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## DIACHRONIC AND SYNCHRONIC ANALYSIS OF LEXICOGRAPHIC PROCESSES OF MINORITY LANGUAGES IN SCOTLAND: A CONTRASTIVE APPROACH

### Bibliographic Description:

Lemeshchenko-Lagoda, V. V. (2021). Diachronic and Synchronic Analysis of Lexicographic Processes of Minority Languages in Scotland: a Contrastive Approach. *Scientific Journal of National Pedagogical Dragomanov University. Series 9. Current Trends in Language Development*, 21. 76–89. <https://doi.org/10.31392/NPU-nc.series9.2021.21.06>.

### **Abstract**

*The paper offers a diachronic and synchronic analysis of the lexicographic processes of the minority languages in Scotland – Scottish Gaelic and Scots. For the first time, three periods (period of glossaries, historical period, modern “educational” period) of the Scottish Gaelic lexicography, and four periods (period of glossaries, pre-scientific period and dialectological period, historical period and scientific period) of epy Scots lexicography were outlined. The author discusses the diachronic and synchronic analysis of lexicographic sources, singles out common and divergent features of both lexicographic processes development, as well as the basic principles and approaches to compiling dictionaries.*

*For the Scottish-Gaelic lexicography, it is absolutely untypical to compile dictionaries of dialectal words; to interpret the Gaelic language as a dialect of Irish, in contrast to the Scots, which for a long period of its development was perceived as a dialect of English, which prompted the lexicographers to compile dictionaries of dialectal vocabulary.*

*A significant advantage of Scottish Gaelic dictionaries lies in the fact that English-Gaelic dictionaries appeared decades earlier in comparison with similar editions in the Scots language.*

*Despite the fact that Scottish Gaelic is the official language of Scotland, Scottish Gaelic lexicography, compared to the Scots one, is significantly inferior both in the number of published dictionaries and in the quality of their content (macro- and microstructure).*

*Both lexicographic processes are characterized by the lack of monolingual dictionaries. All publications are bilingual (translated into English, or from English, rarely in other languages).*

**Keywords:** *minority languages, Scottish Gaelic, Scots, lexicography, lexicographic process, diachronic analysis, synchronic analysis.*

### **1. Introduction.**

The revival and preservation of minority languages has become the subject of increasing attention and concern of both foreign (Y. Bollmann, R. Castro, D. Crystal, F. Fellman, J. Harbeck, V. Makashova, R. Nuwer, J. Yamisha, V. Zhuhan) and Ukrainian linguists (A. Dochu, S. Kot, O. Mykhalchuk, V. Ponomarenko, V. Radchuk, N. Sedneva, V. Vasylenko, L. Vasylyk, G. Yankovska, G. Zaliznyak). It is estimated that of the world's 8,000 languages, only half will survive the next century. Less optimistic views suggest that this number will be twice as small. The loss of at least one language indicates not only a reduction in the world's linguistic heritage, but also a loss of cultural and intellectual diversity.

A crucial role in the preservation of minority languages can be played by a well-thought-out language policy aimed at active use of minority languages in all spheres of life (Y. Bollmann, D. Crystal, H. Lewis, O. Rösch, E. Royles, O. Taranenko), especially taking into account the fact of their coexistence in the same geographical area with the major language.

Regardless of geographical, economic or political conditions, dictionaries serve an important tool for describing, promoting and protecting languages. In addition, they play an even more important role in the preservation of endangered or minority languages, for they assist in preserving what is left of rapidly disappearing languages and cultures by capturing valuable information that otherwise would be lost. Identifying lexical units specific to a particular language, dictionaries help to distinguish it from genetically related languages. In addition, within the dictionary tradition, the modernization of the minority language can also be carried out, i.e. the development of vocabulary layers needed to expand the scope of its use. In this case, the dictionary determines the spelling of the language and often its orthoepic features, as well as grammatical rules. Importantly, in many cases a dictionary contributes to the language revival and changes the speakers' attitude towards it, encouraging its active utilization.

The need to elaborate upon this issue in modern Scotland, where three languages interact - the Scottish English, Scots and Scottish Gaelic, is discussed by foreign linguists (R. Crawford, J. Considine, M. G. Dareau, Ch. Jones, I. Macleod, C. Mark, A.L.K. Nihtinen, L. Pike, S. Pons-Sanz, Ch. Robinson), in particular Scottish ones (A. J. Aitken, A. MacCoinnich, I. Macleod, R. O. Madalalaigh, J. McClure, W. McLeod, S. Rennie). Although Scots and Scottish Gaelic were recognized as regional minority languages after British ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 1992, and Scottish Gaelic was given status of second official language of Scotland in 2005, both languages require a number of measures for the preservation and further development, among which the study of existing and compilation of new dictionaries is one of the priority areas.

So far, the lexicographic tradition has been thoroughly understood and individual dictionaries that record the lexical structure of the Scots language have been analyzed. In particular, there are several studies of the Scots lexicography historical development in the XVIII-XIX centuries. The vast majority of researchers (M. G. Dareau, Ch. Jones, I. Macleod, J. McClure, S. Rennie, Ch. Robinson, M. Robinson) focused their attention on detailing and reproducing the history of dictionary writing and compilation of this period, the most prominent Scottish lexicographers of this time (A. J. Aitken, R. Crawford, J. Considine, S. Rennie).

However, Scottish-Gaelic lexicography has not been the subject of special comprehensive research from both diachronic and synchronic perspectives so far. Moreover, compared to Scots, there is much less research on the Scottish-Gaelic lexicographic processes, although interest in studying this topic is growing, which can be traced in reference to some scientific research in recent years (A. MacCoinnich, W. McLeod, R. O. Madalalaigh, C. Mark, A.L.K. Nihtinen, L. Pike, S. Pons-Sanz).

## **2. Aim and Objectives.**

The paper *aims* to identify common and different features as the results of diachronic and synchronic analysis of the Scottish Gaelic and Scots lexicographic processes.

The main *objectives* are as follows:

- to identify the features of the Scottish lexicography development from the twelfth century to our time and define the main periods and trends of its development;
- to substantiate the basic principles of compiling dictionaries in Scottish Gaelic and Scots;
- to characterize the available approaches to the language material presentation at the macro- and microstructure level;
- to carry out a comparative analysis of the lexicographic processes in Scottish Gaelic and Scots in order to identify common and divergent features.

## **3. Methodology.**

In the paper such general and special linguistic research methods: general methods of analysis and synthesis of information; descriptive method of lexicographic analysis for analysis of dictionary macro- and microstructure; comparative-diachronic method for the purpose of comparative-historical analysis of the formation process of Scottish lexicography at different stages of its formation; methods of dictionary criticism and comparative interpretation to identify their common and divergent features were used.

## **4. Results.**

### **4.1. Periodization of Scottish Gaelic lexicography.**

Traditionally, the beginning of Scottish Gaelic lexicography has been associated with the scientific and translation work of the Rev. Robert Kirk, whose short glossary was published in 1702 and contained a small list of Gaelic words translated into English. During the same period, the Edward Lhuyd's fieldwork on collecting ethnographic material took place. He studied and recorded a large number of dialects that were widely used in Argyll and Inverness-shire. However, for more than three centuries, Scottish Gaelic lexicography has not acquired such a wide variety of vocabulary genres as Scots lexicography. In particular, taking into account the relatively small number of dictionaries that were published during this period (about 30), and the significant preservation or imitation of techniques and methods of fixing and transmitting lexical items in dictionary entries over the centuries, it is difficult to establish a clear periodization of Scottish Gaelic lexicography. Approximately three periods of its development can be outlined:

- period of glossaries (XVIII century);
- historical period (XIX–XX centuries);
- modern 'educational' period – (XXI century).

#### ***4.1.1. The first period of development of Scottish Gaelic lexicography – the period of glossaries.***

As noted above, the first Scottish Gaelic glossary was compiled in 1702 by the Rev. Robert Kirk as a supplement to William Nicolson's Scottish Historical Library. As the author himself calls it, this glossary is much more like a list of words in the Irish dialect spoken by the Highlanders of Scotland. The glossary consisted of a small number of words to explain to Scottish readers some words of Irish origin in Bedel's translation of the Bible. In 1707, Edward Lhuyd's *Archæologia Britannica* was published. The book contains a grammar of the Ibero-Scottish Gaelic language and a small dictionary of the most commonly used words, which accurately conveys the state of the language development at that time.

In 1741, the first attempt to compile a complete dictionary of the Scottish Gaelic language was made by Alexander M'Donald. Words in a glossary are organized around a specific topic, not alphabetically. The first theme is the theme of God and Christianity. It is worth noting that at that time it was the first lexicographical work that covered a fairly broad topic. However, the publishers of this edition were forced to warn readers about certain shortcomings, such as "all or most of the verbs in this vocabulary, from page 143 to page 162, are expressed in the Gaelic by single words, though our author generally expresses them by a needless circumlocution" (URL: <https://www.electricscotland.com/history/literat/dictiona.htm>).

The first dictionary in the modern sense was published by the Rev. William Shaw in 1780. The dictionary was published in two volumes: "Galic and English Dictionary" (15,000 words) and "English and Galic Dictionary" (12,000 words), and contained in alphabetical order most of the words of the Scottish and Irish dialects of the Celtic language, which could be collected from ancient books. However, the dictionary almost immediately received a number of criticisms from native speakers. "As the critics of the publication appropriately point out, Shaw could not distinguish the words of the Scottish Gaelic language from the Old Irish language. Despite all the shortcomings, Shaw's work gave a significant impetus to the compilation of correct and accurate dictionaries in Scottish Gaelic" (Considene, 2017, URL: [https://ebrary.net/116354/language\\_literature/nineteenth\\_century](https://ebrary.net/116354/language_literature/nineteenth_century)).

The last eighteenth-century dictionary of the language was a counterpart to Shaw's, the Gaelic-English *Nuadhfhoclair Gaidhlig agus Bearla / New Alphabetical Vocabulary, Gallic and English of Robert Macfarlan (Raibeard Mac Pharlain)*, published in 1795. In fact, its wordlist has so much in common with Shaw's as to suggest that the *New Alphabetical Vocabulary* is basically a revision of the *Galic and English Dictionary*, though apparently the Irish forms were removed, and many spellings and definitions were tweaked (Considene, 2017, URL: [https://ebrary.net/116354/language\\_literature/nineteenth\\_century](https://ebrary.net/116354/language_literature/nineteenth_century)). The dictionary contains just under ten thousand Gaelic words. In addition to Shaw's dictionary, R. Macfarlan supplemented his edition with 'Rules for reading the Gailic language' which was an unacknowledged reworking of James Stuart's 'Rules for reading the Galic language' of 1767 (Considene, 2017, URL: [https://ebrary.net/116354/language\\_literature/nineteenth\\_century](https://ebrary.net/116354/language_literature/nineteenth_century)).

The analysis of the listed dictionaries made it possible to identify the characteristics of this period:

- all dictionaries were mostly small and bilingual (Gaelic-English);
- there were several options for writing register words;
- vocabulary material is presented in two columns (the first – in Scottish Gaelic, and next – translation into English, or vice versa);
- dictionaries do not contain additional grammatical commentary to register words (do not indicate part-of-speech affiliation, grammatical categories, etc.);

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