

# Socio-Cultural Environment as a Context and Its Effect on Discourse in Translation

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## ■ ABSTRACT ■

This paper aims to analyze the influences of the socio-cultural environment on discourse in translation. To illustrate a deep connection between discourses and societies in which they were produced, communicative patterns of high- and low-context cultures are examined. Though the original version of the translated text comes from a different culture, the translation reflects communicative preferences of the target culture. To uncover some of these preferences, a comparative study of two translations from Russian into English and from English into Russian is conducted. This study, together with further investigation of some more recent translations into Russian, revealed a number of choices affected by translators' cultural background (for example, making the translation more emotionally charged) and current ideological preferences in the society (excessive use of anglicisms).

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### Key Words

cultural context, meaning extension, transformation

## 1. Introduction

Currently, within the field of Linguistics it is possible to distinguish two distinct approaches to examining the connection between cultures and their discourses, and how this connection is modified in modern world. Indeed, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century there is an obvious interconnection among cultures, which are greatly affected by the globalization processes. Aware of these processes and their influence on modern people and cultures, linguists from various cultural backgrounds<sup>1)</sup> focus on examining the effects of globalization on their languages and cultures, and study the influence of English on their native languages and changes in communication standards.

The other scientific approach<sup>2)</sup> focuses on culturally (locally) predetermined features in language and speech/discourse. This approach seems to be the basis of intercultural studies as it helps first to establish cultural dimensions and then uncover their current modifications.

In this paper, I attempt to bring into discussion both approaches. First, I review a possible distinction of cultures into high- (HC) and low-context (LC), suggested by American anthropologist Edward Hall

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1) French (Martin 2005), German (Erling, Walton 2007; Onysko 2009), Greek (Tsagouria 2005), Italian (Gani 2007), Korean (Lee 2006), Russian (Chachibaia, Colenso 2005; Khoutyz 2008; Khoutyz 2010), Uzbek (Hasanova 2010), etc.

2) Some of the ethnolinguists and philosophers working within this approach are: Hall (1976), Sapir (1985) in the USA; Gumboldt (1985), Heidegger (1993), Wittgenstein (1973) in Europe; Potebnia (1892) in Russia.

and further developed by modern linguists (Gudykunst et al.; Keenan; Markus & Kitayama; Singelis & Brown). Then, I analyze translations of two short stories. One is a translation of John Cheever's short story into Russian; the other is a translation of a short story by Tatiana Tolstaya into English<sup>3)</sup>. When comparing the translations, the attention is paid to the meaning-making process at all the levels of equivalence (grammatical and syntactic, textual, lexical and semantic, pragmatic<sup>4)</sup>). After that, the translations are compared in terms of their adaptation to/from LC/HC for HC/LC readers, and the transmission of the author's ideas in the target text is examined.

In the final section of the paper, I compare more recent translations from English into Russian and illustrate some positive and negative trends brought about by globalization and changes in our socio-cultural environments. As there seems to be an obvious distortion of meanings expressed in the source text, which happens mostly through an excessive use of anglicisms and the translator's simplification of characters, I suggest my own translation variants and stress that in any socio-cultural environment to produce a high-quality target text, a translator must pay a special attention to the equivalency in register and in social standards of general information exchange.

## 2. Theoretical Background: communication in high- and low-context cultures

Today's cultures are exposed to a great influx of information about world events. However, despite the seeming similarity of problems we deal with on a daily basis, the way we talk, relate to current events and describe them depends on our cultural background. That is why so much effort is invested by scientists worldwide in an attempt to characterize and predict cultural behavior. Contemporary research focuses on singling out as many tools as possible for further description of cultural dimensions. These cultural dimensions, "identified on the basis of surveys of individual values and beliefs" (Smith 216), describe cultures and their people as linear-active, reactive, and multi-active (Lewis 2006), or individualist versus collectivist, affective versus neutral, specific versus diffuse, with culturally predetermined attitude to time, nature, and information (Trompenaars 1998). Cultures and people's behavior can also be described in terms of being high- or low-distance, masculine and feminine, with high or low uncertainty factor (Hofstede 2005). Interestingly, the study of the response styles revealed that "nations high in acquiescence have a distinctive profile, characterized by values favoring institutional collectivism and uncertainty avoidance and practices reflecting in-group collectivism" (Smith 217). The understanding of these differences and their effect on communication is essential not only for theoretical, but practical reasons which arise in the spheres of education, arts, tourism, and, most importantly, business (which includes advertising, marketing and other areas).

One of the earliest ways of describing cultures and their communication styles is the distinction between HC and LC societies. These terms were introduced by the American anthropologist Edward Hall (1976) and are still applied in modern research of communication styles.

In HC cultures, information is often transferred without being said – it is in the context of situation

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3) Both stories were written in the 20th century and devoted to similar problems. That is why they were selected for the analysis.

4) For more information on the levels of equivalence, see Vanessa Leonardi's "Gender and Ideology in Translation: Do Women and Men Translate Differently" (2007) published by Peter Lang.

and in the nature of relationships between the speakers. In LC environment, communicators clearly verbalize the problem; the cultural context is not of vital importance. Smith sums it in the following way: “High context communication is more indirect and elaborate and assumes the listener’s substantial familiarity with the issues at stake. Low context communication is more direct and succinct” (218).

An attempt to explain individual behavior through culture as a starting point that affects “individual psychological processes” was made by Singelis and Brown (1995), who claim that “culture affects the development of an individual’s psychological makeup, which, in turn, affects communication behavior” (255). The authors cite the work by Markus and Kitayama (1991), who identified in their research two basic self construals – the Western (individualistic) and the Eastern (collectivist). Thus, in the Western (individualist) societies, “[independent] notion of the self as an entity containing significant dispositional attributes, and as detached from context,” stands in opposition to the Eastern (collectivist) self “as interdependent with the surrounding context, [where] it is the “other” or the “self-in-relation-to-other” that is the focal in individual experience” (Markus & Kitayama 225; Cited from: Singelis & Brown 359).

When studying communication styles expressed through individual level factors (i.e., self construals and values), Gudykunst et al. observe that these are “better predictors of low- and high-context communication styles across cultures than cultural individualism-collectivism” (Gudykunst et al., *The Influence* 510). It has been stated in the research (1988) that individualistic cultures tend to use HC communication, whereas LC cultures are predominantly collectivist (Gudykunst et al.).

It is quite logical to conclude that the representatives of HC and LC cultures engage in small talk, give compliments, and express their concerns differently. The comparative analysis of Russian (mostly HC) and English (mostly LC) professional (academic) discourses showed that Russian and English linguists use discourse markers and deictic words differently (Khoutyz 2011). Moreover, cultural studies researchers question the universality of communication maxims described by Grice, as they are predominantly based on the Anglo-Saxon communication styles (Wierzbicka 2003).

Keenan, who examines the concepts of conversational maxims and implicatures in regard to a non-Western society (Madagascar), notices that Grice and some other linguists-philosophers “reflect on conversational conduct as it operates in their own society” (255). She claims that it is hard to expect interlocutors to follow Grice’s maxims, when we are testing them cross-culturally, “one does not expect to find that in some societies the maxim always holds and in some societies the maxim never holds” (257). Further to prove her point, Keenan shows how the “Be informative” principle operates in Malagasy society. There, information is considered to be a rare commodity and “if one manages to gain access to new information, one is reluctant to reveal it” (258). It is possible to hear the following type of conversation there: Q.: How does one open the door? A.: If one doesn’t open it from the inside, the door won’t open. There are no direct answers; the double negative is used instead (Keenan). Obviously, all the other maxims can be understood differently in various socio-cultural environments, for example, the relevancy maxim as the perception of what is relevant to the topic varies from culture to culture (Gudykunst et al. 1996).

Understanding that LC and HC cultures predetermine different communication styles, one can assume that discourses are formed by and at the same time feature, according to Fairclough (2003), social agents, social structures, social practices and social events, and will be greatly influenced by these phenomena molded by their cultural context. Culture, of course, provides deep insights into how language works, as language, according to Sapir, is a medium “for the handling of all references and meanings that a given culture is capable of” (10), its forms “predetermine for us certain modes of observation

and interpretation” (10). However, language is more than just a symbolic system which reports people’s experience, but it “completely interpenetrates with it” (11).

Taking into consideration all the research, which has been focusing on the connection between language and culture, it comes to mind that all the cultural dimensions have not yet been accepted by the theory and practice of translation. The theory of translation (especially in Russia) for many years mostly concentrated on defining the notion of equivalency or finding lexical or grammatical equivalency (see, for example, *Hrestomatia po perevodovedeniju*, Moskva, 2005)<sup>5</sup>. A multi-level comprehensive approach based on notions developed by critical discourse analysis has not been yet adopted into the Russian school of translation theory and practice. It is necessary to stress that this does not mean that there were no high-quality translations. On the contrary, as the comparative analysis shows, the translations of fiction published during the Soviet times are often superior to those published in the last ten years, when there appeared a tendency to use anglicisms instead of TL (target language, local) means or even to change characters’ identities through translators’ lack of knowledge of socio-cultural context of the source culture (Khutyz, *Creativity in translating*).

Within the existing approaches towards stages creating a high-quality translation, there have been adopted principles of multi-layered equivalency developed by Mona Baker and corresponding levels of analysis. These levels are comprehensive and include grammatical and syntactic, textual, lexical and semantic, and pragmatic aspects (Leonardi 2007)<sup>6</sup>.

This particular research focuses on a comparative study of English-Russian and Russian-English translations of modern fiction taking into account the idea that the process of meaning-making and its research consist in observing “how texts particularly figure in particular areas of social life, which suggests that textual analysis is best framed within ethnography” (Fairclough 15). Translation, whether a process or its result, is viewed as a form of intercultural communication, where the text (and its interpretation) is deeply rooted in socio-cultural background. Naturally, the discourses produced within these two cultures will have different features. Relying on the research, which tries to foretell culturally determined patterns of information exchange, it is possible to suppose that discourses created in HC cultures will abound with culturally related implicatures, allusions, symbols, etc. However, what happens when HC culture discourse is translated for a LC culture audience and /or vice versa?

### 3. Going from LC to HC Culture

In order to establish what kind of transformations the discourse of the HC original is subjected to when translated for the readers of the LC culture, the analysis of two translations was conducted: the translation of John Cheever’s short story “The Sutton Place Story” for the Russian (mostly HC) reader and the translation of Tatiana Tolstaya’s short story “Peters” for the American (mostly LC) reader. Both stories were written in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and are devoted to everyday problems of ordinary people.

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5) Komissarov, a reputable Russian linguist in the theory and practice of translation, mentions pragmatic equivalency (2004), however, he views it in terms of situational equivalency and does not mention the importance of social and cultural context.

6) All these levels are examined as components of an integrated communicative process “that takes place within the social context” (Leonardi 19). It means that any level of equivalency needs to be analyzed together with cultural dimensions, which include “social, political, historical and ideological factors” (Leonardi 77).

The analyzed story by Cheever depicts the life of a family in New York City and how this life makes people forget about their loved ones. The almost three-year old Deborah can not stand being lonely and makes up an imaginary friend, whom she uses as an excuse to run away from her home. Cheever's story was translated during the Soviet times by Tatiana Litvinova, who translated many novels from English into Russian and was named one of the best translators of her times for using such a rich vocabulary. Her translation led readers to believe that the original had been written in Russian in the first place (Chukovsky 1968). This high quality criterion expressed by a famous Russian writer and poet Korney Chukovsky, proves that when reading a good translation a reader could not tell that it was originally a discourse in a foreign language created for people of a different culture. It seems that such opinion about the quality of translation was quite popular not only in the Soviet Russia: in the 1930s a similar conservative (to my mind) approach to the "foreignness" was expressed by Hilaire Belloc: "any hint of foreignness in the translated version is blemish" since the "social importance of translation" is to preserve "our cultural identity in the west" (quoted in Venuti 13).

Cheever raises problems which are clear and quite topical for the Russian reader. Therefore, there are no apparent cognitive gaps in the narration. The source text (ST) had to be adapted to the Russian reader's reality with the help of apparently simple linguistic choices. The following examples (see tables 1 and 2) illustrate transformations used by the translator: meaning extension, addition, and generalization. They make the target text (TT) understandable for the Russian reader, yet preserving the specifics of the original.

Table 1: Adapting Discourse to the Readers of the HC Culture

ST	TT	My translation
1) <i>She was a city child and she <b>knew</b> about cocktails and hangovers</i> (Cheever 59).	Она росла в большом городе, и ее <b>ухо привыкло</b> (ear got used to) к таким словам, как «похмелье», «коктейли» (Чивер 203).	<i>Она росла в большом городе и уже <b>знала</b> (knew) такие слова, как «похмелье», «коктейли».</i>
2) <i>She made Martinis in the <b>sand pile</b> and thought all the illustrations of cups, goblets and glasses in her nursery books were filled with <b>Old-Fashioneds</b></i> (59).	Из <b>мокрого</b> (wet) (a) <b>песка</b> она <b>лепила</b> (modeled) рюмочки и, разглядывая книжки с картинками, ни на минуту не сомневалась, что все изображенные там чашки, бокалы и стаканы наполнены <b>коктейлями и виски</b> (b) (cocktails and whiskey) (204).	<i>В <b>песочнице</b> она готовила коктейли (prepared cocktails), полагая, что ими были наполнены все чашки, бокалы и стаканы, изображенные на картинках ее книг.</i>

In example (1) a verb *knew* is substituted by a rather wide-spread phrase in Russian *her ear got used to*; in example (2a) the adjective *мокрый* (*wet*), which is usually used by the Russian children in the sand pile for making "constructions" of various shapes, is added (I consider these to be the cases of meaning extension). Finally, in (2b) the name of the cocktail is substituted by the general word *коктейль* (*cocktail*) and an explanatory noun *whiskey* is added (generalization) as the reader of the Soviet times had a very vague idea about the variety of alcoholic beverages or any other consumer choices. The latter, of course, complicated the process of translation as many realia of the American society had to be adapted for the Russian society by either omission or generalization of the notion.

It is worth mentioning a few other changes which took place in the TT. The translator used many diminutives (3), (4) which normally appear in conversations with children. They are markers of special tenderness and kindness as opposed to the English language, where diminutives are not often used and are usually applied to describe objects of smaller sizes (Wierzbicka 2003). Trying to adapt the narration to the Russian reality, Litvinova slightly changes the characters' linguistic behavior: a police officer sounds more authoritarian and less polite in Russian (5); the Russian version of the nanny is more emotional and uses colloquial expressions (6), (7). The translator chose these grammatical forms (diminutives, imperatives) and lexical expressions based on the meaning of the ST (see table 2):

Table 2: Changes in the Characters' Linguistic Behavior

ST	ТТ	My translation
3) <i>As the morning passed, a lot of <b>children</b> had come to the park, and now she looked for Deborah's yellow <b>coat</b> in the crowd</i> (68).	<i>Утро было на исходе, все больше и больше <b>детушек</b> (little children, diminutive) прибывало в парк. Миссис Харли время от времени выискивала желтое <b>пальтишко</b> (little coat, diminutive) Деборы</i> (212).	<i>Утро было на исходе и в парке было уже много <b>детей</b> (children). Она пыталась разглядеть среди них желтое <b>пальто</b> (coat) Деборы.</i>
4) <i>Go play in the <b>sand</b></i> (62).	<i>Иди, поиграй в <b>песочек</b> (little sand, diminutive)</i> ( <i>Ibid.</i> : 207).	<i>Иди, поиграй в <b>песочнице</b> (sandpit).</i>
5) <i>You'd <b>better go up</b> and see your wife</i> (78).	<i><b>Поднимитесь</b> (go up) к жене, – сказал он Роберту</i> (221).	<i>Вам лучше сейчас быть рядом с женой (You'd <b>better stay with...</b>)</i>
6) <i>They must have <b>given</b> twenty-five dollars for that doll carriage you have up in your room</i> (62).	<i>У самой в комнате стоит игрушечная коляска – верно, за нее не меньше двадцати пяти долларов <b>отвалили</b> (shell out) родители</i> (207).	<i>Они, наверное, <b>заплатили</b> (paid) за эту игрушечную коляску, которая стоит в твоей комнате, долларов двадцать-пять.</i>
7) <i>I am not going to <b>stay</b> here by myself</i> (72).	<i>Не желаю я <b>торчать</b> (stick around) здесь одна</i> (216).	<i>Не собираюсь <b>сидеть</b> (sit) здесь одна.</i>

Moreover, several minor substitutions, which are not at all essential for the plot of the story, were introduced in the TT. They play an important role in domesticating the whole narration (see table 3):

Table 3: Domesticating the TT

ST	ТТ	My translation
8) <i>She was sitting out in front of an antique store, eating a <b>piece of bread</b></i> (82).	<i>Она сидела перед антикварным магазином и жевала <b>корочку</b> (crust of bread)</i> (224).	<i>Она сидела перед антикварным магазином и жевала <b>кусочек хлеба</b> (piece of bread).</i>

It should be pointed out that, to my mind, the choices, made by the translator and introduced in the TT, in most cases are not really necessary and are a characteristic of the translator's style. Although, indeed, a Russian reader does not know the names of the cocktails (though currently they are introduced

into the use as calques, for example, Screwdriver – отвёртка), the rest of the changes could have been avoided (see my translations in tables 1-3). This would have preserved the tone of the ST, which is focused on characters' actions (not feelings) and is rather neutral comparing to its Russian version. It is quite possible that that is exactly what the translator tried to modify with diminutives and expressive collocations.

However, the analysis of the translations shows that all the main aspects of meaning of the SL discourse can be adapted for the TL discourse so that the author's message is understood by the reader. Minor linguistic changes domesticate and generalize some aspects of the discourse for the benefit of the reader and because of the professional tradition and mostly ideological environment of the TT readers. Although the ST information is presented successfully in the TT, Cheever's story becomes domesticated at the grammatical, lexical, pragmatic and conceptual levels. That is why the linguistic behavior of several characters is slightly different in the TT and is adjusted to the norms of behavior (politeness norms, for instance) expected in the TL culture in the similar situations.

#### 4. Going from HC to LC Culture Discourse

For the analysis of the cultural adaptation of discourse in the translation from Russian into English, a short story written by a modern Russian writer Tatiana Tolstaya was chosen. Tatiana Tolstaya, a bright representative of Russian women writers, possesses in her style characteristics typical of the writers of the Soviet period (subjective grotesque, for example), as well as her distinct style of narration, where "common parlance and poetic diction coexist" (Givens 252). Her prose represents a combination of Soviet realism, unique writing style and cultural and historical background experienced exclusively by Russian people during the Soviet times.

The story is devoted to the issues similar to those which were previously discussed in Cheever's story. In this particular story called "Peters" (Петерс), the plot is based on a "typical" Russian situation: a grandmother is bringing up her grandson trying to shield him from all the real life misfortunes; they read books together, she teaches him German. However, when Peters grows up, he can not adjust to the "hostile" world of everyday life.

An initial cultural misunderstanding might be found in the role of *babushka*, a very dear and affectionate Russian word for grandmother, in Russian (Soviet) society. Most probably, this situation will not evoke the same response in the English speaking environment. Moreover, the interpretation of the story title requires further background knowledge. The *-s* added to the main character's name points to the fact that grandmother raised her grandson in the traditions of the pre-revolutionary Russia nobility; the latter presupposes a special respectful attitude of the speaker to himself and his listener: "Peters's name offers the first clue to the workings of language in the story. Peters is "Peters" not "Petr" because of his grandmother's wish that he learn German. The *s* (short for *sudar'*, or "sir") is appended to "Peter" because as a child Peters finds that presenting himself in a way that was adopted in the nineteenth century as a sign of respect is endearing and amusing" (Givens 254).

Antonina W. Boui, the translator of the analyzed story and other works of fiction and non-fiction from the Russian language, adds a comment in the TT to make the reader aware of this connotation (9). Therefore, the translator skillfully preserves one of the most important traits of the character by weaving the explanation into the narration. However, not all historical references and allusions are clear from the TT as, for example, in (10) an allusion to the Swedish invasion might not be clear

for the reader (see table 4).

Table 4: Expanding the Readers' Background Knowledge

9) когда шаркнув толстой ножкой, представлялся старухам: «Петер-с!» (Толстая 231).	He would introduce himself to the old ladies using the old Russian "s" (a contraction for "sir") at the end of his name. "Peter-s!" (Tolstaya 175).
10) Шведы, ушедшие с этих гнилых берегов, забыли забрать с собой небо и теперь небось злорадствовали на своем чистеньком полуострове (243).	The Swedes, when they left these rotten shores, forgot to take away the sky, and now they probably gloated on their neat little peninsular (184).

Most probably, a reference to a specific cultural tradition viewed through Peters's eyes will not be very clear for the reader of the translated version. The boy tried to comprehend what happened to his grandfather as: [...] *they laid him out on the dining room table, kept him there for two days, and then took him away. They had rice porridge that day* (Tolstaya 176). It is an old tradition to eat a special meal made with rice after the funeral and for the Russian reader it is quite obvious that his grandfather was dead. The grandmother explained nothing to the young boy not to traumatize him so that he had to understand on his own what was going on. Viewing the events through the boy's eyes, not all the readers of the TT can interpret the situation correctly, and once again understand grandmother's strong desire to shield her grandson from all the sad events of their life.

Most importantly, a part of complex nature of Peters's personality is lost in translation. It is clear from the story that although he is not handsome, he is well-read, intelligent, and is able to sympathize with people around him. While reasoning with himself, Peters uses lofty and poetic phrases which he probably learned from those fairytales his grandmother used to read him. These words are stylistically marked, for example, obsolete лобзания (*holy kisses*) translated as *kisses*, poetic темная дубрава (*dark oak-grove*) – *dark forest*, etc. (Толстая 235; Tolstaya 178). The translator's decision not to preserve these connotations in the TT through the specific use of the elements of a different register, in my opinion, simplifies Peters's character; the English-speaking reader does not see Peters's emotionally complicated nature, how different he is from the people around him. The true presentation of the main character in the TT would have been more important than finding good descriptive equivalents to the ST realia (lexical level equivalence): ванька-встанька – *a weighted doll*, гоголь-моголь – *beat egg yolks and sugar* (Толстая 233, 236; Tolstaya 178, 179). The translator finds very good English equivalents at the grammatical and lexical levels, yet, in some cases fails to present the author's message in terms of pragmatics and cultural specifics.

## 5. Globalization and Translation: positive and negative consequences

Instant and varied information exchange and contact of cultures have certainly changed our perception of a high quality translation. Many parts of the TT are foreignized nowadays as they help the reader to better understand the source culture and learn something new about it.

Modern translators are constantly facing a choice of either opting for a "popular" borrowing or for an already existing equivalent. It seems that younger translators prefer to use anglicisms, as often people of all countries are familiar with the notions expressed by them (Khutyz, *Creativity in Translating*) and "the translator no longer has the absolute need to always find a translation of a term in the target language if this would make the target-language text lose credibility" (Wiersema 2003).

A large variety of choices allows the translator to find the most appropriate equivalent while preserving

the uniqueness of the ST. This trend can be observed when comparing recent translations with those made in the soviet past. The obvious advantage is that “instead of generalizing or omitting certain notions, which weren’t present in soviet society, the exact specific equivalents are used” (Khuty, *Translation Problems*). The examples taken from two translations of Francis S. Fitzgerald’s novel *Tender is the Night* prove this conclusion (see table 5).

Table 5: Specification in Translation

ST	TT, transl. in 1977	TT, transl. in 2000
11) <i>He made Kaethe Gregorovius feel charming, meanwhile becoming increasingly restless at the all-pervading cauliflower</i> (Fitzgerald 191).	Он пленил Кэти Грегоровиус, заставив ее уверовать в свои собственные женские чары, а сам еле сдерживал накопившее раздражение против этого пропахшего <b>капустой (cabbage)</b> дома... (Фицджеральд 164).	Кэте Грегоровиус чувствовала себя рядом с ним обворожительной, тогда как он все более раздражался из-за все проникающего запаха <b>цветной капусты (cauliflower)</b> ... (Фицджеральд 358).
12) <i>A terrier ran a leash around his legs</i> (191).	Чей-то <b>нёсик (little dog)</b> , топтавшийся у него под ногами, запутался в них (128).	Чей-то <b>терьерчик (little terrier)</b> , вертевшийся под ногами, запутал его поводком (324).

The examples illustrated in Table 5 show that in the 2000 translation some terms acquired the meaning (close to) the one intended originally by the author, whereas in the 1977 translation the same terms were generalized: *cauliflower – cabbage* (1977) – *cauliflower* (2000); *terrier – little dog* (1977) – *little terrier* (2000). Although these are just the examples of preserving equivalence at the lexical layer, the use of exact terms signifies changes in the socio-cultural environment and ideology of the Russian (TT) reader and is important for the other layers of equivalency.

Unfortunately, the latest translation of the novel carries numerous cases of examples where the use of “specific” equivalents (anglicisms) is unnecessary and impedes the understanding of the text (see table 6).

Table 6: Unnecessary Anglicisms in Translated Fiction

ST	TT, transl. in 1977	TT, transl. in 2000
13) <i>...only the cupolas of a dozen old villas rotted like water lilies among the massed pines</i> (67).	а) ...лишь с десяток <b>стареньких вилл (little old villas)</b> вянущими кувшинками белели в кущах сосен (5).	б) Это сейчас тут настроили много разных <b>бунгало (bungalows)</b> , а к моменту нашей истории... (211).
14) <i>Collis Clay was now speaking about fraternity politics at New Heaven...</i> (176).	а) Тем временем Коллис Клэй уже рассуждал о политике <b>студенческих братств (students brotherhood organizations)</b> в Нью-Хейвене (111).	б) Коллис Клэй говорил уже о проблемах <b>студенческих корпораций (student corporations)</b> в Нью-Хейвене (309).

The expression *old villas* should not cause any translation difficulties. In the 1977 TT, Kalashinkova

keeps the word *villas* to preserve the connotation of exoticism; however, she adds a diminutive suffix to the adjective *old* to slightly domesticate it and make it sound more positive (13a). The 2000 translation changes *villas* into *bungalows* (13b). The latter is not a well-known noun by the Russian reader. Moreover, the Italian noun *villa* adds up to the whole narration of the European style of living, whereas *bungalow*, which was borrowed from English, deprives this image of any meaningful associations.

Translation of sentence (14) is even more unsuccessful. As we know, *fraternity* is the realia of the American academic environment. In 1977, Kalashnikova skillfully rendered it as *student brotherhood organization* which transmits the meaning of the ST (14a) and still seems to be the most appropriate equivalent. However, in 2000 the translator came up with the expression *student corporations* which brings up an immediate association with the business activity rather than academic sphere (14b). Although Kalashnikova's translation demonstrates the use of generalized words and expressions, her version is more accurate and hence successful than the more recent translation. This observation testifies to the fact that translations do not necessarily become outdated, even though major social, political and economic changes take place in the target culture. On the contrary, high quality translations stand the test of time and can compete with those translations, the texts of which are affected by too obvious linguistic trends, more appropriate for mass media discourse.

Such lexical inaccuracies might slightly affect the reader's perception of the ST. However, they generally do not change the interpretation of the discourse as a whole. Yet, it is absolutely unacceptable when a translator presents his/her personal interpretation of the ST and completely changes how the reader sees the characters and interprets their behavior. Unfortunately, this situation happens quite often with the translation of modern popular literature. The analysis of the translation (2004) (by Pavlikova) of Lauren Henderson's novel *My Lurid Past* (2003) revealed a complete distortion of the ST.

The main reason for extremely inaccurate representation of the ST seems to be the mismatch between the register used by the characters in the ST and the register which the TT characters use in various situations. It shows a lack of translator's intercultural competence which is basically the knowledge of information exchange norms in certain social settings.

The main character of the book named Juliet Cooper is a young successful woman, a PR representative, who tries to find her soul mate. Her musings, which are often humorous (in the ST), describe her as a well-educated, cheerful and sociable person. Juliet, for example, as an adult person aware of her flaws, speaks about shopping as one of her weaknesses in a humorous way (15). However, in the TT there appear spoken clichés and expressions inherent in teenagers' speech (15a): *want* becomes *fling oneself, no matter – spit at, I still crave them – my eyes are covetous and my grabbing hands shovel everything that comes their way*. This modification of the narration tone through the register change modifies the Russian reader's perception of Juliet. Similar translation blunders caused primarily by register mismatches are often obvious in the translation of the English-language films into Russian (which are usually dubbed, not subtitled). The Russian version is a too close, yet thoughtless translation of the English one. As a result, it contradicts the norms of social communication and forces adult characters to speak the language of rebellious teenagers (for example, the recent dubbing of *Friends with Benefits* into Russian).

In the examples below, my own translation is provided along with Pavlikova's version in order to show how the former is more suitable and close in tone and modality to the ST original (15b) (see table 7).

Table 7: Unsuitable Translation Choices and Suggestions to Improve the TT

ST	Pavlikov's translation	My translation
15) <i>Every time a walk into a clothes store I want every nice thing on the racks, no matter if it doesn't suit me, still less if I already have an item so similar at home that nobody but me would know the difference between them. I still crave them</i> (Henderson 1).	<i>а) В магазине я кидуюсь (fling myself at) на каждую симпатичную вещь. Плевать (I spit at the fact that), если она мне не идет и дома уже висит ее точная копия. Глаза у меня завидующие, а руки загребущие (my eyes are covetous and my grabbling hands shovel everything that comes their way) (Хендерсон 6).</i>	<i>б) Каждый раз, когда я отправляюсь по магазинам, я хочу купить все красивые вещи, даже если они мне совсем не идут, или даже если дома у меня есть что-то подобное. Ведь никто, кроме меня, не увидит разницы между всеми этими нарядами. Я все равно испытываю непреодолимое желание обладать ими.</i>
16) <i>I'm a food PR I spend my days promoting restaurants, TV shows featuring the chefs from the restaurants, and – often equally lucrative – the spin-off cookbook from both</i> (2).	<i>а) Я служитель пищевого культа (minister of food religion). Нужны уточнения? Пожалуйста. Я – специалист по навязыванию публике (specialize in foisting on) продуктов питания, а если выражаться проще – я служу в рекламе. Раскручиваю рестораны, готовлю кулинарные телешоу, приправляю их лучшими поварами, втоюживаю (the word does not exist in Russian, the possible meaning is to foist, however, in Russian it sounds extremely colloquial) покупателям поваренные книги – невероятно прибыльно, между прочим (7).</i>	<i>б) Я – представитель по связям с общественностью, продвигаю продукты и услуги сферы питания. Я провожу свои дни, рекламируя рестораны, телевизионные шоу, в которых участвуют знаменитые шеф-повары.</i>
17) <i>We were organizing a big, big party</i> (43).	<i>Мы готовились произвести настоящий бум (a boom) (57).</i>	<i>Мы готовились к грандиозной вечеринке.</i>

According to the information presented in the TT, the main character is unprofessional and speaks derogatively about her job (16b). This is not how she is presented in the ST where she is successful and devoted to what she is doing. Finally, the anglicisms used in the TT are unnecessary and distort the information even further (17): instead of organizing *a big party*, in the TT the character is preparing for a *boom*. It is one of the examples of the translator's numerous inappropriate choices as, firstly, the noun *boom* is an economic term and might not be clearly understood by the reader; secondly, the borrowing is not even present in the ST and the translator "over-foreignized" the TT for no apparent reason.

## 6. Conclusion

The analysis of the translations of the two stories shows that when translating from LC culture to HC culture the transformations mostly happen at the grammatical or lexical layer. Numerous lexical transformations are not surprising, as it is “the vocabulary of a language that most clearly reflects the physical and social environment of the speakers” (Sapir 90). These transformations help to create vivid situational (pragmatic) meanings pointing at the nature of the relationship between the characters (for example, between Deborah and her nanny). However, these changes do not affect the reader’s perception of the characters and their actions. Naturally, the TT is adapted to the reality of the target culture mostly through meaning extension, addition, and generalization. The meaning extension is caused by language specifics, that are collocations, set expressions and accepted communication norms. The other transformations are often brought about by social (everyday) reality and current understanding of what a quality translation should be.

When working with HC culture discourse addressing LC culture readers, the translator needs to introduce additional historical and cultural references into the TT to broaden the addressees’ background knowledge: it is not possible to infer the true meaning of the literary work in case the reader is deprived of the extra information (mostly social and cultural context). The knowledge about this extra information usually comes from the sharing of a mutual cognitive environment which, apart from individual assumptions, is constituted by those shared by “largish subsets of cognitive environments, such as those pertaining to practices and conventions taken for granted in a particular culture” (Carston 68).

During communication, mutual cognitive environment allows decoding of various associations, connotations, etc. which are deeply rooted in our cultural and social background. In the ST created in HC culture, much information is presented between the lines, the translator must reconstruct this implied information in the TT discourse. It is worth noting that in the translation of ST created in HC culture for a LC culture audience, pragmatic transformations can be mostly found.

Of course, the results featured in this paper are obtained from the analysis of nine works of fiction (Fitzgerald’s novel and its two translations into Russian, Cheever’s short story and its translation into Russian, Henderson’s novel and its Russian translation, and Tolstaya’s short story and its English translation) and need further testing. However, even at this stage of research, it is a well established fact that the cultural context is a crucial factor in the creation of a successful TT. “Translator’s choices are influenced not only by the source language text and the peculiarities of the target audience, but also by the era to which the translator belongs – in translating for the modern reader it is necessary to take into consideration creative traditions, literary norms and conventions that are familiar to the reader of a certain society.” (Khuty, *Translation Problems*). Despite numerous lexical, grammatical and conceptual transformations, a translator should be aware of differences between HC and LC cultures bearing also in mind the TT audience. In case a ST and a TT belong to different types of cultures, a translator should weave the web of a new discourse with special care and attention. It might seem that it is more complicated to translate from HC to LC culture as the gaps in the mutual cognitive environment should be carefully reconstructed by the translator. A “programming”<sup>7)</sup> (Hall 101) of a certain kind

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7) This term stems from Edward Hall’s idea that meaning is made up “of the communication, the background and preprogrammed responses of the recipient, and the situation” (Hall 100). These preprogrammed responses are influenced by status, activity, setting, and experience. Together they constitute culture. In HC communication much information is preprogrammed in the receiver and in the setting, “with only minimal information in the transmitted message” (Hall 101). Therefore, in this case, “programming” implies all the background information necessary for correct

should be introduced and expand readers' background knowledge necessary for fast, efficient, and satisfying interpretation of the discourse.

Finally, a translator faced with numerous linguistic choices these days must remember who the reader of the TT is. This will allow him/her not to impose their own interpretation of the ST on the TT audience and make communicative choices specific for this particular cultural context. This will also help the translator not to over-foreignize the TT which is a wide-spread trend in modern Russian translations. It seems that intercultural competence is essential for translating either for HC or LC culture and producing high-quality translation.

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