

## Original Research

# Russian culture through the prism of English, Finnish and Japanese languages: Reflections or refractions?

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*Thinning borders in the modern world result in intense translanguaging/transcultural communication. Yet, a language is originally fit to describe its own culture, while cultural reorientation requires considerable adaptation. The paper aims at researching the mechanisms of languages' cultural reorientation as exemplified by the Japanese-, English- and Finnish-language Russia-centred discourse. The cultural reorientation of a language is seen as a mode of translation – translation of culture. Research questions are: What linguistic techniques to introduce exocultural context are preferred by the focus languages? What elements of the source culture are selected for constructing the Russia-centred discourse in the focus languages? The research is based on data in three unrelated languages. The data is organised in manually annotated corpora of culturally loaded texts of book titles. The analysis of translation techniques employed by different languages in the process of cultural reorientation revealed (a) the specificity of the strategy of translating culture as contrasted to that of traditional translation; (b) the features of the exoculture-centred discourse as affected by language-specific linguistic factors. The study of xenonyms, selected to represent the source culture, shows a considerable variation in the choice of representatives, while the types of xenonyms are largely comparable. The cross-linguistic research of Russia-centred discourse is crucial for understanding established discursive canon, which must serve as guidance for presenting and promoting Russian culture in intercultural dialogue.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Russia-culture-centred discourse, xenonym, translation of culture, translation technique, culture-loaded text*



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Discussing the connection between the Japanese and Russian cultures, Solovieva and Konishi (2021) describe the appeal the Russian culture holds for the Japanese as '*eccentric to eccentric, adventurer to adventurer*' (Solovieva & Konishi, 2021, p. 3). This implies a certain degree of similarity, comparability between the two cultures, yet also the perception of the Other

as *eccentric*, i.e. '*unconventional and slightly strange*' (OED, 2024). For the Anglophone world, the appeal comes from just the opposite – the lack of similarity, resulting in the perception of Russia as something incomprehensible and, hence, intriguing. This attitude was best summed up by Churchill (1939) in this portrayal of Russia as '*a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma*' (Churchill, 1939, p. 6). A recent study of the Russian-

British relations by Owen (2021) highlights the very same type of perception, indicating little change in it in the past 80 years. For Finns, the Russians were one of the Others, the Them as opposed to Us, as can be seen in the slogan ‘*Swedes we are no longer, Russians we cannot become; Let us be Finns*’ (Klinge, 1992, p. 94). Yet, according to Nielsen (2022), the concept of the Other in this opposition between Finns and Russians is closer the Stranger rather than the Enemy – ‘*someone who is different but not necessarily in a negative way*’ (Nielsen, 2022, p. 52).

The present paper aims at researching the linguistic means of describing a culture, external for the language in use. In particular, we are going to focus on the way the eccentric, enigmatic and/or strange Russian culture is viewed from the Japanese, English and Finnish perspective and reflected in the corresponding languages. The main collision here consists in the fact that the languages we deal with are initially not fitted to describe the source culture, and the missing means have to be introduced into them. At that, the language of description has to make a choice as to what elements are to represent the source culture and what linguistic techniques are to be employed to introduce them; and this choice is, hypothetically, language-, culture-, and, possibly, ideology-specific.

This study will address the following research questions.

1. What linguistic techniques to introduce external cultural context are preferred by the Japanese, Finnish and English languages? Are they conditioned by the linguistic factors – typological features of the describing language? Or are there some extralinguistic factors at play, e.g. the nature of international relations and the dominant attitude toward the source culture, as described above?

2. What elements of the source culture are selected for constructing the Russia-centred discourse in the Japanese, Finnish and English languages? What are the factors underlying the choice?

## 2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present research involves data in three unrelated languages – Japanese, Finnish and English, belonging to three distinct language families – Japonic, Uralic and Indo-European, respectively. This choice is meant to allow insight into the universal/idiosyncratic ratio in the mechanics of adapting the language to an exoculture.

The research is based on a complex methodology, combining (i) corpus analysis tools, employed to carry out statistical analysis of absolute and comparative frequencies of elements occurring in the aggregated data; and (ii) deep analysis, encompassing structural, cognitive, and stylistic features of the aggregated data.

Within each language we are looking at two types of data:

1. Manually annotated comparative corpora of Rossica titles (Rossica-T-En, Rossica-T-Fi, Rossica-T-Jap), i.e. titles of authentic descriptions of Russia in the respective languages. The corpora encompass non-fiction texts (publicistic and popular science) predominantly from the 19th to the 21st centuries, varying in size from about 100 titles in the Japanese subcorpus, 150 titles in

the Finnish subcorpus, and up to 450 titles in the English subcorpus. These disproportionate results from the relatively short history of Finnish as the official language of Finland and the relatively brief history of Japanese-Russian contacts, which influence the amount of Russia-centered literature published in these languages compared to English. However, since the current stage of the research does not aim for statistical evaluations, this noted disproportion does not affect the data's reliability.

2. Manually annotated comparative mini-corpora of culturally loaded authentic texts in the respective languages (Rossica-En, Rossica-Fi, Rossica-Jap, approximately 20,000 words each). The sampled texts had to meet the following criteria: (i) focus on some aspect of Russian culture; (ii) be written in the 21st century; (iii) be original texts, not translations; and (iv) be authored by native speakers of the narration language (judged by the author's name). Aiming for a maximally complete array of the types of culturonyms and their translation techniques, we did not impose stringent genre restraints, except for excluding highly specific materials such as children's fiction, songs, and strictly scientific texts.

This mixed empirical data allows for a mixed methodology of corpus and discourse analysis, aimed at identifying the specific markers of the exoculture-centred discourse on both the surface and deep levels, the superstructure and the macrostructure. The combination of corpus linguistics technologies with discourse analysis has been tested and approved in a number of studies, having by now merged into a relatively autonomous branch of corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) (Partington & Marchi, 2015, p. 217).

Methodologically, the research rests upon four cornerstones: the theory of interlinguaculturology, the translation studies, the contact linguistics, and the theory of discourse. Without going too much into the subtleties of each of these research programmes, let us outline their main points, serving as the foundation for the present study.

## 3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 3.1. Contact linguistics

Contact linguistics overcomes the approach backed by the authority of von Humboldt (2009), having categorically stated that languages are impermeable, and there can be no interpenetration between them, since one can enter the circle of another language only having stepped out of one's own. Weinreich's (1968) counterargument is given in the very title of his *Languages in Contact*. The starting point for the research is the thesis that languages interact and interpenetrate, which mechanism is labelled *interference* – the direct and unavoidable result of languages coming into contact. In particular, while discussing interaction on the lexical level, Weinreich (1968) outlines a wide spectrum of motives underlying this process, which is, largely, the process of borrowing. This highlights the possibility of purposeful transfer of elements from one language into another, whereby the speaker can be driven by both linguistic (e.g., lacunae) and extralinguistic (e.g., source language's prestige)

*'The sole motivation behind applying a language to describing an exoculture is bridging the linguistic and cultural gap, which makes it in truth a variety of translation. The main difference is that in the case of traditional translation, the input is a source text; in our case, the input is a source culture. Thus, we are talking about a specific mode of translation – a translation of culture, and it is being accomplished with the use of translation techniques'*

factors. It is these ideas that formed the basis for the language variantology paradigm (Proshina, 2022; Proshina & Eddy, 2016; Mauranen & Vetchinnikova, 2020).

### 3.2. Interlinguaculturology

Interlinguaculturology is one of several (if not many) research programmes, focusing on the interaction between contacting languages and cultures (Intercultural Communication, World Englishes Studies, World Literature Studies, and Translation Studies, to name a few more). Founded by Kabakchi (1987) and first laid down in his doctoral thesis, it was developed in his works and the works of his disciples (Antonova, 2019; Dudchenko, 2020; Egorova, 2012; Yuzefovich, 2013) and like-minded scholars (Beloglazova & Kabakchi, 2018; Kabakchi & Beloglazova, 2024; Proshina, 2018). Though Kabakchi's (1987) works are focused on the interaction of the Russian and English linguacultures, recently the principles of interlinguaculturology started to be tested on other languages' data (Kornilova, 2010; Ivanova, 2015; Filatova, 2016; Egorova, 2019; Orlova, 2020) illustrating their wider applicability. In particular, the following points can be stated as proven in the described corpus of research:

1. Originally emerging in close connection with a particular culture, that is, as part of a linguaculture, any language can be re-oriented towards any other culture, due to its intrinsic qualities of openness and flexibility.

2. To describe a culture, a language develops and utilises specific means – *culturonyms*. The culturonyms of one's own culture (*idyoculturonyms*) are a natural part of the language, while when reoriented towards another culture, a language has to obtain additional cultural lexicon – terms of an exoculture (*xenonyms*).

3. The linguacultural hybridity due to the introduction of xenonyms is a highly characteristic feature of exoculture-centred discourse, yet there one can expect a considerable degree of variation since the exocultural context can vary (i) quantitatively, i.e. in its denseness; (ii) qualitatively, i.e. the choice of the source culture representatives and the linguistic mechanisms of their introduction.

4. Exoculture-centred discourse is highly specific on both the surface and deep levels, yet it is comprised by distinct genres, establishing their specific requirements and regularities in respect to the exocultural context in particular.

### 3.3. Translation studies

The third keystone for the present research is the study of translation. We heavily rely on its procedures and findings in the following spheres.

1. Following the cultural turn in translation studies of the 1990s (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1998), there has emerged a natural kinship between it and the above described interlinguaculturology. The two disciplines share a common ground, which is easily illustrated by the definition of translation offered by Pym (2020): '*translation is one of the ways information is transformed as it passes between languages and between cultures*' (Pym, 2020). It is a very precise way of defining what is happening in exoculture-centred discourse. The sole motivation behind applying a language to describing an exoculture is bridging the linguistic and cultural gap, which makes it in truth a variety of translation. The main difference is that in the case of traditional translation, the input is a source text; in our case, the input is a source culture. Thus, we are talking about a specific mode of translation – a translation of culture, and it is being accomplished with the use of translation techniques.

2. The noted hybridity of exoculture-centred discourse is the result of the non-translation, a phenomenon highlighted by the new theory of untranslatability (as contrasted to the old one, pegged to the von Humboldt's notion of languages impermeability), forcefully postulated by Apter (2013) in her book inspired by the translational project of *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon* (Cassin et al., 2014). The issues raised by the *Dictionary of Untranslatables* itself and by Apter (2013) can be summed up in this question: '*Is pravda justice or truth?*'. Answering it, one of the authors of the *Dictionary of Untranslatables* Cassin (2022) states that there are various ways to translate the Russian *pravda*, each resulting in it becoming something more or less different. The researcher concludes that '*the untranslatable is not what we cannot translate – we can translate anything – but what we never stop (not) translating*' (Cassin, 2022). And this is a very heuristic lens for understanding the nearly endless variability of xenonyms, all of which can eventually be reduced to a formal borrowing in exoculture-centred discourse.

### 3.4. Theory of discourse

Fourthly, when talking about exoculture-centred discourse we cannot but rely on the theory of discourse. Following Foucault (1972), discourses are understood as '*practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak*' (Foucault, 1972, p. 49). Indeed, '*discourses are composed of signs; but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things*' (Foucault, 1972, p. 49); instead, they actually create the semiosphere, which is the habitat of humans. Literally, discourse is communication, and it is the meeting place of language and ideology, resulting in the construction of knowledge and meaning (Beloglazova, 2008). This interest to ideology is also present in the modern TS and is crucial in the analysis of exoculture-centred discourse, where translation is to be understood in the light of '*asymmetric power relations between culture*' (Pym, 2020).

*'To describe a culture, a language develops and utilises specific means – culturonyms. The culturonyms of one's own culture (idyoculturonyms) are a natural part of the language, while when reoriented towards another culture, a language has to obtain additional cultural lexicon – terms of an exoculture (xenonyms)'*

Foucault (1972) also postulates 'the appropriation of discourse', it's giving 'the right to speak, ability to understand' (Foucault, 1972, p. 68), implying that discourse is pre-existing to any text and pre-given to any speaker, and each text is created and interpreted in accordance with the regulations and requirements of the discourse. While studying exoculture-centred discourse we cannot but observe an established canon, prescribing what and how can be said about a particular source culture in the target linguaculture.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

##### 4.1. The linguistic techniques to introduce the elements of exocultural context

The techniques employed in the translation of culture are, in fact, standard translation techniques. Although there may be some scholar-to-scholar variations in labelling them (Baker & Saldanha, 2019; Newmark, 1988), the main repertoire includes direct transfer, transliteration, transcription, calque (or through) translation, cultural equivalent, descriptive equivalent, couplets (triplets, etc.). As we will attempt to show, in sticking to the described repertoire, exoculture-centred discourse remains a mode of translation; yet there are certain differences in the ways these techniques are employed, as well as variation across languages. Let us consider the application of these techniques to the translation of the Russian culture into three languages, unrelated to Russian and to each other. Both samples in 4.1.1. feature the technique of direct transfer.

##### 4.1.1. Direct transfer

(a) Еще раз экономизм: Е. Д. Кускова, С. Н. Прокопович, and the Challenge to Russian Social Democracy;

(b) 幸福なモスクワ (ロシア語文学のミノタウロスたち) Счастливая Москва (lit. in Japanese: *Happy Moscow (Minotaurs of Russian literature)*, in Russian *Happy Moscow*)

(c) 函館校で一番大切な行事は、АБВГ-Day (言葉まつり) でした。(lit. in Japanese: *The most important was the АБВГ-day*).

The technique illustrated here is the very periphery of translation, being in a way a wilful refusal from the act of translating, where translator merely transplants an element from its source to the target language. It might go quite smoothly between languages sharing the same graphical code, yet this is not our case, with Russian using Cyrillic alphabet, English and Finnish – Latin and Japanese – a unique combination of three non-alphabetic systems. The majority of the audience would not even be able to read the Cyrillic transplant, reducing the sphere of this technique's application to, largely, two cases – (i) texts

aimed at the readers highly knowledgeable in the linguaculture being described, and (ii) texts where the transplant's function is purely decorative and meant to imbue the text with exotic looks, as an indicator of similarly exotic contents.

Several notes are worth being introduced in relation to the illustrations of direct transfer in our data.

Sample 4.1.1a is a paper title (Norton, 1986). But although in the original paper the title features a Russian transplant, when indexed in scientific databases this problematic part of the title gets transliterated (Romanised) as *Eshche Raz Ekonomizm*. The example is indicative of the general attitude towards this translation procedure, which is almost never used other than in hybrid strategies of introducing a culture-loaded term.

Sample 4.1.1b illustrates one of these hybrid strategies, where the transplant is accompanied by a through translation; and it is also an illustration of the decorative function of the transplant, which does not add any cognitive information, but serves merely to draw the reader/buyer's attention by its graphical eccentricity.

Sample 4.1.1c also demonstrates hybridity, but of a different kind – it transplants only part of the festival name, calquing the classifier *день*, yet not into Japanese, but into English. We will have illustrations of this technique in other sections too.

There are no cases of direct transfer in the Finnish-language data, which is also highly symptomatic. Apparently, after being part (albeit autonomous) of the Russian empire for over a century (1809-1917), the Finnish are not looking at the Russian culture as something exotic or eccentric.

##### 4.1.2. Transference

(a) Western critics of Soviet work often chide it for its insistence on *zakonomernost'*, conformity with law and regularity...

(b) Dva Piva Pazhalusta!

(c) 風呂とペチカーロシアの民衆文化。(lit. *Bath and Pechka – Russian folk culture*.)

(d) Varasimme prjanikmuseosta työpajan ja pääsimme leipomaan itse perinteikkäitä pipareita. Raz, dva, tri. (lit. *We booked a masterclass in the prjanik museum and baked our own traditional gingerbreads. One, two, three*.)

(e) 'Normaalna' sanoisi jakuutti venäjäksi (lit. '*Normaalna*', a *Jakut would say in Russian*).

(f) 諜報国家ロシア ソ連KGBからプーチンのFSB体制まで (lit. *Intelligence nation of Russia – from Soviet KGB to Putin's FSB*).

(g) Vkhutemas (an acronym, pronounced *v-who-temaas*) was dismantled by Stalin.

Here, the samples of two techniques are sometimes difficult to tell apart – transliteration, i.e. reproducing the graphic form of the loan, and transcription, i.e. reproducing its phonetic form. Many scholars do not differentiate the two procedures. Thus, Newmark (1988) treats them both under the generic term of *transference*. Yet in some cases we can draw a rather distinct borderline between them; and, more importantly, we need to introduce this distinction to describe the differences in how the languages under study deal with them.

Thus, it is problematic to talk about transliteration in relation to our Japanese data since the language does not operate letters and does not allow for a letter-to-letter translation. Yet, as can be seen in 4.1.2c, it does use the transcribing version of transference, when attempting to render the Russian *печка* with the help of katakana script ペチカ (*petikā*), as well as the name for Russia itself, resulting in ロシア (*Rosia*). Another Japanese technique is rendering the Russianism by means of Romanisation, i.e. transferring it into Latin script (see 4.1.2f). Apparently, it is used as a compromise between readability and eccentricity.

For both Finnish (4.1.2d and 4.1.2e) and English (4.1.2b and 4.1.2g), the two approaches to the technique under discussion can be distinguished. Some cases can be securely identified as illustrations for transcription, where the writer attempts to reproduce how the Russian original sounded (4.1.2e, 4.1.2b). While samples 4.1.2a and 4.1.2d rather refer to the generic notion of transference, since they would be the same in both letter-to-letter and sound-to-sound rendition. Sample 4.1.2g is interesting as it combines the techniques of transcription and transliteration to give the reader the idea as to both written and sound form of the culturonym being introduced.

Thus, we can conclude that transference is much more common than direct transfer, yet it too presents considerable difficulty for the reader, who only receives a form devoid of any meaning associated with it. That is why the application of this translation procedure in exoculture-centred discourse usually falls into two categories. Firstly, the loan can be given in a clarifying context, which often consists in coupling transference with another translation technique, as is the case in 4.1.2d, where the loan *prjanik* is explained in the cultural equivalent *perinteikkäitä pipareita*, and 4.1.2a, where *zakonomernost'* is accompanied by a descriptive equivalent or clarifying note *conformity with law and regularity*. Alternatively, the loan itself can be transparent enough, as *Normaalna* in 4.1.2e. Secondly, just like the transplant, the loan can be introduced for decorative reasons, for the sake of its exotic form and not the cognitive meaning, thus requiring no explanation, as is the case with *Raz, dva, tri* in 4.1.2d.

#### 4.1.3. Calque translation

(a) To avoid prison under the Parasite Law, Dad cooked up a Dead Souls kind of scheme.

(b) Gulag-vankien rakentama Kolyman valtatie eli 'Luiden tie' Jakutskista Magadaniin kulkee alueen läpi (lit. *The Kolyma highway, or 'Bone Road', built by Gulag prisoners from Yakutsk to Magadan, runs through the region*).

(c) 「そり遊びが好きならそりを運ぶことも好きになれ」、リュービシ・カターツア、リュービ・イ・サーノチキ・バズィーチ (lit. *If you love sledging, you should also love carrying the sled, Ljubisi Katazza, Ljubi i Sarnotki Bazit*).

(d) Production of the Volga began in the 'thaw' period in 1956.

Calque or through translation illustrated here represents a compromise between precision and readability of the loan: if the techniques in 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 aim at conveying the external form

of the original culturonym, the way it looks or sounds, calque strives to render the internal form, i.e. the principle of the sign construction, giving its morpheme-to-morpheme translation. This is, probably, most productive in rendering names of works of culture – literature, art, architecture. So, *War and Peace* in English, *Sota ja rauha* in Finnish, and 戦争と平和 in Japanese are all based on this technique. And it is exactly what we see in 4.1.3a, *Dead Souls* being a well-established and highly recognisable calque of the name of Gogol's celebrated novel.

Yet, compromising implies running risks. The risks are of misunderstanding, resulting from two problems. The first problem is calque's imprecision. For example, two distinct Russian culturonyms – *oktyabryonok* and *oktyabrist* are both calqued as *octobrist*, yet one is a member of a Soviet children's organisation and the other – a member of a political party. The second problem is the chance of the calque coinciding in form with a term or turn of phrase already existing in the target language. So, the Russian term *kollezhskiy sovetnik*, a social rank in imperial Russia, when calqued as *collegiate advisor*, gets easily confusable with the name for the person in charge of guiding members of a modern American college fraternity.

These risks explain writers' relative reluctance to use calques in culture-centred discourse, since they are seen as not self-sufficient and are mostly resorted to in coupling with other techniques to overcome their opaqueness. Thus, 4.1.3c is a combination of calque and transference.

Despite its risks, through translation is indispensable when one wants to preserve culture-specific imagery, as in 4.1.3b and 4.1.3d, exposing to some extent the mentality behind the culture being described.

#### 4.1.4. Cultural and functional equivalents

(a) 『ロシア・CIS南部の動乱 岐路に立つプーチン政権の試練』 (lit. *Unrest in Russia and the southern CIS: test for the Putin regime at the crossroads*).

(b) Here we see a samovar the size of a skyscraper, teacups big enough for Paul Bunyan, a plate of chak-chak (something like funnel cake preserved in honey).

While the technique of establishing the equality relationship between the elements of contacting linguacultures is given outright preference in traditional translation due to its value of making translation invisible (Venuti, 2004), one seldom finds it in exoculture-centred discourse.

Since this discourse' main goal is maximally precise description of a strange culture, substituting its unique realia for the realia of another culture would plainly defeat the purpose of such description.

McCauchey (2005) was rightfully sceptical of such equivalents, describing the practice of using them in translation as the *kasha syndrome*: '*...kasha is translated in virtually every textbook as 'porridge'. So, porridge is the word used by today's English speakers when referring to a particular Russian dish that has little to do with the English/Scottish breakfast food'* (McCauchey, 2005, p. 457).



*'Berdy (2017) is experienced in both traditional translation and translation of culture, and rightly points out that in the latter it is not enough to merely provide an equivalent, since this will basically mean that one unique culture gets substituted by an entirely different culture. Therefore, if it is the cultural barrier that translation aims to overcome, as translation of culture does, it cannot but resort to complex strategies, combining a variety of techniques allowing, in their totality, to render the nuances of not only cognitive, but axiological and aesthetic information'*

Kabakchi (2010) illustrates the difference in approach to rendering culture-loaded elements between traditional translation and translation of culture contrasting the following two sets of examples:

(1i) Korovyov and Behemoth were clicking their second glass of splendid, ice-cold, double-filtered Moscow vodka (Bulgakov) ← Коровьев и Бегемот чокались второй рюмкой прекрасной холодной московской двойной очистки водки (Булгаков);

(1ii) ...taking an occasional sip from a glass of red wine (Turgenev) ← '...изредка отхлебывая из рюмки, наполненной красным вином' (Тургенев);

(2i) ...ice-cold vodka, served in tiny liqueur glasses... (Chamberlain);

(2ii) The tray came loaded with garlic sausage, a black loaf, a giant tomato, a bottle of vodka and cut-glass *ryumki* for its consumption (Lear).

All four contexts address the same culture-specific practice of alcohol consumption but do it in markedly different manner.

Here 1i and 1ii illustrate the approach common for traditional translation, which relies on substituting the original cultural onym *рюмка* with the functional equivalent *glass* and loses the distinction between different types of vessels, while 2i and 2ii illustrate the approach taken by the translation of culture, resorting to a descriptive equivalent *tiny liqueur glasses* and to transliteration *ryumki*. The traditional translation's imprecision feeds the myth of Russian alcoholism, while the alternative one is an attempt to portray the same realia as part of culture – the drinking culture, in this case. That is why if a cultural equivalent is to be found in our data, it is mostly coupled with some formal way of introducing a loan and serves as a translator's comment (see 4.1.2d). It is often introduced though as an explicit comparison, which allows to avoid false equivalence. So *chak-chack* in 4.1.4b is not a funnel cake, but *something like funnel cake*.

Once again Japanese data features idiosyncratic translation decisions. The CIS in 4.1.4a, a translation of the original term into English, can be seen as a functional equivalent for a possible Russian loan.

To conclude this part of our review, we would like to quote Berdy (2017), a translator from Russian and an active promoter

of the Russian culture in her publications. Her aim is to make the Russian culture intelligible to foreigners. One of her articles opens with this most insightful observation: 'Over the years I've paid particular attention to the key words and concepts in Russian culture, since in order to have a hope of fitting in, foreigners need to know not just what a word means, but where it is on the Russian value chart. That is, you need to know that *гордыня* is pride, but also that Russians consider it the worst of the *семь грехов* (the seven sins)' (Berdy, 2017). Berdy (2017) is experienced in both traditional translation and translation of culture, and rightly points out that in the latter it is not enough to merely provide an equivalent, since this will basically mean that one unique culture gets substituted by an entirely different culture. Therefore, if it is the cultural barrier that translation aims to overcome, as translation of culture does, it cannot but resort to complex strategies, combining a variety of techniques allowing, in their totality, to render the nuances of not only cognitive, but axiological and aesthetic information.

#### 4.2. Selection of exocultural context representatives

The most evident markers of Russia-centred discourse would be Russian cultural terms like *czar* (English), *maslenitsa* (Finnish), and *rosia, pasuha, kurichi* (Japanese):

(a) The book is largely based on previous work, including a characterisation of Russian autocracy as 'patrimonial' — the state as the personal domain of the czar — most closely associated with the historian Richard Pipes.

(b) Venäläisen 'maslenitsa' eli paikallisen laskiaisen kunniaksi hiihtokeskus kuhisi toimintaa ja alueella järjestettiin jos jonkinmoista tapahtumaa: leikkimielistä kisailua, köydenvetoa, tanssia, maslenitsa-nuken polttamista ja vaikka mitä muuta (lit. in Finnish: *In honour of the Russian 'Maslenitsa', that is a local carnival, the ski center was bustling with activity and various events were organised in the area: playful competitions, tug-of-war, dancing, burning of a Maslenitsa doll and a lot more*).

(c) ロシアのパスハの特徴の一つとして期間に「クリーチ」という伝統的なパンの一種が食べられ (lit. in Japanese: *One of the characteristics of Russian Paskha is that a type of traditional cake called 'kulich' is eaten during the season*).

Yet, xenonyms are not just these names for cultural realia, but a much more diverse class of linguistic means.

##### 4.2.1. Proper names

(a) My American friends call me Mickey and in moments of great affection – Mick. Not very romantic. Russians, on the other hand, almost never call me Miki (for one thing, because it sounds like I'm not a person, but a lot of miks). Instead, they call me Mikusya, Mikus, Mikusik, Mikushenka, Mikulya, Mikulenka, Mikusha, Mikushka, Mikushenka, Mikochka, Mikunchik. Every American who enters our office goes through this process of linguistic softening: Laurie becomes Larochka, Ron becomes Ronchik. Lisa is Lizochka.

(b) Oman Anna-nimeni lempinimi on Anja. Sitä voidaan siten kehittää edelleen Anetskaksi, Anjuskaksi, Anjutaksi, Njuraksi, Ankaksi ja niin edelleen. Jos sattuu olemaan nimeltään Marija, tulee kutsutuksi nimellä Masa (Masenka, Musja...), Aleksandria ja Aleksandraa kutsutaan Sasaksi (Sas, Sasenka...), Aleksei on Ljosa (Ljos, Ljolik...), Sergei on Serjoza (Serjoga, Serjoz...), Nikolai on Kolja (Koi, Kolenka...), Jekaterina on Katja (Katenka, Katjuska...), Ksenja on Ksjusa (Ksjus, Ksjusenka...), Vladimir Volodja (Vova Vovotska...). (lit. *My own name Anna is nicknamed Anja. It can then be further developed into Anetska, Anjuska, Anjuta, Njura, Anka and so on. If you happen to be called Marija, you will be called Masa (Masenka, Musja...), Aleksandria and Aleksandra are called Sasa (Sas, Sasenka...), Aleksei is Ljosa (Ljos, Ljolik...), Sergei is Serjoza (Serjoga, Serjoz...), Nikolai is Kolja (Koi, Kolenka...), Yekaterina is Katja (Katenka, Katjuska...), Ksenja is Ksjusa (Ksjus, Ksjusenka...), Vladimir Volodya (Vova, Vovotska).*)

(c) そんなカチューシャは、もともとロシア語由来の言葉です。ロシア人の女性に多い名前に「エカテリーナ」(Ekaterina)というのがあり、その愛称がカチューシ (Katyusha)です (lit. *The word 'Katyusha' (=headband) is originally of Russian origin. It is one of the most common names for Russian women 'Ekaterina', and its nickname is 'Katyusha'.*)

As Nord (2003) puts it, 'proper names may be non-descriptive, but they are obviously not non-informative' (Nord, 2003, p. 183). First and foremost, they are culture markers. That is why proper names are probably the most frequent category of xenonyms.

The difficulty presented by Russian names to a non-Russian speaker was pointed out by many, but Byron's (2007) observation is among the keenest:

'...there was Strongenoff, and Strokonoff, Meknop, Serge Low, Arsnew of modern Greece, And Tschitsshakoff, and Roguenoff, and Chokenoff, And others of twelve consonants apiece...' (Byron, 2007).

Despite the noted challenge, a 20,000-word corpus of English-language Russia-centred discourse features: 334 instances of people's names (anthroponyms); 112 instances of place names (toponyms); and 367 instances of names for Russia at various stages of its history.

If we address the Rossica-T corpus, we can observe that (i) varying across subcorpora, 17-31% of the titles feature anthroponyms and 9-15% of the titles feature toponyms; (ii) the keywords for all the subcorpora unfailingly include proper nouns (Table 1).

Table 1

Russian proper names among Rossica-T keywords

ENGLISH	FINNISH	JAPANESE
Russia	Venäjä/Venäläinen (Russia(n))	ロシア (Russia)
Russian	Neuvostoliitto (Soviet Union)	プーチン (Putin)
Muscovy	Suomi (Finland)	ドゥストエフスキ (Dostoyevsky)
Soviet	Putin	トルストイ (Tolstoy)
Putin	Aleksandr	
Stalin		
Peter		
Ivan		

At that, one would be wrong to say that writers stick to the simplest cases – on the contrary, they tend to focus on the unique and problematic aspects of proper names, highlighting their special status among a language's lexis. Thus, the samples in English (4.2.1a) and Finnish (4.2.1b) focus on the same feature of the Russian names – their variability, while in 4.2.1c the reader is presented with a resemantisation of a proper noun becoming a common noun, as well as with a touch upon the diminutive forms.

#### 4.2.2. Literary allusions and quotations

(a) 頭じゃロシアはわからない (lit. *You can't understand Russia with your head*)

(b) Minne troika rientää? (lit. *Where the troika runs?*)

(c) Alexander I: Tsar of War and Peace.

These samples are all headlines alluding to Russian literature classics: 4.2.2a is a rendition into Japanese of a quotation from the Russian poet Tyutchev; 4.2.2b quotes Gogol's *Dead Souls*; 4.2.2c reminds the reader that Alexander I is the very tsar of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*.

The Finnish data also includes references to Pushkin and Mandelstam. While the English corpus favours allusions to Fletcher's *From Russia with Love*, as well as Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky and Pasternak.

#### 4.2.3. Rhetorical patterns and cliches

(a) 'Tania, be quiet and sit down,' Papa ordered his daughter. 'It's about to begin. Irina, you, too. Sit.'

(b) *Grazhdanka*, it's forbidden to sit here. Follow me.

(c) 'It was a pleasure to meet you, Gaspadeen' Fursenko had

used the more modern post-Union breakup, more ‘politically correct’ term for ‘mister’, ‘but he automatically stopped himself, then said,’ *Tovarisch Kazakov*. ‘That was what most Russians had called each other back when there was a strong, fearsome, proud empire: Comrade’. Kazakov smiled and nodded approvingly.

(d) Ilmaisu *horoso sidim* tarkoittaa kirjaimellisesti *me itumme hyvin*, ja se on yksi tyypillisimmistä venäläisistä ilmaisuista joita tiedän. (lit. *The expression horoso sidim literally means we sit well and is one of the most typical Russian expressions I know*).

The selection illustrates the Russia-centred discourse’s focus on peculiarly Russian verbal behaviour, which is recognisable in a set of traits. One of these specific traits is neglect of politeness (4.2.3a, 4.2.3b), noticeably revealing itself in the lack of etiquette expressions, as well as in the use of imperative forms. Command is what Brown and Levinson (1987) call ‘one of the most intrinsically face threatening speech acts [...] too rude to occur in most normal social situations’ (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 191), of which the imperative with *you* – the complement of the performative – is ‘marked as aggressively rude’ (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 191). Yet, it is exactly these forms that our data features. They serve as culture markers, being not only acceptable, but rather widespread in the Russian verbal culture (Benacchio, 2019).

Another trait visible in our data, is the specific forms of address (4.2.3b, 4.2.3c), some of which have become widely known across the world. One might recollect, for example, the musical *Tovarich* (1963), starring Vivien Leigh. They become the centre of attention in mass media, e.g. an article dedicated to the Russian/Soviet forms of address *The Fading Tovarish* (Schmemmann, 1986), and in fiction, where, as in 4.2.3c, the reader is introduced to the subtleties of addressing as *зочнодуш* (*Gaspadeen*) and *мосапуу* (*Tovarisch*), as contrasted to *mister*.

Finally, 4.2.3d addresses characteristic discursive clichés, what Baider (2013) refers to as *language (linguistic) stereotypes*, serving to convey not only specific culturally marked situations, but also attitudes and values associated with them.

## 5. CONCLUSION

To summarise our findings let us return to the questions we set before us in the opening of the paper and try to frame answers to them.

1. In answering the first question, we would like to emphasise the following observations.

First, exocultural context can be introduced by a wide spectrum of techniques. All of them are traditional translation procedures, varying in the degree of precision with which they render the unique phenomena of the culture being translated. Yet, while techniques are similar, there is a rather marked difference in the translation strategy. Of the two main strategies pointed out by Venuti (2004), traditional translation has been for centuries preferring domestication allowing for ‘immediate intelligibility’, while cultural translation gives preference to cultural

accuracy. Its main objective being rendering the exoculture in its uniqueness, cultural translation is by definition a foreignising one. This tendency towards the foreignising strategy is a distinctive feature of cultural translation, regardless of the source culture (according to our research comparing Russia- and Belarus-centred discourses), as well as of the target language, as evidenced by the current research.

Second, the domesticating translation techniques, such as cultural equivalent, modulation, synonymy, descriptive equivalent, paraphrasing and notes (Newmark, 1988) can be implemented in the translation of culture as part of a hybrid strategy, combining form-rendering techniques with those, rendering the semantic side of the foreign semiotic entity thus introduced into the exoculture-centred discourse and the language of intercultural communication. The hybrid strategy can combine a transplant with a through-translation (4.1.1b); a transference with a cultural equivalent (4.1.2c, 4.1.4b); a transference with a descriptive equivalent (4.1.2a); a transference with a through-translation (4.1.3c, 4.2.3c); and a transcription with a transliteration (4.1.2g).

Third, the target language might affect the choice of particular techniques due to both intra- and extralinguistic factors.

Thus, Japanese discourse features an idiosyncratic method of translating external cultures, a kind of relay translation mediated by English (4.1.2f, 4.1.4c, and 4.2.1a), which is due to both cultural and technical factors.

The Finnish-language Russia-centred discourse, foreignising as it is, avoids transplants, apparently viewing this degree of foreignisation as extreme, while for the Japanese it appears a rather common practice to add a decorative transplant in Cyrillic, especially as a paratextual element.

Being rather open to loans, the Japanese language has developed a unique system of introducing these loans into its lexicon, with separate graphic codes for Chinese loans and for non-Chinese ones. All Russianisms fall into the latter category called *gairaigo* and are written in katakana, which makes them very visible against the mostly hieroglyphic textual background. Other languages, English and Finnish in our study, have to resort to other solutions to highlight exocultural elements. English systematically uses italicisation for this end.

2. Characterising the elements of the source culture selected for constructing the Russia-centred discourse, we might again start with observations, common for all the varieties of the discourse under study. Thus, we have observed that the source culture is introduced resorting to not only a variety of linguistic techniques, but also with the help of a wide range of xenonym types, revealing different aspects of the culture being described: cultural terms, proper names, precedent texts names and quotations, elements of the verbal culture, to name the most prominent ones. Yet, while the types and categories, generally, coincide for all the datasets in the study, the representatives vary. For example, (i) the English-language *Rossica* has a history of several centuries, therefore the Russia-centred English language is rich in historical cultural terms and names, which are much less vivid



in the other two varieties; (ii) the Finnish-language *Rossica* focuses not on Russia in general, but on the regions adjacent to Finland, which used to be or are populated by Finno-Ugric peoples; and in describing these regions the Finnish discourse largely relies on its own endonyms, while English and Japanese borrow Russian exonyms (e.g. Fin. *Vienanmeri* vs. Eng. *White Sea* vs. Rus. *Белое море*); (iii) the choice of dominant themes and representatives is largely dependent on the current ideology and on the stereotypes associated with the source culture in the target culture: the discourse has its established canon, guiding what and how can be said about Russia in this particular linguaculture.

In the concluding remarks we would also like to address the theoretical and practical implications of the research. In reference to Contact Linguistics, our research has indeed shown interpenetration of languages having come in contact with each other, revealing at that a considerable diversity in both the forms of this interpenetration and the motives underlying these violations of linguistic boundaries. The ease of these breaches of language norms (conditioned at times by relatively trifling motives) is highly indicative of the change if not in their nature, then in the degree of their binding force. Whether this change results from intensified contact in the globalised world, or is the prerequisite for linguistic globalisation, remains to be explored.

In reference to Interlinguaculturology, the research was a complete success in verifying its premises, ascertaining the main thesis: overcoming the cultural gap, i.e. stepping outside of one

culture, can only be accomplished by means of stepping over the boundaries of its language, by means of language hybridisation. Yet, at the same time, we have observed the idiosyncratic character of this hybridisation, conditioned by the nature of the particular languages and the nature of the interlinguacultural relations they develop. This study, though, is yet unable to answer the question of the ratio of universal vs. linguaspecific in the general theory of linguacultural dialogue.

In reference to Translation Studies, the current research continues the rather noticeable trend of expanding the notion of translation by means of identifying its new forms and types. Verbalised culture has been largely seen the very embodiment of untranslatable, yet the review of the techniques employed in translating culture gives a translator a ready-to-use toolkit of complex solutions overcoming the *either-form-or-meaning* problem and allowing the translator to truly and fully deliver an exoculture across the linguistic barrier.

In reference to Discourse Analysis, we resorted to it in order to step over *'the ever finite forms of verbal production that can be directly perceived through our senses – including oral communication, texts by one or many authors, belonging at that to various epochs, – and to present them as a unity with certain commonalities, which are seldom identified in this dynamic ever changing space'* (Rezvina, 2005).

It now remains to identify the workings of particular ideologies and their shaping effect on the Russia-centred discourse in the linguacultures being compared.

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