Institution: **University of Wales**

Unit of Assessment: **28 Modern Languages and Linguistics (Celtic Studies)**

Title of case study: ***Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru / A Dictionary of the Welsh Language***

1. Summary of the impact

Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru (*GPC*) is a historical dictionary similar to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and is the acknowledged authority on the spelling, derivation and meaning of Welsh words. Apart from its scholarly uses, it is used in all areas of the Welsh public sphere, providing the lexical information necessary to produce terminology for bilingual documentation in fields such as government, education, health, law and business. *GPC* has always had a network of voluntary readers and informants, and uses both old and new media to seek examples of contemporary usage and to promote public interest in the language. A concise version of the dictionary has been freely available online since 2003, and a full version will be launched in 2014.

2. Underpinning research

A small team of staff was established at the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth by the University of Wales in 1921 as the University's first major research project. While the staff tackled the more difficult manuscript and early printed material, a large number of volunteer readers helped to amass some 1.75 million citation slips during the 27-year reading programme. The first part of the dictionary was published in 1950, and publication continued regularly until 2002 when the 61st part was published. Subsequently the staff of six lexicographers including the Managing Editor (Hawke), with 1.5FTE clerical and technical support, began revising the dictionary comprehensively to the latest standards of scholarship, beginning with the A–B section, which has more than doubled in length.

GPC entries give the standard spelling(s) of the headword, the etymology (where known) back to Indo-European (if derived from Celtic) or to another language in the case of loanwords. Part-of-speech information is given, including gender and plural form(s), singulative or diminutive forms, transitivity of verbs, etc. Major senses are subdivided into sense paragraphs, together with a Welsh definition and English synonyms, and a number of carefully selected quotations arranged in chronological order to illustrate the use of the word, its various forms, figurative use, and colloquial forms and meanings. Variant forms of the headword are treated separately and illustrated with quotations, as are significant collocations, proverbs, etc. Cross-references are given to related entries.

GPC benefits from a number of contributors who read texts voluntarily to add to the collection, and the staff can call on the advice of specialist consultants in various fields, including three internationally renowned Celtic etymologists, who volunteer their services. Volunteer proof-readers, including senior academics and former *GPC* staff, provide invaluable feedback on the proofs.

The essential foundation of the work is the citation collection (now numbering about 2.5 million paper slips), which has been augmented by an extensive corpus of electronic texts of all periods, by a 120-million word Web corpus, and by advanced on-line searching techniques. A website has been used to promote the project and its publications since 1997. A concise version of 6,000 pages was published online as a free resource in 2003, which has been downloaded thousands of times by scholars and other users for local searching. A £100,000 investment by the University of Wales has recently enabled the conversion of the data to XML and the installation of a modern editing system. An online version of the full dictionary will soon be freely available, and future revision will be online only, allowing for the addition of new vocabulary anywhere in the alphabet.

The first edition was published in 61 parts from 1950 to 2002 and contains a total of 7.3 million words of running text in 3,949 pages, forming four substantial volumes arranged under more than 84,000 headwords with almost 350,000 dated citations exemplifying the use of the words from the

year 631 to 2002, and over 320,000 Welsh definitions and 290,000 English synonyms. The parts of the dictionary published since 1 January 1993 are those from the word *pallter* (part XLIII) onwards, and the second edition of A–B (31 parts in all).

The importance of the Dictionary was acknowledged by its inclusion in *Eureka UK!*, a volume published by Universities UK in 2006 listing '100 discoveries and developments in UK universities that have changed the world over the last fifty years', such as the momentous discovery of the double-helix structure of DNA. The dictionary was one of only a handful of humanities projects.

3. References to the research

Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru / A Dictionary of the Welsh Language, first edition, Cardiff, 1950–2002, edited by R. J. Thomas (1950–1975), Gareth A. Bevan (1975-1998), Gareth A. Bevan and Patrick J. Donovan (1998-2002) [= *GPC1*]

Second edition, Cardiff, 2003–, edited by Gareth A. Bevan and Patrick J. Donovan (2003–7), and Andrew Hawke (2008–present) [= *GPC2*]

Website: http://www.cymru.ac.uk/geiriadur/ (currently being completely revised).

4. Details of the impact

Whilst there is no doubt that *GPC* is the single most valuable resource available to scholars of the Welsh language and its literature (its primary purpose) and the most frequently cited work in that field, its impact reaches many other disciplines within HE in the Arts, Sciences and Social Sciences, other areas of the education system generally, and many spheres of public and commercial life. This was reflected in a letter from the former Chief Executive of HEFCW to the Editor of *Geiriadur yr Academi* and Hon. President of the Society of Welsh Translators (12 June 2012 (source 1)): 'We share your high regard for the Dictionary and recognise its importance to Welsh scholarship. . . . The value of the Dictionary extends well beyond the world of higher education. Translators, lawyers, schools, colleges and the wider public of Welsh speakers are among the many other users.'

Some idea of the broad range of *GPC*'s impact beyond Celtic Studies and linguistics can be gained by examining the 454 citations of it listed by Google Scholar, including such titles as *Audiological Medicine*, *Cambrian Law Review*, *Folk Life*, *Information Visualization*, *Journal of Historical Geography*, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, *Mammal Review*, *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, *Signs*, *Social History*, and *The Chaucer Review*, and the fact that the work is cited in works written in French, German, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, Russian, Ukrainian, and Japanese, amongst others.

GPC is the foundation for all contemporary Welsh lexicography, as acknowledged by the editor of *The Welsh Academy English-Welsh Dictionary*, and the editor of *Geiriadur Gomer*, *Geiriadur Gomer i'r Ifainc*, *A Shorter Welsh Dictionary*, *Geiriadur Pawb*, etc.:

> "Yn y pen draw, *GPC* yw sylfaen gwaith pob aelod o Gymdeithas y Cyfieithwyr a phob cyfieithydd o bwys sydd a wnelo â'r Gymraeg. Dibynnodd *Geiriadur yr Academi*'n drwm iawn ar *GPC*; yn wir, prin y gallesid dychmygu creu *GA* heb gymorth *GPC*. Bu pob testun addysgol o bwys yn Gymraeg, boed lyfr, boed raglen gyfrifiadurol, boed ffilm, yn ddyledus i *GPC*." (source 1)

> "There are numerous competing agencies involved in producing material of a lexicographical nature. Despite their differences, the one thing that these agencies have in common is their respect for *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru* and their acknowledgement of it as a unique, impartial, authoritative and ready source of knowledge. This common acceptance of *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru* as a trusted agent, is a major strength and should be used as the base for future development." (source 2)

The Editor (Hawke) has been called upon to assist dictionaries of other languages. He serves as a language consultant (Welsh & Cornish) for the *Oxford English Dictionary*, on the Advisory Board of a new Scottish Gaelic dictionary project, and as an adviser to the Cornish Language Partnership's dictionary project. He has also been asked to advise on the revision of eDIL (the electronic edition of the Dictionary of the Irish Language), and Scottish Language Dictionaries' revision of their online Scots dictionaries. He has received queries from the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* (Oxford University, e.g. *rhodiawl, sopae*), the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from Celtic Sources* (Royal Irish Academy), the *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* (Aberystwyth) (*cyfraith*), as well as from various Welsh dictionary editors. He has also presented papers about GPC and lexicography at a number of conferences, and has been invited to contribute to various encyclopedias and handbooks on lexicography and linguistics (including Oxford, Elsevier, and Springer). (source 8)

OED (from 2008–present, advice has been given during the drafting/revision of the following OED entries): *aberdevine*, *acorn*, *adder*, *addle*, *afanc*, *Albion*, *alienisparsison*, *alienize*, *allobrogical*, *Almain*, *altar*, *alternity*, *alum*, *amobr*, *anchor* (= anchorite), *anchoress*, *baban*, *be*, *boat*, *Brett*, *Britain*, *Briton*, *Brythonic*, *chemise*, *crown*, *demos*, *erw*, *fair*, *fairy*, *faith*, *February*, *fortisparsison*, *fosse*, *gravisparsison*, *hog*, *homelyn*, *Irish*, *iron*, *lowrie*, *Rebecca*, *red book*, *remain*, *rescue*, *resumption*, *rhandir*, *ring*, *ringild*, *rock*, *rosland*, *ross*, *roucote*, *rough*, *rouncy*, *rudder*, *rule-right*, *rux*, *slovan*, *street*, *table-board*, *Welsh*, *west*, *zawn*. (source 10)

Until it was abolished in 2012, the Welsh Language Board requested the Dictionary every year to nominate a member of staff to serve on the Technical Terms Committee which supports all Government departments in relation to Welsh terminology and maintains a central database called TermCymru (http://www.termcymru.wales.gov.uk). (See, e.g., letter dated 10/02/2011 from the Head of the Board's Translation and Standardization of Terms Unit.)

GPC is specified as the standard for orthography, plural forms and grammatical gender in the Welsh Assembly Legislative Translation Unit house style guidelines (source 5), and it is used extensively in drafting legislation bilingually in Welsh and English, as was highlighted by Winston Roddick, the first General Counsel to the Welsh Assembly, in a letter in *Golwg* on 31 May 2012 (source 4)): 'Hoffwn felly dynnu sylw at ei bwysigrwydd [*GPC*] i gyfreithwyr ac, yn arbennig, i ddeddfwrieithwyr. . . . Mae'n amlwg felly bod rhaid cael geiriadur arbennig ac un o'r safon uchaf i weithredu'r broses o gyd-lunio deddfwriaeth ddwyieithog . . . sef geiriadur sydd yn rhoi tarddiad geiriau yn ogystal â'u hystyr.' The Chief Legal Translator will testify to the importance of *GPC* as a standard for the work of his unit. (source 9)

The use of *GPC* as an authority was mentioned by David Lambert and Manon George of Cardiff Law School at the Constitutional Affairs Committee Inquiry on 'Drafting Welsh Government Measures: Lessons from the First Three Years: Cardiff Law School' (24 November 2010, available on the Welsh Assembly website). (source 7)

GPC is an essential tool to professional translators such as those in local government, the Welsh Government, and the Welsh Assembly who also submit queries directly to the editorial staff (source 3). A translator for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council has stated: 'Y ddau eiriadur hyn [*GPC* a *Geiriadur yr Academi*] yw conglfaen ein gwaith beunyddiol. Yn ogystal â hyn mae statws cyfreithiol yr iaith yn gwneud cywirdeb a manylder diffiniadau geiriau ac ymadroddion yn hanfodol bwysig am y tro cyntaf ers 1536.' (e-mail, 15 May 2012)

GPC is also a source of statistical information about the language. Hawke assisted the publisher Leisure Trends of Brancaster to produce a Welsh version of the game 'Scrabble' (September 2005) and 'Junior Scrabble' (November 2010) by providing statistics on the relative frequency of letters in Welsh, based on the content of the Dictionary at the suggestion of The Welsh Books Council.

GPC is also important in the field of place-names, both in terms of orthography and interpretation. The Welsh Language Board (until its dissolution in 2012) requested the Dictionary every year to nominate a member of staff to serve on the Place-names Committee which advised local

authorities on standardizing the various place-names within their area. A Senior Editor and the Hon. Editorial Consultant serve as officers of the Welsh Place-Names Society. (See, e.g., letter dated 10/02/2011 from the Leader of the Board's Translation and Standardization of Terms Unit.)

The *GPC* editors engage with the public in numerous ways: they receive enquiries by post, e-mail, telephone, Twitter, Facebook, as well as assisting visitors in person at the *GPC* offices. *GPC* has nearly 800 'friends' on Facebook and a number of useful discussions have been forthcoming. (Source 6) Over 1,100 people follow the 'word of the day' tweet on Twitter which is often broadcast on a popular afternoon radio programme with an audience of 40,000–50,000 and which inspired the Children's Poet Laureate of Wales to produce a Breton 'word of the day' tweet. Considerable feedback is received, and the project benefits from generous voluntary contributions from users in the form of examples of words, electronic texts, gifts of books, as well as comments and suggestions. Voluntary informants from all areas and occupations have agreed to be consulted on their colloquial use of particular words. A number of societies and groups (including Cymdeithas Edward Llwyd (natural history) and the Welsh Place-Names Society) contribute data to the project.

The Welsh national press, radio, and television have shown interest in the Dictionary's work (and concern for its survival). The publication of Part 11 of the second edition in 2012 was used to stimulate public interest in the Dictionary and the Welsh language. There was a considerable response by the media with articles and news items appearing in *Y Cymro* and *Golwg*, on S4C, and the BBC (TV, radio, and English and Welsh websites), together with several interviews with the staff and others (e.g. a naturalist) from outside the University. The independent television company Cwmni Da also spent a day filming 'Ar Lafar' at the *GPC* offices (broadcast 12 December 2012) including Hawke discussing the coining of new words including the word *reu* which became popular in the 1980s and 1990s youth culture in Welsh.

GPC has had a bilingual website for over 15 years which receives many hits from around the world, particularly the 6,497-page abridged version of the dictionary, which can be downloaded for free for local searching. It omits the etymologies and citations, but nevertheless has shown that there is a strong demand for online access to the work. This version was released as a temporary measure whilst the full online version was being prepared, which will be available from 2014. Many thousands of copies have been downloaded by readers. Proofs of work-in-progress are placed regularly on the website for readers to comment upon. Online visitors regularly send enquiries about specific words which the staff attempt to answer.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. Correspondence between the Editor of *Geiriadur yr Academi* and Hon. President of the Society of Welsh Translators and the former Chief Executive of HEFCW about the importance of *GPC* in the editing of *Geiriadur yr Academi / The Welsh Academy English–Welsh Dictionary*, and its importance outside HE (29/05/2012 and 12/06/2012).
2. Letter from a freelance lexicographer, the former Director of Cultural Services, Ceredigion Council about the value of *GPC* to his many dictionaries and publications, personal correspondence, 8 May 2012.
3. Statement by an Hon. President of the Society of Welsh Translators.
4. Letter by Winston Roddick published in *Golwg* (31 May 2012).
5. *Canllawiau Arddull Cyfieithu Deddfwriaethol*, Gwasanaeth Cyfieithu Llywodraeth Cymru (version 10, 2012), esp. pp. 5 (gender of nouns), 10 (plurals), 12 (orthography)
6. Examples of discussions in the 'Iaith' Group on Facebook (e.g. *pegor*[1], *penwythnos*).
7. http://www.assemblywales.org
8. Editor of the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from Celtic Sources* (Royal Irish Academy, Dublin).
9. Chief Legal Translator in the Office of the Counsel General of the Welsh Government.
10. Deputy Chief Editor, *Oxford English Dictionary*.