

**SA Language Rights Bulletin**  
**Volume 1 Issue 2**  
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**Prepared for the**  
**Pan South African Language Board**  
**by the**  
**Unit for Language Management**  
**University of the Free State**

## 1 Introduction

The aim of the South African Language Rights Bulletin (SALRB) is to present an overview of language rights issues in South Africa as primarily reflected in data from the printed media obtained from SA Media. Data are only collected from the newspapers supplied to SA Media. (From 2007 onwards data from selected African language newspapers will also be included.) Relevant data from other sources are also reflected. It is intended that such an overview will assist the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) to stay abreast regarding language rights developments in the country, allowing the Board the opportunity to intervene timely should it be required. Although the focus is on language rights, the overview also covers language issues more generally.

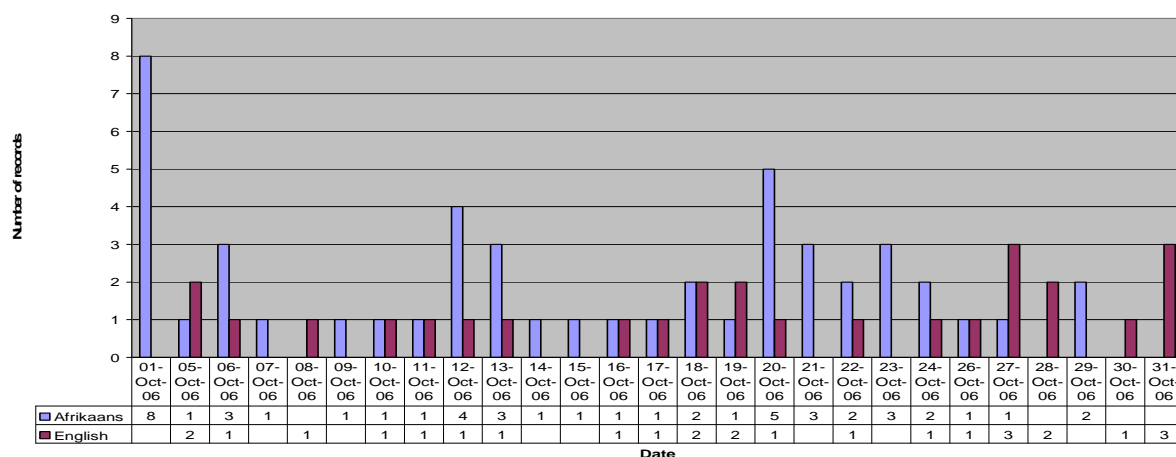
Due to the complex data processing system of SA Media the collection of printed media records presented in this Bulletin might not be complete. The conclusions reached in this report are thus of a preliminary nature. Corrections and adjustments will be made in the corresponding annual South African Language Rights Monitor which will be prepared for PanSALB once data collection has been completed and verified.

## 2 Media coverage on language issues during October 2006

Printed media records for October 2006 were drawn from the SA Media database by means of the standard subject topics used by the archive. Cross-checking is always done against clippings made by the project staff from daily and weekly newspapers.

During October 2006 altogether 76 records were obtained from SA Media (by 20061025). These exclude reviews, which usually form the bulk of printed media records. (Reviews will only be considered for the purposes of the annual South African Language Rights Monitor. However, reviews directly relevant to language rights have been taken into account.) Figure 1 gives an indication of the spread of records during the month, as well as the breakdown between Afrikaans and English records. (No bilingual records were provided.)

Figure 1: Spread of SA Media records on language-related topics for October 2006

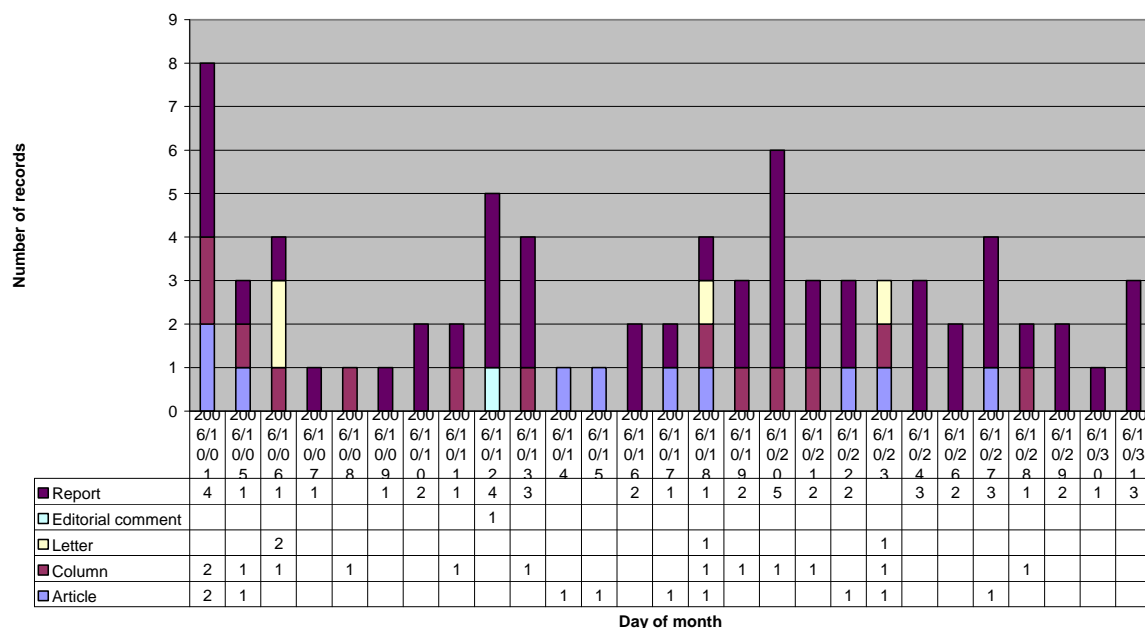


From the spread of records we note that language featured in some or other way regularly throughout the month of October 2006. Relatively sharp peaks are noticeable on five days, i.e. the 6<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. Some of these peaks may be attributed to specific developments. Noteworthy is the coverage prompted by a question put by the Freedom Front Plus leader Dr. Pieter Mulder to President Thabo Mbeki on 20061012 and his resultant undertaking to discuss the name change issue with Dr Pallo Jordan. Coverage to the protest march in Potchefstroom on 20061019 also prompted increased coverage. It is further noteworthy that coverage were maintained towards the end of the month.

Of the 76 records provided, 49 (64,5%) emanated from Afrikaans newspapers and 27 (35,5%) from English newspapers. (In the case of identical records, only one record per media group was included in the database.) Given the ratio 3:1, English:Afrikaans newspapers, the larger presence of Afrikaans records in the database suggests a definite prominence given by the Afrikaans press to language matters during October 2006. However, we also note instances where the English press has given relatively more coverage to language matters, as evident on the 5<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> of October. This difference could be partly ascribed to a prolonged coverage on the part of the English press of name changes, even where English place names are not involved.

Figure 2 provides a breakdown of the type of records captured in the database for October 2006.

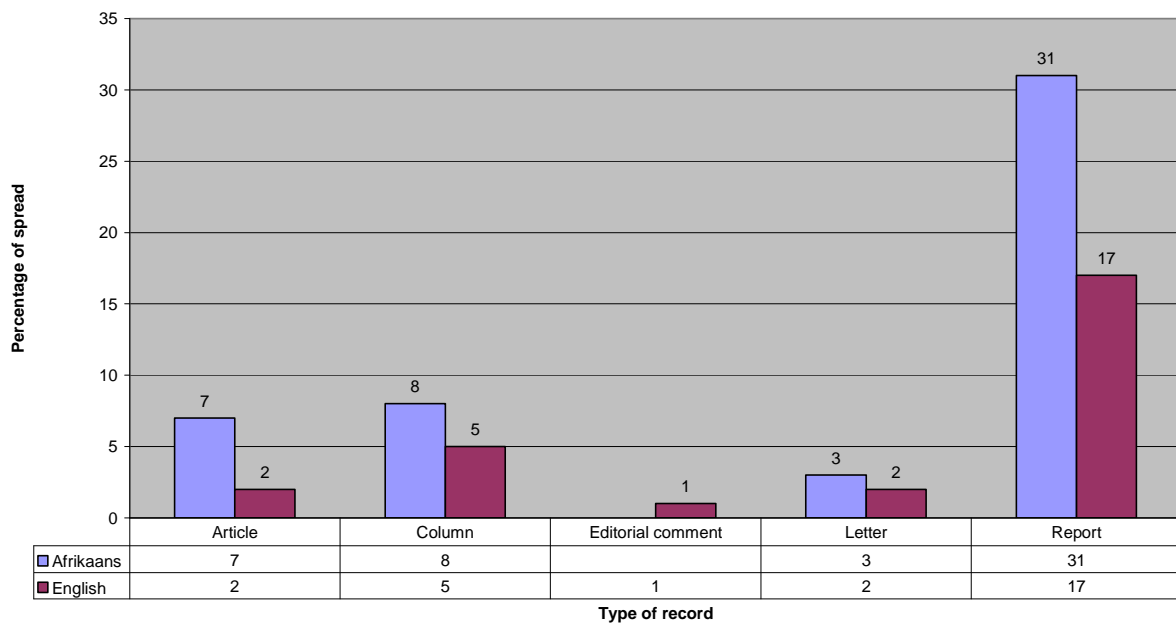
Figure 2: Type of SA Media record on language-related topics for October 2006



By far the largest portion of records consists of press reports. We note that 48 (63,2%) of the records in the database for October 2006 are reports, followed by 17 (13,2%) columns and 10 (13,2%) articles. Only 1 editorial comment has been included in the database for October and 4 letters. Again, the high incidence of reporting point to the active role the printed media plays in covering language as news item.

Figure 2a provides a breakdown of the type of record published by the Afrikaans and English press.

Fig 2a: Type of SA Media record on language-related topics per language of newspaper for October 2006

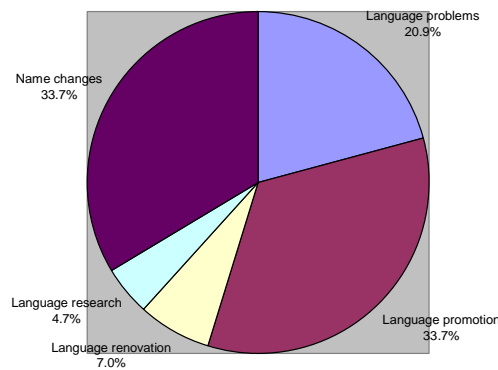


The Afrikaans press has produced almost twice more reports compared to the English press, but relatively less articles. Notably the English press also produced columns covering language-related issues. Only the Afrikaans press published an editorial comment during October 2006 related to language. The latter carried criticism on the marathon Afrikaans poem that was published on the internet and that is discussed later under language promotion (cf. *Afrikaner*, 20061012).

### 3 Focus of media coverage

For October 2006 it was possible to distinguish apart from the previous five broad categories of coverage; language research was added as a category. Figure 3 displays the spread of overall coverage in printed media records captured in the SALRB database.

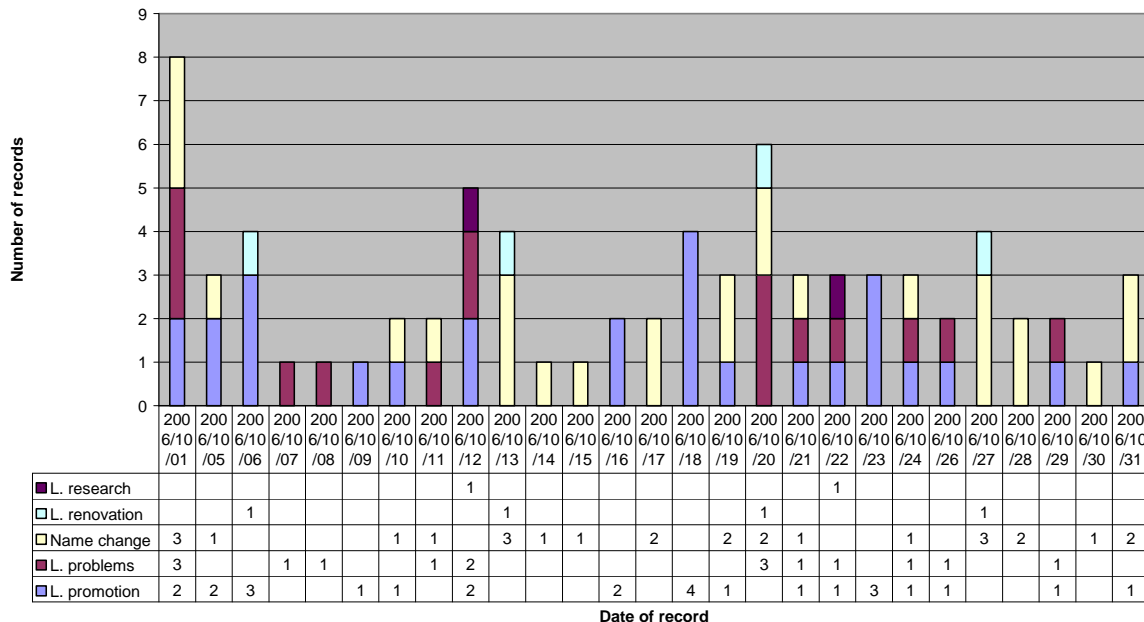
Figure 3: Overall categories of media coverage during October 2006



Compared to the previous month, coverage of the process of name changes in South Africa has still enjoyed some prominence during October 2006 (33,7%) but proportionally less so than during September 2006 (40,5%). Language promotion, in comparison received relatively more attention (33,7%) than during September 2006 (23,8%). a more general nature and language promotion have also received attention in the printed media. A fair deal of coverage was devoted to language problems.

Figure 4 displays the spread of overall coverage per day.

Fig 4: Spread of overall media coverage per day during October 2006



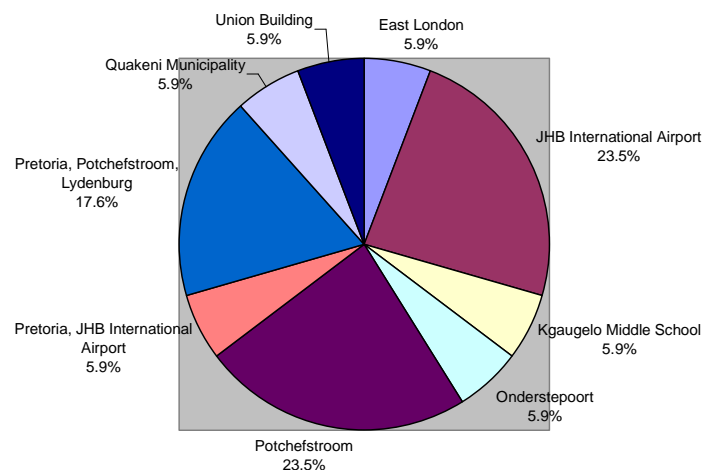
Coverage on *name changes* is spread throughout the month on 16 different days. Coverage the name change of Johannesburg International Airport to O.R. Tambo International Airport continued, as well as that of Pretoria to Tshwane, Potchefstroom to Tlokwe and Lydenburg to Mashishing. A notable development was the discussion that took place between the President

and Dr. Pallo Jordan regarding the proposed name changes of Afrikaans places. The proposed name change of KZN/Natal to KwaZulu did not feature again during October 2006. In comparison, *language problems* did not receive the same continued attention and seem to have been covered more sporadically. Language problems were covered on 11 days of the month. *Language promotion* is covered proportionally more than language problems and features also on 16 days during October 2006 and also covered more regularly throughout the month. *Language renovation* is covered on four set days on a weekly basis, specifically in the language columns that are a feature of the Afrikaans printed media.

### 3.1 Focus on name changes

Altogether 27 records cover aspects related to name changes in South Africa. Figure 5 displays the spread of coverage during October 2006 regarding name changes.

Figure 5: Breakdown of records covering name changes



Coverage on the name change of Johannesburg International Airport to OR Tambo International Airport still featured relatively strongly during October 2006 but did not dominate the name change debate any longer. The coverage of this particular name change may be largely related to the official naming ceremony held on 20061027, the date of OR Tambo's birthday (cf. *Weekend Post*, 20061028, etc.). The rest of this coverage is related to the ongoing debate on this particular name change.

Interestingly, the debate on the name change of Pretoria to Tshwane featured only once directly in an announcement on the outcome of a complaint lodged with the Advertising Standards Authority's finding that advertisements by the Tshwane Metro Council is misleading. The advertisements have erroneously been referring to Tshwane as capital and was thus found to be misleading readers (cf. *Beeld*, 20061017). The name change of Pretoria was also mentioned in four other records but coupled with the two other Afrikaans names under

discussion, Potchefstroom and Lydenburg (*Cape Argus*, 20061013, *Burger*, 20061013, *Beeld*, 20061013, *Beeld*, 20061014). Important about the coverage of these three names is the President's undertaking given in Parliament following a question by the leader of the Freedom Front Plus to discuss the matter with Dr Pallo Jordan, Minister of Arts and Culture. The objective of the discussion would be to find solutions that will acceptable to all. The Freedom Front Plus was raising the issue of changes to names that have emotional, historical and sentimental value to Afrikaners.

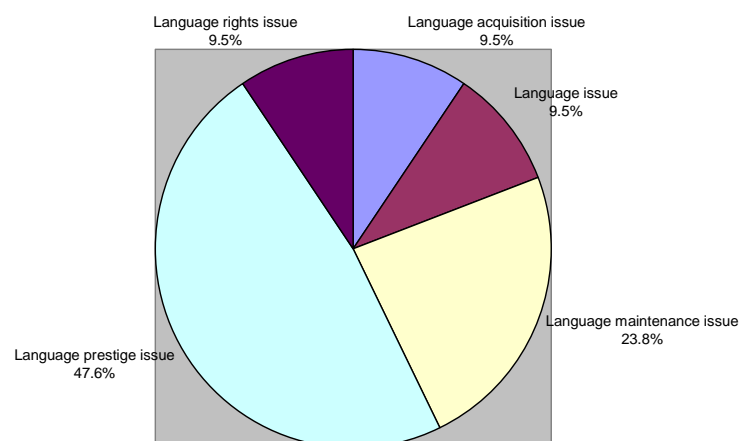
Coverage was also given to other name changes or proposed name changes amongst those names related to the Union of South Africa, i.e. East London (*Sowetan*, 20061024) and the Union Buildings (*Star*, 20061031).

### 3.2 Focus on language problems

The 16 records dealing with language problems may be categorised in terms of four major issues, language prestige issues, language acquisition issues, language rights issues and language issues. Language problem issues generally received sporadic coverage during October 2006 (cf. Figure 4). We notice some concentration on language problems towards the second part of the month and also a relatively more even spread during this part of the month.

Figure 6 displays the details regarding the categorisation of language problems for October 2006.

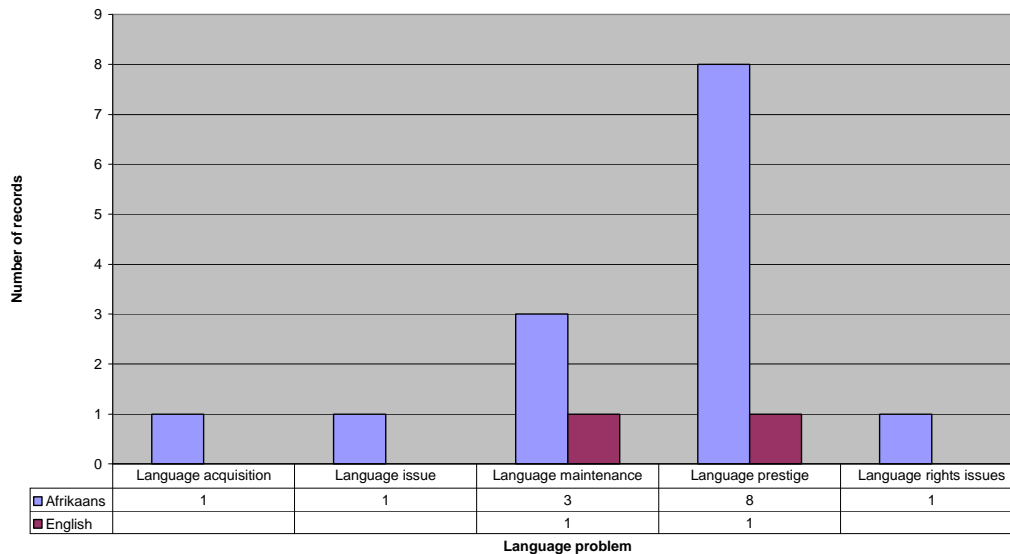
Figure 6: Breakdown of covering of language problems



We note that language problems related to language prestige issues have dominated coverage (8 records) whilst problems related to language maintenance issues have also received a fair amount of attention (4 records) during October 2006.

Figure 7 provides a breakdown of the coverage of language problems per language concerned.

Figure 7: Coverage of language problems per language concerned



We note that coverage of language problems overwhelmingly deals with issues in relation to Afrikaans, and mostly with regard the problems related to the prestige and maintenance of Afrikaans.

The language prestige issues raised in relation to Afrikaans relates mostly to problems regarding language promotion. The relation between Afrikaans and Dutch is debated by Max du Preez in one of the records covering language prestige issues. The question is mooted whether the language needs this link and whether it cannot function as an independent language from Africa (*Volksblad*, 20061007). It prompted some strong reaction from two columnists of *Burger* (20061012; 2006/10/16) criticising Du Preez for his approach and defending a strong link between Afrikaans and Dutch. A further record questions the consequence of arrogant approaches to language promotion. A specific incident is mentioned to illustrate the particular columnist's point. Members of the Transvaal Agricultural Union have insisted on being addressed in Afrikaans when after a meeting of the Presidential Agricultural Working Group as speaker was addressing a predominantly Afrikaans meeting in English. The columnist criticises this type of aggressive language promotion arguing it may damage the prestige of the Afrikaans language (*Beeld*, 20061011). A letter by Bernard Odendaal from Bloemfontein responds to this criticism, agreeing with the columnist on the negative outcome of the specific incident mentioned but in turn criticising her for not putting the problems regarding language status and prestige of other languages into the right perspective. A fourth record from the conservative newspaper *Afrikaner* (20061012) criticises the publication of a marathon Afrikaans poem on the internet for misrepresenting the history of the language and for ridiculing some well-known Afrikaner leaders. Another record covers criticism by Conrad Steenkamp of



the attempts by *Vrye Afrikaan*, the most progressive Afrikaans news paper at present, to adopt a more inclusive approach to language promotion. The author argues that the approach remains essentially elitist and that more effort should be made to focus on poor Afrikaans speakers (*Vrye Afrikaan*, 20061020). The last record covers a problem that might also pertain to some of the marginalised languages of South Africa. It covers an announcement by the Academy of Science of South Africa regarding a new dispensation for scholarly journals. One of the direct implications of its proposals is that Afrikaans journals might lose its state recognition (*Rapport*, 2006/1029).

Records on language maintenance issues again deal with questions regarding the future of Afrikaans as language of higher education. One record covers the announcement by the University of Johannesburg on the phasing out of Afrikaans as medium of education in the Humanities and a follow-up report a speech by Willie Spies of the Freedom Front Plus in Parliament regarding the situation of Afrikaans at universities (*Frontnuus*, 20061001). Two further records later in the month also cover the situation of Afrikaans at universities. The one is an article by Abraham Philips regarding the plight of the poor Afrikaans speaker, calling for a shift in the debate regarding language at universities to this section of the population and the second a letter by Zurietta Pieterse from Malelane criticising the current debate, calling for more language-specific universities also in the African languages (*Vrye Afrikaan*, 20061020).

One language rights issue is included in the database for October 2006. A report indirectly covers the name change of the bank account of the South African Revenue Services (SARS) to the English only wording. It mentions a request to the Minister of Finance for allowance for the Afrikaans name (Suid-Afrikaanse Inkomstediens – SAID) to still be used by tax payers who so prefer (*Frontnuus*, 20061001). This matter was also covered in the previous SALRB.

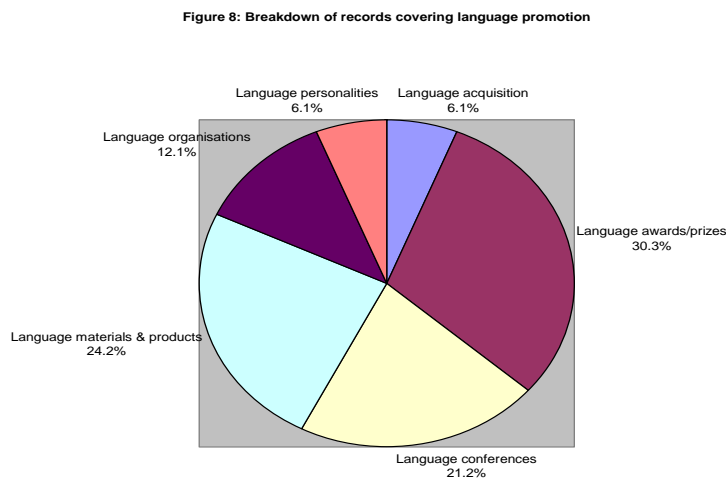
One record deals with a “language issue”. A columnist lambastes the level of Afrikaans used on the KKNK web site (*Burger*, 20061021).

One of the three records not dealing with Afrikaans deal with language acquisition. The first record reports on the status of African languages as second-language subjects. Figures are provided that indicate a move away from these languages and a surprising preference for Afrikaans as second language (*Sunday Times*, 20061022). The second record deals with the overwhelming prestige of English in South African society. However, the columnist argues for a recognition of the value of the “own tongue” and argues for a bilingual approach (*Sunday Times*, 20061008).

### 3.3 Focus on language promotion

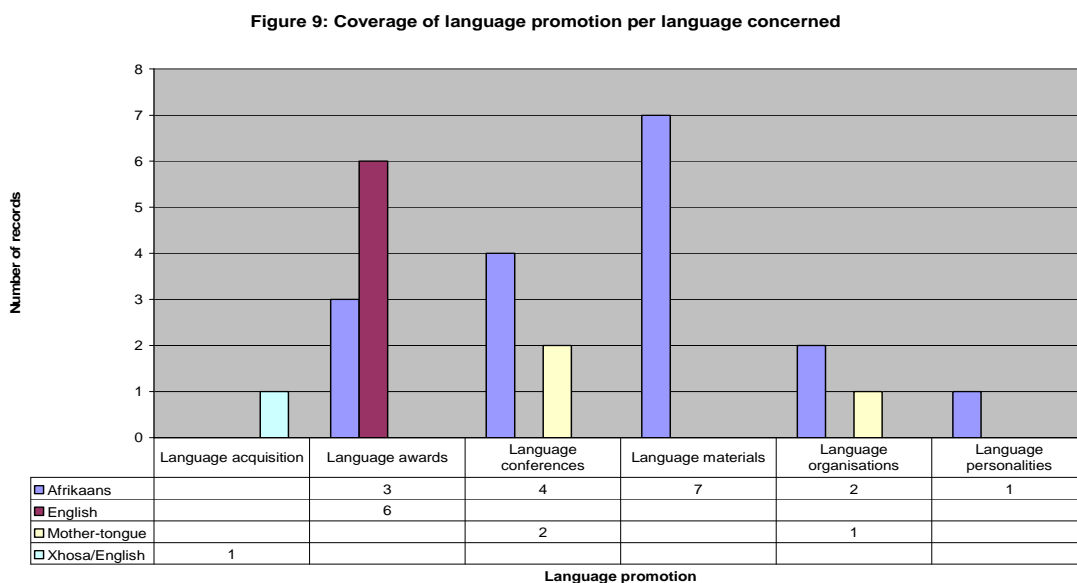
Altogether 27 records focus in some or other way on language promotion. We note a relative clustering of coverage on the first three days of the month and between the 21<sup>st</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. The latter clustering may partly be contributed to the number of language conferences covered after the middle of the month. Also notable is the relative spread of coverage on language materials towards the en of the month.

Figure 8 displays the breakdown in this coverage for October 2006.



For October 2006 coverage on language promotion focussed mostly on language awards and prizes (9 records) and language materials and products (7 records). Language conferences (6 records) also received a fair amount of attention.

Figure 9 provides a breakdown of coverage of language promotion per language concerned.



Again, most of the coverage regarding language promotion is devoted to Afrikaans (63,0%) and some on English (22,2%). The mother-tongue issue received some promotional attention (11,1%) during October 2006 and a school practising bilingual education in English and IsiXhosa received promotional coverage.

Seven of the 17 records covering aspects of the promotion of Afrikaans deal with language materials and products. Notably three of these records deal with coverage of Afrikaans music *per se*, one with traditional music (*Beeld*, 2006/10/09) and two with contemporary music (*Star*, 2006/10/18; *Mail & Guardian*, 2006/10/26). Two of the seven records deal with Afrikaans authors and their work, one focussing on the fact that one of these authors, Petra Müller, has written and published a collection of poetry in English as opposed to her mother tongue (*Kerkblad*, 2006/10/01; *Rapport*, 2006/10/01). Another record covers the publication on the internet of a marathon Afrikaans poem, the longest ever written in Afrikaans, a project initiated by an amateur Afrikaans poet living in New Zealand (*Star*, 2006/10/05). The last record relates to coverage on a new specialist Afrikaans search engine on the Internet, *Soek-Afrikaans.co.za* (*Citizen*, 2006/10/31). Notable about this coverage is the fact that four of the records stem from the English press.

Coverage on language conferences also contribute to language promotion. Two conferences were covered where the promotion of Afrikaans featured. The first is a conference on Afrikaans organised by the Western Cape Language Committee and the Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport on Saturday, 2006/10/21 (*Rapport*, 2006/10/22, 2006/10/29; *Burger*, 2006/10/23). The second was a seminar organised by the Regslui vir Afrikaans, an Afrikaans version of the Law Society, in Paarl and George to inform members on new developments in the fraternity. Although the focus of the seminar was not language as such, the report on the seminar covered specifically the attention paid on the role of this organisation to promote the use of Afrikaans in the courts (*Burger*, 2006/10/24).

Three records deal with language awards and prizes presented for special achievements in Afrikaans. One record announces the award ceremony for Afrikaans music scheduled for 2006/10/30 where the so-called Vonk Oskar Awards are given for albums released during 2005 (*Beeld*, 2006/10/06). The second covers the annual award ceremony of the Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns held on Wednesday, 2006/10/04 at Stellenbosch honouring achievement at different levels in Afrikaans (*Burger*, 2006/10/06). The last record covers Skouspel 2006, another gala event for the Afrikaans music industry held annually in the Superbowl at Sun City but presents a critical view of the quality of the event and mentions an award given to Laurika Rauch, one of the most well-known Afrikaans musicians (*Beeld*, 2006/10/21). Another record deals with a proposal by a columnist to set up an international

Dutch-Afrikaans literary prize. This idea was partly inspired by the achievement by JM Coetzee mentioned below (*Beeld*, 20061016).

Six records deal with language awards and prizes in relation to English. They cover the selection by an international literary panel appointed by *The Observer* from London of JM Coetzee's novel, *Disgrace*, as the best in English published the last 25 years (*Beeld*, 2006/10/12; *Cape Argus*, 2006/10/16; *Mail & Guardian*, 2006/10/19). Another three records deal with language awards and prizes in English. The first stems from coverage of the winner of the 2006 Man Booker Prize, Brittan's most prestigious literary award (*Beeld*, 2006/10/12) and another on Fred Khumalo's achievement as joint winner of the European Union Literary Prize for 2006 for his book, *Bitches' brew*. Gerald Kraak was the other winner (*Beeld*, 20061018).

Two records deal with language organisations involved in Afrikaans language promotion. The first stems from a promotional insert on the Stigting vir die Bemagtiging deur Afrikaans (SBA), an influential Cape-based Afrikaans language agency involved in language promotion and literacy among the poorer section of the Afrikaans community of the Western Cape and adjoining areas. This coverage coincides with the Annual General Meeting of the SBA (*Burger*, 2006/10/05). The second record stems from a fundraising event for the Woordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal (WAT), the largest Afrikaans dictionary (*Burger*, 2006/10/18).

Two of the three records relating to the mother-tongue issue originated at language conferences. The first originated at the Language Policy Implementation in Higher Education Conference held at UNISA at the beginning of the month where the Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor stressed the importance of mother-tongue-based bilingual education (*Pretoria News*, 20061006). The second record presents coverage of a conference organised by the Commission for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Linguistic, Cultural and Religious Communities on the theme, Challenges of language and basic human rights in Africa. At this occasion the centrality of the mother tongue was stressed (*Volksblad*, 20061023). The third record relates to an announcement made by the Chief Executive Officer of the Stigting vir Bemagtiging (SBA) deur Afrikaans regarding the SBA's support for mother-tongue education and motivating its importance (*Burger*, 20061010).

One record emanated from a report on a bilingual education project in Philippi where children from the iThemba School receive dual-medium education in IsiXhosa and English. The school was started by Reverend Otto Kohlstock. The report promotes the success of this particular language model (*Cape Argus*, 20061018).

### **3.4 Focus on language research**

Two records covered aspects of language research. The first record stems from an interview conducted with the Director of the South African English Dictionary Unit regarding dictionary research (*Daily Dispatch*, 2006/10/12) and the second from an announcement about the Cradle of Language conference held by the University of Stellenbosch held towards the end of October 2006 (*Rapport*, 20061022).

### **3.5 Focus on language renovation**

Four records cover aspects of language renovation in Afrikaans (*Volksblad*, 20061006, 20061013, 20061020, 20061027).

## **4 Reflection on language rights issues covered during October 2006**

As can be seen from the above report on the printed media coverage on language matters during October 2006, only one record cover a language rights issue as such, a matter already discussed in the previous Bulletin.

Indirectly related to the domain of language rights is the debate that arose during the month regarding strategies to promote Afrikaans. Signs of a more progressive approach that is developing are arising.

Another notable development is the emerging interest from different quarters than the typical Afrikaner community of the importance of the mother-tongue and also its role in bilingual education. The achievements of the iThemba School in Philippi is a noteworthy project in this regard that deserves further attention.

An alarming development is the Academy of Science of South Africa's announcement regarding a new dispensation for scholarly journals and its direct implications for Afrikaans journals and language of higher learning and the position of the emerging African languages of the country.

**Addendum A: New publications regarding language rights**

Appiah, K. A. 2006. *Language Rights*. Publications of the Modern Language Association of America. Oct, Vol. 121, Issue 5, p. 1618-1620.

Malherbe, E. F. J. 2006. *Taalregte in Suid-Afrikaanse skole: (tydelike) verligting van onverpoosde druk: regspraak*. Tydskrif vir die Suid-Afrikaanse Reg. Issue 1, p. 190-197.

Pupavac, V. 2006. *Language rights in conflict and the denial of language as a communication*. International Journal of Human Rights. Vol. 10, Issue 1, p. 61-78.

**Addendum B: Government Gazette Notices pertaining to language published during October 2006**

1. Close Corporations Act, Board Notice 1411 of 2006. Incorporation and registration of companies; Company change of names; Company changes of short names; Company change of translated names; Dissolution of companies; Conversions from close corporation to companies. 6 October 2006. No. 292525.
2. Pan South African Language Board, Board Notice 109 of 2006. Nomination for membership of National Language Bodies: Sesotho National Language Body. 17 October 2006 No. 29306
3. Pan South African Language Board, Board Notice 111 of 2006. Nomination for membership of National Lexicography Units: Board of Directors. 17 October 2006. No. 29306
4. Pan South African Language Board, Board Notice 112 of 2006. Nomination for membership of Provincial Language Committees. 17 October 2006. No. 29306
5. Pan South African Language Board, Board Notice 113 of 2006. Members of Provincial Language Committees: Removal of persons. 17 October 2006. No. 29306
6. Pan South African Language Board, Board Notice 114 of 2006. Members of National Lexicography Unit: Removal of persons. 17 October 2006. No. 29306