

## CHAPTER 5

# LANGUAGE PLANNING

# Example 1

## Book, example 1, P: 98

Reinaldo Decoud Larrosa is a highly educated Paraguayan who lives in Asuncion the capital city. He has spent many years **fighting** to develop and **encourage pride in** Guarani, an indigenous language, among Paraguayans from all social backgrounds. Upper-class Paraguayans have always regarded **Spanish** as the language of culture, education and civilisation, and in the past they tended to **belittle** Guarani as the language of the ill-bred and uneducated. Larrosa has pointed to the linguistic richness Guarani, with its 14 indicative tenses, and extensive vocabulary in areas such as botany, medicine and agriculture. He has also emphasised its importance as the only language which can adequately **express Paraguayan national identity**. As a result of his efforts and those of others, Guarani is now a language most Paraguayans are proud of.

# National Language

- **National Language:** It is the main language of a political, cultural and social unit.
  - ▣ It is generally developed and used as a **symbol of national unity.**
- **Functions:** 1- To **identify** the nation.  
2- To **unite** the people.

# Official Language

- **Official Language:** The language used by the government for administrative purposes.
- The **difference** between a **national** and an **official** language is that the **national** language is the one **spoken** by the **majority** of people in the country whereas the **official** language is the one used by the **government** for **business**.

# National & Official Languages

- In a **monolingual** country, the **national language** is the **same** as the **official** language.
  - ▣ **Example:** Arabic in Saudi Arabia.
- In a **multilingual** country, the **government chooses** the **national** and **official** languages based how much each **satisfies political** and **social** goals as well as their **formal functions**.
  - ▣ **Example:** Zaire has 4 African languages as national languages but only one official language: French.

# Language Planning

- When the government **CHOOSES** a variety as a **national** or **official** language, it does language **PLANNING**.
- **Language Planning: The deliberate effort to influence the function, structure or acquisition of a language within a speech community.**
- **Choosing a variety depends on factors like:**
  1. The **form** of the variety.
  2. The **functions** it serves.
  3. The **attitudes** people hold towards it.

# The Process of Planning

- **Planning** a language goes under four steps:
  1. **Selection: Choosing** the variety to be **developed**.
  2. **Codification: Standardising** its structural or linguistic **features**. This step is also called **Corpus Planning**.
  3. **Elaboration: Extending** its **functions** for use in new **domains**.
  4. **Securing its acceptance:** Enhancing its **prestige** and encouraging people to develop **pride** in it and **loyalty** towards it.

# The Process of Planning

- **Selecting** the variety to be developed **is** often a **political decision**.
- **Linguists** help in **pointing out** the different **linguistic problems** represented by selecting one variety than another.
- The **acceptance** of the chosen variety by the people will **require** the **support** of **politicians** and **socially prestigious groups**.



# Purposes of Language Planning

- 1. Language Purification:** To **prescribe** the usage in order to **preserve** the “**linguistic purity**” of a language and **protect** it from foreign influences.
  - **Example:** Classical Arabic grammar books.
- 2. Language Revival:** To **attempt** to **turn** a language with few or no surviving native speakers back into a **spoken** means of communication.
  - **Example:** Hebrew
- 3. Language Reform :** To deliberately **change** specific aspects of a language such as **orthography** or **grammar** in order to **facilitate** its use.
  - **Example:** Chinese [reduced the number of characters]  
Turkish [Changed characters from Arabic to Latin]

# Purposes of Language Planning

4. **Language Spread:** To attempt to **increase** the number of **speakers** of one language at the **expense** of another.
  - **Example:** The spread of Spanish in Paraguay at the expense of the native language, Guarani.
5. **Terminology Unification:** To **develop unified** terminologies, primarily in technical domains.
  - **Example:** The Arab Language Academy
6. **Language Maintenance:** To **preserve** the use of a group's **native** language as a first or second language where **pressure** cause a **decline** in the **status** of the language.
  - **Example:** Welsh.

# The Linguist's Role in Language Planning

- Language **academies**, **committees** and **commissions** are **interested** in language planning.
- **Individuals** can be language planners, too, mainly **sociolinguists** and **lexicographers**.

# Examples of Language Planners

- **Lexicography:** The craft of writing, compiling or editing dictionaries.
- **Samuel Johnson** (1709 – 1784): **Wrote** a 40,000 word **dictionary** in 1755. It helped in the **codification** of **English**.
- **Eliezer Ben-Yehuda** (1858 – 1922): The most influential proponent of the **vernacularisation** of **Hebrew**. He called for using Hebrew and **created** new **words** to be used in **everyday** situations.

# Linguist's Role in Language Planning

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□ **The main concerns of language planners are:**

- 1. Language codification**
- 2. Vocabulary expansion**

# Example 2

Book, example 7, P: 112

In January 1982, the **Greek government** passed a law to implement a new writing system called **MONOTONY**. **MONOTONY** replaced a complicated system of symbols with a single stroke to indicate pronunciation. Until this law was passed, the Greeks used a system introduced after Alexander the Great spread the Empire, to make Athenian pronunciation clearer to foreigners. In the **earlier system** there were **five rules for placing accents**, **seven for accenting nouns and pronouns**, and five rules for accenting verbs. **Each rule** had dozens of exceptions. It was estimated that it took average Greek schoolchildren 4500 hours to learn to write their language. With **MONOTONY** in place, it is estimated that millions will be saved in printing expenses, and typing time will be reduced by up to 35 percent.

# Language Codification “Orthography”

- In the **past**, the **church** was the main **influence** on the **written form** of unwritten languages when they translated the Bible into them.
  
- **Missionaries** were good **linguists** whose job was to **produce** a **spelling system** that **reflects** the **pronunciation** of the language.

# Language Codification “Orthography”

- **When developing the spelling system, there were some problems like:**

## **1- Symbols did not correspond to the pronunciation.**

/ŋ/ is identified as a single sound and it is different from /g/. In Samoan, both are the same. So “tagi” in Samoan is pronounced like “tangi” in Maori but spelt differently (*book, example 8, p:112*).

## **2- Different views on how to indicate the length of a vowel (double vowel vs. macron) (*book, example 9, p: 113*)**

It was easier to read, less likely to be ambiguous and economical to use macrons than double vowels in Maori but word processors made the choice less useful.



# Vocabulary Expansion

- When the **linguists** want to **expand** the **vocabulary** of a variety to include the **H** or **L functions** it **lacks**, they either **CHOOSE**:
  - 1- A **borrowed** word from **another** language.
  - 2- An **equivalent** in the **same** language which might not be well-known or with a slightly different meaning that can be adapted.
  - 3- A newly **created** word from the **same** language.