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 on 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.
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*.
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]
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

- The main concerns of language planners are:
  1. Language codification
  2. Vocabulary expansion
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.
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.
When developing the spelling system, there were some problems like:

1- Symbols did not correspond to the pronunciation.

\(/\eta/\) 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.