



MUT

MANGOSUTHU
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

COPAL REPORT ON LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES

Language Policy Implementation
Progress

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SUBMITTED BY
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1. TEACHING & LEARNING MATTERS

1.1 Multilingual pedagogies and translanguaging workshop for faculties was held on the 10th of April 2025. The workshop aimed at equipping faculty staff members with the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively implement multilingual pedagogies and translanguaging strategies in their classrooms. Participants were trained intensively on how to explore the benefits of these approaches, which include fostering inclusive learning environments, enhancing student engagement, and supporting linguistic diversity. Dr N Ngubane, Director UFS Academy for Multilingualism and Professor Ntombela of the Dept of Linguistics, University of Limpopo co facilitated the workshop. Academics and university support staff were enlightened in translanguaging models and reminded of the importance of embracing multilingualism through the 12 official RSA languages in higher education.

1.2 Language ambassadors and SRC training workshop: April 11, 2025

Facilitated by TLDC colleague, Peer Assistance and Foundational Provision Coordinator, Mr L Mkhize. The language ambassadors training was a success, the volunteers were able to get a better insight and understanding of how critical and important their contribution was to the university. Over the last two years, the language awareness campaigns, and promotional events have been made possible by their passion and commitment to the language project.

1.3 Language Awareness Roadshow: Advocacy Day: 23 May 2025

Language ambassadors continue to be of service to the TLDC ALLU in advocacy and language awareness campaigns university wide towards the promotion of multilingualism focusing on linguistic and cultural diversity, social cohesion, and social integration.

1.4 Sign Language workshop: June 26, 2025. This was an online workshop towards the introduction of SASL to the MUT community. Ms A Mkatshwa, an experienced SASL interpreter from Eastern Cape Province, facilitated the online seminar. To be fully multilingual as an institution, MUT will introduce South African Sign Language (SASL) as a third language

as stipulated in the University Language Policy. The workshop aimed to raise awareness and understanding of South African Sign Language (SASL) among students, faculty, and staff at the Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT). Participants were introduced to basic sign language skills, including common phrases and expressions used in everyday communication. The session also covered the cultural aspects of the Deaf community, emphasizing the importance of inclusivity and accessibility in educational environments. Interactive activities allowed attendees to practice signing with peers, fostering a supportive learning atmosphere. The workshop highlighted the significance of non-verbal communication and encouraged participants to continue their learning journey beyond the session. By promoting SASL proficiency, MUT aims to create a more inclusive campus where everyone can engage meaningfully regardless of hearing ability.

1.5 Language advocacy week: this was a five-day intensive training and consultative process:

- Decolonisation, translanguaging and multilingualism discourse
- South African Sign Language (SASL)
- Terminology management and development workshop
- Bilingual workshop for researchers.

Language Advocacy Week at Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) provided a critical platform to reflect on the university's progress in embracing multilingualism and decolonisation, while also identifying gaps and areas of concern. Cofacilitated by language scholars and activists, Dr L Motake, Deputy Director: Language Services Unit, Central University of Technology (CUT): Free State, Registrar's Division and Mr S Nokutywa, Manager of the Languages and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) Unit under the Directorate of Transformation and Languages at Walter Sisulu University (WSU). The focus on decolonization aimed to address the historical imbalances and promote indigenous languages, recognizing their importance in cultural identity and heritage. Workshops on South African Sign Language (SASL) highlighted the need for greater accessibility and inclusion of the Deaf community, emphasizing SASL as an official language deserving equal status and resources. The terminology management and development workshop provided participants with tools to create standardized terms across various fields, ensuring clarity and consistency in communication. This is crucial for developing educational materials and professional discourse that are accessible to speakers of all languages.

The bilingual research workshop offered researchers strategies to conduct studies in multiple languages, fostering a more inclusive approach to academic inquiry. By encouraging research

that reflects linguistic diversity, the workshop aimed to produce findings that are relevant and applicable across different linguistic communities. Overall, Language Advocacy Week sought to empower individuals by promoting linguistic diversity as a means of achieving inclusivity, social integration and social cohesion. It encouraged participants to embrace multilingualism as a strength rather than a barrier, advocating for policies and practices that support language rights.

2 TERMINOLOGY DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT /GLOSSARIES

Faculty language coordinators and champions continue to support the language implementation process. So far, 14 glossaries have been produced including those that are shared. These glossaries serve as essential resources for both instructors and students, facilitating a deeper understanding of specialized terminology across various disciplines. The collaborative effort in creating these glossaries not only enhances language proficiency but also fosters a sense of community among faculty members. By sharing these resources, departments can ensure consistency in language use and promote interdisciplinary learning. As the implementation process progresses, ongoing feedback from users will be crucial in refining and expanding the glossaries to meet evolving educational needs. Additionally, workshops and training sessions are being organized to further support faculty in integrating these tools into their curricula effectively.

3. LANGUAGE POLICY MATTERS

This project is motivated by and in response of the provisions of the 2020 National Language Policy Framework for Higher Education Institutions (LPHEI) that was promulgated by the Department of Higher and Tertiary Education (DHET) and gazetted in 2021, among other language policy imperatives in higher education. Given the unique context of the MUT, a university which is amid an isiZulu speaking community and attracts over 90% of isiZulu students predominantly from the surrounding areas of KwaZulu-Natal, it is imperative to explore the possible impact of an English-IsiZulu, SASL multilingual model, and its implications on access to disciplinary knowledge, development of academic literacies and the cognitive development of African language first language learners. Non-mother speakers of isiZulu will be afforded an opportunity to learn isiZulu.

3.1 The integration of South African Sign Language (SASL) as a third language is crucial for fostering inclusivity and accessibility within the university community. By recognizing SASL

alongside English and isiZulu, the institution not only supports multilingualism but also acknowledges the diverse linguistic needs of its students and staff.

3.2 Establishing a dedicated University Language Committee will be essential in overseeing the implementation and development of language policies. This committee should work closely with various stakeholders to ensure that language initiatives align with the university's broader goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

3.3 The proposal to include language policy matters in the Academic Planning Quality Committee (APQC) is a strategic move to integrate language considerations into academic planning processes. This will help ensure that language policies are consistently reviewed and updated in line with educational objectives and societal changes.

3.4 Driving the language agenda forward requires collaboration across departments and faculties to create an environment where all languages are valued equally. The newly established Transformation Office under the ambit of Vice Chancellor's office will preside over this as the VC is the custodian and the compliance officer of the language policy.

4 Research related activities

Pre-and-post surveys have been conducted and analyzed by the language unit staff.

Research papers related to the language project are in progress.

5 LANGUAGE EVENTS HOSTED/ORGANISED

The events hosted and organized by Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) in pursuit of promoting multilingualism, aligned with the language policy, include:

- International Mother Language Day
- Africa Day
- Poetry Session
- Language Awareness Advocacy Day
- South African Sign Language (SASL) Online workshop for staff and students
- TLDC Language Advocacy Week

These events demonstrate MUT's active efforts to align with its language policy by fostering multilingualism and promoting indigenous languages such as SASL. The International Mother Language Day (IMLD), Africa Day, Language Awareness Advocacy Days and Language Advocacy Week especially emphasize awareness and celebration of linguistic diversity, while workshops like the SASL online session directly support language skills development among

the university community. All of these events were a resounding success. The guest speaker and moderator of the IMLD day was Dr N Ngubane, Director of the University of the Free State (UFS) Academy of Multilingualism. She outlined the significance of mother language day and how the institutions of higher learning could embrace and successfully adopt multilingualism as a resource in the teaching and learning space. Her presentation was validated by two language experts from the KZN province, namely, Ms Thobile Dlamini from the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture (DSAC) and Ms Winnie Dube from the eThekweni Municipality Language Services. They elaborated further on what their contribution would be in assisting university staff and students in fostering inclusivity and social cohesion in language matters.

MUT's Africa Day celebration and commemoration was held on the 29th of May 2025. Mr Mbuso Khoza, a world-renowned language and cultural expert and actor was the guest speaker of the Africa Day event. His speech was vibrant, scholarly, and managed to capture the audience's participation, university staff and students.

Together, these initiatives play a key role in institutional transformation towards multilingualism as outlined in MUT's language policy framework for 2025 and beyond. They are part of a broader commitment to incorporate indigenous languages and deploy multilingual pedagogies across faculties to promote inclusivity and accessibility in education.

6. LANGUAGE RELATED PROJECT/S

The Mangosuthu University of Technology's (MUT) Language Development Project is designed to ensure the effective implementation of all proposed language-related initiatives, fostering multilingualism and supporting the university's language policy. This project plays a critical role in institutional transformation by promoting indigenous languages, including South African Sign Language (SASL), alongside English and isiZulu, thus embracing a truly multilingual academic environment. The project involves the formation of a language board comprising management and faculty representatives to oversee the coordination and execution of language policy implementation plans. This includes organizing workshops, advocacy weeks, and events such as International Mother Language Day, Africa Day, and organised poetry sessions, all aimed at promoting language diversity and inclusivity within the university community.

Furthermore, the Language Development Project supports the production of terminology glossaries, development of multilingual pedagogical resources, and ongoing research activities to evaluate language policy impact. It fosters collaboration with other institutions to strengthen the status and use of indigenous languages in teaching, learning, and academic

engagement. Through these structured and collaborative efforts, the MUT Language Development Project ensures that language policy objectives are met comprehensively, contributing to improved academic access, cultural preservation, and social cohesion within the university. The project also aligns with the university's strategic plan for 2026-2030, embedding language advocacy within the broader institutional goals.

7. OTHER ACTIVITIES (IF NOT ALREADY MENTIONED ABOVE)

7.1 Preparation of a Short learning isiZulu Basic Conversational course for non-mother tongue speakers of the language

Designing a short learning course for non-native speakers in isiZulu requires thoughtful consideration of both linguistic and cultural elements to facilitate effective communication. This course should begin with foundational vocabulary and essential phrases, focusing on greetings, common expressions, and polite conversational forms to build confidence with basic interactions. Incorporating contextualized dialogues will help learners understand usage nuances, while repetitive practice through role-playing exercises can reinforce language skills. Visual aids such as flashcards or multiple kind of videos featuring native speakers of isiZulu should be integral, offering authentic pronunciation exposure. Cultural insights into traditions and social etiquette will enrich the learners' understanding, fostering a respectful engagement with isiZulu communities. Assessments at strategic intervals can gauge progress and deepen comprehension further through interactive feedback sessions. Overall, this structured approach aims not just to impart linguistic competence but also an appreciation for the rich cultural tapestry connected to the isiZulu language.

7.2 Production of Glossaries: Work-in-progress

The production of glossaries alongside faculty lecturers involves a meticulous and collaborative process aimed at refining terminologies pertinent to academic disciplines. This work-in-progress initiative necessitates the identification and systematic collection of essential terms, often through ongoing consultations and workshops with expert faculty members. By engaging lecturers who are actively involved in teaching, this effort leverages their deep subject knowledge while ensuring that glossary terms reflect current curricular emphases and pedagogical needs. The collaboration fosters an academically rigorous environment where terminological accuracy is paramount, aiding in standardized knowledge dissemination across various educational platforms. Additionally, this dynamic process respects the evolving nature of academic language, accommodating new concepts as they arise within scholarly discourse. Overall, the initiative not only enriches the educational framework but also supports students

in accessing precise definitions that enhance their comprehension and engagement with course materials.

7.3 Translation of university documents

The translation of university policies, discipline specific terminology lists, newsletters, university notices, departmental notices, workbooks, examination papers, learner guides, tests and assessments, abstracts and postgraduate proposals is an ongoing process. Proof reading and editing of documents is part of this process in collaboration with the Department of Communication.

7.4 Language magazine capturing language events including the launch of the language development project is work in progress.

7.5 SADiLaR SWIP Project:

The Academic Language and Literacy Unit (ALLU) under the auspices of the Teaching and Learning Department Centre (TLDC) at Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT), hosted a workshop that was facilitated and funded by the South African SADiLaR-Wikipedia-PanSALB (SWiP) project from the 16th to the 17th of September 2025. The SWiP is a collaborative initiative by the South African Centre for Digital Language Resources (SADiLaR); the free encyclopaedia (Wikipedia) and the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB). This was an eye opener as MUT colleagues benefitted from the SWIP project which emphasizes the significance of indigenous languages. The isiZulu language in the Province of KwaZulu Natal where MUT is located is spoken and used by most staff and students. The aim was to encourage the Zulu speaking students and academics, including other indigenous languages to actively contribute to Wikipedia.

7.6 SADiLaR AI WORKSHOP

Dr Makhanya and Ms Shezi attended a two-day AI workshop facilitated by SADiLaR, and Escalator which was hosted by the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), ULPDO on October 14-15, 2025. The event aimed to explore the connection between artificial intelligence (AI), language, and library services, with a focus on human-centred AI and its applications in academic and public sectors. The first day featured keynote addresses and presentations highlighting the integration of AI into scholarly work, libraries, and language development. Sessions included explorations of AI tools for library services and language processing, emphasizing community engagement and innovative use of technology for societal benefit.

On day 1, facilitators conducted interactive sessions that kept the attendees' attention.

Ms J Mabaso introduced the Escalator.

Escalator Program Summary

Escalator is a SADiLaR program aimed at building capacity in digital humanities and computational social sciences. It fosters a South African community of practice for digital and computational research, especially in African languages. The program supports skills development, mentorship, and sustainable digital scholarship collaboration across institutions.

Dr B Trollip facilitated the following workshop:

Introduction to Data Management

The Escalator program under SADiLaR (South African Centre for Digital Language Resources) focuses on enhancing data management practices by promoting collaboration and resource sharing among researchers. It aims to build a robust infrastructure for managing linguistic data, ensuring that resources are accessible, well-documented, and preserved for future use. By fostering a community of practice, the program encourages the adoption of standardized methodologies and tools that facilitate interoperability and data reuse. This collaborative approach not only enhances the quality and reliability of research outputs but also supports the broader goal of advancing digital scholarship in language studies across South Africa.

Digital Humanities

Ms M Griesel facilitated the second day workshop and expanded on the themes of human-centred AI and its ethical implications. The session also delved into the integration of AI tools with existing linguistic resources, highlighting the potential for improved language processing and translation outcomes. Attendees engaged in a lively debate about the balance between leveraging AI for productivity and maintaining ethical standards, especially concerning data privacy and bias. The day concluded with a hands-on workshop where participants experimented with customizing AI models using SADiLaR's datasets, fostering a deeper understanding of the practical applications and challenges of human-centred AI in linguistics.

8. Collaborative work planned for 2026:

- a) SASL intensive training for MUT staff and students by the Social Inclusion and Equity Directorate, Pretoria
- b) Skills development in Human Language Technologies (HLT), National Language Service - Human Language Technologies, Pretoria.
- c) SADiLaR collaboration on AI language technologies: Proposal to be submitted by MUT.