- ✓ Create paragraph breaks if necessary – for example, to introduce a new idea or topic in the story.
- ✓ Is there a **word count** to check, for example, number of words per page? (This can be especially important for early reading and levelled Readers.)
- ✓ Identify words that will be difficult to translate into the target language. How will you address this? What resources or references will be useful? Consult with others?

Pictures

- Does each page of written text make sense with the picture on the page?
- If the written text on a page does not quite represent the picture, you should probably revise the text to match the picture (or raise this as a query). For example, if the text says that the characters are very happy and yet the picture shows that they are neutral or unhappy, you should translate what you see in the picture.

Letters, symbols and special characters

If a language uses special characters or symbols for writing (for example, diacritics), check that the letters and symbols are correct and consistent.

Punctuation

Check that:

- ✓ Every sentence starts with a capital letter and ends with a full stop.
- ✓ Names of people and places (and other proper nouns) start with capital letters.
- ✓ Direct speech is formatted correctly: Full stops or commas are placed inside the quotation marks, for example: Mary said, "I will come tomorrow." OR "I will come tomorrow," said Mary.
- ✓ The quote mark for direct speech is always a "double quote mark" (not a 'single quote mark' pressed twice").
- ✓ Spacing is correct before/after punctuation (close up or open up spaces).
- ✓ Sentences are appropriate for the reading level.

Resource 5: Extracts from article about “mother tongue” education

These extracts are from an article that was originally published on:

<https://theconversation.com/its-time-to-rethink-whats-meant-by-mother-tongue-education-96475>

It's time to rethink what's meant by "mother tongue" education

Lara-Stephanie Krause

The issue of mother tongue education has been fiercely but sporadically debated in South Africa since 1994. In the past two and a half years, student protests at universities across the country have breathed new life into the discussions.

Proponents of mother tongue education tend to argue that children should be taught in the language they first learned and spoke at home. Those who oppose this approach argue that English is a ‘global language’ and should be the main language of instruction throughout the school system and into higher education spaces.

But in a country steeped in colonialism and apartheid, it’s not far-fetched to suspect that the common understanding of the idea of “mother tongues” is coloured by outside influences.

A mother tongue is taken to be a language that has a name: Xhosa, Tswana or Sotho, for instance. It refers to the standard version of that language, transcribed in most cases by 19th century European missionaries based on how they understood and conceptualised the way people spoke in the immediate vicinity of the rural mission station.

But what they were transcribing were actually regional dialects, not pure versions of pristine languages tied to an authentic and timeless cultural identity. Decades of schooling practices institutionalised and continuously reinforced the missionaries’ notions.

Here’s the problem: those supposedly “pure” languages often bear only a loose family resemblance to the way that modern people in both rural and urban areas actually speak. [End Extract 1]

The frame of reference for European missionaries and colonisers when transcribing African language practices was an idea of languages existing as autonomous structures each spoken by a distinct group of people.

Versatile and flexible African listeners and speakers communicating efficiently without necessarily agreeing on one distinct, correct way of speaking did not fit this 19th century European frame of reference.

But to translate Bibles and develop grammars for their “educational” and Christian agenda, missionaries had to make African ways of speaking fit European ideas of language and grammaticality. Their Western concept of language forced them to be selective, to choose some ways of speaking for standardisation and writing purposes and to ignore others.

The result is that most of today’s “African languages” and so-called mother tongues are not defined by the way African mothers speak but by how white Europeans wrote them into being decades ago.

The good news is that some shifts are happening in how African languages are discussed and understood. [End Extract 2]

Translation

Resource 6: Example of a translation template (African Storybook)

This is the template that is used for African Storybook translation work.

African Storybook Story template

Title of story	
Language	
Title of story (English)	
Name of story writer/s	
Name of translator (or adaptor)	
Name of illustrator	

Type the new story and / or the story translation in the table starting on the next page. Please make sure that the story has the right number of words per page for the Reading Level. The Reading Level does not have to be the same for both languages.

Reading Level of the story: (Choose one with X)	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 (First words) (1-11 words per page) <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 (First sentences) (11-25 words per page) <input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 (First paragraphs) (25-50 words per page) <input type="checkbox"/> Level 4 (Longer paragraphs) (50-75 words per page) <input type="checkbox"/> Level 5 (Read aloud) (75-150 words per page)
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When you have finished typing the new story and / or the translation, please write a story summary in 1 or 2 sentences. We need a short summary in both languages.

Summary of story (local language)	
Summary of story (English)	

Translation

Page	Story in local African language	Translated story
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		

Resource 7: African Storybook quality assurance process

The quality of African Storybook books is considered central to reading, advocacy and acceptability by communities that invest themselves in using the storybooks. As such, checking the quality of translations is taken seriously. This document describes how the quality assurance process of storybooks should be undertaken by a language consultant (for 'ASb-approved' storybooks).

Assuring the quality of storybooks is not about re-writing the books afresh or replacing what is written with your own version. Rather, it is about striving to provide translations that are appropriate, acceptable and useable by the people they are intended for.

Step 1:

- a) Start by **READING** from start to finish each storybook you have been assigned.
- b) Understand the story text.
- c) Look carefully at the images to see if they tell the same story as the text does.
- d) Focus on checking and making a note of these issues:

Step 2:

- **Language quality:** Check that there are no spelling errors or grammar mistakes.
- **Pictures:** Does each page of text make sense with the picture on the page? If the text on a page does not quite represent the picture, please revise the text to match the picture. For example, if the text says that the characters are happy and yet the picture shows that they are sad, you will need to revise that text so that it matches what you see in the picture.
- **Letters and special characters:** Check letters, special characters and symbols are correct and consistent.
- **Punctuation: Check that:**
 - ✓ Every sentence starts with a capital letter and ends with a full stop.
 - ✓ Every proper noun (names of people and places) starts with capital letters.
 - ✓ Direct speech is formatted with the correct quotation marks and a full stop or comma after the direct speech is placed inside the quotation marks. For example: Mary said, "I will come tomorrow." OR "I will come tomorrow," said Mary. (Note that direct speech uses a "double quotation mark", not two 'single quotation marks' typed "twice").
 - ✓ Spacing is correct before/after punctuation (close up / open up spaces).
 - ✓ Sentences are generally the right length for the reading level.
 - ✓ There is no use of semi-colon (;) or abbreviations.

Step 3:

After reviewing the issues, make corrections to the story text (edit online and/or on the story template). After addressing all issues you identified and making corrections, read each story once again from start to finish to make sure that each story is presented clearly and logically, with sentences and paragraphs that are coherent.

Step 4:

Compile a report of what issues you noticed and addressed as you worked through your assigned storybooks. Please refer to some specific examples. You submit the report at the end of your work.

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