

Appeal of the Lexicographic Centre at Tbilisi State University to the XVII EURALEX International Congress

Language is central to human identity and culture. In the development and maintenance of a feeling of national identity language is central, and the dictionary is the key tool to access and record that identity. The recognition of the special role of dictionaries for the development of science and culture, for the school and university education led to an unprecedented upsurge of lexicographic activities in many countries. Numerous lexicographic centres have been established, the scope of theoretical and research work in the field of lexicography has widened significantly, the types and variety of dictionaries published have also increased.

Despite these developments, within academia in some countries, lexicography is still overlooked, relegated to being a mere craft rather than an academic discipline. Such a notion is misguided and dangerous. Lexicographers not only study language for what it is, the central tool for communication, but also provide the means by which a language, and its underlying cultural values, may be taught and given full value within a society.

Lexicography, as any other branch of science, has undergone tremendous changes and has developed into a rapidly developing interdisciplinary branch of science, incorporating multiple components such as, semantic theories, corpus-based methods, techniques for natural language processing, e-lexicography, etc.

The present status of lexicography in some countries gives ground for serious concern.

Namely:

- The result of lexicographic work is not classed among scientific categories in general and in process of present-day contests and rating assessments in particular. This happens despite the fact that a dictionary entry often implies even higher scholarly qualification than any specific research article does;
- Lexicographic work and its product are not yet entitled to the right of being competitive participants of modern grant competitions;
- Remuneration for the work of lexicographers is inadequate, compelling them to earn livelihood by means of carrying out other activities;
- Lexicographers are not awarded academic (scientific) degrees for the lexicographic products they create; and
- Lexicography is totally excluded from the list of priorities of universities or research foundations.

We strongly believe that:

- *Lexicographer's work is scientific activity, and lexicographic products (dictionary entries, dictionaries) pieces of scientific work, for which lexicographic scholars must be awarded relevant academic (scientific) degrees;*
- *More attention should be paid to lexicography in grant competitions to ensure creation of academic dictionaries, as well as theoretical research in academic dictionary production;*
- *Special academic curricula must be introduced in universities in order to train future lexicographers;*
- *Dictionary use should be taught both at schools as well as at colleges and universities.*