

JOHANNA NICHOLS and ARBI VAGAPOV:

*Chechen-English and English-Chechen Dictionary.*

692 pp. London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004. £80.

and

JOHANNA NICHOLS:

*Ingush-English and English-Ingush Dictionary.*

x, 563 pp. London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004. £100.

Chechen and Ingush are two closely related languages of the North Central Caucasian or (Vei)Nakh branch of the Nakh-Daghestanian (or North East Caucasian) family; the third member of the group is the unwritten and moribund Bats (Ts'ova-Tush), spoken by perhaps 3,000 people concentrated in the east Georgian village of Zemo Alvani. Both Chechen (with around 1.1 million speakers) and Ingush (with 300,000 speakers) were granted literary status by the early Soviets, and, despite a move on the part of the early post-Soviet Chechen regime to romanise the Chechen script, both continue to use Cyrillic-based orthographies, as indeed now required by a Russian Federation law of 2002.

One of the initial obstacles facing those keen to take up the challenge of tackling a Caucasian language is the difficulty (if not impossibility) of obtaining a dictionary, for even if good works exist (as in the case of A. Matsiev's 1961 Chechen-Russian Dictionary), they are often hard to obtain. The present works, arising out of Nichols' years of research into both languages, clearly fill this gap for those attracted to Nakh. The two volumes not only follow the same design but are also to a degree interlinked. And so, it is convenient to write a joint-review.

The background to the lexicon is described and the contributors listed in the Introduction to the Chechen volume, information which is split between Acknowledgments and Preface in the Ingush volume. Thereafter the pattern of the volumes is: description of each language and the history of its people (only upto 1990 for the Chechens!); detailed analysis of the sound-systems, including presentation of

the scripts and the corresponding IPA and romanised transcriptions employed in the sections where Latin (*recte* roman) spelling is employed; abbreviations and conventions; explanation for the structure of the entries from native language into English; Chechen/Ingush-English lexicon in Cyrillic script; Chechen/Ingush-English lexicon in roman script; explanation for the structure of the entries from English into native language; appendices (6 for Chechen vs 8 for Ingush) containing grammatical information, which, thanks to the specifications given in the lexical entries, allows one morpho-syntactically to manipulate the individual words and not just discover their meanings. Citation-form for nouns is the Nominative case (with Ergative, Plural and noun-class also indicated); pronouns are given in the Nominative (+ Ergative) for Chechen, Nominative (+ Dative) for Ingush; verbs appear in the Infinitive for Chechen but the Verbal Noun for Ingush (with Present, Witnessed Past, case-frame and conjugation-type also shewn). In the Cyrillic section all principal parts are presented in both Cyrillic and roman versions.

Why duplicate entries in Cyrillic and roman scripts? The answer lies in the fact that the orthographies do not demarcate all the (vocalic) phonemic distinctions, such as length. So, for example, the first four entries in the Cyrillic section for Chechen are: а (and, even), абат (primer), абат (alphabet) [these two are differentiated in terms of class-agreement], абде (eternity). In the roman section, on the other hand, we find for the short vowel 'a' the first two entries are: /'a/ (and, even) [with the 'strong onset' that characterises word-initial vowels marked by the apostrophe], /abdie/ (eternity), whilst the first entries for the long vowel 'aa' are: /aabat/ (alphabet vs primer). The standard orthography is necessary so that literate Chechens/Ingush can use the dictionaries, whilst the sections in transcription are needed to make the works user-friendly for non-natives. The downside of duplication is the limitation on the number of entries that could be accommodated in works already of substantial size: Matsiev incorporated some 20,000 items for Chechen in 629 pages, whilst Nichols & Vagapov fit fewer than 6,000 (albeit carefully selected to be of most use) into 692 pages.

Amongst the essential information provided in the appendices are paradigms for the various declensional and conjugational types. Appendix 1 in each book deals with the nouns, and to understand the non-consecutive numbering of the declensions in the Chechen volume, one needs to refer to the companion volume, for Ingush manifests all 15 paradigms, whilst types 4, 5 and 6 are absent in Chechen. The verbal patterns are different, and so no parallel numbering is adopted.

The aspect-descriptor 'simulfactive' should be altered *passim* in volumes to 'semelfactive', as what is indicated is a one-off event (not one contemporaneous with another action, which is what simulfactive means). In explanation of the choice of 'w' to represent the voiced pharyngeal fricative in the romanised script we read in the Chechen volume that it 'is graphically similar to the letter used to spell pharyngealization in the Georgian alphabet' (p.24), whilst in the Ingush volume the wording is that it 'resembles the letter used to transliterate pharyngeals in the Georgian alphabet' (p.21). What is presumably meant by these puzzling statements is that the motivation for the choice of 'w' lies in the omega-like letter used by native Caucasian linguists to represent the voiced pharyngeal fricative in their romanised [sic] transcriptions (see the recommended table of correspondences in volume I of the Annual of Ibero-Caucasian Linguistics, 1974, Tbilisi). Other *corrigenda* noted were as follows: [Chechen volume] p.25 l.7: ЧЪЪЭВРЭГ; 1.5up: НОЖИ; p.28 l.6up: 40 (not 20); p.676 l.23: otherwise different paradigms; l.29: chanie. [Ingush volume] p.5 l.8: evolve; p.20 l.3: [həp]; 1.6up: [həpiɾ].

This pair of dictionaries will be essential items on the shelves of anyone interested in the Nakh(-Daghestanian) languages and will serve as a model to lexicographers of Caucasian languages for the design of dictionaries, which should ideally offer the user the maximum amount of information as economically as possible. Dare one hope for more comprehensive lexicons for these languages in future years, or will one have to rely just on lexical additions to Nichols' relevant websites (<http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/63/077.html>, and <http://ingush.berkeley.edu:7012/ingush.html>)?

GEORGE HEWITT