

# History of English-Georgian Dictionary

## 1. Initial stage of English-Georgian lexicography

English-Georgian lexicography begins in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the creation of English-Georgian word-lists by English authors. While exploring English-Georgian literary relationships, Georgian scholars paid great attention also to the lexicographic contacts between the two nations. “Memoir of a map of the countries comprehended between the Black Sea and the Caspian; with an account of the Caucasian nations, and the vocabularies of their languages” by G. Ellis, published in London in 1788 is regarded as one of the very first attempts of English authors to study Caucasian languages, including Georgian. Along with the discussion of the history, culture, religion, *etc.* of Caucasian peoples, the book also contains a minor (about 130 words) dictionary of Caucasian languages with their corresponding English translations [29, p. 32; 30, pp. 147 – 159].

This piece of work was followed by a dictionary of 224 words by D. Peacock, comprising data from Georgian, Mingrelian, Laz, Svan and Abkhazian languages with their English correspondences [29, pp. 33 – 34].

Among the word-lists compiled in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, we must mention an English-Georgian dictionary of 1,000 words compiled by Marjory S. Wardrop in the process of her work on the translation into English of Rustaveli’s poem Knight in the Panther's Skin, and 200-word fragment (letter B) of her unfinished Georgian-English dictionary.

Personal archives of David Barrett, Consultant in Caucasian and Central Asian Studies to the Bodleian Library of Oxford University, contain English-Georgian word-list including 4,000 entries, compiled by Mr Barrett himself [29, pp. 35 – 36].

## 2. English-Georgian lexicography in the 20<sup>th</sup> century

### 2.1. Dictionaries by Isidorè Gvarjaladze

The 1930s saw almost simultaneous creation of English-Georgian and Georgian-English dictionaries. The first English-Georgian dictionary (20,000 entries) was published in Georgia in 1939. It was compiled by Isidorè Gvarjaladze, a professor at Tbilisi Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages. In the same year, Eka Cherkezi in England completed her work on a Georgian-English dictionary, but its publication was delayed by the World War II. The book was eventually published in 1959 by the Oxford University Press [2].

Thus, professor Gvarjaladze is the pioneer of English-Georgian lexicography. It is worth mentioning, that Eka Cherkezi began her work in 1928, dedicating her dictionary to Oliver Wardrop.

So-called “Gvarjaladze dictionary” has since been republished multiple times. The author also published a Georgian-English dictionary and an English-Georgian dictionary of proverbs. The last books of the series were printed in 1975 – “English-Georgian Dictionary” (40,000 entries) and in 1979 – “Georgian English Dictionary” (40,000 entries), both in co-authorship with Tamar Gvarjaladze [10; 11; 12]. For a long time, these dictionaries were only available dictionaries of the kind and have done the Georgian public a great service. Online versions of the said English-Georgian and Georgian-English dictionaries can be found at the following Internet address: [www.translate.ge](http://www.translate.ge)

## **2.2. English-Georgian dictionary by Juansher Mchedlishvili**

In 1990s, Juansher Mchedlishvili, another professor from the Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages, published his English-Georgian Dictionary, which is in fact a type of learner's dictionary. The dictionary was based on learner's dictionaries published by the Oxford University Press and Longman publishing company and was primarily adapted to teaching purposes. In 2009, in co-authorship with David Mchedlishvili and Ivetta Gotsiridze, there was published the eighth, corrected and supplemented edition of the dictionary which comprised up to 67,000 words and expressions [16]. Indisputably, the said dictionary has done a great service to the students and teachers from the Georgian institutions of secondary and higher education and still remains one of the most popular educational and lexicographic sources for Georgian readers.

## **2.3. The Comprehensive English-Georgian Dictionary created by the Lexicographic Centre at Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

### **2.3.1. The history of the Dictionary**

In 1995, the Lexicographic Centre at Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University began the publication of the fascicles of its Comprehensive English-Georgian Dictionary. Currently, printed and published are 14 fascicles of the English-Georgian Dictionary (letters A – P), which cover 2 380 pages of the dictionary [7]. The publication of the remaining four fascicles of the Dictionary is intended before the end of 2015, after which the Comprehensive English-Georgian Dictionary will be presented to the reading public in the form of a two-volume edition.

The idea to create a comprehensive English-Georgian academic dictionary was conceived back in the 1960s at the Chair of English Philology of Tbilisi State University. The initiator of the project was a prominent Georgian scholar and translator, the then Head of the Chair, Prof. Givi Gachechiladze. As far as the lack of an academic English-Georgian dictionary was especially acutely felt by translators, the creation of such a dictionary was primarily determined by the need to adequately translate English-language literature into Georgian. At the initial stages of the work on the Dictionary, in the 1960s and 1970s, it was decided to use English-Russian dictionaries as source material and to merely translate them into Georgian. This erroneous decision made all preliminary work and translated materials already accumulated practically useless.

In the 1980s, a small team of editors embarked on thorough revision of the dictionary material and the preparation for the publication of the Dictionary. The editors of the English-Georgian Dictionary arrived at the decision to use comprehensive English monolingual dictionaries as major sources for the project. Namely, there were selected the Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles (OED) [18; 19; 20; 22] and Webster's Third New International Dictionary [24], whose definitions became the basic source for the semantic investigation of English words. The editorial team also relied on the New English-Russian Dictionary by Ilya Galperin [17], as well as on other dictionaries, such as Longman [14], COBUILD [3] and other trustworthy sources. This stage of the work on the dictionary has lasted for 30 years.

In 1992, the Editorial Board decided to digitalize the edited entries of the Dictionary and to start publishing the Dictionary in fascicles on a letter-by-letter basis. In 1995, the first

fascicle of the Comprehensive English-Georgian Dictionary, the letter A, was published which was soon (1996) followed by two more fascicles, letters B and C. The Georgian scientific community, as well as foreign Kartvelologists, attached great importance to the beginning of the publication of the New English-Georgian Dictionary ([www.margaliti.ge](http://www.margaliti.ge)).

In 2009, the Editorial Board made the decision to develop an online version of the Dictionary and to post it on the Internet. In February 2010, the Dictionary was posted on the Internet at the address [www.dict.ge](http://www.dict.ge). The Online Dictionary is by no means a stereotyped version of the printed edition of the Comprehensive English Georgian Dictionary. First fascicles of the English Georgian Dictionary, which were prepared and published back in the 1980s and 1990s, have undergone a thorough revision. The online version has also comprised letters from Q to Z, not published yet as fascicles.

The Comprehensive English Georgian Dictionary presently contains up to 110 000 entries. Taking into consideration the fact that dictionary entries fully represent the polysemy of English words, contain numerous collocations, phrasal verbs, phraseological units, ample amount of scientific and technical, economic and artistic terms, as well as terms from various other fields – the total material contains several hundred thousand units.

The search system of the online dictionary makes it possible to look up English as well as Georgian words, collocations and phrases.

### **2.3.2. The word-list of the Dictionary**

The selection of the word-list for the Dictionary was determined by the target groups for which it was initially intended – namely translators of English belles-lettres and scientific literature into Georgian, specialists working on specialized, branch-specific texts, learners of English, for whom English is their future speciality, also prospective psychologists, physicians, biologists, etc. who study English and need to know foreign special terms and their Georgian equivalents, as well as learners of English in general. The abovementioned target groups determined the inclusion in the Dictionary of modern vocabulary of the English language characterized by high frequency of occurrence, as well as the inclusion of less frequently used words, rare, obsolete, archaic, words or rare, obsolete and archaic meanings of modern words. The dictionary has included terms from almost all fields of knowledge.

Consequently, the English-Georgian Online Dictionary is primarily intended for English language specialists, teachers, translators and specialists from various fields, who have to work on special terms; the Dictionary is also intended for learners of English in general, as well as for the individuals, interested in English.

### **2.3.3. Semantic asymmetry between English and Georgian languages**

One of the important issues faced by the editors of the CEGD has been ‘linguistic and cultural anisomorphism’ between the English and Georgian languages, resulting in semantic asymmetry of seemingly similar words of these languages. English-Georgian lexicography is not exceptional in this respect, as it is the central problem of bilingual lexicography at large [25; 26; 28; 31; 32; 35]. This problem is well-formulated in the definitions of ‘**equivalence**’ and ‘**equivalent**’ in the Dictionary of Lexicography by Hartmann and James. ‘**Because of linguistic and cultural anisomorphism, translation equivalents are typically partial, approximative, non-literal and asymmetrical (rather than full, direct, word-for-word and**

bidirectional). Their specification in the bilingual dictionary is therefore fraught with difficulties, and recourse must be made to surrogate explanatory equivalents' [13, p. 51].

Semantic asymmetry is even wider between genetically unrelated and structurally completely different languages as is the case with the Georgian and English languages.

In order to solve the problem of linguistic equivalence, in the Comprehensive English-Georgian Dictionary there are distinguished: **equivalent of meaning** and **translational/contextual equivalent**. The goal of the editors of the Comprehensive English-Georgian Dictionary has always been to describe the equivalence between the English and Georgian languages on a more **general, systemic level** of the two languages, rather than give only Georgian equivalents of English words found in particular contexts; e.g.

**Rough:** *ustormastsoro*, *khorkliani*, *ukheshi/aragluvi zedapiris mkone* (lit. uneven, of rough/coarse surface); *rough road* oghrochoghro gza (lit. uneven / bumpy road); *rough edges [surface]* *ustormastsoto kideebi [zedapiri]* (lit. uneven edges [surface]); *rough skin* *khorkliani / khesheshi kani* (lit. calloused skin); *rough cloth* *ukheshi / mkise ksovili* (lit. coarse fabric); *rough hands* *ukheshi / dakozhrebuli khelebi* (lit. calloused hands).

In this example, *ustormastsoro*, *khorkliani*, *ukheshi/aragluvi zedapiris mkone* (lit. uneven, of rough/coarse surface) is an equivalent of meaning, whereas *oghrochoghro*, *ustormastsoto*, *khorkliani*, *khesheshi*, etc. are translational/contextual equivalents.

The editors of the Comprehensive English-Georgian Dictionary have developed a technique of combining equivalents of meanings (i.e. informatively more valuable or explanatory equivalents of lexical units) with translational/contextual equivalents presented in different illustrative phrases and sentences selected for entries. This is the novelty introduced by the team of the Comprehensive English-Georgian Dictionary into English-Georgian lexicography [27].

**The Editorial Board of the Dictionary comprises:** Shukia Apridonidze, Tinatin Margalitadze (Editor in Chief), George Meladze, Ariane Chanturia, Gela Khundadze.

#### 2.4. Donald Rayfield's Comprehensive Georgian-English Dictionary

"For English-reading students of Georgian outside of Georgia, a Georgian-English dictionary is far and away the greatest need; without such a work, the glorious treasures of the Georgian past and the excitement and promise of the present remain a closed book for us," wrote Howard Aronson, a professor from Chicago University and a kartvelologist in his letter sent to the Editorial Board of the Comprehensive English-Georgian Dictionary in 1998, where he greatly appreciated already published fascicles of the English-Georgian Dictionary, congratulating its Creative Team upon their achievement: "I congratulate you and your group on an outstanding achievement! Unquestionably, this will be the definitive English-Georgian Dictionary and clearly far, far surpasses all previous attempts at creating such dictionaries" (<http://margaliti.ge/new/feedback.htm>).

The basic principles of this Georgian-English Dictionary were first adumbrated by Donald Rayfield in a paper given to a Caucasological Symposium in Paris in 1988. Only twelve years later, the happy conjunction of developments in the Internet, of research funding in Britain and the availability of a compatible team of compilers in London and Tbilisi turned the dream of such a dictionary into reality.

The Georgian-English Dictionary presents an English equivalent for practically the entire lexical corpus of the Georgian language, ancient, classical and modern, as well as literary,

colloquial and dialectal. The Dictionary is published in two volumes and comprises 140,000 word-entries.

The Dictionary includes virtually all the entries from the eight-volume Explanatory Dictionary of the Georgian Language (often referred to as *KEGL*). The second major source is a database listing about two million word forms and their frequency of the Georgian daily and weekly press (from 1999-2002). Thirdly, there have been used a searchable electronic version, and a list of all word forms, of forty substantial texts by contemporary writers, predominantly novelists, such as Grigol Robakidze, Konstantine Gamsakhurdia, Mikheil Javakhishvili, Otar Chiladze, Chabua Amiredjibi, Bachana Bregvadze, Besik Kharanauli, Guram Dochanashvili, Tamaz Chkhenkeli, Vakhushti Kotetishvili, Aka Morchiladze and others. The fourth major source were Ilia Abuladze's and Zurab Sarjveladze's compilations and dictionaries of Old Georgian. There have been (selectively) used about thirty dictionaries of the various dialects of modern Georgian and dictionaries from various branches of science and technology. The Georgian-English Dictionary has also incorporated a substantial body of modern colloquial, including vulgar, expressions.

The Dictionary is, in the first place, intended for English-speaking readers, interested in Georgian literary texts, Georgian historical sources, Kartvelian languages. This is why the Dictionary has comprised the vocabulary from Old Georgian and Middle Georgian periods, dialectal material, *etc.* The Dictionary is also intended for Georgian users.

Unlike European-Georgian bilingual dictionaries, the dictionaries of Georgian-European type face a major problem, namely that of Georgian verb. As we know, the editorial board of the Explanatory Dictionary of the Georgian Language found a new way of representing Georgian verb in the Dictionary. Namely, while Georgian dictionaries traditionally included verbs represented in the form of *masdar* or verbal noun, which could not fully express the semantic richness and all the categories of the verb, the team working on *KEGL* renounced this tradition, deciding instead to represent not only initial forms of Georgian verbs, but also specific verb-forms according to verbal categories of person, version, voice, dynamic or static passive, *etc.* [8, preface]. So the Explanatory Dictionary includes not only initial verb-forms (*masdar*, verbal noun) but also third-person forms of all above-listed categories in present (future) tense:

თესვა *tesva* *masdar, verbal noun*

თესავს *tesavs* *third person singular form, neutral version*

ოთესავს *itesavs* *subjective version*

უთესავს *utesavs* *objective version*

ათესვინებს *atesvinebs* *causative verb*

ოთესება *iteseba* *intransitive verb - dynamic passive*

თესია *tesia* *intransitive verb - static passive*

*etc.*

Kita Chkhenkeli in his Georgian-German dictionary chose the run-on layout of dictionary entries for verbs. The verbs are represented by their stems without prefixes and all their lexical derivatives and grammatical forms are included in the same entry. In his Comprehensive Georgian-English Dictionary, Donald Rayfield follows the principle

developed by Arnold Chikobava and includes in the dictionary all above-listed verb forms.

e.g.

თესვა *tesva* ‘sowing (seed ...)’

თესავს *tesavs* ‘sows he/she, it (seed ...)’

ოთესავს *itesavs* ‘sows he/she, it (seed ...) for oneself’

უთესავს *utesavs* ‘sows he/she, it (seed ...) for smb’

ოთესება *iteseba* ‘it (seed...) is being sown’

თესია *tesia* ‘has been sown (seed ...)’

ათესვინებს *atesvinebs* ‘has smb sow smth (seed ...)’

*etc.*

In the preface of the Dictionary, Donald Rayfield himself gives the following explanation for this approach: “Such a multiplicity of entries (sometimes twenty finite entries for a verb listed in conventional dictionaries by one entry) inflates the size of our dictionary but will, we hope, economize the time employed by the user. All other procedures seemed to us to have more disadvantages than advantages. Listing forms under a masdar is arbitrary, since many verbs do not have a masdar, others have a masdar which cannot easily be ascertained, and the masdar itself has such a range of meanings that it does little to explain the meaning of a finite form. The method chosen by Tschenkéli to list verbs by root, then by prefixes, is satisfying for a professional linguist, but it can force a lay user to search for an hour to find a single specific finite form. Until an electronic system is perfected for unifying the prodigious numbers of forms of a Georgian verb into one entry, the path we have chosen seems to be the least of all the evils” [5].

***The Editorial Board of the Dictionary comprises:*** Rusudan Amiredjibi, Shukia Apridonidze, Laurence Broers, Ariane Chanturia, Levan Chkhaidze, Tinatin Margalitadze, Donald Rayfield (Editor in Chief).

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In the recent years, a new direction – English-Georgian specialized lexicography – can be observed in the English-Georgian lexicography. While in the past specialized dictionaries were predominantly compiled in respect to the Russian language and English-Georgian specialized dictionaries were comparatively rare [9; 15], nowadays there is seen an urgent need for English-Georgian specialized dictionaries.

In 2009, the Lexicographic Centre at TSU compiled the English-Georgian Military Dictionary, whose online version is available at the address <http://mil.dict.ge> Nearing its completion currently is the work on the English-Georgian Biological Dictionary, which is available on the Internet at the address <http://bio.dict.ge>.

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