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Language Planning

Language planning occurs because there is a close relationship between a nation and its language through which members of social and political units identify themselves. What we speak is a marker of our identity and group membership. Therefore, it is obvious that every country has its language. For instance English in England, French in France, Spanish in Spain, Portuguese in Portugal, Japanese in Japan, German in Germany, etc.

Hence, language planning refer to the deliberate and prescriptive activities that aim to regulate language use in counties are necessary, especially in multilingual countries where governments (linguists can also be involved) make plans to develop certain languages or to limit the use of others (linguistic cleansing) for the purpose of linguistic homogenization in their respective countries. Language planning can involve changing some aspects of language or its linguistic varieties as well as specifying certain functions to each.

• Wardhaugh (2006: 354) explains that language planning may involve 'assessing resources, complex decision-making, the assignment of different functions to different languages or varieties of a language in a community, and the commitment of valuable resources'.

• Cooper (1989: 45) defines language planning as the 'deliberate efforts to influence the behavior of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language codes'.

These two linguists point to the conscious efforts initiated to change the linguistic behaviour of 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.

Types of language planning

Language planning concerns four areas:

Status planning

It refers to the decisions and activities concerned with bringing about changes in the **functions** or **uses** of languages (or language varieties) in social and political units such as countries and federal departments.

Example: the Algerian government's decision to set Arabic as the language of the official scountry and the medium of instruction in the Algerian schools after independence in 1962.

Corpus planning

It refers to decisions and activities concerned with developing the form and the structure of a language or one of its varieties, and to provide it with the necessary linguistic means, that is, improving its grammar and enriching its vocabulary, to serve particular functions so that it can fulfil its new functions effectively, in the different social domains (such as government, education, scientific fields, workplace, media, etc).

Examples: designing an orthography and a written code, introducing new words to fill gaps in the languages, publishing dictionaries, grammar books and literature to ensure language acquisition and transmission through generations.

Acquisition planning

It refers to decisions and activities aimed at increasing the number of a language users, that is, its speakers, writers, listeners, and readers (Cooper, 1989: 33). This occurs through promoting its teaching and providing opportunities to people to learn it, practice it and develop communicative and other specific skill in this language.

Examples: Mother Tongue Education programmes, language revitalization activities

Prestige planning

This concerns the decisions and activities aimed at motivating people to use the language and developing positive **attitudes** and **feeling** towards the language to achieve success in expanding the language throughout the country. Such decisions are essential to guarantee a long-term stability.

These four areas of language planning do not exist in isolation they are interrelated and work jointly. Activities aimed at changing the functions of a language (status planning) often require changes in the form or structure of the language (corpus planning), and may also involve education and training (acquisition planning). Status planning activities will only succeed if positive attitudes towards the language are adopted (through prestige planning) by both the speakers of the language and others in the wider society such as government officials, teachers, pastors. Language academies, committees and commissions are interested in language planning. Individuals can be language planners, too, mainly sociolinguists and lexicographers.

The process of language planning

Many linguists agree that language planning typically include four main steps:

1. Selection: Choosing the variety to be developed for broader usage. Selecting the variety to be developed is often a political decision.

2. Codification: Standardising its structural or linguistic features. That is, developing the form of the language, i.e. its linguistic structure, including its phonology, grammar, and lexicon. This step is also referred to as Corpus Planning. Linguists help in codifying a language and they can point out the different linguistic issues that may arise in selecting one variety than another.

3. Elaboration (implementation): Extending its functions for use in new domains. Haugen (1983: 272) argues that 'Selection and codification remain mere paper exercises unless they are followed by *implementation* and *elaboration*, the former involving social status and the latter the linguistic corpus'.

4. Acceptance: Enhancing its prestige and encouraging people to develop pride in it and loyalty towards it. 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 and simplify its use.
Example: Chinese [reduced the number of characters]
Turkish [Changed characters from Arabic to Latin]

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.