

SA Language Rights Bulletin
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1 Aim

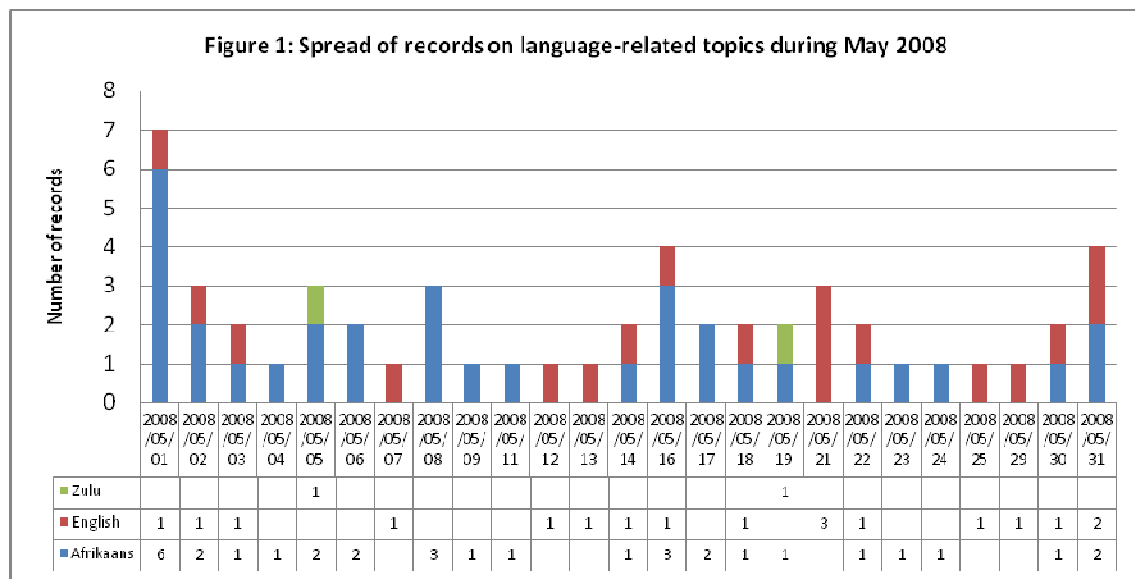
The aim of the South African Language Rights Bulletin (SALRB) is to present an overview of language rights issues in South Africa, primarily as reflected in data from the printed media, obtained from SA Media. Data are only collected from the newspapers supplied to SA Media, except in the case of the two Zulu newspapers. However, relevant data from other sources are also reflected. The objective of such an overview is to assist the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) to remain abreast of language rights developments in the country, and to provide the Board with the opportunity to intervene on a timely basis, should this be required. Although the focus is on language rights, the overview also covers language issues in general.

2 Data

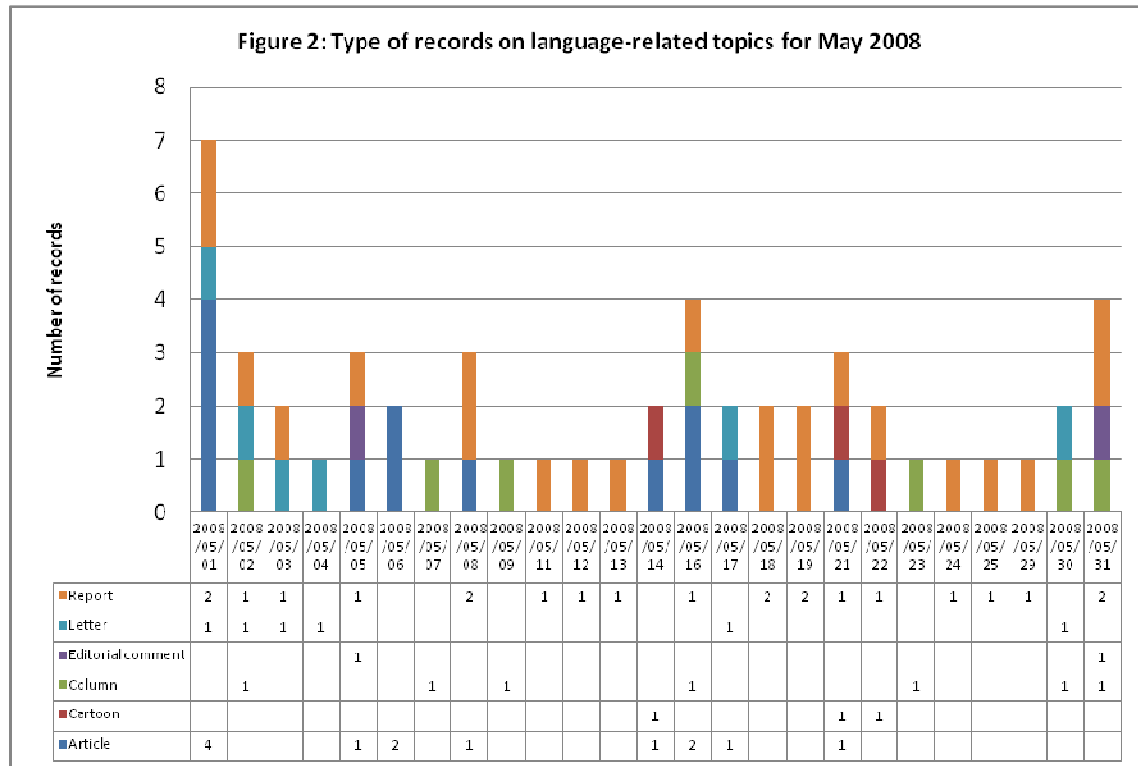
Printed media records are drawn from the SA Media database on the basis of the standard subject topics used by the archives. Cross-checking is always carried out against clippings made by the project staff from daily and weekly newspapers. Records exclude reviews, which usually comprise the bulk of printed media records. (Reviews will only be considered for the purposes of the annual South African Language Rights Monitor. However, reviews that are directly relevant to language rights have been taken into account.) Owing to the complex data-processing system of SA Media, the collection of printed media records presented in this Bulletin may not be complete. The cut-off date for records provided by SA Media for this Bulletin was 20 June 2008. Conclusions reached in this report are 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 the data-collection process has been completed and the data have been verified. Other information is collected via the Sasol Library at the University of the Free State.

3 Media coverage on language issues during May 2008

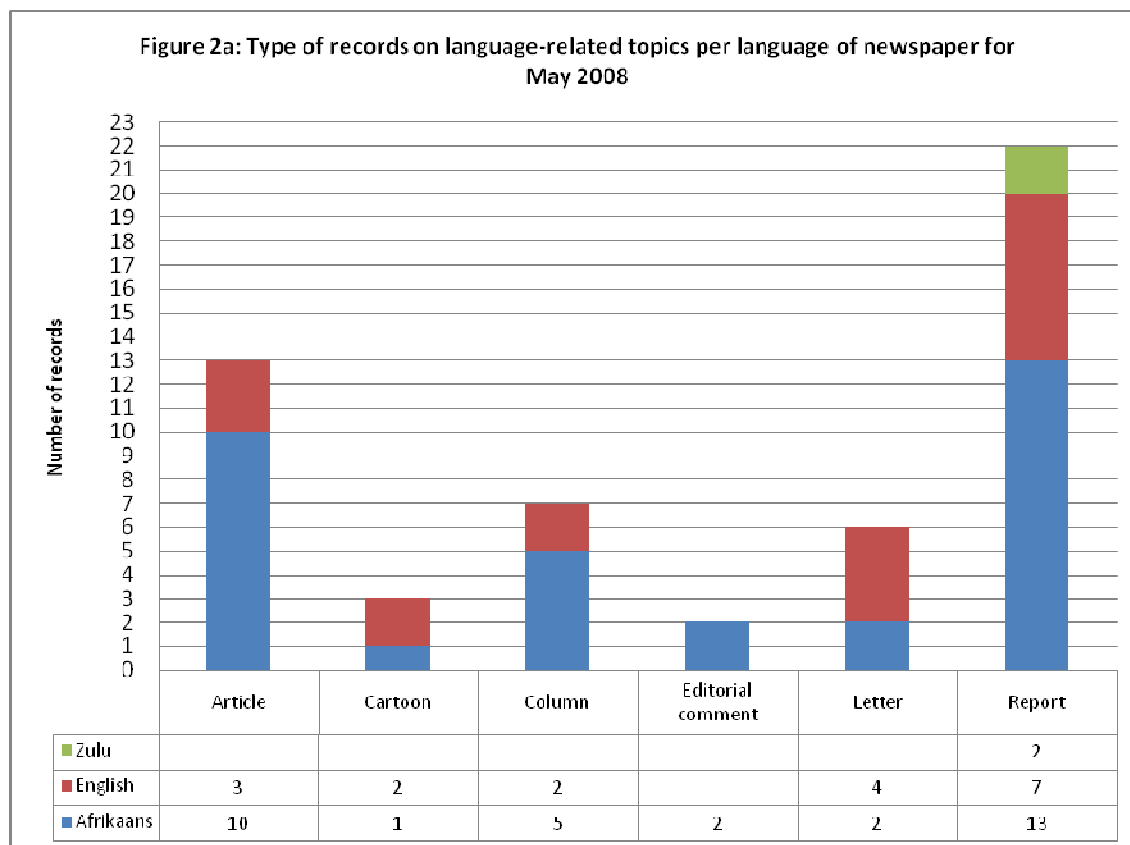
During May, a total of 53 records were obtained from SA Media. Two language-related records were published by *Isolezwe*; but none were published by *Ilanga*. Figure 1 provides an indication of the spread of records during the month, as well as the distribution between Afrikaans, English and Zulu records.



- Language division: 62% Afrikaans (33 records), 34% English (18 records) and 4% Zulu (2 records).
- Coverage of language-related matters occurred on 25/31 days (81%), at an average of 2 records per day.
- Seven records were published on the first day of the month, 6 of which appeared in the Afrikaans press.
- Four records in each case were published on 16 and 31 May, and 3 records in each case on 2, 5, 8 and 21 May.



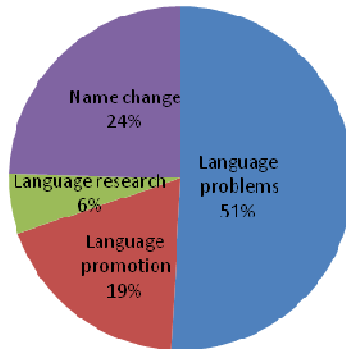
- As was the case in respect of the first four months of the year, newspaper reports accounted for the greatest percentage of the records on language-related topics – 41%. 25% of the records for May were derived from articles, 13% from columns, 11% from letters, 6% from cartoons and 4% from editorial commentary.
- The high incidence of reports covering language matters points towards a sustained interest in language-related issues on the part of newspapers.



- A total of 22 *reports* were received for May, of which 13 appeared in the Afrikaans press, 7 in the English press and 2 in the Zulu press. A large component of the reports dealt with name changes – 10 out of 22 records in total. Of these, 5 appeared in the English press, 4 in the Afrikaans press and one in the Zulu press. Eight reports – 5 in the Afrikaans press, 2 in the English press and one in the Zulu press – focused on problems related to language use and language rights. Three records – all in Afrikaans – reported on language promotion, while language research comprised the topic of a further Afrikaans report.
- Thirteen *articles* were published in May – 10 in the Afrikaans press and 3 in the English press. Nearly half of the articles dealt with language problems – 6 out of 13 records in total. Of these, 5 appeared in the Afrikaans press and one in the English press. Four articles focused on language promotion (and more specifically on various language materials and products), 2 on language research and one on name changes.
- Seven *columns* were received, of which 5 were published in the Afrikaans press and 2 in the English press. With the exception of one (English) record which comprised, in part, a language appeal, all the columns dealt with issues of language use.
- Four English and 2 Afrikaans *letters* were received. The topics of concern in the Afrikaans letters were language problems (language maintenance) and language promotion (language awareness), while linguistic issues and name changes featured in the English letters.
- The data for May included no fewer than 3 *cartoons*, all of which can be categorised as records focusing on language problems. Two appeared in the English press and referred to a specific case of language use (see below), while the Afrikaans cartoon indirectly addressed the issue of language rights.

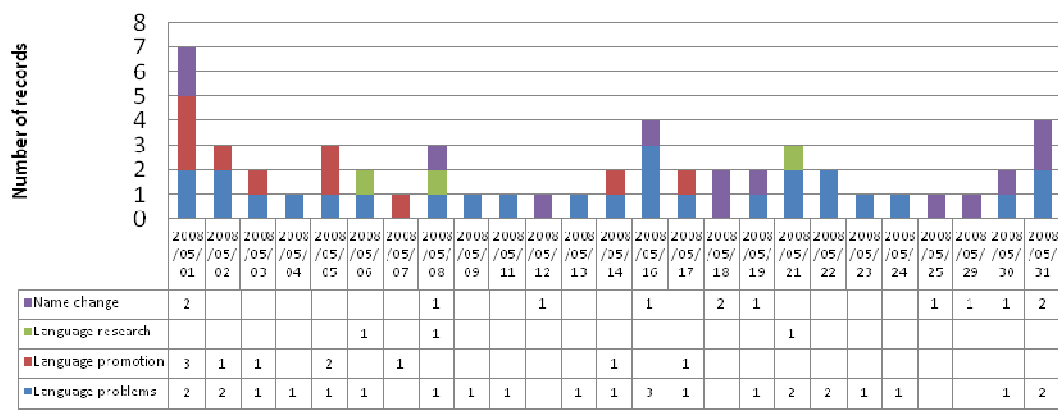
- Two Afrikaans *editorial comments* were published, one of which was related to language problems (language rights) and the other to language promotion (language conferences).

Figure 3: Overall categories of media coverage during May 2008



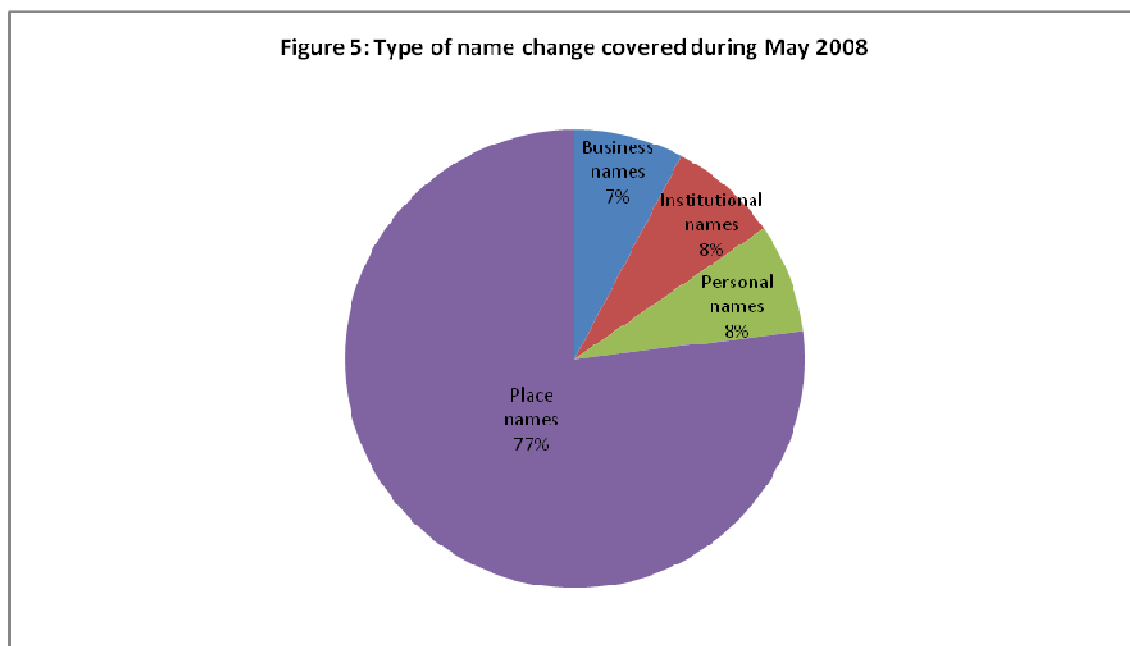
- As can be seen in Figure 3, matters related to *language problems* in South Africa received prominent coverage during May, accounting for 27 (51%) of the 53 records. Of these 27 records, 15 dealt with linguistic issues, 10 with language rights and 2 with language maintenance.
- The number of records dealing with *name changes* was the highest since January 2008. Thirteen records on name changing were received for May, as against the 3 of the previous month. The changing of place names featured in 10 records and the changing of institutional, business and personal names in one record each.
- The number of records dealing with *language promotion* was significantly lower than in the case of the previous month. Of the 10 records that were received in this category (as against the 21 records in the database for April), 5 focused on language materials and products, 3 on language conferences and one each on language awareness and language appeals.
- *Language research* received coverage in 3 records during May.

Figure 4: Spread of overall media coverage on language-related topics during May 2008

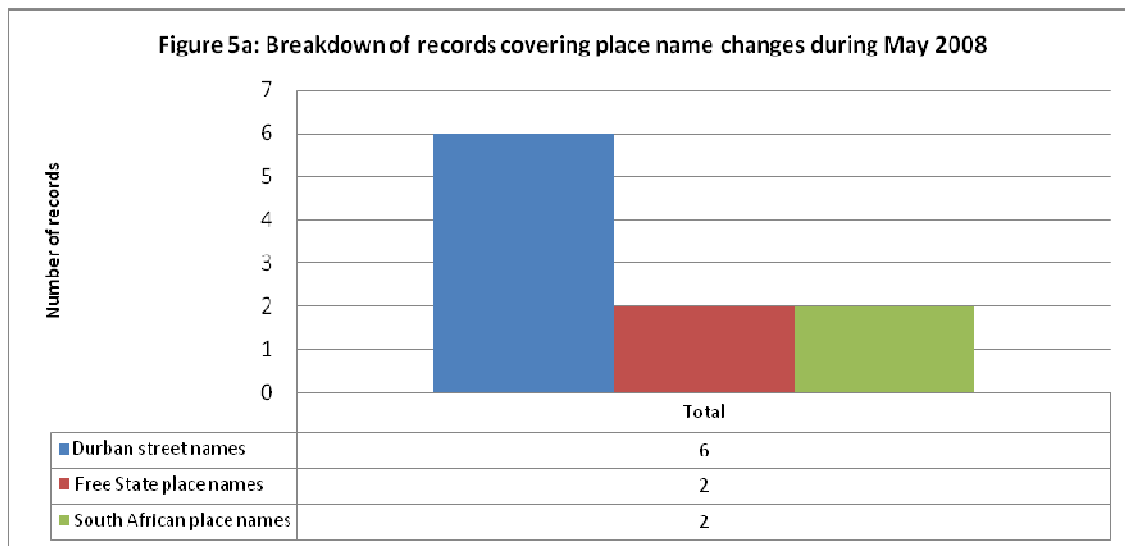


- Coverage of *language problems* occurred throughout the month, with 3 records – 2 on linguistic issues and one on language rights – published on 16 May. Coverage took place over 20 days.
- Coverage of *language promotion* occurred during the first half of the month, on 7 particular days. Three records appeared on the first day of the month, all featuring language materials and products.
- Thirteen records covering *name changing* were published during the month, with a higher concentration towards the end of the month. Two records on this topic appeared on 1, 18 and 31 May. These 6 records related mainly to the changing of South African place names in general (3 records), the changing of Durban street names (2 records) and one personal name change (1 record).
- *Language research* received coverage on 6, 8 and 21 May.

3.1 Focus on name changes



- Thirteen records in the database for May focused on matters related to *name changes* in South Africa. The majority of these records (10 in total) dealt specifically with changes to place names, while institutional, business and personal name changes were covered in one record each.
- In the category of place-name changes, as shown in Figure 5a, 6 records dealt with changes to street names in the KwaZulu-Natal capital of Durban. Free State place names and South African place names in general featured in 2 records each.



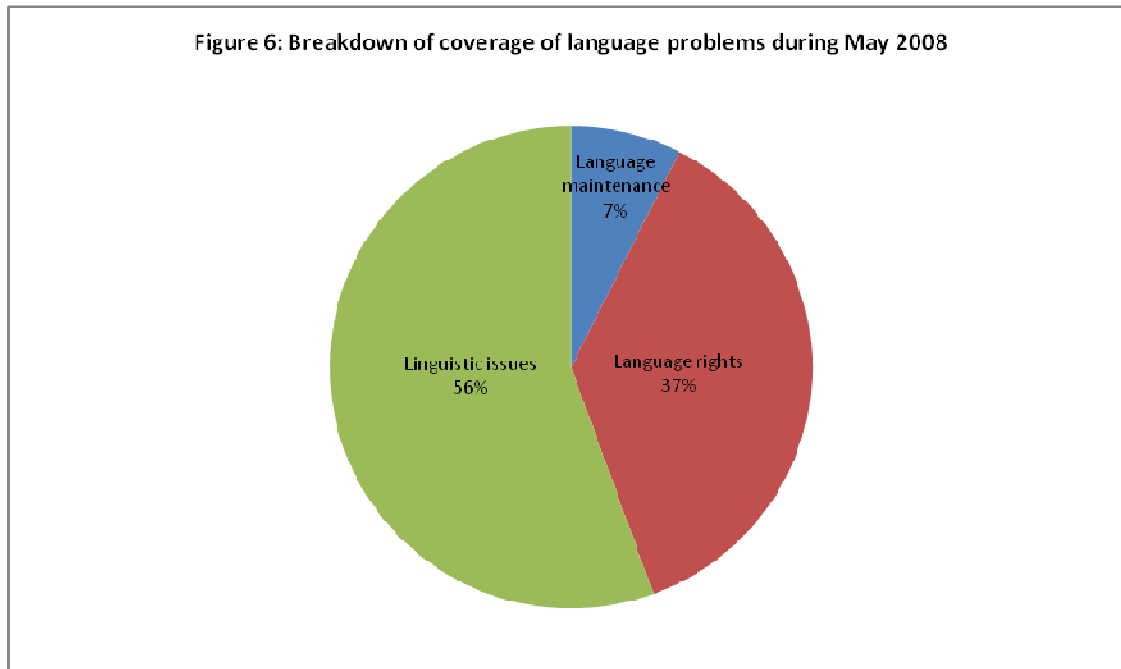
- On the first day of the month, the *Volksblad* reported that the process of name changing in the Free State was to be accelerated. Free State MEC for Sport, Arts and Culture, Ace Magashule, announced in his budget speech that public sessions on the topic were to be organised by the provincial names committee. According to Magashule, the only street in the province that had been renamed since 1994 was Nelson Mandela Drive in Bloemfontein.
- Also in the Free State, at a workshop on name changes held on 15 May by the Moqhaka municipality (which includes Kroonstad), it was once again pointed out that various place names in the province were offensive. Seipati Dichaba, national and provincial representative of the Department of Arts and Culture, cited Dewetsdorp as an example, claiming that General Christiaan de Wet amputated the breasts of black women. An outraged FF+ councillor described Dichaba's statement as "a serious form of hate speech" and the name changing process as cultural terrorism aimed at the destruction of the Afrikaner heritage (*Volksblad*, 16/05/08).
- In Durban, opposition party councillors walked out of a mid-May meeting of the ANC-dominated eThekweni municipality in protest against the adoption of the Masakhane committee's proposal to change the names of about 100 streets in the city (*Rapport*, 18/05/2008; *Sunday Tribune*, 18/05/08). The most controversial proposals included the suggested renaming of Kingsway in Amanzimtoti and Mangosuthu Highway in uMlazi after ANC activists Andrew Zondo and Griffiths Mxenge respectively.¹ Mxenge was a human rights lawyer during the apartheid era, while Zondo was the Umkhonto we Sizwe cadre whose bomb killed five people and left more than forty injured at the Sanlam Centre, in Kingsway, two days before Christmas in 1985. He was convicted and hanged by the apartheid government in 1986. As the IFP saw it, the Mangosuthu Highway name change was a move by the ANC to sideline the IFP's leader, despite his "tangible contribution to the liberation struggle" (*Sunday Tribune*, 25/05/08). In a small-scale survey conducted by *Isolezwe* (19/05/08), one respondent described the proposed

¹ Broadway > Swapo, Northway > Kenneth Kaunda, Aliwal Street > Samora Machel, Warwick Street > Julius Nyerere, Leopold Street > David Webster, Ordinance Street > Bram Fischer, Edwin Swales Drive > Solomon Mahlangu.

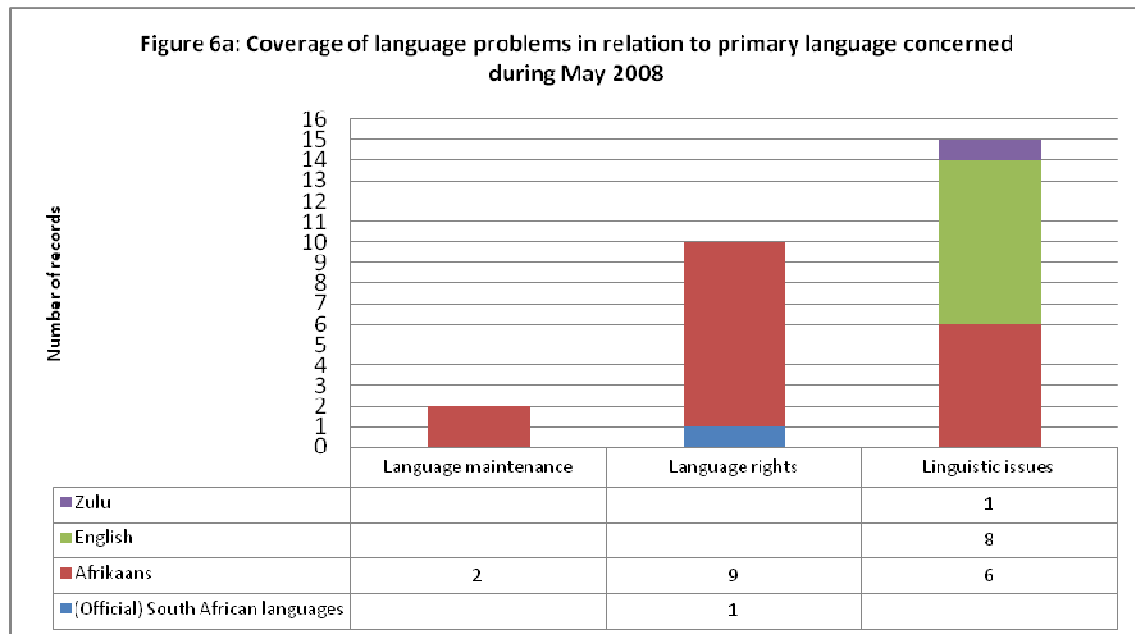
change as the ruling party's way of proclaiming its position of power. Among those objecting to the changing of the name of Kingsway to Andrew Zondo Street, as the *Sunday Tribune* (18/05/08) and *The Times* (29/05/08) reported, were both the bomber's father and the family of Anna Shearer who was killed in the explosion. Her widower, who lived on Kingsway, was quoted as saying that Zondo's actions were criminal because he had targeted civilians. Following the ratification of the name changes by a full council meeting at the end of May, opposition parties threatened legal action, protest marches and even vandalism: "We need to talk a language that they [the ANC] understand", said the IFP's Thembi Nzuzi, adding that marches and protests might follow. The DA's John Steenhuisen warned that "many people are waiting for those road names to go up so they can deface [the new signs]" (*The Times*, 29/05/08).

- According to *The Times* of 29 May, the ANC agreed not to rename Higginson Highway in Chatsworth after former PLO leader Yasser Arafat. However, on 30 May, the paper published a letter in which Jews were called on to stop spending their holidays and money in Durban, should Arafat be honoured in this way.
- In the wake of the conflict in the eThekweni municipality, Arts and Culture Minister Pallo Jordan announced the names of nine people who would serve as councillors on the South African Geographical Names Council under the chairpersonship of advocate Tommy Ntsewa. Both the *Burger* and the *Saturday Star* reported on 31 May that Jordan expected the members of the council to undertake travels from province to province, conducting imbizos in an effort to involve local communities in renaming processes. Public opinion and history were to be the decisive factors when name changes were being considered, he said, adding that South Africa's whole history, including colonialism, should be reflected in its place names. New names should not be a source of demoralisation, disorientation or despair. Opposition reaction, in this case, was summed up in a remark by DA MP Desiree van der Walt, namely that "the reconciliatory tone adopted by the minister" was "not always practised by municipalities" (*Saturday Star*, 31/05/08).
- The renaming of South Africa's thirteen high courts in an attempt to align their respective areas of jurisdiction with provincial boundaries featured in *Business Day* (12/05/08), while an article in *Finweek* (08/05/08) traced the history of the Avusa Company's name in a footnote.
- In an interesting letter to the *EP Herald* (01/05/08), the author of the book *Ayikho into egqibeleleyo*, Mbulelo Nzo, illustrated the way in which Xhosa and Zulu surnames and clan names were Afrikaansified or Anglicised during the apartheid era. This enabled the bearers of the new Afrikaans/English names to register as coloureds, who were not required to carry "dompasses" and who received preferential treatment, especially in the job market. People with the clan name Ndlovu (elephant) would register as Oliphant, for example, or AmaBele would become Bell.

3.2 Focus on language problems



- The 27 records dealing with *language-related problems* mostly covered linguistic issues (56% – 15 records); but matters relating to language rights (37% – 10 records) and language maintenance (7% – 2 records) also received media attention.
- Of these 27 records, 17 (63%) were concerned with Afrikaans – more than twice the number of records that were concerned with English (8 – 29%). Zulu was the primary language concerned in one record (4%), while another record focused on South Africa’s official languages in general (4%).

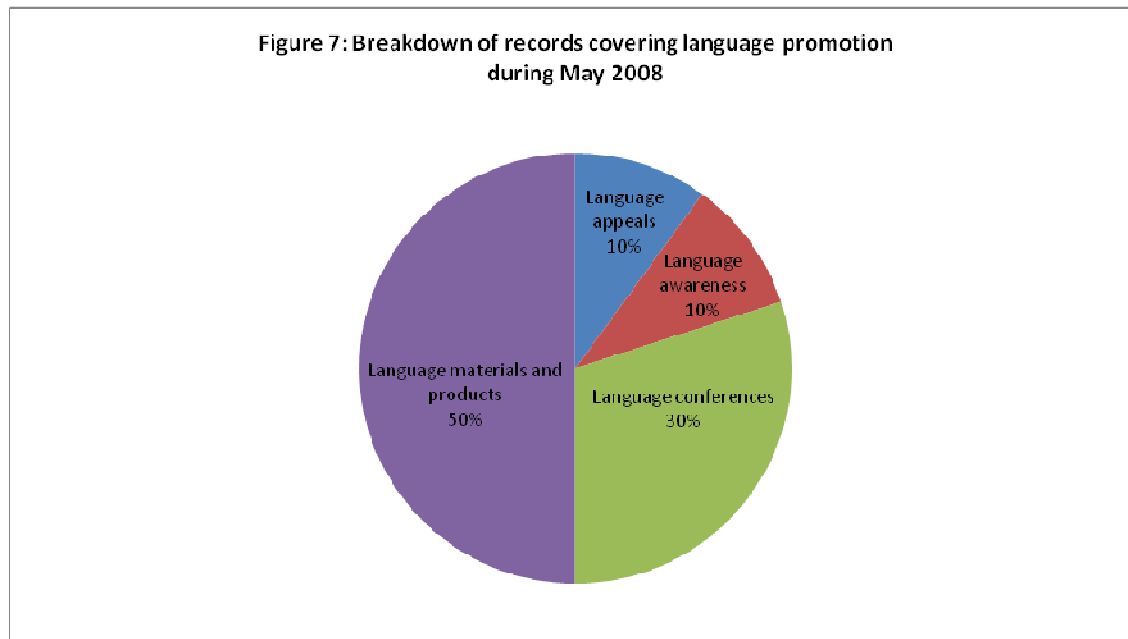


- The majority of records covering language problems (15 out of 27) – including all the records in which the primary language concerned was English or Zulu – dealt with **linguistic issues**, ranging from corpus-related questions to the way in which language was used by journalists, copywriters, politicians, as well as sportsmen and -women.
- Four records, including 2 cartoons (*Citizen*, 21/05/2008; *EP Herald*, 22/05/08), commented on the fact that the services of an interpreter were needed when Bafana Bafana’s new coach, Brazilian Joel Santana, first addressed the media in South Africa. “Many see chaos [coming]”, reported the *EP Herald* (21/05/08), “while others say coach speaks soccer lingo”. Columnist Rodney Hartman, for one, was optimistic. With people such as Jose Mourinho and the Scotsman Alex Ferguson in mind, he asked: “[H]ow eloquent must a coach be [in English] to inspire a decent side?” (*Saturday Star*, 31/05/08).
- At a political gathering in Khayelitsha, the “chatterbox character” of the speeches led journalist Mphuthumi Ntabeni to remark that such gatherings might assume a “musical” character if politicians could speak a language unknown to us (à la Ronald Barthes’s *The Rustle of Language* – *Cape Times*, 16/05/08).
- Ten records touched upon **language rights** issues. With a single exception (“*Taal-tameletjie pla steeds in wet wat oor verbruikers moet waak*” – *Beeld*, 06/05/08), Afrikaans was the primary language concerned in all these records.
- Labour Minister Membathisi Mdladlana assured a community meeting at Porterville in the Western Cape that his department translated all official documentation into all the local (official?) languages of South Africa. According to *Landbouweekblad* (16/05/08), the minister was embarrassed by the fact that documents were not available in Afrikaans at the meeting, owing to alleged courier problems. In an article in *Die Burger* (17/05/08), the principal and vice-chancellor of the University of Stellenbosch, Prof. Russel Botman, assured readers that the US wished “to retain Afrikaans as an asset within a multilingual environment”.
- In contrast to the positive messages for multilingualism and for Afrikaans referred to above, the tone of the records that focused on the pre-tertiary educational rights of Afrikaans speakers was rather alarmist. Following a report in the *Rapport* (11/05/08) according to which the Afrikaans community would be facing a serious shortage of teachers in the near future (given the average age of Afrikaans-speaking teachers, namely 47), the *Burger* (14/05/08) published a cartoon portraying “the Afrikaans-speaking teacher” as an endangered species. The *Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie* (SAOU) called on “role-players who fight for the survival of Afrikaans” to follow its example and encourage Afrikaans school-leavers, through bursaries, to enrol in teacher training programmes (*Rapport* 11/05/08). An equally pressing need, at least according to the right-wing *Genootskap vir die Handhawing van Afrikaans* (GHA), was that of ensuring the survival of single-medium Afrikaans schools through litigation. To this end, the GHA established the *Red Afrikaanse Skole* (RAS) fund in May (*Afrikaner*, 22/05/08).
- (Alleged) discrimination against Afrikaans in South Africa was condemned by the Unrepresented Nations’ and People’s Organisation (Unpo) at its latest conference in Brussels. (The organisation also condemned farm murders.) *Beeld* reported on 19 May that the influential international organisation had unilaterally accepted a resolution to this effect, which had been proposed by FF+ leader Pieter Mulder. At the same time, Mulder’s party was officially accepted as a member of Unpo. Mulder interpreted this as a sign that the tide was turning for Afrikaners and for minority rights: “Various speakers shared our grievances”, he said; “they seek to take control of their own situations”. It is noteworthy that the reporter for *Beeld*, Leopold Scholtz, deemed it necessary to

highlight the fact that the conference had been sponsored by *liberal* parties in the European parliament.

- Two Afrikaans records – a letter in the mainstream press by Dr P.F. Erasmus (*Rapport*, 04/05/08) and an article in the far-right press by Anita Morkel (*Afrikaner*, 01/05/08) – pertained to **language maintenance** (and indirectly to language rights and language prestige).

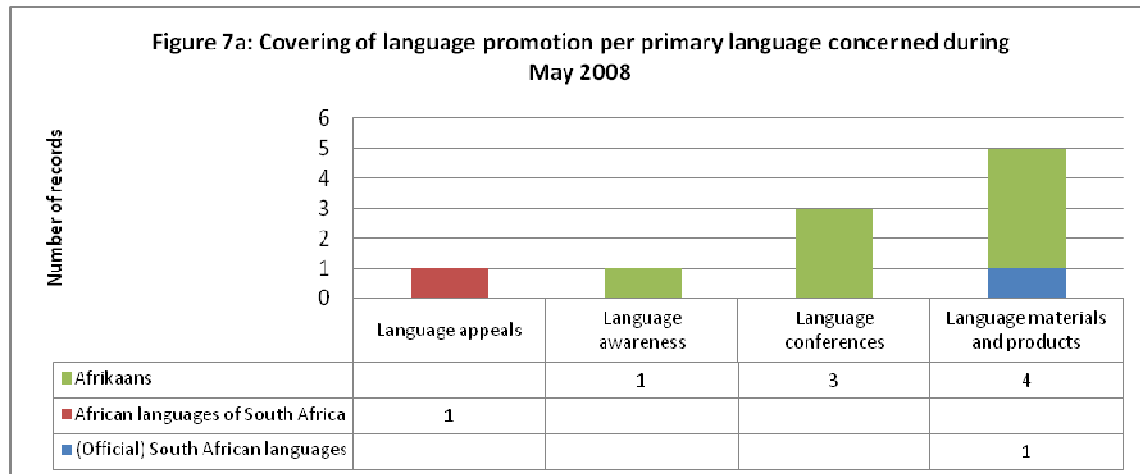
3.3 Focus on language promotion



- In contrast to April, during which a wide range of language-promotional activities and an equally wide variety of languages received coverage in the print media, May was a quiet month, with Afrikaans dominating the scene as the primary language concerned in 80% of the records on *language promotion*.
- Only 10 records were received in this category, half of which showcased **language materials and products**. These included Languageworks, a training organisation that offers courses in Afrikaans, English, South and North Sotho, Tswana and Zulu, as well as Dutch, German, French, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Russian and Mandarin. Established in 1981, its 40-hour courses are offered at three levels and have a practical, business-oriented approach. Arguing that the management of cultural diversity and the ability to speak other languages in addition to English have become business imperatives in South Africa, *Business Day* (14/05/08) promoted Languageworks in an article published on 14 May.
- Three records, all published on the first day of the month, focused on Afrikaans-language products, namely the Afrikaans Bible which celebrated its 75th birthday in May 2008 (*Afrikaner*), the Afrikaans Bible for the Deaf which was launched in February 2008 (*Kerkblad*) and, last but not least, the Afrikaans comic strips of T.O. Honiball (*Taalgenoot*). LitNet, or “the foremost Afrikaans virtual community”, as website editor Etienne van Heerden described it, featured in one record (*Volksblad*, 05/05/08).
- In April 2008, the First Millennium Youth Deliberation on Afrikaans (as a language of higher education) was the subject of a report and an editorial in *Die Volksblad*

(28/04/2008, 29/04/08). This **language conference** again made the news in May. Two reports and one editorial on the topic were received. Initiated by students, the conference took place at the University of Pretoria on 30 April and 1 May and was attended by representatives of the historically Afrikaans universities (UF, UJ, UNW, UP, US), as well as student leaders from UWC, Rhodes and Wits.

- No records pertaining to **language education** were received, but the database for May includes a column which is, in part, a **language appeal** (*Sowetan*, 07/05/08), as well as a letter aimed at raising **language awareness** (*Burger*, 17/05/08).



3.4 Focus on language research

During May, one overseas and two local language-related research projects received coverage in the print media:

- A study led by Dr Gitit Kavé, a clinical neuropsychologist at the Herczeg Institute on Ageing at Tel Aviv University, found that older people who speak more than one language display better cognitive functioning. This suggests that learning a new language may protect the brain from the effects of ageing (*Business Day*, 21/05/08).
- Research conducted by Dr Mbithi wa Kivulu of the HSRC indicated that the demand for English as the medium of instruction in South African schools from Grade 4 upwards has increased in recent years. With regard to the foundation phase, however, the demand for English has decreased in relation to the demand for the mother tongue. On 25 April 2008, the *Citizen* reported on this study, under the heading “English favoured by school goers” (cf. SALRB April 2008). However, when *Beeld* covered the story two weeks later on 8 May, the subeditors opted for the title “*Ál meer swart ouers verkies eie taal bo Engels*” [More and more black parents prefer own language to English]. Nobody was lying, of course; yet it is interesting to see who favoured which part of the truth.
- At Rhodes University, Dr Mark de Vos of the linguistics department and his team (including Master’s student Alexa Kirsten) are currently compiling the first Afrikaans language atlas. The main focus of the project, which is 50% complete, is the dialects of Afrikaans. According to De Vos, Afrikaner nationalism has made the biggest impact on the language since the Great Trek of the mid-1800s (*Volksblad*, 06/05/08).²

² Compare Etienne van Heerden’s vision for LitNet: “*Ek wou Afrikaans die kuberruim inneem. Ek voorsien dat [die] taal uiteindelik gaan losmaak [losraak?] van geografiese gebied. Dat dit belangriker gaan wees dat Afrikaans in die kuberruim gepraat word as in die Vrystaat. Ek praat van ver vorentoe*” [I wanted to take

3.5 *Focus on language renovation*

No records were received regarding issues related to language renovation.

4 Reflection on language rights issues covered during May 2008

4.1 *Linguistic human rights*

In their introduction to the volume, *Language rights and political theory* (2003), Alan Patten and Will Kymlicka argue that most debates about language in multilingual contexts cannot be settled within the linguistic human rights framework. There are exceptions: the right to a fair trial, for example, is recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It follows that the right to a court-appointed interpreter is, in some cases, a linguistic human right. However, as Patten and Kymlicka point out, international declarations have little to say about those issues that are typically at the heart of language conflicts, such as public funding of minority-language schools (2003:33, 34). They continue:

[T]he “linguistic human rights” movement [associated with Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson] has focused primarily on securing a universal right for publicly funded mother-tongue primary education. This is hardly trivial, but it falls far short of what is at stake in most linguistic conflicts around the world, where groups are fighting over the use of languages in public administration, higher education, and public media. [Most] minority groups want much more than is, or could reasonably be, guaranteed in international law (2003:35).

This is certainly true of the (white?) Afrikaans-speaking community of South Africa, as is demonstrated (once again) in the database for May. The rights-related claims made by activists for Afrikaans extend far beyond the right to mother-tongue-medium primary education. Activists demand, *inter alia*, single-medium primary and secondary schools (see, for example, *Taalgenoot*, 01/05/08; *Afrikaner*, 22/05/08), as well as *at least some* tertiary institutions where Afrikaans is used as a language of administration and tuition (*Beeld*, 02/05/08; *Volksblad*, 03/05/08, 05/05/08). In terms of the South African Constitution, these are rights that South Africans may claim (within limits). Yet, as pointed out in section 4.2 below, this fact does not make local language-in-education debates any less difficult to resolve.

One record in the database for May pertains indirectly to the role of language in a fair trial. Following a remark by Judge Eberhard Bertelsmann that the use of archaic language in court aggravates the trauma of children who appear as complainants and witnesses, the *Burger* (31/05/08) expressed the view that legal language is intimidating for lay adults, too – and called for the use of “plain language” in court and elsewhere. Another record also alludes to plain language. In his discussion of the Department of Trade and Industry’s new Consumer Protection Bill, Andreas van Wyk notes that the Bill requires consumer documents to be “in plain language”. He adds that, ironically, the Bill’s definition of plain language can hardly be said to be formulated in plain English! It is, perhaps, worth quoting here:

For the purposes of this Act, a notice, document or visual representation is in plain language if it is reasonable to conclude that an ordinary customer of the class of persons for whom the notice, document or visual representation is intended, with average literacy skills and minimal experience as a consumer of the relevant goods or services, could be expected to understand the content, significance and import of the notice, document or visual representation without undue effort (*Beeld*, 06/05/08).

Afrikaans into cyberspace. I foresee that (the) language will ultimately become detached from (any) geographical area – and that it will be more important for Afrikaans to be spoken in cyberspace than in the Free State. I am referring to a time far ahead in the future] (*Volksblad*, 05/05/08).

The main focus of Van Wyk's article, however, is on the question regarding the languages in which consumer documents should, by law, be made available. The author's position is reminiscent of Neville Alexander's harmonisation proposal, according to which the major African languages of South Africa need to be harmonised through the creation of one standard written form for the Nguni varieties and one for the Sotho varieties. Van Wyk suggests that Afrikaans, English, Sotho and Zulu should be the official languages of South Africa. If consumer documents were available in these four languages and, where applicable, in Tsonga and Venda, "all South Africans would be empowered through access to [consumer] information in their own languages" (*Beeld*, 06/05/08). At least one cabinet member would agree. At the Porterville meeting, during which he offered to translate documents into Afrikaans himself (see section 3.2 above), Labour Minister Membathisi Mdladlana asked: "How can people know their rights if these are not [outlined] in their own languages?" (*Landbouweekblad*, 16/05/08).

Consumer and labour rights – like the right to a fair trial – apply universally to all individuals and may entail linguistic human rights. The right not to be discriminated against on the basis of one's mother tongue qualifies as a basic linguistic human right, as it is part and parcel of the individual right to non-discrimination (Patten & Kymlicka 2003:34). The more challenging question is whether groups (particularly those with poor human-rights records) can collectively claim the right to non-discrimination, as the FF+ did at the latest Unpo conference (see section 3.2).

4.2 Language rights

In at least three records in the May database, explicit reference is made to language rights, and more specifically to language rights within the educational sector. The May edition of *Taalgenoot* (the mouthpiece of the ATKV) carries an article based on interviews with prominent Afrikaans-speaking participants in South Africa's language-in-education debate (Danie Keet, Rassie Malherbe, Koos Malan, Marius Smit, Lucas Viljoen, Paul Colditz and Marlene Verhoef). The article (by Sonja Carstens) begins by quoting Section 2(29) of the South African Bill of Rights, in terms of which "[e]veryone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions [including single-medium institutions] where that education is reasonably practicable". The tension that exists between this particular constitutional right and the right of access to education, as has been suggested in previous editions of the SALRB, is a key aspect of the ongoing local debate about media of instruction in schools. In this regard, the article quotes Rassie Malherbe as saying that "the right to education of previously disadvantaged children will always outweigh the right of learners who have always had access to education". Koos Malan puts it as follows: "[F]or as long as Afrikaans as [a] language stands in the way of previously disadvantaged children's access to schools, single-medium schools will come off second best".

An objection that is often raised is that the right of Afrikaans-speaking children to mother-tongue education is technically not affected in parallel-medium (Afrikaans/English) schools. The counter-argument is that parallel-medium instruction is the beginning of the end for mother-tongue instruction – a belief that is shared by all activists for single-medium Afrikaans schools. Citing the controversial example of the Hoërskool Ermelo, Marius Smit explains the process as follows: If 120 English-speaking learners were accepted annually, the linguistic composition of the school would be 50/50 (Afrikaans/English) within five years. If the available government subsidy would not allow for the appointment of English-speaking teachers, Afrikaans-speaking teachers would simply have to carry a double burden. This is

why Afrikaans/English parallel-medium schools typically become dual-medium and eventually English-medium (cf. Giliomee 2005). In recent years, it is claimed, this has been the fate of 88% of traditionally Afrikaans schools. This has led activists for Afrikaans to insist, as the interviewees in the *Taalgenoot* article did, that the government only pays lip-service to mother-tongue education and that its policy is, in effect, a policy of Anglicisation.

At the point where the number of English-speaking children in a school equals the number of Afrikaans-speaking children, the latter tend to leave the school (Lucas Viljoen, quoted in *Taalgenoot*, 01/05/08). Yet one record in the database for May suggests that language may not be the only consideration. The *Witness* reported on 13 May that 35 parents had requested transfers for their children from the parallel-medium Newcastle High to the nearby Afrikaans-medium Ferrum High. This followed the appointment of Manuel Govender as principal at Newcastle High – the announcement of which was allegedly met with the singing of the De la Rey song. According to the *Witness*, many Afrikaans parents wished to see acting principal Muggie Liebenberg appointed, although he had not been short-listed for the post. Parents cited the marginalisation of Afrikaans as their reason for quitting Newcastle High; yet, according to Govender, “they are the ones responsible for taking Afrikaans out of the school”. As he saw it, the move was racially motivated: “[T]he fact that they are taking the children to an Afrikaans-medium school is proof that they want to maintain their Afrikaans identity”.

The question posed by Hermann Giliomee in his biography of the Afrikaners as a people remains relevant: “How does the historian know that a concern expressed over the survival of [a language or] a culture or a people is not in fact a camouflage for concern about a standard of living, a concern about privilege or even sheer racism?” (2003:xix). To this one may add the question: How do we know that the campaign for single-medium Afrikaans schooling is not a campaign for white schools (or at any rate, schools that are as white as possible)? It is clear that at least *some* activists have found themselves grappling with this very issue. One way to prevent a linguistic divide from becoming a racial divide, according to Marlene Verhoef, is through classroom interpreting. It should also be noted that all those interviewed for the *Taalgenoot* article expressed their concern, not only about the status of Afrikaans, but also about the status of the African languages of South Africa. According to Koos Malan and Paul Colditz, these languages have been worse off since the ANC came into power. By doing nothing to “elevate [their] status and advance [their] use”, the government is neglecting its constitutional duty.

At the level of tertiary education, language conflict in South Africa is also a conflict of rights, in this case the constitutional right to receive education in the official language(s) of one’s choice, and the right “to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible” (section 29(1) of the Constitution). In this realm, too, the question of real and ulterior motives complicates the debate. One may ask, for example, whether a concern about the impact that the racial integration of university residences may have on Afrikaans is, in the final analysis, a concern about language. The situation at the University of the Free State – including the Naledi Pandor/interpreters incident – was on the agenda of the First Millennium Youth Deliberation on Afrikaans, as *Beeld* (02/05/08) and the *Volksblad* (03/05/08) reported. However, according to student leaders who attended the conference, “the perception of language as a racial issue” was discredited – or, as the *Volksblad* (05/05/08) interpreted the situation in an editorial, Afrikaans was depoliticised. “Perhaps the most encouraging development” at the deliberations, according to the editorial, was the fact that some non-Afrikaans student representatives had confessed that their “eyes had been opened” to the motive behind the Afrikaans campaign: “that it is a sincere attempt to

develop all indigenous languages and free them from the stranglehold of English in the country”. Some commentators, one may assume, will remain unconvinced.

5 Concluding remarks

After a few quiet months, the changing of place names again received prominent media attention during May. Particularly controversial were the proposed changes to Durban street names. Activism has taken on a confrontational nature, with opposition parties threatening not only protests and litigation, but also violence. One letter, as we have seen, suggested a boycott by Jews, should Higginson Highway be renamed after Yasser Arafat.

In a move that can perhaps be regarded as a form of activism that is the direct opposite of economic boycotting, the GHA established the *Red Afrikaanse Skole* (RAS) fund, in order to contribute towards the financing of envisaged constitutional court action against the government. In addition, the SAOU established a bursary scheme to encourage Afrikaans school-leavers to enrol in teacher training programmes. However, in contrast to April – during which a wide range of languages featured in records that focused on such actions of language promotion – the records for May in this category were mostly concerned with Afrikaans.

Finally, the single record in the “language appeals” category in the database for May deserves some comment. In his regular column for the *Sowetan*, Charles Mogale called on “Africans of lighter pigmentation” who speak Afrikaans “to make a conscious effort to learn an African language” and to “refuse [to be] labelled coloured, even if they call you Kerkorrel Regopstaan”. Mogale’s rejection of the African/“coloured” distinction on the grounds that “there are countless ‘coloured’ folks who have given their lives to the liberation of this country”, suggests that he defines the “in” group in political rather than linguistic terms (*Sowetan*, 07/05/2008).

In recent years, similar attempts to “in-define” people labelled *coloureds* have been made by people labelled *Afrikaners*; yet in this case, language rather than politics has been the mechanism of inclusion/exclusion. Politics – or rather political history – remains a stumbling block, however – as a letter in the database for May suggests. Writing to *Rapport* (04/05/08), one Dr P.F. Erasmus complained about the way in which English is “forced” onto Afrikaans-speaking persons by the government and its “often incompetent” public institutions – despite the fact that the “English” used is “shamelessly distorted”, as well as the fact that this language acquired its current status “precisely as a result of colonialism” – and despite the “hatred for colonialism” on the part of black Africans. In the letter-writer’s opinion, black Africans clearly constitute the “out” group, while coloureds form part of the “in” group (“*Afrikaanses*”) which he defines as “Afrikaans speakers of all races and religions”. Erasmus goes so far as to suggest that *Afrikaanses* constitute a politically leaderless ethnic community. According to him, the “other ethnic groups” still have their traditional leaders, whereas *Afrikaanses* are living in a vacuum in which cultural and other *ad hoc* bodies “scarcely have the ability” to fulfil the “all-embracing” function of leadership. The time has come, he concludes, for the likes of J.B.M. Hertzog and Jan Smuts to take the lead in the fight for the survival of *Afrikaanses* and their language. Whether *Afrikaanses* of darker pigmentation would regard these men as ideal leaders is doubtful: along with Jacobus Wilhelm Sauer, Hertzog and Smuts are identified by Giliomee (2003:301) as the architects of racial segregation in South Africa (and Smuts was hardly a language activist).

Unfortunately, the database for May contains no responses to either Mogale's column or Erasmus's letter. However, one record in the database for April comes to mind: the article in which Richard van der Ross called on "brown people" in South Africa to proudly assert their identity as people of mixed descent/creoles as other people in similar circumstances across the globe have done (*Die Burger*, 03/04/08). Some "coloureds", it appears, identify themselves neither as Africans nor as *Afrikaanses*, but as creoles – or alternatively, as all of these things.

References

Source	Date	Page	Author	Title of record
<i>Volksblad</i>	01-May-08	1	Dirk Kok	Verandering van plek-, straatname bespoedig
<i>Volksblad</i>	16-May-08	2	Tharine Geldenhuys	Stelling oor genl. De Wet 'erge vorm van haatspraak'
<i>Rapport</i>	18-May-08	5	Gerhard de Bruin	Herrie los oor Swapo en bomplanter straatname kry
<i>Sunday Tribune</i>	18-May-08	4	Agiza Hlongwane	Street renaming irks bomber's father
<i>Isolezwe</i>	19-May-08	7	Gcwalisile Khanyile	Abayizwa eyokushintshwa komgwaqo
<i>Sunday Tribune</i>	25-May-08	2	Nomfundo Mcetywa	Street renaming heads for court
<i>The Times</i>	29-May-08	5	Nivashni Nair	Rage rising on Zondo Road
<i>The Times</i>	30-May-08	20	Don Krausz	Jews should not put up with eThekwini insult
<i>Burger</i>	31-May-08	2	Philda Essop	Imbizo's sal publiek pols oor plekname
<i>Saturday Star</i>	31-May-08	2	Deon de Lange	History is the game of the new names
<i>Business Day</i>	12-May-08	3	Ernest Mabuza	New names for high courts
<i>Finweek</i>	08-May-08	14	Michael Coulson	Wat baat dit tog?
<i>EP Herald</i>	01-May-08	7	Mbulelo Nzo	Names changed in apartheid era to escape restrictions of the 'dompas' system
<i>Volksblad</i>	24-May-08	4	Sandra Mulder	Collegians keur dié gedrag teen blasers af
<i>ER Herald</i>	21-May-08	3	Khanyi Ndabeni and Katherine Wilkinson	Many see chaos, while others say coach speaks soccer lingo
<i>Citizen</i>	21-May-08	12		
<i>EP Herald</i>	22-May-08	6		
<i>Saturday Star</i>	31-May-08	16	Rodney Hartman	Action on soccer pitch speaks louder than words
<i>Cape Times</i>	16-May-08	9	Mphuthumi Ntabeni	Lost - and found - in a world where language and truth meander so far apart
<i>Volksblad</i>	02-May-08	11	Anton Prinsloo	Vermoor vir R2?
<i>Volksblad</i>	09-May-08	7	Anton Prinsloo	Waar kom dié haas dan vandaan?
<i>Volksblad</i>	16-May-08	9	Anton Prinsloo	Wat op dees aarde is 'antipon'?
<i>Volksblad</i>	23-May-08	9	Anton Prinsloo	Elke hond se dag
<i>Volksblad</i>	30-May-08	13	Anton Prinsloo	Hoe wyd is syd; en hoe nat papsopwatermat?
<i>Beeld</i>	08-May-08	14	Anesca Smith	Strenger eise vir werkers in Brittanje kom
<i>Financial Mail</i>	02-May-08	10	Richard Staniforth	One man's meat
<i>Saturday Star</i>	03-May-08	10	Fred Sanders	Charlize adds real class to casinos
<i>Isolezwe</i>	05-May-08	2	Charles Khuzwayo	Ufuna ukushicelela incwadi ngezisho zakhe
<i>Landbouweekblad</i>	16-May-08	86	Lucille Botha	Hý sal vertaal, sê Mdladlana
<i>Beeld</i>	06-May-08	12	Andreas van Wyk	Taal-tameletjie pla steeds in wet wat oor verbruikers moet waak
<i>Burger</i>	31-May-08	18		Hoftaal
<i>Burger</i>	17-May-08	15	Russel Botman	Botman se nuwe plan vir US begin bot
<i>Taalgenoot</i>	01-May-08	32	Sonja Carstens	Praat skole nog Afrikaans?

<i>Afrikaner</i>	22-May-08	3		Fonds help Afrikaanse skole
<i>Rapport</i>	11-May-08	15	Sonja Carstens	Beurse dringend nodig om Afrikaanse onderwysers te kry
<i>Burger</i>	14-May-08	12	Fred Mouton	
<i>Witness</i>	13-May-08	1	Sphumelele Mngoma	Afrikaans pupils quit Newcastle High
<i>Beeld</i>	19-May-08	5	Leopold Scholtz	Plaasmoorde veroordeel
<i>Rapport</i>	04-May-08	15	Dr PF Erasmus	Ware leiers moet nou opstaan vir ons taal
<i>Afrikaner</i>	01-May-08	8	Anita Morkel	Die standhouding én stukrag van die eie
<i>Sowetan</i>	07-May-08	12	Charles Mogale	Your colour doesn't matter because we're all Africans
<i>Star</i>	14-May-08	3	Theo Garrun	Don't let business get lost in translation
<i>Kerkblad</i>	01-May-08	46	Dr Pieter Bingle quoting Carien Kruger, <i>Rapport</i> 09/02/2008	Boodskap duideliker in nuwe Bybel vir Doves
<i>Afrikaner</i>	01-May-08	7		Die Bybelvertaling van 1933
<i>Taalgenoot</i>	01-May-08	28	Theo Kemp	'n Skatkis vol strokies
<i>Volksblad</i>	05-May-08	6	Danila Liebenberg	Etienne léés die lewe
<i>Burger</i>	17-May-08	15	Martiens van Bart	Taal nié bedreig by Gedenkskool
<i>Beeld</i>	02-May-08	4	Alet Rademeyer	Beleidmakers oor taalkwessies 'luister nie' na studente
<i>Volksblad</i>	03-May-08	9	Henry Cloete	Afrikaans kan as voorbeeld dien, meen studente-leier
<i>Volksblad</i>	05-May-08	6		Stukrag vir taalberaad
<i>Beeld</i>	08-May-08	16	Alet Rademeyer	Al meer swart ouers verkies eie taal bo Engels
<i>Business Day</i>	21-May-08	8	Science Daily and Health News Correspondent	Language keeps the brain fired up
<i>Volksblad</i>	06-May-08	7	Thinus Dippenaar	Afrikaans sterf nie; hy groei en verander, sê dosent