

Contemporary English-Russian Dictionary: A New Type of Dictionary in Russia

Galina Zakharova

English-Russian dictionaries have always been in great demand in the Russian book market, as a means to help the study and use of the English language for world communication.

In the former USSR, the Russky Yazyk publishing house was the leader, and monopolist, in the field of publishing dictionaries, English-Russian ones in particular. This was a huge publisher with old traditions and a well-known lexicographic school, which formed and trained several generations of lexicographers.

During the last 20 years, since the perestroika, we have witnessed great changes in our economy, including the book publishing industry. Now the dictionary market is no longer uniform, Russky Yazyk has lost its leading position, and it produces fewer dictionaries than before and does not have the national school of lexicography any more.

Nevertheless, the dictionaries compiled and edited by lexicographers of the former Russky Yazyk are highly esteemed and are of great demand in the market. These are *Modern English-Russian Dictionary* (by V.K. Müller, V.L. Dashevskaya, V.A. Kaplan, Moscow, Russky Yazyk – Dropha 2002), *New English-Russian Dictionary* in 3 volumes (edited under the supervision of E.M. Mednikova and Y.D. Apresyan, Moscow, Russky Yazyk, 1st edition 1993) and the recently published *New Comprehensive Russian-English Dictionary* (by D.I. Ermolovich and T.M. Krasavina, Moscow, Russky Yazyk, 2004).

There are also other major publishing houses involved in the local dictionary trade, for example AST, whose *English-Russian and Russian-English Dictionary for Schoolchildren* (2004) contains grammar notes and was compiled by professionals from the old school. However, many of the dictionaries currently available in bookshops are reprints of old editions, without proper revision and editing, just new colour jackets.

Our publishing house, RUSSO, was established in 1993 on the basis of the scientific and technical dictionaries department of Russky Yazyk. We publish specialist and scientific dictionaries on various subjects, including exact sciences

(physics, chemistry, biology, etc) and applied sciences (medicine, economics, law, transport, agriculture, computer sciences, etc).

It was the idea of Ludmila Popova, one of the prominent Russian lexicographers and former chief of the department of Germanic languages at Russky Yazyk, to publish an English-Russian dictionary of a new type, principally different from those that existed. We decided that this dictionary should feature popular terminology of science and technology as well as everyday language, while making room also for fields that were traditionally weakly represented in the dictionaries of the past, such as religion, sociology, psychology, sexology, youth slang, new and extreme sports, modern music and fashion.

The *Contemporary English-Russian Dictionary*, published in 2004, contains about 50,000 words and 70,000 phrases. It combines general, everyday language with up-to-date terminology from the fields of technology, medicine, biology, transport, sports, etc. Special attention was paid to computer terminology, slang and pop music terms. The dictionary can help in reading and translating various texts – from classical literature to newspapers, magazines and popular science. It includes literary words, even obsolete and dialectal, which are necessary for our users in order to read nineteenth century literature, alongside slang and expressions commonly used in modern literature. It makes use of numerous labels (e.g. functional, regional, stylistic) to help distinguish different shades of meanings. We have aimed, in particular, to make this dictionary as comprehensive and user-friendly as possible, and have thus accompanied the book by a CD-ROM.



Galina Zakharova is the director of RUSSO



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Ludmila Popova, Natalia Mokina, Galina Zakharova
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