
Centre for Bilingual Lexicography at Tbilisi State University, Georgia.

Projects, Methods, History

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The first bilingual dictionary of the Georgian language, Georgian-Italian was compiled and published in 1629 in Rome. Between 1629 and 1870 approximately ten European-Georgian dictionaries were compiled. At the beginning of the 19th century Georgia became a part of the Russian Empire. Since that time the major emphasis has been placed on Russian-Georgian lexicography. As a result of such an approach, bilingual lexicography of the Georgian language suffered in respect to European languages.

Even when the first English-Georgian, or other European-Georgian dictionaries appeared from the 1940s, they were mere translations of European-Russian dictionaries, which led to numerous inaccuracies and even gross mistakes.

The same erroneous lexicographical principles became the basis of compilation of A Comprehensive English-Georgian Dictionary (CEGD), initiated by the Department of English Philology of Tbilisi State University back in the 1960s. The decision was made to translate the New English-Russian Dictionary, edited by I. Galperin.

After examining the existing material, the Editorial Staff of CEGD (established in the 1980s) arrived at the conclusion that it was impossible to edit the material in the form in which it was executed. The Editorial Staff developed entirely new principles for the creation of CEGD.

The method of the analysis of definitions of English Dictionaries was identified as the basic technique for the investigation of the semantic structure of English lexical units.

The process of revision and editing of the material of CEGD has continued for 25 years.

The publication of CEGD started in 1995 in fascicles on a letter-by-letter basis. By now, thirteen fascicles of CEGD have been published, from letters A to O.

The Internet version of CEGD was launched in February 2010.

Other projects of the Lexicographic Centre include: 'English-Georgian Learner's Dictionary';

'English-Georgian Military Dictionary' (first publication of the series of specialised English-Georgian Dictionaries).

1. Introduction

One of the distinctive features of present-day lexicography is the synthesis of philology and culture, in the widest meaning of the word 'culture'. The significant part of the culture of any nation is materialised by means of its language and the language itself is enshrined in the dictionaries of the language concerned.

The new awareness of the special role of dictionaries as the carriers of the culture of each given nation and, at the same time, as key factors for the understanding of the culture itself, led to an unprecedented upsurge of the lexicographic activities throughout the world. The demand for lexicographic products has increased; the scope of theoretical and research work in the field of lexicography has widened significantly, and so on.

2. Short History of the Lexicographic Centre

The Lexicographic Centre at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University was founded back in the 1990s. At that time it was part of the English Department of the University and it was focused on English-Georgian Lexicography, namely on the tremendous project of the English Department – compilation, editing and publication of 'A Comprehensive English-Georgian Dictionary', comprising 160,000 word entries.

In 2001, the Lexicographic Centre acquired the status of a University Centre. From 2010 the Lexicographic Centre will be transformed into the Centre for Bilingual Lexicography and a new graduate programme will be introduced at the University, namely 'Language and Lexicography'. The aim of the new MA programme is to bring up a new generation of lexicographers, who will work on different bilingual European-Georgian projects. The Lexicographic Centre at Tbilisi

State University played an important role in the development of English-Georgian Lexicography in Georgia.

3. Short History of Bilingual Lexicography in Georgia

Georgia has a centuries-old tradition of compiling dictionaries. Georgia was one of the first countries to adopt Christianity as its official religion early in the 4th century. Conversion of the country into Christianity gave great impetus to the development of culture and learning. Numerous works of Greek and Latin authors were translated into Georgian by Georgian scholars, writers, historians and philosophers. Some of them were supplied with Glossaries.

The first explanatory dictionary of the Georgian language was compiled as early as the beginning of the 11th century. The first bilingual dictionary, Georgian-Italian was compiled and published in 1629 in Rome. Between 1629 and 1870 approximately ten European-Georgian and Georgian-European dictionaries were compiled.

At the beginning of the 19th century Georgia became a part of the Russian Empire and since that time the major emphasis has been placed on Russian-Georgian and Georgian-Russian lexicography, both general and specialised dictionaries. As a result of such an approach bilingual lexicography of the Georgian language suffered in respect to European languages.

Even when the first English-Georgian, or other European-Georgian dictionaries appeared from the 1940s, they were mere translations of English-Russian or European-Russian dictionaries. In bilingual dictionaries of this type it was impossible to avoid inaccuracies, even gross mistakes.

As we know, seemingly identical meanings of the words from any two languages never fully coincide, particularly in this case with such unrelated, systemically different languages as Georgian and English. The semantic structure of an English word may match some part of the semantic structure of a Georgian word whereas its other parts may relate to completely different Georgian lexical items. It is easily imaginable what discrepancies and inconsistencies may arise in a dictionary if the explanation of English words is based upon the semantic structure of the Russian language.

Thus, the bilingual lexicography of that period was based on erroneous lexicographical principles and this happened when Georgia was in urgent need of a comprehensive, reliable English-Georgian dictionary which would serve as a bridge connecting our country with the global English-speaking community.

4. A Comprehensive English-Georgian Dictionary

In the 1960s, the English Department of Tbilisi State University launched a project of paramount importance, initiating the compilation of the Comprehensive English-Georgian Dictionary (160,000 word-entries). Unfortunately, from the very beginning the Project was based upon the same incorrect theoretical principles; namely, it was decided to translate the New English-Russian Dictionary edited by Prof. I. R. Galperin.

In the 1980s, the English Department established the Editorial Staff of the Comprehensive English-Georgian Dictionary which was entrusted with the task of examining the already compiled cards of entries and with the initiation of the editorial and publishing activities.

On examining the existing material, the editors had to arrive at the conclusion that it was impossible to edit the material in the form in which it was executed. It also became obvious that it was necessary to thoroughly revise the already compiled dictionary entries.

The Editorial Staff developed entirely new principles for the creation of the English-Georgian Dictionary. The principle of the compilation of entries of the English-Georgian Dictionary basing on the English-Russian Dictionary was irreversibly renounced. The entries had to be revised based on the most reliable and respected English explanatory dictionaries. The information obtained from explanatory dictionaries had to help to ascertain precisely the entire semantic structure of each English word and only thereafter the corresponding Georgian words had to be looked up. The method of the analysis of definitions was identified as the basic technique for the investigation of the semantic structure of English lexical units.

The process of revision and editing of the material of the Comprehensive English-Georgian Dictionary has continued for 25 years. Galperin's dictionary was revised and reprocessed with the help of the Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles; Webster's Third New International Unabridged Dictionary, comprising over 500,000 entries; Cambridge University, Longman, and COBUILD dictionaries, as well as with the help of other reliable explanatory dictionaries of the English language. It is through such meticulous work that the entries of the Comprehensive English-Georgian Dictionary have been created up until the present day.

In 1992, the Editorial Staff decided to digitalise 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. By now, thirteen fascicles of the English-Georgian Dictionary have been published, from letters A to O, and these fascicles have become the most reliable source of English words for Georgian readers (www.margaliti.ge).

Thus, the Editorial Staff of the Comprehensive English-Georgian Dictionary has laid the foundation of entirely new lexicographical principles in the Georgian reality for English-Georgian lexicography in particular and for bilingual lexicography in general. 'A Comprehensive English-Georgian Dictionary' is not only the first comprehensive English-Georgian dictionary, but the first comprehensive bilingual dictionary of the Georgian Language in respect to European Languages.

The already published volumes of the Dictionary contain up to 100,000 word entries, tens of thousands of collocations, phrasal verbs, phraseological units, proverbs and sayings, amounting to 250,000 equivalents.

It must be also noted that the Comprehensive English-Georgian Dictionary is comprised of a significant quantity of terms from practically all existing fields and branches of science: anatomy, archaeology, astronomy, banking, biology, geography, geology, economics, arts, linguistics, mathematics, medicine, mineralogy, military, radio, law, technical, physics, philosophy, psychology, and so on. Taking the vocabulary of the English-Georgian Dictionary as the basis, it will be possible in the future to publish a series of English-Georgian dictionaries of the terminology from various fields of human activity. One of the first specialised dictionaries, compiled and edited by the Lexicographic Centre is the 'English-Georgian Military Dictionary', initiated at the request of the Ministry of Defence of Georgia.

The editorial work on ‘A Comprehensive English-Georgian Dictionary’ continues. The work is underway on all remaining letters of the Dictionary.

5. A Comprehensive English-Georgian Online Dictionary

In 2009 the Editorial Staff made a decision to launch ‘A Comprehensive English-Georgian Online Dictionary’. The decision was made to launch the Internet Version of the Dictionary, proceeding from the following considerations:

Georgian readers and learners of English, will have immediate access to an enormous amount of material, including terminology from various fields of knowledge, which will facilitate the translation of both literary and scientific texts;

The work on the dictionary will be carried out in close cooperation with the Georgian reader, which will give enormous feedback to the Editorial Board. Comments from readers; their suggestions, maybe some corrections and so on will contribute greatly to the successful completion of the project.

‘A Comprehensive English-Georgian Online Dictionary’ was launched in February 2010 (www.dictionary.ge). The Online Version comprises a revised edition of the published fascicles, as well as other letters (P – Z), which have not yet been published as books.

The Internet programme has two types of search system: a search of main Dictionary entries and a full search of the Dictionary. A full search of the Dictionary enables one to look for a word, collocation, phrasal verb, idiom, and so on in the entire Dictionary. The programme displays search results, which show the search item in the form of an entry name, or a quotation. The online dictionary has the full text search function for Georgian words and phrases as well, which makes it possible to use the online Dictionary not only as an English-Georgian, but also as a Georgian-English one.

Figures 1, 2 and 3 represent *A Comprehensive English-Georgian Online Dictionary*

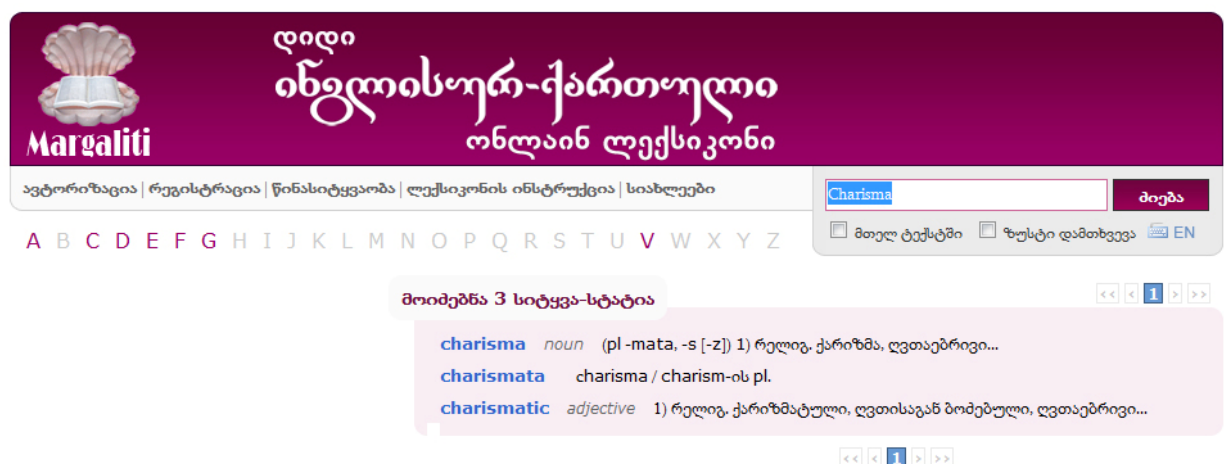


Figure 1.

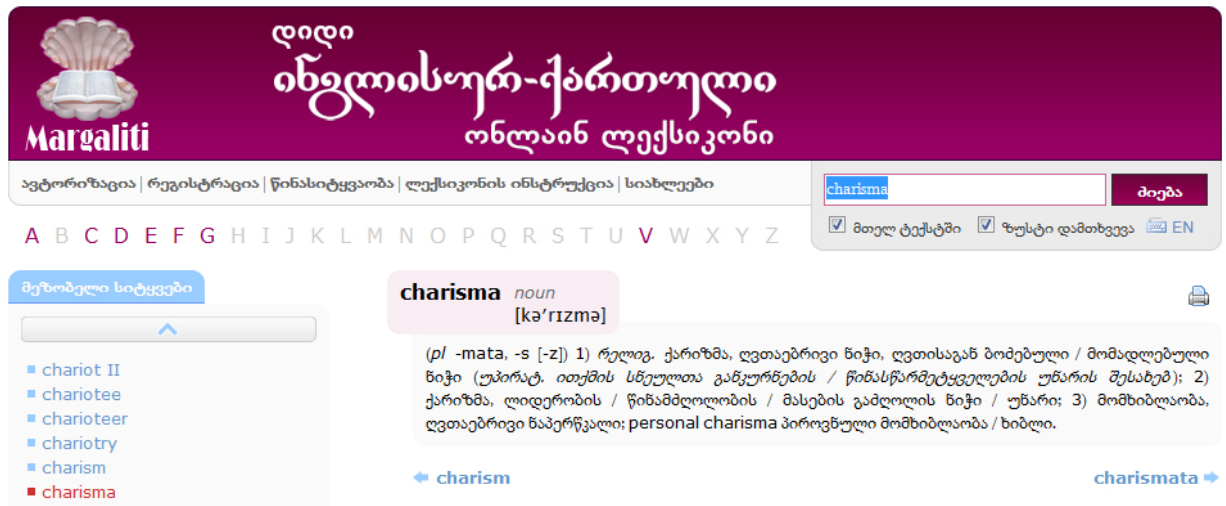


Figure 2.

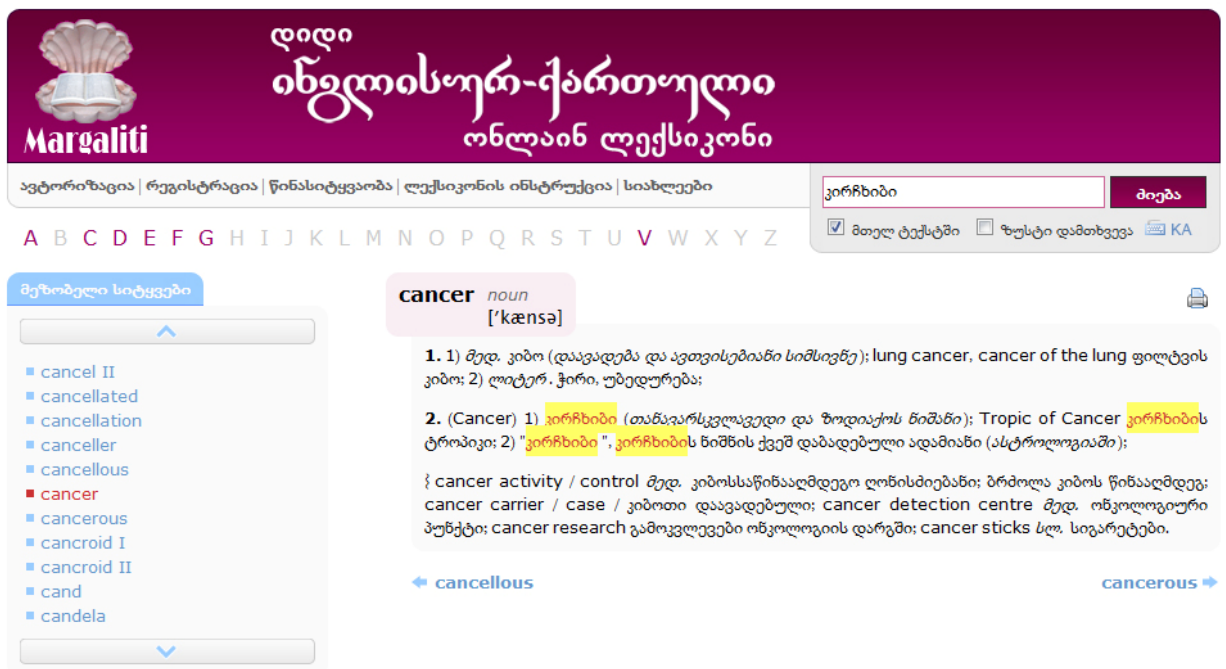


Figure 3.

6. English-Georgian Military Dictionary

Alongside of this work on the Comprehensive English-Georgian Dictionary, the Lexicographic Centre of Tbilisi State University has started publication of English-Georgian specialised dictionaries, the 'English-Georgian Military Dictionary' being the first such publication, as mentioned earlier.

The 'English-Georgian Military Dictionary' is comprised basically of 9,500 modern American, British, as well as international terms from such fields as tactics, operations, manoeuvres, trainings, units, personnel, ranks, transportation, weapons, equipment, logistics, and so on. Along with military terms, represented in the dictionary are aeronautical, nautical, radio-technical, technical, cartographic and political terms.

The dictionary also comprises a number of historic military terms which are meant for the individuals who have to work on military literature. Included in the dictionary are military

colloquial and military slang words and expressions for the military servicemen who have to communicate with their foreign colleagues during their participation in various international peacekeeping or other operations.

The dictionary contains the most common military abbreviations. At the back of the book is an index of abbreviations, a table of military ranks, units of measurement and some other useful information. Attached to the Dictionary is its electronic version, which is the first electronic dictionary of this type in Georgia and has the majority of the functions described above.

Figures 4, 5 and 6 represent electronic version of the *English-Georgian Military Dictionary*



Figure 4.

Section 3. Reports on Lexicographical and Lexicological Projects

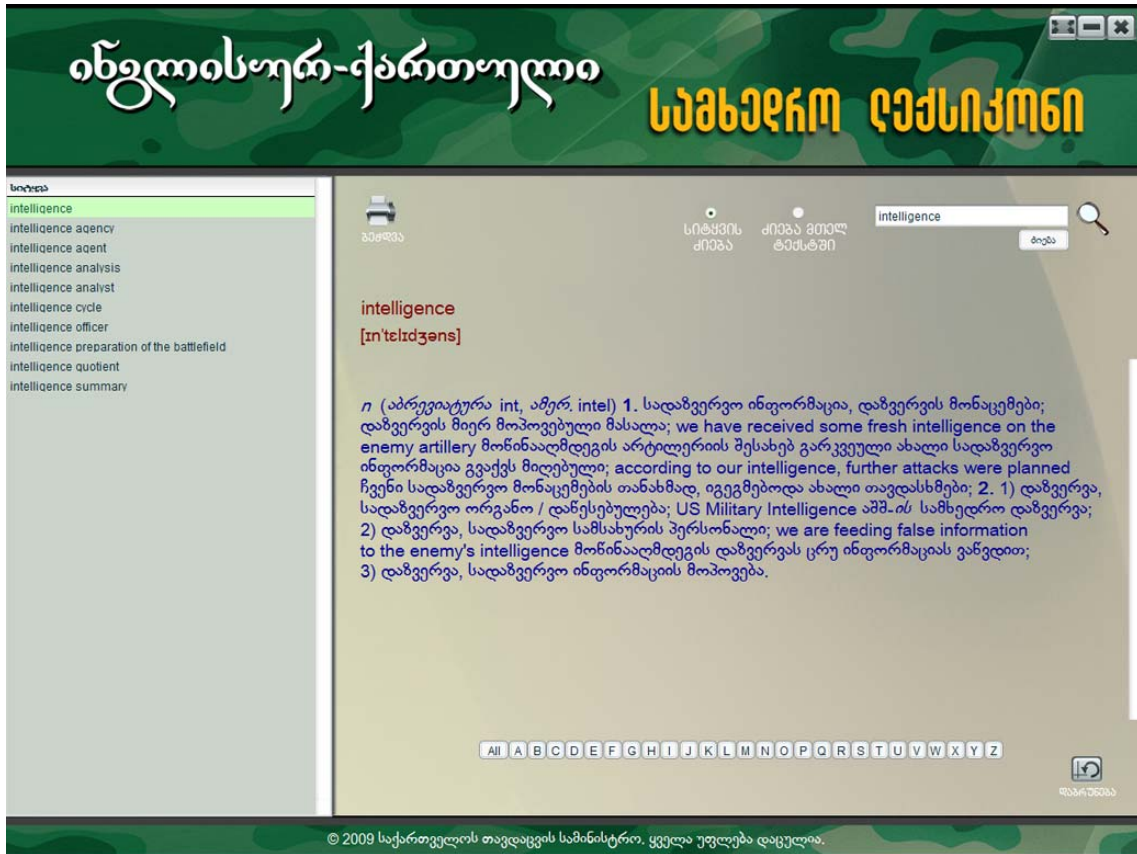


Figure 5.

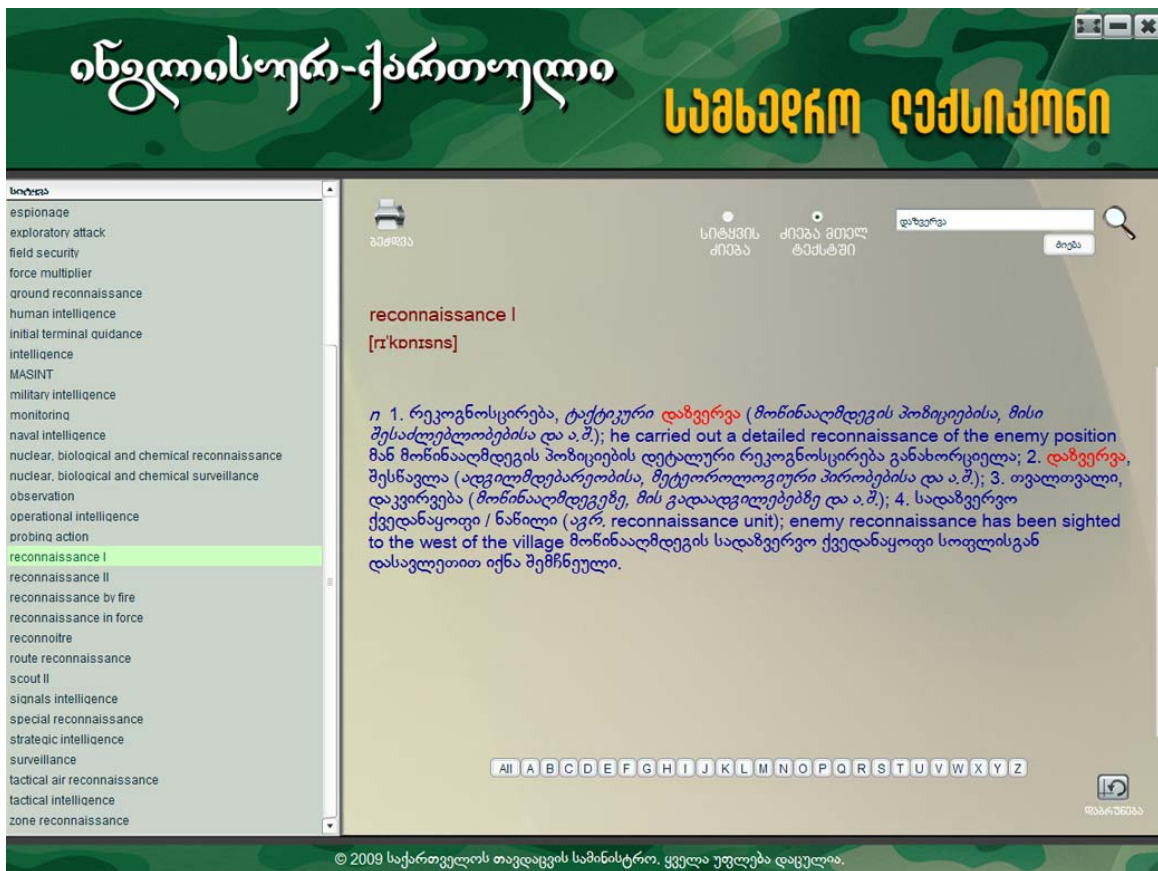


Figure 6.

7. English-Georgian Learner's Dictionary

Another important project of the Lexicographic Centre is the 'English-Georgian Learner's Dictionary'. The work on this Dictionary started two years ago and will be completed in 2011. Unlike 'A Comprehensive English-Georgian Dictionary', which reflects to the maximum extent possible, the lexis, polysemy and phraseology of the English words, explains obsolete and archaic, as well as dialectal words or meanings, and contains numerous technical terminology, the 'English-Georgian Learner's Dictionary' aims at providing learners of English with the most widely used and modern meanings of English words. The quotations are shorter and easier to understand for learners of English.

The 'English-Georgian Learner's Dictionary' will also be supplied with an electronic version, which will have all the functions described above, namely, a search of main Dictionary entries and a full search of the Dictionary. The electronic dictionary will also have the full text search function for Georgian words and phrases as well.

From 2010, the Lexicographic Centre of Tbilisi State University plans to expand its activities to bilingual European-Georgian lexicography.

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