

RUSSIAN REFERENCE DICTIONARIES AT SOCIAL SCIENCES LIBRARY

ĐÀO DUY TÂN^(*)

1. Russian reference dictionaries

The series of Russian reference dictionaries of the Social Sciences Library (Library), Science Information Institute has an important position in the system of scientific newspapers and books and life. Reference dictionaries, though not in great numbers, have scientific and practical values. They assist readers in looking up any word, any term, any concept, any event, any place name, any personality or any definitions, how to pronounce, spelling, usage, origin of words, with concise, laconic, succinct, standardized, and straightforward content.

Preliminary statistics have shown that in the Russian book treasure there are about 223 titles of reference dictionaries of various types divided evenly among the specialized branches of social sciences and humanity. These include:

- *Encyclopedia*, including general encyclopedia, specialized encyclopedia, encyclopedic dictionaries.
- *Bilingual dictionaries* and specialized bilingual dictionaries.

- *General explanatory dictionaries* and specialized explanatory dictionaries.
- *Russian dictionaries*, including Russian dictionaries, Russian explanatory dictionaries, Russian spelling dictionaries, dictionaries of foreign terms in Russian.
- *Other types of dictionary*, for example, dictionaries of celebrities, dictionaries of proper names, dictionaries of keywords.

Such dictionaries as mentioned above have been selected and supplemented by the Library for over the past half a century. Part of the reference dictionaries are on display and serving readers at New Book Reference and Display Room. These are the core dictionaries with large information capacity, standardized, and recognized to some extent.

The first dictionaries introduced to the Library, according to years of publication, included those in 1947, 1953, 1956, 1957, 1958, and 1959. The Russian explanatory dictionary (Tol'kovo slovar' russkogo

^(*) Researcher, Institute of Social Sciences Information.

jazyka. V dvukh tomkh. M.: Sov. Enciklopedija, 1947) published in 1947 is the book with the earliest year of publication, which is followed by *the Russian Dictionary* published in 1953; *Old French Dictionary*, 1956; *Political Dictionary*, 1958. During this period, there appears the sole *Soviet Encyclopedia Yearbook*, published in 1957 (Ezhegodnik sovetskej enciklopedii, 1957, M.: Sov. Enciklopedija, 1957, 648tr.).

So, in the 1950s of the previous century, in the Russian book treasure, there were only six sets of dictionary of various types. Reference dictionaries appeared in profusion in the middle of the 1960s with various types of dictionary of information and reference values, particularly general encyclopedia and specialized encyclopedia, bilingual, specialized, and Russian reference dictionaries.

Reference dictionaries fall within the specialized areas of politics, philosophy, sociology, literature and art, linguistics, law, economics, historical, military sciences, music, architecture, and education.

In respect of genre, bilingual dictionaries account for a dominating majority against other types of dictionary, encyclopedia, specialized dictionaries, for instance.

In respect of time for publication, the majority of reference dictionaries were most published in the 1960s, 1970s and in the early 1980s. In the recent years, the number of Russian dictionaries imported was inconsiderable and their genres could also hardly be differentiated; these were dictionary works and also reference dictionaries with depths of information;

for example, the book by Kovalevskij M.N. *Sovremenyje sociologi. V dvukh tomakh*. M.: Sankt Peterburg, Aletecja, 1997 (contemporary sociologists). *Filosofy dvadcatogo veka*. M.: Iskustvo XXI vek, 2004, 367 pages (philosophers of the 20th century), or such books as *Evropejskij al'manakh. 1997 Istorija. Tradicii. Kul'tura*. M.: Nauka, 1998, 184 pages (European Almanac 1997. History. Tradition. Cultural). In addition, similar reference works can be seen in other scientific spheres. From the fact above, we can notice the diversity in the genres of reference dictionaries, they not simply explain the concepts, terminologies, collations but also go deeper and more specifically into every issue, every event, every person and every work.

By studying the series of Russian reference dictionaries, we have the feeling that in many a sphere of social sciences, there is a tendency towards 'dictionarilization', or more specifically, 'encyclopediasation'. Such books have pushed the genre of reference dictionary to the bordering area between research work and encyclopedia, thereby sometimes making us confused about genres of books and newspapers: for study or for reference, for instance, the book *Pejzazh. Russkaja zhivopis'*. M.: Belyj gorod, 2000, 631 pages (Landscape, Painting of Russia). This is a book, which falls into the category of referring to landscape paintings of the Russian Painting. Each painting is accompanied by some introduction of the author, the author's creative process, painting content, its values and position in the painting of Russia and the world. If we

only look at the title and do not peruse the content of the book, then we would confuse with a research work on the Russian Painting and do not regard it as a reference book. Another example is the book *Rossija velikaja sud'ba*. M.: Belyj gorod, 2003, 704 pages. This is also a reference book with a deep content about the famous paintings by Russian painters. The introductions of each painting as a piece of writing will help us refer to and learn about each painting, and where it is being kept too. Meanwhile, the book *Illjustrirovannyj slovar' russkogo iskusstva*. M. Belyj gorod, 2001 552 pages (Dictionary of Illustrative Pictures in Russian Art) points out that dictionaries and compiling methods do not differ much compared with the two above books.

The above examples show that it has become a tendency to turn around to look for sources of documentation on a certain sphere of science and compile them into reference books with various functions. This is one of the utilities that help readers have a more generalized and fuller view of one issue in a certain space and time. A kind of dictionary with the nature of a research work and also the typical features of reference dictionary as commonly seen in the spheres of philosophy, literature, art, architecture and culture. The most well-known one among the books of the structures above is the Modern Russian Literature Linguistic Dictionary consisting 17 volumes, published in around the middle of the 1960s of the previous century (*Slovar' sovremnnogo russkogo literaturnogo jazyka*. M.: Nauka, 1965). This dictionary work is a panoramic view of the development course of Russian

literature, of the famous Russian literature, of the Russian literature schools. Readers can feel the breath of each literary work, the finest quintessence of each work in the Russian literature; and a complete picture of the society in line with the space and time to represent the spirit of a whole nation, a whole time. After the dictionary was published, literary critics could only give out their appreciative comments and reconfirm its position in the system of dictionaries in the former Soviet Union, and until today, this is still the valuable book that cannot be replaced by other (1, p. 39).

The above is some generalized view on the series of reference dictionaries among the Russian documentary section of the Library.

2. Encyclopedia

The specialized encyclopedia books that are being kept and in service at the Library included:

- *Philosophic Encyclopedia*, 4 volumes, published between 1960-1978.
- *Philosophic World Encyclopedia*, published in 2001, 1312 pages.
- *Neo Philosophic Encyclopedia*, 4 volumes, published in 2000
- *Economic Encyclopedia*, 4 volumes, published in 1972. The first Economic Encyclopedia edition was published between 1962-1965 including 3 volumes.
- *Literary Encyclopedia, the first edition*, 10 volumes, published between 1929-1939, and until 1965

edition, it was contracted to 4 volumes (Kratkaja literaturnaja enciklopedija. M.: Sov Enciklopedija, 1965).

- *Encyclopedia on History of the Soviet Union*, 16 volumes, published between 1961-1965 (Sovetskaja istoricheskaja enciklopedija. V 16-kh tomakh. M.: Sov. Enciklopedija, 1961-1965).
- *Encyclopedia on the Soviet Union Military*, 8 volumes, published in 1976 (Sovetskaja voennaja enciklopedija. V 8-i tomakh. M.: Voenizdat, 1976).
- *World Art Encyclopedia* (Enciklopedija mirnogo iskusstva M.: Belyj gorod, 2001, 337 pages).

And some other encyclopedias that are not included in this presentation.

Apart from the encyclopedias, there exist also some kinds of encyclopedic dictionary. Encyclopedic dictionaries are tools for looking up, referring to, supplying the basic information that mankind has accumulated during the course of their history on objects, concepts, things, personalities.

- *Russian Encyclopedic Dictionary*, 2 volumes, published in 2000 (Russkij enciklopedicheskij slovar'. M.: Bol'shaja russkaja enciklopedija 2000).
- *Legal Knowledge Encyclopedia* (Enciklopedija slovar' pravovykh znaniy. M.: Sov. Enciklopedija, 1-1965, 512 pages).
- *Large Encyclopedia on Art* (Bol'shoj enciklopedicheskij slovar' iskusstva. M.: Vnesigma Asija, 2001, 688 pages).
- *Encyclopedia on Music* (Enciklopedija muzykalnyj slovar'. M.: Sov. Enciklopedija, 1996, 632 pages).

During the process of studying, learning about the Russian book treasure of the Library, we have found out that the treasure still lacks quite a few valuable encyclopedias, for example, *Children's Encyclopedia* (12 volumes, published between 1971-1978, some encyclopedias published in the states of the former Soviet Union such as *Ukrainian Encyclopedia* (17 volumes, published between 1969-1975). Apart from that, many encyclopedias in other republics were published in their ethnic minority languages.

A series of specialize encyclopedias not included in the treasure of the Library are:

- *Pedagogical Encyclopedia* (4 volumes, published between 1964-1968).
- *Geographical Encyclopedia* (5 volumes, published between 1960-1966).
- *Theatrical Encyclopedia* (5 volumes, published between 1961-1967).
- *Musical Encyclopedia* (5 volumes, published between 1973-1978).
- *Encyclopedia on the Arts of Countries and Nations over the World* (5 volumes, published between 1962-1978).
- *Encyclopedia on the great October Revolution* (published in 1977).
- *Encyclopedia on History of Ukraine* (16 volumes, published between 1962-1972).
- *Encyclopedia on the Arts of Ukraine* (7 volumes, published between 1966-1968).

Thus, in the section of encyclopedias, the Library is possessed of the very basic books of scientific, cultural and artistic values. These are indispensable

constituents of the social structure of science. However, apart from that, there still remain numerous specious specialized encyclopedias that the Library has not yet established and reached.

3. Dictionaries

This is the section of documentation with reference dictionaries in largest quantity, herein under, we shall have a look at the popular kinds of dictionary in the Russian book treasure.

Bilingual dictionaries are dictionaries in two languages, such were most compiled and published in the middle of the 1960s until the end of the 1970s. Those bilingual dictionaries on display and in service at the New Book Reference-Display Room of the Library are all in the widely-used languages in the world, nevertheless, there is also not a small number of bilingual dictionaries in the languages that just a few people would understand. Each dictionary as such contains a large number of entries; these are not only modern words but also old ones. These dictionaries are generally characterized by their many times of reprinting, with editing and supplementing with new words. From the general view on the section of dictionaries, bilingual dictionaries are relatively complete, particularly in the languages that are frequently used by Vietnamese scientists. Bilingual dictionaries not only do the function to provide some knowledge necessary to each unit of word, terminologies, unknown words or words whose meanings are not fully understood but also serve as tools for studying,

teaching foreign languages, cultural and scientific exchanges among the countries.

For over half of a century of building and developing, from the time of taking it over from École Française d'Extrême-Orient, the Library has selected and supplemented its treasure with numerous bilingual dictionaries in Russian. Herewith, we can draw up a list of the dictionaries that are on display at the New Book Reference-Display Room to illustrate the above comments. These include:

- *Large English-Russian Dictionary* (3 volumes);
- *Large Chinese-Russian and Russian-Chinese Dictionary* (4 volumes);
- *Large German-Russian Dictionary* (2 volumes);
- *Large Russian-Polish, Polish-Russian Dictionary*;
- *Large Japanese-Russian Dictionary* (2 volumes);
- *Italian-Russian Dictionary*;
- *Spanish-Russian Dictionary*;
- *Russian - French, French - Russian Dictionary*;
- *Khmer-Russian Dictionary*;
- *Vietnamese-Russian and Vietnamese-Russian Dictionary* (3 volumes);

And many other bilingual dictionaries, for example, Rumanian-Russian, Mongolian-Russian, Portuguese-Russian dictionaries or bilingual dictionaries in the languages used by very few people such as Russian-Estonian, Russian-Baskian, Russian-Tibetan. In addition, there are also trilingual dictionaries, yet these are in the

commonly-used languages such as English-French-Russian Dictionary.

Scientific specialized dictionaries include explanatory dictionaries of scientific specialized terminologies and specialized bilingual dictionaries. The first specialized dictionary in Russian available at the Social Sciences Library was the Political Dictionary, published in 1958 (*Politicheskij Slovar'*. M.: Politizdat, 1958. 702 pages). This was an explanatory dictionary of the political terms formed prior to the 1950s and many other not yet aged terminologies.

Scientific specialized dictionaries in the Russian documentation treasure fall within most of scientific disciplines such as:

- *Summarized Political Dictionary* (*Kratkij politicheskij slovar'*. M.: Politizdat, 1978, 415 pages).
- *Large Legal Dictionary* (*Bol'shoj juridicheskij slovar'*. M.: Infra, 1999, 790 pages).
- *Market Economy Practice Dictionary* (*Novikov V. A. Slovar' prakticheskij rynchnoj ekonomiki*. M.: Flinta, 1999, 375 pages)
- *Economics Dictionary* (*Ekonomicheskij slovar'* M.: Prospekt, 2005, 624 pages).
- *Summarized Economic Dictionary* (*Kratkij ekonomicheskij slovar'*. M.: Politizdat, 1989, 399 pages).
- *Russian Literary Language Dictionary* (*Slovar' sovremennogo russkogo literaturnogo jazyka*. V 17-i tomakh. M.: Nauka, 1965).
- *Summarized Philosophical Dictionary* (*Kratkij filosofskij slovar'*. M.: Prospekt, 2005, 496 pages).

- *Humane Studies Dictionary* (*Ramzevich N.K Slovar' gumanitarija*. M.: bylina, 1998, 313 pages).

- *Dictionary of Illustrative Pictures in Russian Art* (*Iljustrirovannuj gorod*, 2001, 552 pages).

In addition, there are also specialized dictionaries on education, psychology, information, archaeology, ethnography, music, military, physical training and sport, etc.

The section of specialized scientific bilingual dictionaries are also very diverse, for example, English-Russian Legal Dictionary, Russian-English Scientific Information Dictionary, English-Russian Economic Dictionary. In specialized scientific bilingual dictionaries, some common languages and mainly English are used while other languages such as French, German, Chinese, Japanese, Italian, Spanish are rarely found in the Russian book treasure of the Library.

Russian dictionaries have an important position in the system of reference dictionaries of the Library. The targets of service of such dictionaries are in a wide range, not only those Russians of high and average qualifications but also those foreigners who study, research, teach Russian and translate from Russian into other languages and vice versa.

Russian dictionaries include:

Russian dictionaries which involve: Russian Dictionary (4 volumes); Russian Explanatory Dictionary (2 volumes); Linguistic Terminology Dictionary; Russian Spelling Dictionary; Dictionary of Synonyms; Dictionary of Antonyms;

Dictionary of Russian Phrases; Dictionary of Foreign Words; Russian Dictionary in the 11th-17th Centuries (11 volumes); Russian Dictionary in the 18th Century; Dictionary of Abbreviations; Dictionary of Standard Russian Words; Dictionary of Russian Keywords, etc.

Above, we have outlined the general features of the section of reference dictionaries among the documentation in Russian of the Social Sciences Library. Reference dictionaries are very diverse, highly informative, always updated, in a systematic, generalized, accurate, full and reliable manner. Nevertheless, there is still a lack of the numerous general as well as specialized dictionaries and thus has not satisfactorily met readers' expectations.

REFERENCES

1. Đào Duy Tân. The Documents in Russian at Social Sciences Library. *Social Sciences Information Review*, 2007, No. 8.
2. Mikhailov A. I. *Osnovy nauchnoy informacii*. M.: Nauka, 1965, 256 pages.
3. Nguyễn Kim Thân. From East to West, Before the Historical Turning Point. In *Almanac – The World's Civilizations*. H.: Culture and Information Publishing House, 1996, 2048 pages.
4. World Proper Names Dictionary. H.: Culture-Information Publishing House, 2000, 1734 pages.