

7.7 1851 Traverse des Sioux Treaty Analysis Worksheet

Read these translations aloud or silently. Pay attention to the two different versions in English. The first English version is the formal treaty language written in 1851. The second English version was translated in 2012 (in Mni Sóta Maḵoḵe: The Land of the Daḵota) from the 1851 Daḵota translation. This gives us a clue as to how the Daḵota read and understood the treaty.

English Language From Treaty, Article One, 1851:

It is stipulated and solemnly agreed that the peace and friendship now so happily existing between the United States and the aforesaid bands of Indians, shall be perpetual.

In 1851, Stephen Riggs, a missionary, translated the English into Daḵota.

Daḵota Language From Treaty, Article One, 1851:

Isantanka Oyate qa Daḵota Warpetonwan qa Sisitonwan ewicakiyapi kin hena okiciciyapi qa odakonkiciyapi kin ohinniyan detanhan cantekiciyuzapi kta e nakaha awicakehan wakiconzapi qa yuxtanpi.

Language Translated From Daḵota From Treaty, Article One, 2012:

The people of the United States and the Wahpeton and Sisseton Daḵota people, those named, help each other and are allied with each other, earlier this day they purposefully resolved and concluded forever from this time to hold each other's hearts.

Answer these questions:

1. What is different and what is the same about the tone and the length of the two versions in English?
2. What feelings do you see in the different versions?
3. What do you notice about how the different versions describe relationship?

Relating to representatives of the government as relatives was a way for the Daḵota to see the United States through the lens of mitakuye owas'inq. But there's a big difference between the language of the treaty and how the Daḵota were actually treated. Keep in mind that most interactions between the U.S. government and its officials and the Daḵota were oral—they talked to one another. When it came time to write things down the language got more legal and specific, and the true nature of what they were signing was not always clear to the Daḵota or to other tribes.