isiZulu language guidelines and principles

This document is a reference document to avoid unnecessary discussion about which target language conventions to follow when translating Sony Ericsson (SE) User Interface texts. It is intended to help ensure that language and style are used consistently and correctly and that they are standardised between products and between different translators working with the same target language.
1. Principles that need to be specified for all languages

1.1. How should Numbers and Digits be displayed (e.g. separators, digit grouping, rendering)?

In sentences numbers are used with prefixes.
If numbering is used on its own, the English number format should be followed.
E.g.:

100 000 = 100 000
100,000,000.00 = 100,000,000.00

In a sentence, spell the number out (“Umuntu oyedwa”) rather than use “umuntu oyi-1”. The only exception is with space limitations — in that case the number can be used together with another word.
E.g. “umuntu oyi-1” or “umuntu o-1”.

The position of the number in a sentence is determined by the context of that sentence. E.g. "There are 13 people present - abantu abakhona bayi-13" or "13 people have left - abantu abayi-13 sebehambile”

1.2. How should Time and Date formats be translated (incl. abbreviations)?

Spell out months using Gregorian calendar:
For communication, e.g. a letter: 18 Meyi / 18 kuNhlaba 2009
Abbreviated form: 18 Mey. 2009 (see Calendar abbreviations below)
In a sentence: Ngomhlaka-18 Meyi 2009.
Ngomhlaka 18 kuNhlaba 2009 (ngonyaka ka-2009)
Numbering of centuries, days, time — spell out:
izinkulungwane ezingama-20
izinsuku eziyi-12
Isikhathi 6: 30 ntambama/kusihlwa
6:30 ekuseni

24-hour format is preferable.

1.3. How should Calendar details be displayed (incl. abbreviations)?
Months in isiZulu are as follows:
January — uMasingana
February — uNhloLANja
March — uNdasa
April — uMbasa
May — uNhlaba
June — uNhlangulana
July — uNtulikazi
August — uNowaba
September — uMandulo
October — uMfumfu
November — uLwezi
December — uZibandlela

Avoid abbreviated forms.
But if the months are translated in the English loan-form of the word, they can be abbreviated:
e.g. January — uJanuwari (Jan.); February — uFebhruwari (Feb.); March — uMashi (Mas.); April — u-Ephreli (Eph.); May — uMeyi (Mey.); June — uJuni (Jun.); July — uJulayi (Jul.); August — u-Agasti (Aga.); September — uSePthemba (Sep.); October — u-Okthoba (Okt.); November — uNovemba (Nov.); December — uDisemba (Dis.)

1.4. How should Measurements be indicated (e.g. Imperial/Metric)?
Metric system is used:
kilometre — ikhilomitha (km)
metre — imitha (m)
decimetre — idesimitha (dm)
centimetre — isentimitha (sm)
millimetre — imilimitha (ml)

The imperial measurements should be converted to metric measurements. We normally have to convert inches, thous, feet and miles (imperial) to the millimetres, metres and kilometers (metric) in our language.

1.5. How should Names and Addresses be displayed (examples)?
Names should follow the source. The only translated parts are expressions like “Mr/Mrs”. Initials follow the source:
Sibusiso Dlamini
S. Dlamini

Addresses follow the source. Foreign addresses are kept as is:
P.O. Box 78 N1 City 1740
023 Mayburg Street N1 City 1739.

Example of an address in Zulu:
Mr MG Mdlalose
506 Estoril
7 Hopkins Street
Yeoville
2100

1.6. Are there any Official regulations (spelling reforms, writing conventions, localisation rules) applicable for SE UI texts?
N/A. See references.

1.7. Is there any standard Terminology by other actors (e.g. Microsoft, Nokia) used in telecommunications?
SEMC interface has been localised into isiZulu ("isi" means language, so "isiZulu" is "Zulu language") for a while now, but Nokia and Microsoft are also available in isiZulu. Both are good examples of language use and SEMC would look pretty much the same.

1.8. How should **Abbreviations** (e.g. “message” written as “msg”) and **Truncations** (e.g. “continue” written as “cont.”) be handled?
Acronyms and short forms should be avoided in isiZulu. In some cases a shorter synonym should be considered.
If abbreviation or shortening is the only option, the following rules should be used:
shortening is normally done in words by removing vowels or prefixes in words.

Examples of common abbreviations:
Nkk. — Nkosikazi (Madam/Mrs)
Mnz. — Mnumzane (Mister)
Dkt. — Dokotela (Doctor)
Umshy Cng - Umshayi Cingo (Caller)
Phqul - Phequulula (Browse)
izndl zocing - izindleko zocingo (Call cost)
phambk - Phambukisa (divert)

Measurement abbreviation is dealt with as explained above.
If any doubt may arise as to the meaning of the acronym or abbreviation, spell it out.

1.9. How should **Acronyms** (e.g. “Global Positioning System” written as “GPS”) be handled?
English/non-translated acronyms are used with the correct prefix (“ye-”, “isi-”, “yakwa-“, etc.) in the front of the acronym. The use of these prefixes is determined by the surrounding words such as verbs, position in sentence (subject/object, etc.).

If the acronym appears on its own, the prefix used is "i-": For example:
i-RPC
i-HTML
i-TCP
i-PIN

If source acronyms are translated in full and both the full translation and the acronym is present, the isiZulu acronym is used without a prefix. For example:
Cindezela Ukuze Ukhulume (CUU) = Push To Talk (PTT)

But if acronym “CUU” is used on its own, it would be written as “i-CUU”.

1.10. Are there any principles about **Soft keys** (e.g. regarding limited space)?
Deleting prefixes might be helpful in creating more space. Where space is limited, using English might be the only way. This should only be used in extreme situations.
2. Potential areas of conflict in isiZulu only

2.1. Are there any competing conventions regarding Address/Register (formal/informal tone)? If so, describe the one SE UI texts should use.
Language that is simple and easy to understand should be used. Use active voice forms with informal, almost conversational tone.
E.g. Press Menu to go back to the Games Menu — Cindezela uMenyu ukuze uphindele kwiMenyu Yemidlalo.

2.2. Are there any competing conventions about how Nouns and Verbs (in master text) are translated (e.g. use of plural forms, verb forms)? If so, describe the one SE UI texts should use.
N/A.

2.3. Are there any competing conventions regarding Articles (e.g. articles and nouns)? If so, describe the one SE UI texts should use.
In isiZulu the initial vowel of the prefix has the function of the article.
e.g. the book — incwadi, this book — le ncwadi

2.4. Are there any competing conventions about which Accented and Special characters to use in your language? If so, describe the one SE UI texts should use.
N/A.

2.5. Are there any competing conventions regarding Punctuation and Separators? If so, describe the one SE UI texts should use.
N/A.

2.6. Hyphenation should generally be avoided! Space constraints may change after translation, causing text to reflow and hyphenations to appear in the middle of rows. If hyphenation is the ONLY viable option for your language, describe which convention SE UI texts should use.
Hyphenate after the prefix and move the stem of the word to the next line. If a stem also needs to be hyphenated, hyphenate it after a consonant. For example:
izigilamkhuba can be hyphenated first by hyphenating the prefix: “izi-gilamkhuba”.
If the stem also needs hyphenation: “izi-gilam-khuba”.

However, a lot of exceptions exists. For example:
bodo-zela
For more examples of exceptions please see the Reference material tab > Dictionaries > item 13

2.7. Are there any competing conventions regarding Capitalisation? If so, describe the one SE UI texts should use.
Follow the English convention. Where necessary, the prefix is a small letter followed by uppercase letter in the main stem:
E.g. e-Gauteng
2.8. Are there any competing conventions about *Terms left in English* in your language? If so, describe the one SE UI texts should use.
N/A
2.9. Are there any competing conventions about translating **Trademarks** in your language? If so, describe the one SE UI texts should use.
Do not translate trademarks.

2.10. Are there any competing conventions about **Transliterations** in your language? If so, describe the one SE UI texts should use?
N/A

2.11. Are there any competing conventions about **Loan words** from other languages? If so, describe the one SE UI texts should use.
For loan month names from English — see section 1.3.

2.12. Is there any specific information about the **Receiving markets** for your language? If so, describe what applies to SE UI texts.
isiZulu spoken in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province of South Africa is considered the standard. Do not confuse with or use various spoken dialects.

2.13. Are there any **Issues translators/validators have disagreed on** in previous SE projects? If so, describe what applies to SE UI texts.
N/A

2.14. Other
N/A
3. Reference Material

Dictionaries
11. Pansalb, 2008; *Imithetho yokubhala nobalomagama lwesiZulu*.
12. isizulu.net

Major actors
1. Microsoft (Language packs and spell checkers can be downloaded from Microsoft website). Most notable the latest Windows Vista. Translation of Windows 7 is ongoing.
2. Nokia
3. Pansalb (www.pansalb.org.za)
4. University of KwaZulu Natal (www.ukzn.ac.za)
5. Google
6. Zulu Language Board
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