Chapter 2
Language-in-education policy, publishing and the translation of children’s books in South Africa

2.1 Introduction
In 1993, Zoë Wicomb made the following comment about the education system in South Africa:

Without a decent, compulsory, multilingual system of education for all, we cannot move toward the national interracial culture of which our policy document or euphonic conference titles speak. We need a radical pedagogy, a level of literacy that will allow our children to read works of literature that will politicize them into an awareness not only of power, but of the equivocal, the ambiguous, and the ironic which is always embedded in power (Wicomb, 1993: 32).

In 2010, more than 15 years later, the degree to which such a multilingual system of education, developing (amongst other things) a sophisticated literacy, has been attained remains a matter of acute concern. Multilingual education (built on the principle of mother-tongue education together with the effective acquisition of other languages) is a cornerstone of the policies underlying the South African educational system. However, while the importance of mother-tongue education within the framework of additive bi- and multilingualism continues to be emphasised by all stakeholders, there is an increasingly urgent awareness that both policy and implementation are severely flawed, contributing to what researchers have unambiguously described as an “educational crisis” and “comprehensive educational failure” (Heugh, 1999: 301).¹

Coupled with this, there are broader concerns about reading, literacy and publishing, particularly in the African languages. In his keynote address to the World Library and Information/International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions Conference, held in South Africa in August 2007, the then Minister of Arts and Culture, Z. Pallo Jordan outlined some of these concerns:

Ours, regrettably, is not a society of readers. Worse yet there is neither enough literature in indigenous languages nor a single bookstore that specialises in the African languages. Afrikaans and English literature are better served. Even German, French, and Portuguese fare better than indigenous languages on the South African book market. Recent surveys indicate that 51% of South Africans

¹ Such statements are backed by data on pass rates (see for example Heugh, 1999:302-304; Webb, 1999:356-357), and by case studies (see for example Desai, 2001:331-338; Myburgh et al., 2004).
have no books in their homes. A mere 14% of the population read books and only 5% of these read to their children (Jordan, 2007).

This chapter addresses in more detail some of the issues touched on in these comments. In particular, it aims to provide an overview of the state of publishing in South Africa, with particular emphasis on issues relating to language distribution, children’s books and translation – against the background of the discursive and practical situation relating to education, multilingualism and mother-tongue education. This background is presented in section 2.2, and focuses on the current situation regarding language and education in South Africa, with specific attention to the tensions between multilingualism and mother-tongue education on the one hand, and the forces encouraging increasing Anglicisation on the other. Against this backdrop, the remainder of the chapter investigates the current South African publishing scenario, particularly as it relates to children’s books, education and translation.

There are four components to this investigation. The first (see section 2.3) is an analysis of the broader current South African publishing scenario, with emphasis on language issues and books for children, primarily using data from the 2006 annual industry survey conducted by the Publishers’ Association of South Africa (PASA) (Galloway et al., 2007). However, the data do not provide specific information about the degree to which translation is used, or how it is used. The second, third and fourth components of the investigation address this matter. After a brief overview of existing research (see section 2.4.1), section 2.4.2 first provides an analysis and interpretation of data collected by means of a survey among publishers, specifically focusing on the use of translation in the production of children’s books in South Africa. Section 2.4.3 supplements this by presenting an analysis of a sample of data from the recent *Writings in nine tongues* catalogue (PASA, 2007b) outlining available literature in the nine African languages that are official languages of South Africa. These data have been processed and analysed to arrive at broad trends regarding the use of translation in the production of children’s books in South Africa, particularly relating to the African languages. Comparisons and links between these findings and the results of the survey among publishers, are correlated with the argument presented in section 2.2 and 2.3.

The final component adds another dimension to the picture drawn in this chapter by presenting an alternative perspective on the translation of children’s books, supplementing the broadly product-oriented view of the analysis to this point with a broadly process-oriented view: that of translators of children’s books. Section 2.4.4 presents the findings of a survey among translators of children’s books. The findings of this survey are also correlated with the argument in the preceding sections, in order to arrive at a comprehensive and multi-faceted view of the ways in which translation is used in the production of children’s books in South Africa, drawing on

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*The 2007 PASA annual industry survey (Galloway et al., 2009) was made available in the final stages of preparation of this thesis. It is briefly referred to where relevant, but since the situation as far as publishing languages is concerned remains roughly constant across the two surveys, and there are some problems with comparing the 2006 and 2007 data (see footnote 18), the discussion remains largely based on the 2006 survey.*
the perspectives of various role-players and focusing in particular on the links between education, language, society and translation.

2.2 Multilingualism and education in South Africa

In terms of legislation and policy, the South African government’s commitment to promoting multilingualism and mother-tongue education in schools appears unequivocal, at least on the surface. Heugh (2006:63) lists the legislative and policy documents that are (in various ways, and to greater and lesser degrees) linked to the government and Department of Education’s commitment to the double-pronged strategy of mother-tongue education and the development of multilingualism. These policy documents have been developed and implemented since 1996, and include:

- the National Education Policy Act, Act 27 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996b)
- the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996c)
- the policy document for language in education (Department of Education, 1997)
- the implementation plan for the language-in-education policy (Department of Education, 2001a)
- the Revised national curriculum statement (Department of Education, 2002).

Various researchers regard these policy documents as pedagogically sound, methodologically thorough, and consistent in their commitment to equitable and democratic access to education, and view the comprehensive language-in-education problems the country faces largely as a result of a gap between policy and implementation (see, for example, Beukes, 2006:28-29; Plüddemann, 2006:78; Taylor, 2002:313). However, Heugh (2006:65-66) argues that the policy itself is inconsistent and incoherent, and undermines its commitment to both mother-tongue education, and bi- and multilingualism. She points out that while all the documents overtly appear to be aligned in terms of a commitment to providing democratic, equitable and meaningful access to education, as well as a commitment to the approach of additive bi- or multilingualism, the policy documents developed after 1999, in particular the implementation plan for the language-in-education policy (Department of Education, 2001a) and the Revised national curriculum statement (Department of Education, 2002), increasingly undermine this commitment. More specifically, she contends that there are several lacunae in these documents, which make the implementation of the goals set out in the policy document for language in education (Department of Education, 1997) impossible to attain (Heugh, 2006:66). She argues that several clauses in these two documents demonstrate the implicit assumption that mother-tongue education is suitable only for the Foundation Phase, after which English (for learners who speak African languages) ought to be the language of teaching and learning (Heugh, 2006:68). This is evident from the emphasis that the Revised national curriculum statement places on mother-tongue education in the Foundation Phase, and the lack of guidelines or information regarding the language of teaching and learning from Grade 4 onwards. As Heugh
(2006:68) points out, the question of the medium of instruction after Grade 3 simply does not come up, and the suggestion is that a change to English from Grade 4 onwards is inevitable.

This has the effect of simultaneously undermining mother-tongue education as well as the effective development of bi- and multilingualism by means of an additive approach. According to Heugh (2006:69), additive bi- or multilingualism (as conceptualised in earlier policy documents, like the language-in-education policy document, Department of Education, 1997) would mean mother-tongue teaching and learning throughout the school system, supplemented by teaching and learning in the second language, usually after about six or eight years of mother-tongue instruction. Both languages are used throughout the school years and the aim is to maintain the home language while aiding effective acquisition of an additional language or languages (Desai, 2001:329). The approach which now seems implicit (and explicit in many schools) of changing to English instruction after only three or four years of mother-tongue instruction clearly does not serve the interests of additive bi- or multilingualism.³

There are other criticisms that have been levelled at policies relating to language in education. De Klerk (2002:40) points to the lack of enforceable clauses in the largely human rights framework derived policies promoting multilingualism, a point taken up by Plüddemann (2006:85) who views the decentralised decision-making inscribed in language-in-education policy (which leaves decisions about media of instruction to schools, parents and learners) as opening the door to uninformed decisions that ultimately disadvantage learners. Both Plüddemann (2006) and Desai (2001:331) advocate that the government needs to play a more interventionist role in promoting mother-tongue education and multilingualism, by introducing more centralised decision-making on the issue (or at least clearer and more unambiguous leadership – Webb, 1999:364). Desai (2001) is critical of other aspects of the policies, too, particularly the policy on language in education (Department of Education, 1997), explaining that the policy in fact may result in lesser degree of multilingualism than policies prior to 1994 because (except for Grade 10 to 12) only one language (as opposed to two prior to 1994) is compulsory for promotion (Desai, 2001:330; see Department of Education, 1997). Webb (1999:361-363) integrates the above criticism into his comprehensive outline of the shortcomings of South African language-in-education policy, concluding in the words of Bambose (1991:111) that it is riddled with “avoidance, vagueness, arbitrariness, fluctuation, and declaration without implementation”. Ultimately, the policy disables its own success by failing to provide the necessary mechanisms for its implementation.

As a result of the complex interaction of the above policy-related factors (and other, more practical factors, which will be discussed shortly) the perception that English is meant to be used as medium of instruction after the Foundation Phase (from Grade 4

³ In addition, it is also profoundly problematic in terms of cognitive development and academic performance. As Heugh (2006:69) points out, no scientific study exists suggesting that switching to English as medium of teaching and learning in Grade 4 can be successful. She also provides a table (Heugh, 2006:70) demonstrating the link between choices regarding medium of instruction, and academic performance, suggesting very poor performance for learners in this kind of linguistic situation.
Language-in-education policy, publishing and the translation of children’s books onwards) has flourished, to the point that it has largely metamorphosed into policy. The prevalence of this perception-turned-policy is evident from comments by various researchers, who point out that it is policy for African languages to be used as media of instruction for only the first few years of schooling, after which a switch is made to English. For example, Moyo (2002:152) speaks of “the pronouncement that English shall remain the medium of instruction above grade 5”, while Howie et al. (2007:196) explain that South Africa’s language-in-education policy holds that mother-tongue education is mandatory in the Foundation Phase (Grade 1-3) after which a switch to Afrikaans or English is prescribed.

The picture that emerges from the above (very cursory) overview of language-in-education policy is one of a policy at odds with itself, unable to reconcile various tensions within it, such as its basic orientation of language as a right and a resource, its language ideology of linguistic pluralism, its desire to use language as a tool for nation-building, its political legacies, and socio-economic pressures (see also Taylor, 2002:318). While the intent to promote multilingualism in education is consistently expressed, together with the importance of the maintenance of the home language, 4 the discursive strategies and gaps evident in documents such as the Revised national curriculum statement have the effect of simultaneously continually destabilising this overt commitment to multilingualism and mother-tongue education, thus short-circuiting the attainment of its own goals. The reasons for this short-circuit can only be hypothesised. It may be that the gaps in the policies, which leave the door open for Anglicisation, are simply the effect of bigger global and local neo-colonial economic forces emanating from the Anglophone world that work in favour of English (see Heugh, 1999:306), or it may be that there is a deliberate intention of Anglicisation on the part of the government (see De Klerk, 2002:35; Giliomee, 2003:27; Plüddemann, 2006:77). It may also simply be a question of indecision, uncertainty, a lack of political will, and poor conceptualisation and organisation of implementation strategies in the face of a particularly challenging situation (see De Klerk, 2002:41; Webb, 1999:363).

The ambivalence of the policy is reflected in the actual situations in schools in South Africa. Research focusing on the language situation in schools in South Africa confirms the shift towards English. Webb (2002:185) has pointed out that in some provinces, up to 60% of learners learn through a second language. Howie et al. (2007) state that from Grade 4 onwards, more than 80% of South African learners learn in a second language, usually English, despite the language-in-education policy that allows for learning to take place in the home language throughout school. In a

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4 For example, the language-in-education policy document (Department of Education, 1997) explains that the underlying principle of the policy is “to maintain home language(s) while providing access to and the effective acquisition of additional language(s). Hence the Department’s position that an additive approach to bilingualism is to be seen as the normal orientation of our language-in-education policy”.

5 The latter possibility seems to be suggested by Heugh (1999:308), when she points out that at the time of the negotiation and implementation of the new curriculum in 1997-1998, the issues of textbook and materials production in all 11 official languages were never discussed, nor was enough time given before implementation to produce such materials. In her view, this reflects the unstated premise that somehow all learners would end up learning through English.
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profoundly ironic twist, the practical situation as it currently stands much resembles the language-in-education situation in the last years of apartheid. Heugh (1999:303) points out that by the early 1990s mother-tongue education for black children had been reduced to the first three years of primary school (if that), with a switch to English after that – a situation which the current situation replicates almost exactly (though against a very different ideological background). At the same time, children whose home language is Afrikaans or English continue to reap the rewards of unproblematised access to education in their mother tongue from Grade 1 to Grade 12, and beyond to tertiary education (see also De Klerk, 2002:33).

Why has this situation, which unwittingly replicates the linguistically framed patterns of privilege and exclusion of the past, developed? In the first instance, it has to do with the fact that the choice of medium of instruction, in accordance with the South African Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996c) and the policy document for language in education (Department of Education, 1997), is lodged with parents, learners and school bodies (see Plüddemann, 2006:84-86), and several powerfully interwoven attitudinal, economic, ideological and practical factors work in favour of parents and learners preferring English as a medium of instruction. Various researchers, including De Klerk (2002), Desai (2001) and Webb (1999) emphasise the increasing practical move to monolingualism (English) in the official and public sphere. Desai (2001:328) points out that if African languages are not seen to be used in this sphere, it is unlikely that they will be perceived as appropriate media of instruction in the educational sphere. This is linked to prevalent perceptions of learning in the African languages, which is regarded by many black learners and their parents as limiting and ghettoising, largely because of apartheid policy, which used mother-tongue education for exclusionary purposes, to prevent access to power among the black population (Beukes, 2006:28; Heugh, 1999:302; Webb 2006:37). In addition, the effects of globalisation, which (in overt and subtle ways) have linked and continue to link proficiency in English to status, mobility, power and wealth, militate against learners choosing African languages as media of instruction (Desai, 2001:330-331; Heugh, 1999:306; Plüddemann, 2006:78; Webb, 2003:289). The globalising move towards English is further fuelled by the politically inspired pro-English attitude accompanying the general distrust of education in the African languages arising from the abuse of mother-tongue education for discriminatory purposes during apartheid. As Heugh (1999:302) points out: “From the early years of African resistance to segregation, English had come to symbolise the language through which access to power and international ideas were possible.”

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6 De Klerk (2002:30) makes the very relevant point that mother-tongue education cannot be regarded as a good in itself. Rather it may be used (and has been used) at various times for various purposes – exclusion, pacification, empowerment.

7 Heugh (1999) also provides a comprehensive overview of changes in language-in-education policy since the 1950s, and points out that (despite its reprehensible discriminatory and repressive intentions) the Bantu Education Act of 1953 did allow for mother-tongue education in the African languages for the first eight years of school, with the introduction of Afrikaans and English as subjects in primary school, and a switch to Afrikaans and English (in equal proportions) as media of instruction in high school – with positive educational outcomes (Heugh, 1999:302). However, this scenario lead to the increasingly dominant role of Afrikaans, which eventually led to the student uprisings in Soweto in 1976. The resistance to
The problem is that these perceptions are not simply (as Webb, 2003:289 refers to them) “myths”. It seems to me impossible to dismiss these perceptions as myths that merely need to be debunked. Rather, these perceptions are linked to structural forces in society that wield enormous power (see Heugh, 1999:307). Certainly it is necessary to change perceptions and attitudes about the advantages of English and the disadvantages of the African languages (as, for example, Webb, 2003 and Beukes, 2006 convincingly argue). However, at the same time the ideological and material power of these perceptions, rooted in vast global and local economic and ideological structures which hide and suppress (and even ostensibly invalidate) the value of the African languages and multilingualism more broadly as a resource, cannot merely be set aside.\(^8\)

The material power of such perceptions and structures is evidenced in the way in which the economic and ideological considerations working in favour of English\(^9\) precipitate in practical ways that continue to promote English (and Afrikaans) to the detriment of the African languages. Heugh (2006:72), for example, points out that the lack of teaching and learning materials, and indeed exams, in the African languages, effectively forces black parents to choose English as a medium of teaching and learning for their children. The lack of exams and materials in the African languages (especially at higher levels) simultaneously also contributes to the perception that the African languages are not suitable for higher-level academic work. The lack of materials and exams in the African languages thus simultaneously directly encourages the choice of English, and fuels negative perceptions about the African languages, which indirectly encourages the choice of English. The lack of such materials (and increasing efforts to fill this lack, also by means of translation) is a complex issue, which informs much of what follows in this chapter.

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\(^8\) Of course it is also necessary to “undo” these structures as much as it is to change perceptions. Heugh (1999:309-313) makes a strong argument in this regard, focusing on how the resources which African languages offer may be harnessed in order to promote multilingualism on functional (particularly economic) grounds, as opposed to ethical, moral, cultural or even sentimental grounds.

\(^9\) Louw (2004) focuses in broad terms on the Anglicisation of postapartheid South Africa, exploring the economic, political and cultural causes of Anglicisation. While he makes some useful points, the argument he sets out (that the “apartheid state deliberately encouraged linguistic diversity and actively built cultural infrastructures which impeded Anglicisation” – Louw, 2004:318) is made to cohere largely by focusing on the position of Afrikaans and mostly omitting the African languages. This results in an interpretation of the situation that is broadly accurate (South Africa is undergoing a process of Anglicisation) but often falls severely short in terms of accounting for the complexity of the multilingual situation, postapartheid policies for the promotion of multilingualism, and the effects of the historical advantaging of Afrikaans over the indigenous African languages. See De Klerk (2002) and Heugh (2000) for arguments that foreground what is largely suppressed in Louw’s (2004) argument.
If one, for a moment, sets aside the almost automatic impulse to resist what may be regarded as the cultural and linguistic colonisation or hegemony associated with Anglicisation, one might argue that education in English may have some virtue, after all, in the South African context, particularly given the stigmatisation of mother-tongue education as a result of apartheid practices. However, even from this overtly “purely pragmatic” position, there is the final insurmountable problem that positive attitudes towards English in South Africa are almost invariably accompanied by extremely low reported proficiency rates.

The lack of proficiency in English, despite the high esteem in which it is held, is the result of a complex situation, which Heugh (2000:22) describes as a “cycle of massive under-education” which has rendered sustained literacy and proficiency in English virtually unattainable for most of the population. For the purposes of the argument here, a single example of this lack of proficiency will suffice. In 2007, the alarmingly poor reading abilities of South African primary-school learners were outlined by the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) report (see Blaine, 2007). The study was conducted for the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), and involved 215 000 Grade 4 learners across 40 countries. In South Africa the study was conducted by the University of Pretoria, with about 30 000 Grade 4 and 5 pupils from 400 schools being tested in all 11 official languages. In the international survey of 40 countries, South African learners came in last, scoring 302 – significantly below the PIRLS Scale Average of 500 (Mullis et al., 2007:37). Less than half of the South African learners attained the Low International Benchmark of 400, which presupposes very basic reading skills, involving the ability to recognise, locate and reproduce explicitly stated details from information texts, and making some straightforward inferences (Mullis et al., 2007:78).

Significantly, the PIRLS results demonstrate not only poor proficiency in English, but poor reading proficiency all round, suggesting that the conflicted and internally inconsistent language-in-education policy and implementation are contributing to poor reading and language skills in all languages, so that learners (with the possible exception of first-language speakers of English and Afrikaans) are not getting the opportunity to develop sophisticated literacy skills in any language, and certainly not in more than one language.

A paper by Howie et al. (2007) presents a more nuanced interpretation of preliminary data gathered by the PIRLS study, investigating reading progress from Grade 4 to Grade 5, as well as the relationship between the learners’ performance in

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10 The benchmarks represent the range of performance shown by students internationally. For PIRLS 2006, the Advanced International Benchmark is 625, the High International Benchmark is 550, the Intermediate International Benchmark is 475, and the Low International Benchmark is 400 (Mullis et al., 2007:67).

11 Obviously low literacy and proficiency levels cannot be blamed solely on the language-in-education policy and its implementation, and other factors also play a role (e.g. parental involvement, social dynamics, teacher proficiency and training, socio-economic factors, excessively large classes, poor textbook resourcing). The issue of the unavailability of reading materials in the African languages is also an important factor here (as explored further in this chapter). See also Webb (1999:356, 2006:38) and Plüddemann (2006) for suggestions regarding addressing some of these problems.
reading literacy in the language of the test and their home language (Howie et al., 2007:191). They come to the following conclusion:

The English mother-tongue speakers in Grade 5 were the only group that attained an average of above 50% (52.44%). This low percentage is a cause for great concern. The message is clear: South African students cannot read at a sufficient level. The majority of students receiving instruction in English when English is not their mother tongue face a serious problem. The mean percentages of 14.83 at Grade 4 level and of 22.56 at Grade 5 for this group... paint a bleak picture indeed of the level of education and achievement in South Africa, even when the increase between the two grade levels is taken into account. The implications for further education and the economic development and contribution of these students to the country are almost too awful to imagine (Howie et al., 2007:196).

All this seems to reiterate the point that mother-tongue education is a crucial component of educational and general developmental success (see also Webb, 2006:39-45). Moreover, it also seems to emerge from the above that the success of mother-tongue education is closely linked to the successful development of a sophisticated bi- or multilingualism, so that the failure of one is almost inevitably coupled with the failure of the other.

The issue of language in the school environment in South Africa therefore appears to be in the stranglehold of language policies at odds with themselves, ideological precepts, economic considerations, perceptions of status, and the forces of globalisation. Ironically, the choice of medium of instruction made with the motivation of ensuring a good education, high social status and economic prosperity is often also the choice that keeps children from realising their potential, as they spend an entire educational career remaining “linguistically excluded from meaningful access to learning” (Heugh, 1999:309). From within this knot of tensions, the only thing that emerges clearly is that English continues to be widely preferred and used.

The predominance of English is also clearly evident in publishing statistics. Heugh (1999:309, 2000:26) is unequivocal about the importance of access to educational material in all languages throughout the curriculum (or at the very least, throughout the Foundation and Intermediate Phase, or up to Grade 6) as a prerequisite for equality of education. The same, I would argue, would hold true for other kinds of books for children. Eight years ago, Heugh (2000:29) commented on the lack of reading materials in the African languages, pointing out the complete unavailability of textbooks in any language other than Afrikaans and English from Grade 4 onwards, and the limited availability of books in the African languages prior to Grade 4 (see also Taylor, 2002:330; Jenkins, 2002a:269). Undeniably, this situation has improved since then. The recently published Writings in nine tongues catalogue of literature and readers in the nine African languages in South Africa (PASA, 2007b), and its 2008 supplement (PASA, 2008), does attest to the increasing availability of literature and learning materials in the African languages in South Africa, as does the IBBY-SA list of 100 South African picture books (IBBY-SA, 2008). However, as I argue further in this chapter, the tensions outlined above continue to impact the
production of books for children in South Africa in ways that privilege English (and Afrikaans) and disadvantage the African languages.

The following section provides a broad overview of the publishing industry in South Africa, focusing particularly on issues of language in sectors incorporating children’s books.

2.3 Publishing, language and children’s books in South Africa: the 2006 PASA annual industry survey report

The executive summary of the 2006 PASA annual industry survey report (Galloway et al., 2007) makes the predominance of English in book publishing in South Africa clear, reflecting the general view of the hegemony of English outlined above. In terms of locally produced books, “English generated 71.92%, Afrikaans 18.63% and the nine African languages combined 9.44% of reported sales per language... A breakdown of language and sub-sectors revealed that English dominated the local publishing scene, especially the educational and academic sectors” (Galloway et al., 2007:4). For 2007, the distribution remains largely the same, with English representing 75.25% of all sales, Afrikaans 15.25% and the African languages 9.5% (Galloway et al., 2009:43). This overarching panorama of the supremacy of English may be usefully supplemented by considering a few aspects in more detail.

While the report does not treat children’s books as a separate subsector, the two subsectors in which children’s books would fall (educational books and trade books) both demonstrate the marginalised position of the African languages. In the educational subsector, this marginalisation is particularly strongly coupled with the dominance of English. In terms of sales of locally produced educational books (among which readers, and the like, would figure), 75.01% of sales in 2006 were of English books, 14.03% of books in the African languages (viewed collectively), and 10.96% of Afrikaans books (Galloway et al., 2007:30). At first glance it appears that in this subsector, both the African languages and Afrikaans are losing out against English. However, given that Afrikaans is the mother tongue of 13.3% of the South African population (Statistics South Africa, 2001) the sales of educational books in this language are roughly proportionate to the number of Afrikaans-speakers in the population. But considering that only 8.2% of the population speak English as a first language, and 78.5% an African language (Statistics South Africa, 2001), the practically inverse relationship between sales of books in these two languages and the numbers of mother-tongue speakers of these languages clearly suggests the overwhelming preference for English materials in the educational subsector, even among speakers of African languages.

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12 As defined for the purposes of this study – see Chapter 1.
13 Almost exactly the same distribution is evident in the 2007 survey (Galloway et al., 2009:45).
14 Of course, sales here are reported in turnover per language (group), which cannot necessarily be directly correlated to population size per language (group). However, given the extreme nature of the relationship between sales per language and population size per language, the inferences made here appear justifiable.
In the trade subsector, where children’s books not explicitly linked to education would be categorised, the African languages have an even smaller share, with a more equal distribution between English and Afrikaans. In this subsector, the net turnover of local book sales per language shows that English books accounted for 55.89% of all sales, with Afrikaans accounting for 39.52% and the African languages for only 4.6% (Galloway et al., 2007:29). Two points seem to be suggested by this. Firstly, the publishing infrastructure developed over decades for Afrikaans, as well as the continued book-buying support of the Afrikaans-speaking community, continue to support sales of books in this language. Secondly, as far as the African languages are concerned, it appears that in the absence of a guiding discourse that promotes the publishing and sales of books in these languages (such as the educational discourse that specifies that educational books for young learners should be available in their mother tongue) the African languages have even less support from book buyers.

The above data on language distribution are based on sales, which may be used to make some inferences regarding the preference and perceptions of book buyers. The above clearly seems to suggest a preference for English among buyers in the educational and trade sectors alike, which is more pronounced in the trade sector because it is purely market-driven, with no overt government policy affecting sales. However, it would also be useful to consider data regarding language distribution as it relates to the production of books, which may provide information regarding the way in which market, economic and ideological forces affect publishers’ decisions about production in different languages.

In terms of production, the total title production (which excludes subsequent editions and reprints but includes new editions) still demonstrates the prevalence of English, although it does also seem to reflect a fairly strong awareness of the importance of publishing in, particularly, the African languages. Overall, 51.46% of books produced in 2006 were in English, 27.10% were in Afrikaans, and 21.44% were in African languages (Galloway et al., 2007:34). In 2007, production in English and Afrikaans appears to drop off somewhat (42.98% and 20.97%, respectively), with production in the African languages on the increase (36.05%) (Galloway et al., 2009:53).

In the educational subsector, the production of titles in the African languages is somewhat higher and that in English somewhat lower. In this subsector, 44.70% of 2006 titles were produced in English, 31.85% in African languages and 23.45% in Afrikaans (Galloway et al., 2007:36). In this subsector, as overall, production in the African languages appears to be on the increase when comparing the 2006 and 2007

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15 The 2007 survey report provides the following corresponding data: English books accounted for 60.51% of net turnover of local book sales, Afrikaans for 34.45%, the African languages for 5.02% and other European languages for 0.02% (Galloway et al., 2009:44). The same general pattern is therefore evident, though with a somewhat heavier emphasis on English than is evident from the 2006 survey report.

16 In the academic subsector the African languages have an even smaller share of sales: only 0.02%, compared to 78.11% for English academic books and 21.87% for Afrikaans (Galloway et al., 2007:31). The 2007 report suggests a further shift towards English, with 90.11% of total book sales in the sector coming from English books, 9.89% from Afrikaans books, and nothing from books in the African languages. This further emphasises the low status of the African languages, which are not used to any notable degree in the context of higher education.
data. In 2007, 40.75% of educational books produced were English, 44.17% were in the African languages, and 15.08% were in Afrikaans (Galloway et al., 2009:55). In this subsector, and overall, it does appear that publishers are increasingly committed to publishing in the African languages, though, of course, this commitment is based on the fact that, officially at least, policy requires books used in the educational context to be available in learners’ mother tongues. There is thus an economic incentive for publishing in the African languages in this subsector, as sales are certain. Furthermore, the lower production of English titles, coupled with the higher production of titles in the African languages also probably reflects the fact that the production of books in the African languages for use in education has lagged seriously behind in the past, and that there is now a surge of development taking place to fill this lack (while English and Afrikaans materials have been consistently well developed over the years, and an extensive back catalogue of books in these languages therefore already exists).

Nevertheless, despite the encouraging signs in terms of production in the African languages in the educational subsector, the picture remains skewed in favour of English. This becomes more evident when considering total title production per language group in the trade subsector (in which more general children’s books are also included). In the absence of a guiding discourse that promotes the production of books in the African languages, production in these languages dwindles to only 6.46% in this subsector, with Afrikaans titles representing 44.59% of all titles produced and English 48.95% (Galloway et al., 2007:35). This trend remains broadly the same in 2007, with 6.76% of trade books produced in this year in the African languages, 33.30% in English, and 59.94% in Afrikaans (Galloway et al., 2009:54). Again, the strong support of the Afrikaans community in terms of book-buying is reflected in the comparatively large number of books produced in this language (clearly, decisions about production are based on market-analyses demonstrating the viability of publishing in Afrikaans).

Galloway et al. (2007:37) point out that the “trends of title production per language group in relation to sub-sectors echoed that of Net Turnover per language group in relation to the three sub-sectors”. This suggests the possibility of, at least broadly, correlating title production with sales. However, no direct correlation between the two sets of statistics can be inferred, since the sales data are based on turnover, while the production data are based on number of titles. Also, sales include books produced in previous years. However, one would expect a broad correlation between the two sets of data, since the two aspects they describe (language distribution for sales and for production) are intrinsically related: sales in particular languages are at least to some degree linked to availability of titles in particular languages, while production of titles in particular languages are linked to market analyses of viability of sales in

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17 In the academic subsector, no books were produced in the African languages in 2006, with 91.87% of books produced being in English, and 8.13% in Afrikaans (Galloway et al., 2007:37). The 2007 survey suggests the dominance of English even more strongly: 98.21% of academic books produced in the year were in English, 1.53% in Afrikaans, and 0.26% (one book) in the African languages. This suggests the overwhelming dominance of English in higher education in South Africa, coupled with the higher-order status that this language occupies in the country.
particular languages (based at least in part on previous sales). All of this takes place within the context of wider social perceptions of and attitudes towards languages.

Looking at the two sets of data broadly as reflections of general attitudes among publishers and book buyers, it does appear that there are some ways in which they do not echo each other. In the case of trade books and academic books, net turnover of local books per language group generally correlates with title production per language group, in the sense that roughly the same proportion of books produced in each language are sold in each language, suggesting a close and possibly unproblematised relationship between supply and demand (with a small demand and small production in the African languages). In the case of the educational subsector, however, the proportions are less clearly aligned. In terms of the 2006 data on sales, the emphasis is very strongly on English (75.01%), with the African languages (14.03%) and Afrikaans (10.96%) sharing the remainder of the sales (Galloway et al., 2007:30). Production, on the other hand, seems more evenly distributed (English 44.7%, African languages 31.85% and Afrikaans 23.45%; Galloway et al., 2007:36), for reasons suggested above. As pointed out, the two sets of data cannot be directly compared. However, it does seem that the evident commitment to publishing in the African languages in the educational subsector (most likely driven by language-in-education policy requirements) is not reflected by a comparable commitment in terms of sales. It may well be that, as an article in The Economist pointed out in 1993, “in Africa books are harder to sell than to make” (Anon., 1993:72).

The above, largely speculative, inferences aside, it remains clear that in the final analysis both the production and sales of books in the African languages remain wholly out of proportion to the number of mother-tongue speakers of these languages in South Africa, while the preference for English clearly remains evident across all subsectors (ameliorated somewhat, though not sufficiently, in the educational subsector by policies prescribing the use of the African languages in education). However, without the motivating force of these policies, there is scant support for the African languages in publishing, from both publishers and book buyers, as evident from the production and sales statistics in subsectors other than the educational subsector. The African-language book market in South Africa (and I believe this holds true for the children’s book market, specifically, too) is determined by and dependent

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18 A more useful way of investigating sales and production trends (and inferring attitudes towards the African languages in terms of publishing) would be to do a year-on-year comparison of data regarding sales and production in the various languages. However, such data do not appear to be available. None of the PASA industry surveys done from 2002 to 2005 included information on language (see the documents available at http://www.publishlsa.co.za/index.php?cmd=about_indu_stat), and a comparison of the 2006 and 2007 surveys is of limited use due to the short time-span (and other complicating factors, such as the relatively small sample sizes and differences in the respondent groups over the two years which may skew the language representation – see Galloway et al., 2009:6-10). The fact that language distribution has only been included from the 2006 survey onwards in itself suggests how recently the availability of materials in all the South African languages has become an issue.

19 A number of the contributions in Ikonne et al. (1992) provide some insight into the production, distribution and marketing difficulties that publishers of children’s books in Africa face.
on the educational discourse in South Africa in ways that the Afrikaans and English markets are not.

Ultimately, a kind of catch-22 situation prevails. Until the market for African languages in particularly the trade and academic sectors grows, publishers will not produce books in these languages. And the market for the African languages in these sectors will only grow if speakers of these languages perceive the African languages as having higher-order functions, and demand academic and leisure books in these languages – which they are unlikely to do due to the pressures outlined in section 2.2 (and which are simultaneously reflected and exacerbated by the lack of books in the African languages).

The data provided by the 2006 and 2007 PASA annual industry surveys in broad terms suggest the current language situation in the publishing industry in South Africa. However, it does not provide any information regarding the use of translation in the industry. The following section attempts to draw outlines of broad trends in the use of translation in the production of books for children in South Africa, by considering the findings of a survey among publishers together with an analysis of data from the 2007 Writings in nine tongues catalogue of literature in the African languages (PASA, 2007b). This is followed by a discussion of the findings of a survey among translators of children’s literature. The three sets of findings are broadly correlated to arrive at a description of the current uses of translation in the production of children’s books for various language markets that draws on the perspectives of different role-players, and considers the impact of various discursive and economic forces in South African society.

2.4 Translation in the South African children’s book industry

2.4.1 Overview of available research

Little research is available on the extent or use of translation in the South African children’s book industry, or even on the broader use of translation in the South African publishing industry. While there are studies about literary translation (specifically between Afrikaans and English), focusing on particular texts, and on folktales (see Chapter 1), virtually no work has been done on gauging the use of translation in the publishing industry more broadly and contextually.

There appear to be only two studies that are broadly similar in intent to the current research, though both are also significantly different from this study. Scheepers (2003) has investigated the need for literary translation from Dutch into Afrikaans and the other South African languages. Although her study is markedly different from this study (it does not focus on children’s books specifically, it deals only with translation from Dutch, and is intended as a needs analysis more than a survey of translation practices), some elements of the study do link with the current research. Specifically, she has collected information from publishers regarding numbers and types of translated texts, and information from translators regarding the types of texts they translate (see the addenda included in Scheepers, 2003 for more detailed information). In this sense there is some overlap with the survey research presented in section 2.4.2 and 2.4.4.
Scheepers (2003:52) comes to the conclusion that most of the publishing houses that responded to her survey make use of translation between Afrikaans and English, and some to the African languages. She continues to say that the targeting of particular African languages for publications is dependent largely on the geographical location of the publishing house, but that Sesotho, isiZulu and isiXhosa appear to be the African languages in which most books are sold. However, given that her focus is on translation from Dutch to Afrikaans, her research provides little further insight into the specific translational, social and economic dynamics between the various South African languages. Also, since her further investigation of the processes used in the selection and commissioning of a translation focuses specifically on translation from Dutch to Afrikaans (which accounts for a very small percentage of translation in South Africa), information regarding these processes cannot be regarded as representative of translation practices and policies in South African publishing houses more broadly. The results of the survey research presented in section 2.4.2 and 2.4.4 aim to address this issue in more detail.

Buchholtz (2001) presents the results of a research project which is more directly related to the current study, focusing on publishers’ policies regarding the translation of children’s literature from English into African languages in South Africa. The research report presents the results of interviews with five educational publishers in South Africa, all of whom make use of translation. The interviews focused on aspects such as text selection, dealings with translators, and the translation process, with the intent of providing a comprehensive view of translation as both process and product (though the emphasis appears to be on the translational process). While the research report has several shortcomings (for example, the research design lacks rigour, there are several contestable assumptions, and the argument does not always proceed very coherently), it does point out some very salient issues regarding the translation of children’s books in South Africa.

The most pertinent of these issues, as far as the aims of this study is concerned, is the fact that translation policies and practices within publishers seem to have developed in a largely ad hoc manner, based on immediate needs requiring immediate solutions. Consequently, apart from a basic style sheet, few publishers have clear policies regarding translation, dealing with matters such as cultural context adaptation, Anglicisation, modernisation, adaptation and the like (see Buchholtz, 2001:9-20). This has also affected the sourcing of translators, which is done in a fairly unstructured way (see Buchholtz, 2001:9-20). For example, in one company the requirements are that a translator must be a first-language speaker of the target language, have a reasonable educational level, and be aware of the need for writing in a child-friendly register and style (Buchholtz, 2001:12). While these are undoubtedly important parameters, professional experience and training appear to be of little importance in the sourcing of translators.

There are broad correspondences between the list of publishers targeted by Scheepers (2003; see her Addendum B) and the original sampling frame of publishers compiled for this research (see section 2.4.2.1).
Buchholtz’s (2001) study is useful as it points out general concerns and trends. However, it suggests little regarding the extent to which translation is used (it includes only five publishers, and in this group, the extent to which translation is used varies from “a very small percentage” to about 40%). In addition, the limited scope and fairly informal approach of the study suggests the need for a more comprehensive and rigorous investigation of the issues involved in the translation of children’s books in South Africa. The survey research among publishers done for this study attempts to fill this gap. This survey and its findings are discussed in the following section.

2.4.2 Survey research: publishers of children’s books

2.4.2.1 Sampling

The sample of publishers was determined by methods based on nonprobability sampling, and particularly purposive (expert) sampling (Schutt, 2006:152, 155-156). An initial sampling frame consisting of South African publishers who publish children’s literature was compiled, using:

- the results list generated by a search for children’s book publishers on the website of PASA (PASA, 2007a)
- the PASA catalogue of readers and literature in the nine African languages for South Africa (PASA, 2007b)

The initial sampling frame compiled from these sources consisted of 90 entities. Using the above sources, together with general Internet sources, contact details (telephone numbers and e-mail addresses) for the entities were compiled. An attempt was made to contact all the entities on the list telephonically or by e-mail, in order to ascertain whether:

- the entity still exists
- the entity is, in fact, a publisher (rather than a distributor, NGO, or other body)
- the entity does publish children’s literature
- the entity does make use of translation
- the entity would be willing to participate in the survey by completing a questionnaire dealing with its practices and policies regarding the translation of books for children.

This was done to create a narrowed-down sampling frame that fit the profile required by the study (i.e. publishers who publish children’s books and make use of translation). The initial telephone calls or e-mails were also used as a way of ensuring that the appropriate person at the publishing house was contacted for the completion of the questionnaire. Of the 90 entities in the original sampling frame,
21 entities were removed because no active contact details could be found for the entity, or because it was ascertained that the entity no longer exists, or because the initial contact e-mail sent to the available address was returned and marked undeliverable

9 entities were removed because it was established telephonically or by initial contact e-mail that they were not publishers, but distributors, NGOs or other bodies

2 entities were removed because they indicated telephonically or by initial contact e-mail that they did not wish to participate in the survey

6 entities were removed because they indicated telephonically or by initial contact e-mail that they do not publish children’s books (or did in the past, but no longer do)

8 entities were removed because they indicated telephonically or by initial contact e-mail that they do not do any translation.

This means that 44 entities remained. Of these, 27 agreed telephonically or by initial contact e-mail to complete the questionnaire. A total of 17 publishers could not be contacted telephonically (at least three attempts were made, on different days and at different times) or did not respond to the initial contact e-mail. This meant that it was not possible to verify their information to determine whether they fit the profile of the target population (i.e. publishers who publish children’s literature and make use of translation). It was decided to narrow down the sampling frame further by removing entities that did not appear to publish children’s literature in various languages. To do this, Internet searches were done for the 17 publishers with whom no initial contact could be established. The Internet searches were intended to check whether the publisher was, in fact, a publisher, whether it published children’s literature, and published children’s literature in various languages. In this way it was hoped to make the sample more representative of the publishers targeted, limiting the number of entities not conforming to the requirements.

Twelve publishers were removed from the list at this point, based on the fact that their website catalogues or more general Internet searches indicated that they did not match the profile of the target population.

This ultimately left a sampling frame of 32 publishers, all of whom are involved (as far as could be verified) in the publication of children’s literature, and make use of translation, to a greater or lesser extent. It was decided to include all 32 publishers in the sample, as the group was small enough to be manageable. The sample includes large, medium and small publishers, educational publishers as well as more general and literary publishers, established publishers as well as new publishers. On this basis it was deemed to be sufficiently representative for the purposes of this study.

The publishers in the final sample are the following, in alphabetical order:

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21 Some subsidiaries of larger publishing houses were included, as indicated in the list. However, in all these instances the subsidiary caters for a particular niche market, and as such has highly individualised publishing policies. As a matter of fact, many of the subsidiaries were first separate publishing houses, at various stages bought into the parent company.
2.4.2.2 Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was designed to be as open-ended and flexible as possible, while simultaneously facilitating the processing of data. A semistructured approach was followed, revolving around key questions, but providing respondents with opportunities to explain and elaborate their views. The questionnaire focused on the following three broad areas:

- demographic information about the publisher’s focus and output of books for children (see subsection (a) in 2.4.2.5 for results and findings)
- the degree to which translation is used in the production of books for children aged 0 to 12 and changes in translation trends over the past decade, particularly relating to source and target languages for translations (see subsection (b) in 2.4.2.5 for results and findings)
- matters relating to the translation process: selection of books for translation, sourcing of translators, and procedures and policies guiding translation (see subsection (c) in 2.4.2.5 for results and findings).
The questionnaire and covering letter for publishers are included as Addendum B.

2.4.2.3 Data collection
During the initial telephone or e-mail contact, the information in the subject information sheet for publishers (see Addendum A) was explained to the relevant person. Consent to participate in the study was obtained telephonically or by e-mail. Respondents were assured of confidentiality, both in the initial telephonic contact as well as in the cover letter accompanying the questionnaire. The questionnaire and covering letter were e-mailed to respondents. Completed questionnaires were returned over the period 10 December 2007 to 28 January 2008, with a number of additional requests and reminders sent to respondents, as well as a number of extensions on the original deadline.

A total of 16 questionnaires were completed and returned (15 questionnaires by e-mail, and 1 questionnaire by mail), representing an acceptable response rate of 50%. While a higher response rate would have been desirable, the publishers who responded include small, medium and large trade and educational publishers, and as such reflect an acceptable cross-section of the various types of publishers in the sample. As such the response rate was regarded as adequate for the purposes of this study.

Receipt of completed questionnaires was acknowledged by e-mail.

2.4.2.4 Data processing
Responses to each question were coded and input on an Excel spreadsheet. In instances where categories were not included in the questionnaire itself, respondents’ answers were compared and analysed, and categories of similar data created and coded accordingly. The data were processed by means of simple descriptive statistics, using frequency tables and graphs.

2.4.2.5 Results and interpretation

(a) Demographic information
The demographic information provided here is intended as background to contextualise the data, and to demonstrate the adequacy of the response group for the purposes of this study, and not as findings to be generalised to the larger population of publishers of children’s books in South Africa.

Respondents were first asked to indicate whether their target market is general or specific, and if specific, to describe their market (see Figure 1). 32% of respondents described their market as general, while a total of 56% of respondents had an educational market (with 25% targeting only the Foundation and Intermediate Phase, and 31% targeting the whole educational market, from Foundation Phase to Further Education and Training). These two groups accounted for the largest proportion of publishers. 6% of respondents indicated that their company consisted of different departments servicing different markets (though in each case, this included an educational and trade department). The remaining 6% of respondents indicated their market as children’s books only.
The sample therefore reflects a representative cross-section of different types of publishers, in line with the 2006 *PASA annual industry survey report*’s turnover demographics indicating that approximately 53% of the turnover of the participating publishers was from educational books intended for the schools market, and 28% from trade books (Galloway *et al.*, 2007:20).

Publishers were also asked to define their market in terms of language. The largest percentage of respondents targets all eleven official South African languages (37%), with 12% of the total also publishing in Portuguese, predominantly for the Mozambican market. Of the total sample, 19% indicated that they did not publish in all South African languages, but only in larger languages, or languages in their immediate geographical area. In most instances, the languages listed here were English, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sesotho, Sepedi and Setswana. A total of 12% of respondents published only in the official African languages of South Africa (excluding English and Afrikaans), with 13% each publishing mostly in either English or Afrikaans. The sample therefore appears to represent a variety of language markets, and is thus suitable for the purposes of this study.

The two remaining questions dealing with demographic information focused particularly on the children’s books\(^{22}\) published by the particular publisher. The first question was intended to gauge the size of the publisher, specifically as related to the children’s book market. Figure 2 demonstrates sufficient variety in this regard, including very small publishers (publishing fewer than 5 books in 2007), very large

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\(^{22}\)The questionnaire explicitly defined “children’s books” as picture, fiction and poetry books for children aged 2 to 12.
publishers (publishing more than 40 books in 2007), as well as a significant range in between.

![Number of children's books published in 2007](chart1)

**Figure 2: Number of children's books published in 2007**

The last demographic question focused on the degree to which the children’s books published by the particular publisher have an educational purpose, in order to ensure that the educational publishing context (which is the focus of this research) is adequately represented in the sample. As shown in Figure 3, 63% of respondents indicated that more than 80% of their output of children’s books had some educational purpose.\(^{23}\)

![Children's books with an educational purpose](chart2)

**Figure 3: Number of children’s books with an educational aim published in 2007**

\(^{23}\) This educational purpose was defined as “either to be used explicitly in formal education, or with a general educational slant, e.g. teaching colours, numbers, values, social attitudes”.
Overall, responses to the demographic part of the questionnaire suggest that the respondents constitute a sample suited to the aims of this research.

(b) Translation and the publication of children’s books
Publishers were asked to indicate what percentage of the total number of children’s books published in 2007 were translations (see Figure 4). While 37% indicated that less than 20% of the children’s books published in 2007 were translations, an almost equal percentage of respondents (38%) indicated that between 20% and 50% of books were translations. A total of 25% of respondents indicated that more than half of the children’s books they published were translations, with 6% of the total suggesting that more than 80% of their output of children’s books in 2007 constituted translations.

It is clear that there is significant use of translation in the production of children’s books in South Africa. Many of the larger educational publishers make extensive use of translation to produce series of readers available in different South African languages, while trade publishers of children’s books similarly use translation to make children’s books (originally produced either locally or internationally) available in a variety of South African languages. Some of the reasons for and consequences of this use of translation will be discussed in more detail as this chapter progresses.

In addition, publishers were asked to indicate the languages between which translation had been done in 2007. The responses to this question are presented in Figure 5.
Translation from English to one of the African languages is by far the most common language combination in which translation was done in 2007, with 75% of publishers indicating this as a translation combination. This is followed by English to Afrikaans translation (50% of publishers) and translation from an African language to English (31.25% of publishers). There is some translation of Afrikaans books to English (18.75%) and slightly less incidence of translation from English to a European language (indicated as Portuguese, for the Mozambican market) and translation between African languages (each at 12.5%). Translation in the other three language combinations (Afrikaans to an African language, a European language to Afrikaans, and an Asian language to Afrikaans or English) was done by only 6.25% of the respondents.

This suggests a clear trend of translating English-language originals for children into the African languages (75%), with significant emphasis also on translation from English to Afrikaans (50%). The dominance of English as the medium for the

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24 It must be noted that the data reflect only the number of publishers who indicated a particular translation combination. Publishers did not indicate what type of translation they did most of within their publishing house. It may therefore well be that there are ultimately more books translated from English to Afrikaans than from English to the African languages. However, a number of publishers did comment that translation from English to the African languages, and English to Afrikaans constitutes most of their translation, thus supporting the inferences regarding the most widespread language combinations for translation. Ultimately, what remains clear is that English is most often the source language. This is also corroborated by the findings outlined in section 2.4.3 and 2.4.4.
production of original titles for children clearly emerges from this data. However, there is also interesting evidence of translation from African languages to English (31.25%), which suggests that book production for children is starting to incorporate the development of original materials in the African languages, which are then translated to English (either for publication in English only, or, more likely, to be used as a “master file” or pivot translation for translation into other African languages). Direct translation between African languages is not common (12.5%), and English is often used as a mediating language for translation (see also Buchholtz, 2001:14).

The questionnaire further asked publishers to identify trends in the translation of children’s books over the past decade, particularly relating to the number of books translated, the languages into which books are translated, and the type of books translated. It must be noted that there was a particularly high no-response incidence for these questions, which compromises the data somewhat. Nevertheless, publishers clearly suggest that the use of translation in the production of children’s books has expanded over the past decade (see Figure 6), with 50% of publishers indicating that increasing numbers of books have been translated over the last ten years.

![Change in number of books translated over the last decade](image)

*Figure 6: Changes in the number of books translated over the last decade*

In terms of changes regarding the languages in which translation is done over the last decade, 31.25% of respondents indicated that there has been a change in the sense that more translation is done into the African languages. However, a total of 37.5% of respondents indicated that there was no real change, providing motivations in one of the following three categories:

- translation in the company has always been focused on translation from English to the African languages (18.75%)
- translation in the company has always been focused on translation from English to Afrikaans (6.25%)
translation is not encouraged in the company and has always been used only in limited ways, as the publishing house is committed to the original production of materials, especially in the African languages (12.5%).

In addition, this question had a no-response incidence of 31.25%, making it difficult to generalise responses.

An even higher no-response incidence (43.7%) was evident for the question dealing with changes in the type of books translated. In response to this question, 25% of respondents indicated that there were no real changes in the types of books translated over the last decade. However, 31.3% of respondents indicated that there were some changes, listing a variety of changes that did not broadly correlate across the response group. Some of the changes listed here included:

- More picture books are being translated.
- The emphasis has shifted from the translation of readers into African languages to the translation of subject-specific core educational materials into African languages.
- Increasing numbers of novelty titles and baby books are being translated into Afrikaans as part of international co-productions, as they are expensive and difficult to produce locally (and there is a local demand for these books).

Overall, therefore, it appears that there have been notable changes in the way that translation has been used in the production of children’s books in South Africa over the past decade. More translation appears to be done, and certainly translation into the African languages and Afrikaans appears to play an important role in the children’s book industry. It also appears that there is a diversification in the types of books that are being translated (see also subsection (b) in 2.4.4.4). Jenkins (2002a:269) has pointed out that the only published children’s literature in the African languages in South Africa consists of school readers. This undoubtedly constitutes an important part of the market for children’s books in the African languages; however, there are an increasing number of non-educational children’s books (particularly picture books) now also available in various African languages, such as the translated versions of Madiba magic (Mandela, 2002 ST-E), Ouma Ruby’s secret (Van Wyk, 2006 ST-E), Alba (De Boel, 2006 ST-E), The day Gogo went to vote (Sisulu, 1997 ST-E), Little Lucky Lolo and the Cola Cup competition (Varkel, 2006 ST-E), The singing chameleon (Mhlopo, 2008 ST-E), The best meal ever (Magona, 2006 ST-E), Lulama’s long way home (Van Heerden, 2007 ST-E), Lila and the secret of rain (Conway, 2008 ST-E), The cool Nguni (Bester, 2007 ST-E) and translations of Niki Daly’s Jamela books (e.g. Daly, 2001 ST-E, 2005 ST-E, 2007 ST-E), among others. There are also some multilingual books available, such as uTshepo mde: tall enough (Jadezweni, 2006 ST-X) and UTristan no Thobe baya esikolweni / Tristan and Thobe go to school (Jones, 1995 ST-E), both of which are

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25 See the section on children’s books in the bibliography for an explanation of the abbreviations used for children’s books that have been translated.
26 There are also a number of youth novels available in the African languages (usually not translations). See PASA (2007b, 2008).
presented in a multilingual isiXhosa and English text. However, books translated into the African languages are still comparatively few and far between, especially compared to the extensive English and Afrikaans markets (and considering the vast potential readership for children’s books in the African languages). Nevertheless, given that most of the books on the above list (and there are numerous others) are very recent publications, it is possible that this may be the beginning of a positive trend towards making more leisure books for children available in the African languages, either through translation or through original production in the African languages.

It is also significant that, according to survey responses, by far the largest percentage of translated children’s books have locally produced, South African source texts. A total of 87% of respondents indicated that source texts were mostly local (with almost all publishers indicating that 90-100% of their translations were from South African source texts). Only 13% of respondents indicated that source texts were mostly imported. The only publishers indicating that source texts were mostly imported books were the two Afrikaans trade publishing houses (one of which specialises in the publication of children’s books). In both these instances translation takes place primarily from English to Afrikaans. However, in the educational market, almost all translations were from locally produced originals, indicating a clear preference for materials developed in and for the local environment.

Publishers’ motivations for making use of translation were fairly predictable, as is evident from Figure 7.

![Figure 7: Percentage of publishers citing particular motivations for translation](image)

27 The former book was originally written in isiXhosa, and the original isiXhosa version is accompanied by an English translation. There is also an isiZulu-English version (Jadezweni, 2008 TT-Z). The latter book was originally written in English and translated into isiXhosa.  
28 However, it is crucially important that translation does not become (as it seems to be at the moment) the only way in which books for young black readers are produced, suppressing the production of original children’s books in the African languages. For a further discussion of this issue, see section 2.4.4.5.
All publishers indicated that translation is a financially viable way of meeting the demand for books in various South African languages. One respondent very succinctly explained that it is simply “cheaper to translate than to develop from scratch”. This is particularly true in the case of series of readers, where a series of, for example, 30 readers can be developed in English, and then simply translated into the other languages, with comparatively little additional cost. Additionally, as already pointed out, there is a market for translated children’s books in the educational context, so that publishers are relatively assured of good sales.

A total of 75% of respondents cited educational reasons as the motivation for translating particular books, particularly focusing on the importance of learners having access to materials in their mother tongue, while 62.5% of respondents indicated that aesthetic and literary considerations played an important role in the selection of texts for translation. While aesthetics and literary value remain important considerations, they do appear to take a back seat to market forces and educational issues and incentives. In the South African children’s book market, therefore, it appears that translation is motivated less by the ideal of making “good” or “valuable” literary works available in various languages, and more by the pragmatic ideal of making the books needed to fulfil educational requirements available in different languages – an ideal which largely overlaps with ideological and market forces which promote the publication of educational books for children in the African languages, but not necessarily generally.

(c) The translation process and quality control

The next part of the questionnaire focused specifically on the translation process, and particularly the relationship between the publisher and the translator, as well as quality control processes for translations.

Sourcing translators appears to be done in a relatively informal way (see Figure 8), with the largest percentage of respondents (37.5%) indicating that they found translators by word of mouth, using references from colleagues and other translators. However, respondents also to a lesser extent make use of databases, organisations (like the South African Translators’ Institute) and university language departments (25% of respondents). A few respondents commented on the shortage of trained translators, especially in the African languages, which means that the few trained, experienced and dependable translators who are available for this kind of specialised translation are usually very busy. It also means that often less experienced translators are used, which commonly results in quality issues requiring, in the words of one respondent, “extensive checking and editorial intervention”.

29 Translating a text is, of course, much faster and cheaper than developing one. In addition, translators are generally (though not always) paid a once-off flat fee, whereas authors receive royalties, which are significantly more substantial than translation fees. This issue is taken up again in Chapter 3.
The translation process seems to be guided in similarly relatively informal ways in most publishing houses, with only 31% of respondents indicating that their publishing house has standard guidelines for translation. Figure 9 illustrates the reasons the 69% of respondents who do not have guidelines cited for the absence of such guidelines in their company. Most of the respondents in this group (46%) explained that their company trusts the professional expertise and experience of the translator, and therefore does not interfere in the translation process. A total of 27% of respondents felt that standard translation guidelines were too inflexible, and that each book needed to be assessed individually and guidelines established for the particular book. One respondent reiterated that in her company they have always “found discussions much more useful than written guidelines which some-one could struggle to interpret or follow”, and that such discussions usually take the form of a negotiation process in which the parties “try to marry” the translator’s and the publisher’s visions for the project. Another respondent also emphasised the importance of flexibility: “Each project is different and needs slightly different approaches. I think a set of guidelines is useful, as long as they are just that – guidelines. Strict, inflexible rules... can sometimes make projects difficult...”

Other reasons cited for the absence of standard guidelines include the limited use of translation in the publishing house, which makes the development of guidelines unnecessary (18%) or the use of in-house translators (though this is rare, at only 9%).
The matter of whether standard guidelines ought to be supplied to translators of children’s books appears to be a sometimes contentious one (see also subsection (c) in 2.4.4.4 for translators’ opinions on this matter). However, a number of respondents indicated that they often have difficulties with translations – one respondent, who has worked in African-language publishing for 14 years, emphasised that they have always had a “huge amount of problems with translations”, while another explained that translations were “sometimes terrible”.

These difficulties probably contribute to publishers’ general feeling that translators do need guidelines (see Figure 10). A total of 75% of respondents indicated that translators do need guidelines, though 12% of the total qualified their affirmative answer by saying that guidelines are only necessary if large numbers of translations are done, and 19% qualified their affirmative answer by emphasising that these guidelines need to be flexible.
The exact nature of such guidelines was not explored in further detail. However, the 31% of respondents who indicated that they do have translation guidelines pointed out the following three important dimensions of their guidelines:

- There ought to be guidelines for cultural adaptation, so that translation is not approached as simple linguistic transfer.
- Guidelines should be provided for appropriate language use at the particular level. This also includes guidelines relating to the use of standardised language and dialectical variation, which can pose problems, particularly for the African languages.
- A house style specifying orthography, spelling and the like should be provided in order to ensure consistency. This is especially important for the African languages, where there may be a great degree of variation in spelling and orthography.

The importance (and difficulties) of these three dimensions were raised repeatedly by respondents. A number of respondents pointed out that the translation of a children’s book is more “re-interpretation as opposed to standard translation” or more “adaptation because we have cultural differences” and that translators need guidance in this regard. Another respondent explains this in the following way: “Have to ensure that works are ‘adapted’ – pure translation from English to an African language is nearly always impossible as it does not fit the cultural context, for example names need to be changed, content carefully screened and evaluated.”

Language variation poses particular problems for translation into the African languages, as pointed out by one respondent: “Vocabulary (especially in the African language) should be specific to area/province and the translator should be from this area to be familiar with local vernacular. Also the language should be appropriate to be that taught to learners at school and not as such the spoken vernacular which may not be standard.” In addition there are difficulties with variance in spelling and orthography. At lower levels, there are also various constraints that affect the
translation process: “For teaching reading for example we would have to stick to high frequency word lists and ensure that all translators use same words...” It is in view of the above that respondents believe that guidelines for translators are essential (a view also shared by most translators; see subsection (c) in 2.4.4.4).

Lastly, respondents were asked to indicate what quality control procedures they used specifically for translations. The aim was to determine, indirectly, whether the editorial process for translations is significantly different to the editorial process for other books, the most pertinent difference being that translations generally undergo a process of revision rather than a simple edit. The revision process includes many tasks ordinarily associated with editing, but also involves comparative readings of the source and target text to check accuracy and appropriateness of transfer (see Mossop, 2007).

A total of 43.75% of respondents indicated that a language edit and proofread is standard (usually done by an in-house or freelance language editor checking only the translated text),30 while 37.5% suggested that some sort of checking of content transfer is done, usually by another translator (and most often involving a comparative read). A total of 31.25% of respondents said that they used trialling (with users, teachers, Department of Education officials or other stakeholders). Some publishing houses (12.5%) indicated that the original author was involved in the quality-control process. In only 12.5% of instances did respondents indicate that the translator receives feedback on his/her work.

While the open-ended formulation of this question solicited largely unstructured answers that did not allow for a well-defined or step-by-step breakdown of quality-control procedures for translations specifically, respondents’ answers do suggest that quality-control procedures relating specifically to translation may be somewhat problematic, particularly in view of the difficulties with translated texts respondents also pointed out. While it may be assumed that editing and proofreading of translated texts is standard, it is not clear whether revision (involving a comparative read with the source text) is. Of course, the more creative nature of this kind of translation may mean that less rigorous standards of transfer are required than would be the case in, say, textbook translation, but some comparative check with the source text would still be necessary. It is also noteworthy that only 12.5% of respondents indicated that translators receive feedback on their work. Structured feedback on translations may be helpful in developing translators’ skills and streamlining future translation work. All in all, it may be inferred from the above responses that there may be a need for more targeted and structured quality-control processes for translations, involving revision as much as editing.

The fact that translation is mostly outsourced, and that the editorial staff working in-house frequently do not speak the language into which translation is done,

30 However, this should not be taken to mean that the remainder of the respondents do not edit and proofread translated manuscripts – the editing and translation of manuscripts is standard procedure in all publishing houses, and it is likely that the remainder of the respondents did not mention it here because they did not see it as pertaining specifically to translated texts (or did not regard it as “quality control measures”).
complicates quality control processes. I would argue that to a large extent the problem lies in the fact that the editorial processes that have been developed in publishing houses have not traditionally had to deal with translational issues. As a consequence additional steps for quality control in the form of revision (see Mossop, 2007) are not necessarily always included in the process, and when they are, there are often no guidelines to resolve conflicts between translator and reviser (and possibly editor). This becomes particularly problematic where there is a mismatch between the target language of the translation, and the language generally spoken by the editorial department in the publishing house.

2.4.2.6 Broad findings and limitations of the survey for publishers

A few salient points emerge from the survey among publishers. Firstly, it is clear that translation plays an important role in the production of children’s literature for children aged 2 to 12 in South Africa, and that translation has increased in this sector over the past decade. Secondly, it appears that the most prevalent combinations for translation are from English to the African languages, and from English to Afrikaans. English therefore appears to be the preferred language for the production of original children’s books that are translated. This echoes the prevalence of English in the publishing industry outlined in section 2.3, and the general preference for English in the South African educational context as well as the broader South African society discussed in section 2.2. Translation therefore has the potential to be somewhat of a double-edged sword, extending the uses of the African languages, their visibility and their status, while simultaneously suppressing (by making unnecessary) original writing in these languages, thereby ultimately contributing to the entrenchment of the high status of English in South African society. This matter is considered in more detail in section 2.4.3 and 2.4.4, where more attention is given to the relationship between original and translated works in the African-languages market and in the Afrikaans and English markets. A theoretical perspective on the situation is provided in Chapter 3.

In the third instance, it emerges quite clearly that the translation of children’s books in South Africa is not in the first instance a transfer from a geographically and culturally distinct “foreign” to an easily definable and homogenous “domestic”. The fact that the vast majority of publishers indicated that most translated books are from locally produced originals suggests a translational dynamic that is by and large focused on the diversity contained within the domestic in South Africa, attempting to transfer domestically produced texts in various ways between the different (and often strongly interwoven) cultural configurations within South African society. This is a complex matter, and is taken up briefly again in subsection (c) of section 2.4.4.4 and in section 2.5, and in more theoretical detail in Chapter 3.

Of course, this translational dynamic cannot be separated from economic and financial considerations. The fact that all publishers cited economic and market-related reasons as the main motivation for the translation of children’s books suggests, in the fourth instance, that the use of mostly originally locally produced texts is also motivated by financial concerns. Publishers’ emphasis on the educational motivation for translating certain books can also be linked to economic and market factors: the educational discourse in South Africa that requires books to be available in African languages ensures that there is a market for children’s books in the African
languages where there might otherwise be none (as evidenced in the comparison of the percentages of African-languages books published in the educational and trade sectors; see section 2.3). There is therefore a suggestion that publishing for children in the African languages is driven by a different dynamic than publishing for children in Afrikaans and English, one in which the educational discourse plays a constitutive and defining role – which is not as strongly the case in the Afrikaans and English markets.

In the fifth instance, the survey suggests that the translational process and interaction relating to the translation of children’s books are often experienced as problematic by publishers. In particular, 69% of publishers indicated that they do not have guidelines for translators, yet 75% of publishers felt that translators do need guidelines, largely as a result of the problems that are experienced with translated manuscripts. However, the exact form, nature and use of such guidelines are not clear. While publishers’ answers clearly indicated that they felt that translators need guidance regarding matters such as cultural adaptation and various aspects of language use, there is also an awareness among publishers that a rigid set of guidelines may do more harm than good. Some aspects of quality-control issues also appear to be potentially problematic, in particular the fact that only 37.5% of respondents indicated that some sort of comparative check is done, and only 12.5% specified feedback to the translator as part of their quality control process.

While relevant trends emerge from the survey among publishers, there are also some shortcomings associated with this part of the study that need to be considered. In the first instance, the questionnaires collected information only for the year 2007, even though some information about broad trends over the past decade was also solicited. This means that, for example, data on the number of books translated will reflect only a small portion of actual translations that may have been done.

In addition, while the response rate of 50% was regarded as adequate, and the response group considered to be representative of the larger population, the response group was relatively small, which may have influenced results. Lastly, while the mostly open-ended design of the questionnaire allowed respondents the opportunity to explain and elaborate their answers, and to introduce aspects that the researcher could not necessarily have foreseen in advance, it also meant that there were numerous vague responses, or responses that veered off the topic. These had to be interpreted and analysed, and in some instances left out of consideration.

Ultimately, therefore, the questionnaire yielded results indicating broad trends and perceptions. In order to investigate some of the trends emerging from the survey in more detail, and to address some of the limitations of the questionnaire, it was decided to analyse data from the recent Writings in nine tongues catalogue (PASA, 2007b), a record of literature available in the nine African languages. In particular, an attempt was made to see whether the data could be used to outline translation trends particularly as they pertain to the African languages, and to confirm some of the suggested differences between the English and Afrikaans children’s book markets, and the children’s book market in the African languages.
2.4.3 Data from the *Writings in nine tongues* catalogue

The *Writings in nine tongues* catalogue (PASA, 2007b) contains bibliographical information for more than 4000 titles in the nine official African languages of South Africa (excluding Afrikaans and English). The information is organised per language, categorised by genre and subcategorised by publisher. A brief synopsis of each book is given, in the language of publication as well as in English. The targeted age group of the title is also indicated, and the author(s) and ISBN of each title provided. Generally, no indication of whether the text is an original or translated title is given.

An attempt was made to use the data to deduce broad, generalised trends regarding the use of translation in the production of titles in the African languages, with attention specifically to age group, genre and language.\(^{31}\)

### 2.4.3.1 Sampling

In order to draw a representative sample of the data, it was decided to use the data for four of the nine languages: isiXhosa, isiNdebele, Xitsonga and Sesotho. These four languages represent one widely spoken language from the Nguni language family (isiXhosa), one relatively widely spoken language from the Sotho language family (Sesotho), and two marginalised languages: one that falls within one of the two major language groupings (isiNdebele, part of the Nguni family) and one that does not (Xitsonga).\(^{32}\) The total number of titles amounted to 1763, slightly less than half of the approximately 4000 total titles. The number of titles per language was:

- isiNdebele: 166 titles
- isiXhosa: 853 titles
- Sesotho: 442 titles
- Xitsonga: 302 titles.

### 2.4.3.2 Data processing

No explicit information on which texts are translations and which originals is provided in the catalogue, and preliminary enquiries directed to publishers clearly indicated that it was not going to be possible to get the detailed information required for all the books in the sample from publishers. An indirect system of categorisation therefore had to be devised. This system uses various parameters to categorise books

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\(^{31}\) In 2008, a supplement to the *Writings in nine tongues* catalogue appeared (PASA, 2008). The supplement contains an additional 931 entries. The supplement contains titles published in the year since the publication of the first catalogue, as well as some titles that were not included in the first edition. Three additional publishers are also represented. In addition, a dictionary section has been added (PASA, 2008). For the purposes of this study, however, only data from the original 2007 catalogue has been included in the analysis. Analysis of the additional material constitutes a further avenue of investigation emerging from this study.

\(^{32}\) isiXhosa is the second-largest language in South Africa (with 17.6% of mother tongue speakers). Geographically it is centred in the Eastern Cape. Sesotho is spoken as mother tongue by 7.9% of the population, mostly in Gauteng and the Free State. Xitsonga (spoken mostly in the northern parts of South Africa) has 4.4% mother-tongue speakers, and isiNdebele (spoken mostly in Mpumalanga, Gauteng, Limpopo and the North-West Province) 1.6% (see Statistics South Africa, 2001). isiNdebele is marginalised mostly as a consequence of its few speakers. The marginalised status of Xitsonga (like Tshivenda) is mostly the result of its few speakers as well as of the fact that it does not belong to either of the larger language families.
as likely originals or likely translations. Books were categorised into the following groups:

**Likely translations**

- Books of which the authors are most likely Afrikaans- or English-speaking (indicated by their surnames), and which in the vast majority of cases have traceable Afrikaans and English originals. Books in this group are most likely translations from English (though also possibly from Afrikaans).
- Books of which the authors are most likely African-language speakers (based on surname), and which are available in various languages (English, Afrikaans and/or other African languages). These books are most likely translations (though the originals may be either in English or in an African language, as many black authors also write in English).
- Books with a mixed group of authors, available in various languages. These books are most likely translations (in this instance, too, the originals may be either in English or an African language, though most likely in English).

**Likely originals**

- Books written by an African-language author, available only in the single African language. Books in this category are most likely originals in the African language.
- Books written by a mixed group of authors available in a single African language. Books in this category are most likely originals in the African language.

In order to verify this categorisation, books were cross-checked between the different languages included in the catalogue to see whether the same book appeared in different languages. In addition, Internet searches of online book catalogues and bookshops were done to verify the data yielded by the categorisation. While these measures suggested a high rate of accuracy for the categorisation method, there does remain some margin of error in this approach, as it is an indirect rather than a direct categorisation of data. Nevertheless, the margin of error is believed to be insignificant enough to ensure that broad trends can confidently be inferred from the findings.

The data were coded on an Excel spreadsheet, together with data categorising books according to genre and age group. As far as age groups are concerned, four groups were used: 0 to 6 years (preschool), 6 to 12 years (Foundation and Intermediate Phase), older than 13 years, and Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET). The system of age categorisation used in the catalogue is not consistent and did not always fit easily into the categories used for the categorisation of the data (for example, some books would be indicated as for age group 4 to 7, or 2 to 9). In instances such as these, books were categorised into the age category where the greatest percentage of the indicated age span was included, also taking into consideration the type of book (e.g. is it a picture book for small children, or is it a beginner reader for slightly older children?). For the purposes of this study, data for the group 0 to 12 years were combined, since this is the age group on which the research focuses.

The data were processed by means of descriptive statistics, comparing various dimensions, specifically percentages of likely original and likely translated texts as related to age group, genre and language.
2.4.3.3 Results and interpretation

(a) Translations versus originals: whole sample
Taken over the whole sample (ranging from age 0 to about age 18), the prevalence of translation in the production of books in the African languages is clear (see Figure 11). There are slightly more books in the category of likely translations (54%) than there are in the category of likely originals (46%). The percentage of likely translations is increased drastically by the large numbers of readers and series of readers that are translated across the nine African languages, usually with English source texts (see subsection (c) below for some of these series).

Figure 11: Likely originals versus likely translations, expressed as a percentage of the whole sample

Making deductions about the source languages of translations is not straightforward, as explicit data about original languages were not always available. Figure 12 shows the percentages of likely translations as categorised according to their authors. From this it is clear that the majority of translations are done from source texts with (most likely) an original English or Afrikaans author. A verification of these texts against online catalogues and bookstores suggests that the vast majority of these books are English originals. In the second-largest group, the group including authors with African-language surnames, originals may have been in either English or in an African language. However, the data from the questionnaire for publishers (suggesting that most translation is done from English to African languages, and little from African languages to other African languages; see subsection (b) in 2.4.2.5) suggest that there is a high likelihood that most of the texts in this category were first produced in English and then translated to African languages. The same holds true for the last category, which reflects books with a mixed group of authors, available in different languages.
In an indirect way, this may also be linked to the information on author profile in the 2006 and 2007 PASA annual industry surveys (Galloway et al., 2007, 2009). According to the 2006 report, the author profile of the publishers participating in the survey seems to be overwhelmingly dominated by white authors, with more than 80% of authors in the trade and academic sectors being white (Galloway et al., 2007:38). The overall dominance of white authors is also evident in the 2007 report, with 82.21% of authors in all subsectors being white (Galloway et al., 2009:57). Translation once again may have a double-edged effect: on the one hand making texts available to children in their mother tongue through the mediation of translation, while on the other (inadvertently) creating a situation that continues to facilitate a publishing industry dominated by white authors.

(b) Translations versus originals correlated with age groups
Figure 13 demonstrates the distribution of likely originals and likely translations according to age groups, expressed in each case as a percentage of the total originals or translations. What emerges clearly from this graph is that translation is most prevalent in the age group 0 to 12, with little translation being done in the age group 13+ and ABET. As far as original production goes, the inverse is true: there is little original production in the African languages in the age group 0 to 12, with most original production in the African languages being done in the age group 13+ and ABET.

33 In 2006 no data on the educational subsector were available. However, the 2007 report does provide information on author representation specifically in the educational subsector. While the trade and academic subsectors are dominated by white authors (89.97% and 88.96% respectively), the educational subsector has a more equal distribution: 57.79% white authors and 42.21% black authors (Galloway et al., 2009:58).
The fact that translation appears to be predominantly used only in the production of books for the age group 0 to 12 may be linked to the unique circumstances in South Africa, and in particular the determining role that the educational discourse plays in the production of books for children in the African languages. Translation appears to be used as a cost-effective means of fulfilling the need and requirement for books in young children’s mother tongues, driven primarily (though not exclusively) by the educational discourse specifying that such books need to be available at least at the lower levels. Translation emerges as a strategy resulting from the overlap between the educational discourse and related economic incentives. At the higher levels, most books are original works rather than translations. Naturally, at the higher levels, the function of literary works used in the educational context changes. At the lower levels, literary works are used predominantly to teach reading skills (and other, integrated skills). At the higher levels, language and literary studies focus more on a study of the literary works valued in a particular language, and it is therefore to be expected that the use of literary works translated from other languages would not, as a rule, be acceptable.

This interpretation of the situation once again suggests just how strongly the educational discourse affects the publication of books for children in the African languages in South Africa: it appears that educational-market incentives impel and constrain the publication of books for children in the African languages in ways that are not as compellingly the case in the English and Afrikaans markets (see also section 2.4.3.4).
(c) Translations versus originals correlated with genres

Figure 14 outlines the distribution of likely originals and likely translations across genres, as a percentage of the total sample. Clearly, translation is used most often for the category of fiction, specifically novels and readers – almost 50% of the total sample constitutes translated novels or readers. The only other genre where translation figures significantly is in non-fiction. Translated non-fiction texts account for 3.23% of the total sample. There are also a few instances of translated short stories (1.13% of the total sample) and traditional literature (0.57%), and a little drama (0.17%).

![Likely originals vs likely translations: per genre for whole sample](image)

Figure 14: Likely originals and likely translations per genre, expressed as a percentage of the whole sample

Clearly most translation is done in the category of fiction. However, if likely translations in the category of novels and readers are broken down into age groups (see Figure 15), it becomes clear that it is readers (and other literature) for the age group 0 to 12 that constitute the bulk of translated texts. In addition, it should also be taken into consideration that in the age 13+ and ABET group, a significant number of the translated texts are ABET readers, so are in reality readers rather than novels.

34 The translated drama texts are, however, not really dramas: they are performance texts accompanied by tapes and an activity book for learners in the preschool age group, translated into different languages.
There are several large and smaller series of readers that are translated into all (or most of) the South African languages, for example the Jasper series from Clever Books, the We Are Growing series from Oxford University Press Southern Africa and the Kagiso readers from Maskew Miller Longman. This, together with the translation of readers generally, as well as the translation of picture books (to a much lesser degree; see subsection (b) in 2.4.2.5), accounts for the large number of translations in the age group 0 to 12, motivated by reasons already outlined. Of course, it must also be taken into consideration that in most of the other genres, excluding non-fiction (i.e. short stories, drama, poetry, essays and prose, traditional literature and multi-genres) little is published for children under 12, as these genres are generally not seen to be relevant to young children. Therefore it is not so much the case that little translation is done in these genres in the age group 0 to 12, but rather that little or nothing is published in these genres for the age group 0 to 12.

(d) Translations versus originals correlated by language

It was hypothesised that there would be a higher incidence of translation in the marginalised languages, as there would be less production of original texts. However, this does not appear to be the case, at least not with the four languages included in the sample (compare Figure 16 and Figure 17).

The ratio of translations and originals appears to remain fairly constant. However, in the isiNdebele group for the whole sample (see Figure 16), there does appear to be a slightly lower percentage of likely originals, and a correspondingly slightly higher percentage of likely translations. This may be linked to the marginalised status of the language and the fact that it is the smallest language in South Africa, with only 1,6% of the country’s population as mother-tongue speakers.
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In the subsample representing books for ages 0 to 12 (see Figure 17), the ratio between likely originals and translations remains similarly constant. The only exception here is isiXhosa, where there is a slightly higher incidence of likely originals. This is accounted for by the fact that there are a few publishing houses (e.g. NF Saliwa Publishers and Electric Book Works) that have produced a number of isiXhosa original texts that have been translated to other languages.

Figure 16: Likely originals versus likely translations per language for the whole sample, expressed as a percentage of the total of each language

Figure 17: Likely originals versus likely translations per language 0 to 12 years, expressed as a percentage of the total of each language for age 0 to 12

In general, from this sample it appears that there is not really a significant relationship between the degree to which translation is used, and the status or size of the particular African language. Translation figures pertinently in all languages, and particularly strongly in the age group 0 to 12. However, the number of likely
translations and the number of likely originals remain roughly proportional. In the smaller languages, where fewer original texts are produced, translations are correspondingly fewer. Often this is accomplished by reducing the number of books in a series of readers that are translated into the particular language. For example, the Oxford We Are Growing series in isiXhosa is listed as having 46 titles, while the same series in isiNdebele has 23 titles (see PASA, 2007b:19-22, 95-101).

However, it may be useful to consider possible relations between numbers of translations and originals in various languages by looking at the entire set of data for all nine languages. It would also be particularly useful to consider such data for the remaining two languages, English and Afrikaans. However, as such data are not available at the moment, this constitutes a future avenue for research.

2.4.3.4 Broad findings, correlations and limitations

The analysis of the data from the Writings in nine tongues catalogue (PASA, 2007b) suggests a number of salient trends regarding the use of translation in the production of books in the African languages. Clearly translation plays an important role, but it does so almost exclusively at the level of books for the age group 0 to 12, and is particularly used for readers and picture books. There is little translation in other genres, and little translation for the age group 13 and over. In addition, it should also be pointed out that even though there are a number of picture books translated into the African languages for children, these are not nearly as common as translated readers. However, it appears as though the publication of leisure books for children in the African languages is on the increase, considering the number of recent children’s leisure books published in all, or many, of the South African languages.

All of this suggests that the translation, as much as the publication, of African language children’s books in South Africa is driven by educational and related economic incentives. Outside of the educational context, the market for children’s books in the African languages is small, though possibly growing (compare also section 2.3). However, at the moment this growth appears to be facilitated largely by translation into the African languages, rather than by original production. In the age group 0 to 12 the vast majority of African-language children's books are first produced in English, and then translated into the African languages. In a sense, therefore, while translation plays a crucial role in making books available to children in their mother tongues, thereby raising the status and use of the African languages, translation may also form part of the social structure that maintains the marginalised position of the African languages by continuing to facilitate a publishing structure that encourages the writing of books in English. This may extend to broader economic structures as well. Quite often, royalties for translated books continue to be paid to the original authors, while translators are usually paid a once-off translation fee. This means that mostly white authors (or black authors writing in English) reap

35 It should be kept in mind that while the findings here suggest the significant use of translation in the production of African language books, especially for children aged 0 to 12, these findings need to be seen against the background of the relatively small numbers of books being published in the African languages, compared to publishing in Afrikaans and English (see section 2.3).

36 In this regard, it is also interesting to note whether translators are acknowledged. In many books, the translator is not acknowledged at all, or is mentioned on the imprint page only.
the benefits of translations into the African languages, while black authors writing in the African languages continue to be excluded from meaningful representation in the publishing industry, as also reflected in the 2006 and 2007 PASA annual industry survey report data on author representation (see subsection (a) in 2.4.3.3).

This is not to suggest that translation is a practice that needs to be avoided. On the contrary, translation may play a crucial role in bridging gaps. On the most obvious level, it makes books available to South African children, fulfilling an immediate and acute need. This is an immensely positive use of translation. Making books in the African languages available through translation may also have broader positive effects, creating visibility in the publishing industry for these languages, raising their status, and ultimately contributing to the growth of an African-language publishing industry. The current prevalence of translation in the production of children’s books for young children may be seen as a meaningful intervention at this particular time. Ultimately, however, there will need to be a greater balance between translation and original production if there is to be significant representation of African-language writing and authors in the publishing industry, if the African languages are to fulfil higher order functions in South African society, and if black children are to benefit from the resources offered by books written in their mother tongue (see also section 2.4.4.4 and 2.4.4.5, dealing with translators’ opinions on this matter).

The interpretation of the data here has focused in particular on the inferred use of translation into the African languages. The possible limitations and shortcomings of the data-processing approach have been outlined earlier, and need to be kept in mind when considering the findings. Nevertheless, in general the trends suggested by the data correspond with the trends evident from the 2006 and 2007 PASA annual industry survey reports (see section 2.3), as well as the survey among publishers (see section 2.4.2).

The Writings in nine tongues catalogue focuses only on the African languages, and thus provides no corresponding data for English and Afrikaans children’s books, which may have yielded particularly meaningful comparative results. More explicit comparisons between the use of translation in the Afrikaans and English children’s book markets on the one hand, and the African-language children’s book market on the other, are made in section 2.4.4.4 and 2.4.4.5, based on the findings from the questionnaire for translators. However, it may be assumed without much contention that the English market for children’s books in South Africa is dominated by original works in English. It is also not as strongly driven by educational concerns as the

However, the text is credited to the author. But there are also instances in which translators are listed as co-authors, as in the case of the Oxford University Press We Are Growing series of readers, where the translators are sometimes listed as authors (see PASA, 2007b), reflecting the rewriting and adaptation process that is often the role of the translator of children’s books as well as a greater status accorded to translators. This matter is investigated in the textual analyses in Chapter 4.

37 See Chapter 3.
38 Inferences about the use of translation aside, the data collected in the Writings in nine tongues catalogue offers numerous possibilities for further research, looking particularly at the relationships between language status, genre, and publications for various age groups.
African-language children’s book market: there are many English children’s books available other than books like readers intended for the educational market.

The Afrikaans market appears to have a slightly different dynamic. The vast majority of the readers, and other children’s books for ages 0 to 12 included in the *Writings in nine tongues* catalogue (PASA, 2007b) are also available in Afrikaans (as translations from the English), and the educational-economic incentive to publish in Afrikaans is also therefore present in this sector. However, the Afrikaans book market is clearly not as dependent on educational-economic incentives for its (continued) existence. There is a committed book-buying public for the Afrikaans market (see section 2.3) that extends to the children’s book market, and also affects the uses of translation in this sector. The two Afrikaans-only publishers participating in the survey for publishers both indicated that educational incentives are a less important motivation for the translation of children’s books, and that market forces coupled with aesthetic and literary value play an important role in decisions about which texts to translate. These two publishers were also the only two publishers who indicated that they translate more imported than locally produced books, and one indicated that international co-production (especially of novelty titles and baby books that are expensive to produce locally) features prominently. Publishers with a focus on Afrikaans (or publishers who originally started with a focus on Afrikaans, but have since diversified into other languages, such as Tafelberg) do make use of translation, but they also publish large numbers of original children’s books in Afrikaans, which is not the case in the African languages.

Translation is therefore not as intrinsic a part of the production profile for books in Afrikaans, and certainly does not threaten to replace the production of original books in Afrikaans. Rather, the translation of (mostly) English books into Afrikaans is seen as enriching the corpus of Afrikaans books, supplementing original works (see also section 2.4.4.4 and 2.4.4.5, as well as Chapter 3).

All of the above comments suggest the continued privileged positions of the Afrikaans and English markets for children’s books. These markets are not only markedly bigger, they are also more diversified in terms of the types of books available, not as overwhelmingly driven by educational incentives, and much better balanced in terms of the relationship between translation and original production. It also suggests the predominance of English as the source language in cases where translation is done. Overall, the publishing and translation scenario for children’s books in South Africa echoes the powerful position of English outlined in section 2.2 and 2.3.

The questionnaire for publishers and the analysis of the data from the *Writings in nine tongues* catalogue suggest some trends regarding production, considering translation mostly from a product-oriented view. The following section turns its attention to a more process-oriented view of the translation of children’s books in South Africa, presenting the findings of the second part of the survey research, which dealt with translators’ experiences and perceptions of the translation of children’s books. The findings of this survey are correlated with the findings and argument presented so far in this chapter.
2.4.4 Survey research: translators of children’s books

2.4.4.1 Sampling and data collection

The sample of translators was determined by methods based on nonprobability sampling, and particularly a combination of purposive and availability sampling (Schutt, 2006:152-153, 155-156). Determining a sampling frame consisting of translators of children’s books in South Africa was not possible. In order to target the population for this part of the study (translators who have translated children’s books), the secretary of the South African Translators’ Institute (SATI) was contacted by e-mail. The aims of the research were explained, using the subject information sheet for translators (included as Addendum C), and the secretary was asked whether SATI would be willing to distribute the questionnaire (together with a covering letter explaining the research) on their (e-mail) mailing list, which regularly includes news on job opportunities, research, training, and the like. Translators of children’s texts, in particular, were invited to respond.

In addition, a number of prominent translators of children’s books were contacted individually, by e-mail, and the aims of the study explained using the subject information sheet for translators before inviting them to participate in the research. Furthermore, two established translation agencies dealing with all the South African languages were contacted by e-mail. The aims of the research were explained, and the manager of the agency asked whether she/he would be willing to send the questionnaire (together with a cover letter explaining the research) to translators who have worked with children’s books and invite them to participate in the study.

The questionnaire and covering letter (included as Addendum D) were subsequently distributed by e-mail on the SATI mailing list, to translators of children’s books included in the databases of the two translation agencies, and to individual translators of children’s books.

Consent to participate in the study was implied by a respondent’s reply to the e-mail soliciting participation. The cover letter accompanying the questionnaire assured respondents of confidentiality.

A total of 28 completed questionnaires were returned over the period 10 December 2007 to 28 January 2008. An analysis of answers to the demographic part of the questionnaire (see subsection (a) in 2.4.4.4) demonstrated sufficient variety in terms of language, experience and qualification (also broadly corresponding to the publishing trends outlined in section 2.3), and the sample was therefore regarded as sufficiently representative for the purposes of this study.

2.4.4.2 Questionnaire design

The questionnaire for translators was designed along the same open-ended and flexible principles as the questionnaire for publishers (see section 2.4.2.2). A similar semi-structured design was followed, also to facilitate comparisons between the findings from the two questionnaires. The questionnaire for translators dealt primarily with the following three categories of information:
• demographic information about the translator’s experience, qualifications, languages, and the extent to which she/he is involved in the translation of children’s books (see subsection (a) in 2.4.4.4 for results and findings)
• specific information regarding translation numbers, translation trends and translation languages (see subsection (b) in 2.4.4.4 for results and findings)
• matters relating to the translation process and perceptions regarding translation: guidelines for translation, the issue of translation as opposed to original production, and the matter of source-text orientation as opposed to target-text orientation (see subsection (c) in 2.4.4.4 for results and findings).

2.4.4.3 Data processing
The data gathered by the questionnaires were coded in the same ways as the data from the questionnaires for publishers (see section 2.4.2.4).

2.4.4.4 Results and interpretation
(a) Demographic information
The demographic information presented here is intended to demonstrate the representativeness of the sample (especially in terms of language distribution, measured against the language-in-publishing information presented in the 2006 PASA annual industry survey report; see section 2.3). The information also provides some general background (e.g. experience, qualifications and involvement in the translation of children’s books) that reflects the degree to which the sample is suitable for the purposes of this study.

As is evident in Figure 18, the largest percentage of respondents (32%) have 6 to 10 years’ experience in the translation industry, with an almost even range of respondents having more and having less experience than this. The sample was therefore deemed representative in terms of the degree of translation experience the respondents indicated, with a significant representation of experienced translators.

Figure 18: Respondents’ translation experience, expressed as a percentage of the total sample
Similarly, a range of qualification levels were represented, but with a high incidence of postgraduate qualifications. A total of 85% of respondents had some postgraduate qualification: 39% had an honours degree or postgraduate diploma, 32% a masters degree, and 14% a doctoral degree. A total of 11% of respondents held only a first degree. Most qualifications were in language, translation, and related fields. As far as qualification type and level are concerned, the sample appears to be suitable for the purposes of this study.

In terms of the kinds of translation respondents habitually do, and the languages in which respondents translate, there appears to be a meaningful range but sufficient focus to make the sample suitable for the purposes of this study (see Figure 19 and Figure 20).

![Text types generally translated](image)

**Figure 19: Types of text that respondents generally translate**

Most of the translators who responded to the questionnaire are not exclusive translators of children’s books, but translate such books as part of their general translation practice. However, 71.4% of the total number of respondents indicated that they have had some experience translating children’s books (defined as picture, fiction and poetry books for children aged 2 to 12). A number of the translators who completed the questionnaire did not mark children’s books as translation they generally do, but did indicate (elsewhere in the questionnaire) that they had translated texts for children. Other translators marked the translation of educational material for primary and secondary school, but appear to have included materials like...
readers in this category. There were also a few respondents who have not translated children’s books at all, but indicated a keen interest in the topic and completed the questionnaire.

It was decided to take all responses into consideration, since most of the respondents had translated children’s books, and since the professional knowledge of those who did not were still regarded as having value for this study.

**Figure 20: Language pairs in which respondents do translation**

Respondents indicated the languages in which they usually do translation. The largest percentage of respondents (60.7%) indicated English to Afrikaans translation, followed by 50% of respondents indicating Afrikaans to English translation. A total of 32.1% of respondents indicated that they translate from English to an African language, followed by 28.6% of respondents who indicated that they translate from a European language to English.

Since the emphasis of this chapter is mostly on the translation dynamic between English, Afrikaans and the African languages, these languages were regarded as adequately represented in the sample. The ratio of Afrikaans/English and African-language translators was 19 to 9. While there were significantly fewer translators in the African languages who participated in the survey, this was regarded as acceptable against the background of the significantly smaller share of the publishing industry devoted to publishing in the African languages (see section 2.3). Also, sufficient diversity was reflected in the particular African languages represented, as evident from the lists of languages listed in each category below (the numbers indicate the number of times the language combination was cited):
• English to an African language: 2 Tshivenda, 2 isiXhosa, 3 Sesotho, 1 isiNdebele, 1 Xitsonga, 1 Siswati, 1 isiZulu
• an African language to English: 2 Tshivenda, 2 isiXhosa, 1 Sesotho, 1 isiNdebele, 1 Xitsonga, 1 Siswati, 1 isiZulu
• Afrikaans to an African language: 1 Xitsonga, 1 Siswati, 1 isiZulu, 1 Sesotho
• an African language to Afrikaans: 1 Tshivenda, 1 Siswati, 1 isiZulu.

A range of European languages in combinations with Afrikaans and English were also represented, most often listed by respondents who translate primarily between Afrikaans and English, but who also do translations from European languages to Afrikaans/English, or vice versa. One translator worked only between English and Portuguese. The European-language combinations included the following (the numbers indicate the number of times the language combination was listed):

• a European language to Afrikaans: 4 Dutch, 6 German, 2 French, 1 Flemish
• a European language to English: 1 Portuguese, 3 Dutch, 3 French, 4 German
• English to a European language: 1 Portuguese.

In the last instance, respondents were asked to indicate the number of children’s books they have translated. Half of the respondents indicated that they have translated fewer than 5 children’s books, with 32% indicating that they have translated between 5 and 20 children’s books. A total of 11% of respondents have translated between 20 and 40 children’s books, and 7% more than 40. The relatively large percentage of respondents who indicated that they have translated fewer than 5 children’s books does not necessarily reflect a lack of experience, but rather suggests that (for many translators) the translation of children’s books forms a relatively small part of their work (see also subsection (b) below). Also, some of the translators indicated that they have not translated children’s books at all (as explained above), and their responses are reflected in the “fewer than 5” category. Nonetheless, there appears to be a sufficient representation of translators who have translated significant numbers of children’s books.

Based on the above information, the sample of respondents was deemed sufficiently representative for the purposes of this study.

(b) Translation languages, numbers and trends
The second part of the questionnaire focused on the translation dynamics involved in the production of children’s books in South Africa, as perceived by translators, and focusing specifically on translation languages, translation output and general trends.

Translators were asked to indicate the language combinations in which they have translated children’s books, specifically. The responses to this question are summarised in Figure 21. This graph suggests a few trends that echo the findings of the questionnaire for publishers (see section 2.4.2) and the analysis of the Writings in nine tongues catalogue (see section 2.4.3). Translators’ responses indicated that the most common language combinations for the translation of children’s books are those with English as a source language: English to Afrikaans (50% of respondents)
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This once again points to the predominance of English as the dominant language from which translation is done, and therefore also indirectly suggests the dominance of English as the language of original production of children’s books in South Africa. However, a considerable percentage of respondents (25%) also indicated translation from Afrikaans to English as a combination in which they have translated children’s books, possibly reflecting the strong market for original Afrikaans books as well.

![Diagram showing language combinations in which respondents have translated children's books.](image)

**Figure 21: Language combinations in which respondents have translated children’s books**

Significantly, however, only 10.7% of respondents indicated that they have translated children’s books from an African language into English, corroborating the sustained

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30 The findings of the questionnaire for publishers suggests a higher incidence of translation from English to the African languages (cited by 75% of respondents), with English to Afrikaans translation cited by 50% of respondents. The differences between the findings of the questionnaire for publishers and that for translators are accounted for by the particular demographic of the sample group of translators, which included significantly more Afrikaans/English translators than African-language translators. Also, as pointed out by some publishers, there are relatively few African-language translators handling large quantities of translation work from and into the African languages.
hegemony of English as a language of original production, and the African languages as languages that are translated into, but not from. As far as the translation exchange in South Africa is concerned, therefore, it appears that the movement is predominantly from English into the other languages, a dynamic which, if not managed carefully, may prove particularly disadvantageous for the African languages in the long term by making the original production of children's books in the African languages unnecessary (see subsection (b) below, and 2.4.4.5 for a more nuanced exploration of this idea). 40

It must be noted, however, that most of the respondents indicated that the translation of children's books does not form a significant part of their work as translators, as is evident from Figure 22.

![Figure 22: Translation of children's books as a percentage of total work](image)

The large number of respondents (68%) who indicated that the translation of children's books constitutes less than 20% of all their translation work is likely due to a number of factors. Most of the respondents participating in the survey work as freelancers, taking on a variety of translation jobs (see Figure 19), of which the translation of children's books forms a small part. Furthermore, the translation of children's books is usually regarded as a fairly specialised field of translation. As a consequence of all this, a small pool of translators tends to be used for the translation of children's books, as also pointed out by a publisher participating in the survey for publishers (see subsection (c) in 2.4.2.5). This also, at least to some degree, accounts for the 11% of respondents who indicated that more than 80% of their translation work constitutes the translation of children's books. The data therefore confirm some of the findings of the survey for publishers, indicating that the specialised nature of the translation of children's books means that this work is done by a relatively small group of translators.

40 This matter is also considered from a theoretical perspective in Chapter 3.
The specialised nature of the translation of children’s books was also pointed out by several of the translators participating in the survey. Asked to indicate what particular skills (apart from general translation and language skills) translators of children’s books need, respondents cited a range of skills, but particularly emphasising that translators of children’s books must have:

- first-hand knowledge and experience of children, especially in terms of their cognitive, emotional and linguistic abilities at particular ages (60.7% of respondents)
- an in-depth understanding of the cultural background and social circumstances of the various constituencies of child readers in South Africa, in order to ensure that a homogenising concept of “the child” does not inform the translation of children’s books (21.4%)
- a passion for books and reading, and a commitment to the development of a reading culture in South Africa (17.9%)
- creative skills, particularly storytelling skills (14.3%).

Other skills cited (with a frequency of less than 10%) include a knowledge of educational issues in South Africa, an awareness of the ethical responsibility of translating for children, and an ability to reconcile the needs of the adult reader with the child reader, in the case of storybooks intended to be read aloud.

As in the questionnaire for publishers, translators were asked to identify possible trends in the translation of children’s books over the past decade, particularly in terms of changes in the number of children’s books translated, the languages in which books are translated and the types of children’s books translated.

These three questions all had very high no-response incidences (more than 50% in each case), with many respondents indicating that they did not feel that they had translated enough children’s books to be able to identify trends. However, as far as trends pertaining to the number of books translated are concerned, a total of 35.7% of respondents indicated that they thought more books for children were being translated, with only 3.6% saying that they thought fewer children’s books were being translated, and 10.7% indicating that they believed there has been no change in numbers. This confirms the trend of increasing translation evident from the survey among publishers (see subsection (b) in 2.4.2.5).

In terms of changes in translation languages, 21.4% of respondents indicated that they thought an increasing number of children’s books was being translated from English to Afrikaans, with the same percentage indicating that they believed translation from English to the African languages was on the increase. This, too, echoes the findings of the survey among publishers (see subsection (b) in 2.4.2.5). Lastly, regarding changes in the types of children’s books translated, respondents cited a number of perceived changes, which did not broadly correlate across the group. Respondents listed the following types of books as categories where they felt there was an increasing incidence of translation:

- books dealing with social issues and problems
- books focused on education and literacy development
- picture storybooks
• poetry
• fantasy
• children’s books with a more “adult” message.

The first three categories were cited slightly more often than the others. As far as the first two categories are concerned, this may well suggest, once again, the importance of the educational discourse in the production of children’s books in South Africa, which would favour the production and dissemination of books that have an explicit educational intention, or books that are indirectly “educational” in the sense of dealing with realistic, social issues. The perceived increase in the number of translated picture storybooks is corroborated by the recent publication of a number of picture storybooks in the African languages, which may possibly indicate the start of a trend of an increased production (through translation) of leisure books for children in the African languages.

In addition, some respondents indicated that they thought fewer Eurocentric books were being translated, in favour of a more culturally diverse body of children’s books. In a related point, it was also suggested that fewer imported books were being translated, with a greater focus on local books.

All in all, respondents’ comments appear to suggest that a diversification in the market of translated children’s books is taking place, with a greater range of texts being translated. If this is the case, and it seems to be corroborated by the increasing number of picture storybooks in the African languages, as well as the diversification of the Afrikaans children’s book market pointed out by respondents to the questionnaire for publishers and the questionnaire for translators,41 this signals a positive trend for the entire South African children’s book market, but particularly for the African-languages market, which up until recently consisted exclusively of readers (see subsection (b) in 2.4.2.5).

(c) The translation process and perceptions regarding translation

The questions in this part of the questionnaire explored translators’ perceptions and motivations regarding the translation process. Translators were first asked to indicate their motivation for translating children’s literature. Figure 23 summarises the translators’ responses to this question.

41 One translator respondent (who translates mostly children’s and youth books from English to Afrikaans) made the following comment in this regard: “I think our market has come to recognize the possibilities of international co-productions; which gives us the opportunity to publish books that would otherwise, from a financial point of view, have been impossible to produce... I think this has led to a significant increase in the variety of children’s books we have on offer nowadays. Many of our most exciting Afrikaans baby, picture and novelty books are co-productions. If we didn’t translate these books, they simply couldn’t have existed.”
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Figure 23: Translators’ motivation for translating children’s books

As is to be expected, financial and professional reasons featured most strongly as translators’ motivation for translating children’s books, with 42.9% of respondents citing this as a motivation. In the second instance, 32.1% of translators felt that by translating children’s books they made a contribution to a culture of reading and book-buying, particularly by making available books in children’s mother tongue. One respondent described her motivation for translating children’s books as follows: “Children must have a wide variety of books to motivate them to read on their own as well. In African languages there is no variety of children’s books that children can borrow from libraries and read them on their own.” This largely social motivation is accompanied by a personal motivation – 28.6% of respondents said that they translated children’s books because it is creative and challenging work, which also contributes to their own development. As one respondent commented:

Firstly, I enjoy the challenge of grappling with difficult concepts and attempting to decode an author’s meaning successfully while at the same time striving for clarity of expression, keeping the target reader uppermost in my mind... Secondly, I translated at least two classics into Afrikaans primarily for my own benefit, i.e. to develop and grow as a writer and editor of children’s fiction.

It is interesting that only 14.3% of translators mentioned the idea of translation as facilitating cultural exchange as a motivation for their translation work, particularly since the idea of bridging cultural differences is often associated with the translation of children’s books. However, many translators did cite the function of translation to provide engagement with other cultures elsewhere in the questionnaire. In South Africa, the idea of translation as cultural exchange has complex implications, and is related to the tensions between domestication and foreignisation (and, of course, to the particular directionality of the translation patterns that have been discussed so far). Also, in South Africa, as I argue in the next chapter, the relationship between the concepts of “domestic” and “foreign” is rather more complex than usually assumed in discussions of translation as cultural exchange (and of domesticating versus foreignising approaches to translation), with intricate and often problematic relationships between language, culture, race, ideology and power that have potent effects. This matter is briefly addressed further in section 2.4.4.5 and 2.5, and is
taken up again in the next chapter, which aims to develop a theoretical framework for
the analysis of the translation of children’s books in South Africa which is sensitive to
these issues.

In questions similar to those in the questionnaire for publishers, translators were also
asked whether they receive guidelines for the translation of children’s books, and
whether they would want to receive guidelines for the translation of children’s books.
The majority of translators (46.4%) said that they do not as a rule receive guidelines
for the translation of children’s books, while 35.7% indicated that they do receive
some kind of brief or guidelines. 17.9% of respondents did not answer the question.

As can be seen in Figure 27, the majority of respondents (57%) also felt that they
would want publishers to provide them with guidelines when translating children’s
books. An additional 22% of respondents felt that it would probably be a good idea,
but qualified their answers by saying that such guidelines should not be too
restrictive, and that there should be sufficient flexibility and scope for an open
discussion between the translator and the publisher or client, should the translator’s
professional opinion about the best approach to a particular translation differ from
the guidelines provided by the client. A total of 14% of respondents said that they do
not wish to have guidelines — significantly, these were the very experienced
translators of children’s books who devote almost all their translation time to the
translation of children’s books. These translators expressed their motivation for not
wanting guidelines by saying that it would stifle their enthusiasm and creativity, or
that their professional expertise made them a better judge of the translation
requirements for a particular children’s book than a publisher or client could be. One
(African-language) translator suggested that publishers’ guidelines for translations
into the African languages were often problematic, because such guidelines often
served the interests of “maintaining cultural dominance”.

Both publishers and translators therefore appear to be in favour of guidelines for the
translation of children’s books (though publishers appear to be rather more strongly
in favour of guidelines than translators; see subsection (c) in 2.4.2.5). Both groups
also suggested the importance of having guidelines that are flexible, and that leave
room for discussion and negotiation between translator, client and author.
The last two issues dealt with in this section were the matters of translation as opposed to original production, and source-text orientation as opposed to target-text orientation in translation. Potentially significant correlations between these two questions, as well as the language profile of the respondents, emerged.

Respondents were asked whether they thought that, given the linguistic and cultural diversity (and difficulties) of South Africa, translation was a good way of making books available to South African children, or whether it would be better to produce original books in the various languages. Responses to this question, for the whole sample group, are summarised in Figure 25.
Overall, 53% of respondents felt that translation was a good way of catering for a diverse South African child readership. Only 14% felt that it would be better to write original texts in the various languages. However, 29% of respondents did feel that there needed to be a balance between translation and original production. One translator, translating predominantly children and youth books from English to Afrikaans, made the following comment in this regard:

There should be a healthy mix of translations and original books, with a greater emphasis on original works, if at all possible. Translated works serve as a window of other cultures and worlds and allow access to the works of some of the best authors in the world. At least some of these works should be available to readers as well as (budding) authors who cannot read the original texts. However, local writers should still be encouraged and developed by publishers.

Another English/Afrikaans translator pointed out that “if there is a dearth of original works in a language, a translation can fill the void at such a juncture. However, it cannot and should not replace ‘original’ work...” Another respondent made a similar comment: “I do, however, think there should be a healthy balance between local production and translation. A translated book can never, in my opinion, convey exactly that same sense of ‘familiarity’ that an original text has.”

A few respondents explicitly described the use of translation as a strategy to produce children’s books in societies where, for whatever reason, there are not sufficiently qualified or experienced authors to write these books in original languages:

Translations are good, especially for those countries that are not in a position to create their own books. Original books are good, but the language could then be an issue, unless the right person to write the book is found. So, until such a time as those countries are set up to write their own, translating is definitely a good idea.

In order to gain a more nuanced understanding of responses to this question, the sample was divided according to language, with translators working in the African languages in one group, and translators working in English/Afrikaans in the other. Figure 26 suggests significant differences between the opinions of the two groups.
A higher percentage of Afrikaans/English respondents (57.9% of this group) than African-language respondents (44.4% of this group) were in favour of translation rather than original production. However, the most marked differences in opinion are evident in the next two categories. None of the English/Afrikaans respondents felt that original production is a better way (than translation) of making children’s books available to the diverse South African reading constituency, whereas 44.4% of the African-languages respondents felt that original production was a better option. This clearly suggests an awareness among African-language respondents of the potentially disempowering effects of translation, particularly against the background of the publishing situation for children’s books in the African languages, where almost no original children's books in the African languages are published. As one respondent in favour of original production pointed out:

I believe it would be much better to write original books in the different languages, as it will elevate the status of the most marginalised languages to be on par with those that are already developed. At the same time, it will provide children with knowledge of key concepts in their mother tongue that will be more useful in their school years as they grow up.

Furthermore, while 36.8% of English/Afrikaans respondents indicated that there should be a balance between translation and original production, this option was only selected by 11.1% of African-languages respondents. Overall, it appears that while translators working in the African languages are positive about the role that translation may play in providing books for children, there is also a strong feeling

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42 The different sizes of the two groups do, however, need to be taken into consideration here, with 19 Afrikaans/English respondents and 9 African-language respondents. However, the data here is expressed as a percentage of each group.
that original production possibly need to take priority to fill the lack of original-language materials in the African languages. For Afrikaans/English respondents, translation is a process that supplements an already strong industry of original production of children’s books in Afrikaans and English. Translation does not pose a threat to original production in these languages, and from this (privileged position), translation can be encouraged as a way of enriching South African literatures, as many of the English and Afrikaans respondents pointed out. Ultimately, translation appears to play very different roles in the Afrikaans/English market and the African-language market. While in the former case translation plays a supplemental role in the production of books for children, in the latter it, at the moment, plays a constitutive role. There is therefore no evidence of a balance between original and translated books in the African languages, and correspondingly, translators working in these languages feel strongly that original production should be encouraged in order to counteract the development of a situation where the only African-language books for children are translations from English.

Finally, translators were asked to indicate which of two options they thought was a better approach to the translation of children’s literature: a source-text orientation (a broadly foreignising approach) or a target-text orientation (a broadly domesticating, localising and adapting approach). The responses of the entire sample are represented in Figure 27.

![Source-text or target-text orientation](image)

**Figure 27: Preferences for source-text or target-text oriented approaches to the translation of children’s literature**

The results were surprising, since, generally, target-text orientations are almost universally regarded as more appropriate for the translation of children’s literature (see Chapter 1). However, 32% of respondents in this survey were in favour of a source-text oriented approach, typically explaining that “traces of the source culture should definitely be retained to allow the child reader a glimpse into a world (cultural milieu) differing from his own” or pointing out that “the translator has an ethical obligation to keep as closely as possible to the original text”. Another respondent explained his view as follows:
Adaptation is only necessary when something essential to understanding the book/plot needs to be clarified. Children enjoy entering a different world with a different culture and names, etc. Especially when translating books that have been filmed, such as JK Rowling and Roald Dahl’s work, I find it confusing and quite ludicrous to change proper names and try to localise the whole setting.

One respondent also cited the practical consideration of keeping costs down as a motivation for a source-text orientated approach, explaining that in this case original artwork can be mostly be used unaltered, whereas cultural adaptation often necessitates changes to artwork, or new artwork altogether.

A total of 25% of respondents felt that a target-text oriented approach was better, since children have difficulty engaging with books that are too far removed from their own experiences. One respondent cited formal research showing that Afrikaans children prefer reading stories that take place in a familiar setting. Another 25% of translators felt that this decision depended on the individual text, explaining that “immersion in local culture or not is reliant on the nature of the book”. A further 18% of respondents believed that every text constitutes a mixture of domesticating and foreignising elements.

Once again, when responses to this question were considered in two groups (an African-language and an Afrikaans/English group), significant differences emerged, as evident in Figure 28.

![Source-text or target-text orientation: African-languages vs Afrikaans/English respondents](image)

Figure 28: Source-text or target-text orientation: African-language versus Afrikaans/English respondents, expressed as a percentage of the total respondents in each group

Preferences for source-text or target-text oriented approaches are almost inverse in the African-language and Afrikaans/English groups. Whereas 42.1% of the English/Afrikaans respondents felt that a source-text orientation is more appropriate, only 11.1% of African-language respondents believed this to be the case. A much higher percentage of African-language respondents (55.6% of this group) felt
that a target-text orientation was more appropriate, with only 10.5% of English/Afrikaans respondents selecting this option. This difference in preference is most likely related to the particular functions that translation plays in the different languages. In the case of the Afrikaans and English children’s book markets, translation plays a culturally supplemental role of giving children access to other, diverse realms of experience, of facilitating, in the words of one respondent, “confrontation with cultures or people other than [them]selves”. In the case of African-language books, translation is playing a culturally constitutive role of providing, by and large, all the books there are. It is therefore to be expected that cultural adaptation would be the norm for translations of children’s books into the African languages, as children firstly and foremostly need books relating to their own social and cultural experience – before being introduced to other social and cultural experiences. The educational factor also enters into the equation. As one Sesotho translator pointed out, “culture is also a contributing factor to children’s learning and as a result it is important that in translating children’s books, they be adapted to the target reader’s culture”.

Only a slightly larger percentage of African-language respondents (22.2%) than Afrikaans/English respondents (15.8%) felt that the opposition between target- and source-text oriented approaches was not necessary, since each text constitutes a mixture of foreignising and domesticating elements. However, a considerably greater percentage of the Afrikaans/English translators (31.6%), compared to the African-language translators (11.1%), specified that decisions about source- or target-text orientation were dependent on the text itself. For Afrikaans/English children’s book translators, who proceed from the premise that translation is mostly a way of supplementing the market of original books, decisions about source- or target-text orientation are not constrained by the need to have books reflecting a familiar cultural environment, since these already exist. They therefore appear to be aware of having the “luxury” of choice in this regard, whereas African-language translators experience the imperative of cultural adaptation because of the absence of books in the African languages that reflect the everyday environment of young African readers.

2.4.4.5 Broad findings and correlations

Generally speaking, the findings of the survey among translators corroborate the findings of the survey for publishers, as well as the analysis of the data from the Writings in nine tongues catalogue. Translators’ responses confirm that translation plays a significant role in the production of books for children and that translation in this sector appears to be on the increase. Furthermore, the findings from the questionnaire corroborate the finding that the translation of children’s books in South Africa takes place largely from English into Afrikaans and the African languages. The translators participating in the survey also seemed to confirm the apparent diversification of the children’s book market suggested by the findings presented earlier in this chapter. This is an encouraging trend, particularly if it means that the market for children’s books in the African languages will continue its diversification beyond readers and educational material, and increasingly extend into leisure reading. A last broad dimension in which there were significant correspondences between the findings of the questionnaire for translators and that for publishers, has to do with guidelines for translations. The majority of translators
and publishers indicated that guidelines for the translation of children’s books are not standard, while simultaneously suggesting that such guidelines are necessary, though with sufficient leeway to ensure flexibility for individual projects.

In addition to broadly substantiating the other findings presented in this chapter, results from the survey among translators also provide a more nuanced perspective on the differences between the function of translation in the Afrikaans and African-language children’s book markets. In particular, the findings from the questionnaire more clearly delineate a point suggested by the findings from the other data: that translation fulfils two very different functions for the Afrikaans book market and the African-languages book market in South Africa. In the case of the Afrikaans children’s book market, translation is seen as supplementing original production in Afrikaans, thereby providing an enriched and diversified reading experience for children. Correspondingly, translators working from English to Afrikaans do not feel compelled to advocate cultural adaptation, instead favouring a source-text oriented approach (or a text-dependent decision about the most appropriate approach), based on the motivation that translation contributes to the cultural enrichment of Afrikaans readers. This cultural exchange involves either European cultures, British or American culture, or African cultures (but almost always from originally English-language books rather than from originally African-language books).

In the case of the African languages, translation fulfils a constitutive role in production for children’s books in the age group 0 to 12, since the vast majority of books for children in this age group are translations rather than original books. Consequently, translators working in the African languages advocate cultural adaptation more strongly than their Afrikaans/English counterparts, since for them translation is, at the moment, the means by which a basic corpus of reading material in the African languages is being developed – and this basic corpus, of necessity, has to consist of material that black South African children can relate to and that reflects their everyday life.

The two different functions of translation for the two different groups are also reflected in respondents’ opinions regarding the relationship between translation and original production in various languages. While many of the respondents emphasised the importance of a balance between translation and original production in various languages, translators working in the African languages emphasised the importance of original production quite strongly, because clearly, at the moment, there is not nearly enough children’s books written in the African languages to balance out the strong role of translation in producing children’s books in these languages. None of the Afrikaans/English translators placed the same emphasis on original production, simply because it is not an issue in these markets: translation plays a supplemental role that does not threaten to replace original production.

The possible reasons for the predominance of translation in the production of especially African-language children’s books in South Africa are diverse, and will be explored in more detail as part of the theoretical discussion in the next chapter. It is, however, obvious that to a large extent this has to do with the underdevelopment and lower status of the African languages. A number of respondents to the two questionnaires indicated that translation was often used because of an absence of
experienced children’s book authors in the African languages. As one translator respondent pointed out: “I do believe that translation is a good way of making books available to many different types of readers as in some cultures there may not be an availability of writers to produce books in that particular language”. At the moment, therefore, translation has stepped in to fill the lack of children’s books in the African languages. In the long term, this may have positive effects, raising the status of the African languages, expanding the children’s book market in the African languages, helping to develop a culture of reading and book-buying in the African languages, and participating in the development of authors to write original children’s books in the African languages. However, the use of translation in the production of children’s books in the African languages will need to be managed to ensure that it facilitates the development of original writing instead of suppressing it by making it unnecessary, so that ultimately there can be a greater balance between original production and translation in the African-languages children’s book market in South Africa. The current dynamic of translating almost exclusively from English may well, if not managed carefully, serve to entrench the domination of originally English-language books for children in South Africa, instead of encouraging the exchange of literary work from various languages and backgrounds through translation and encouraging the development of a body of children’s literature in the African languages.

2.5 Conclusion
Many of the issues pointed out in the above discussion beg further critical clarification and exploration. For example, the issue of cultural exchange is more complex than the translation dynamics outlined in this chapter suggest. Specifically, the fact that most translated children’s books are translated from English into Afrikaans or the African languages does not necessarily mean that “English” (as in British or American, or “white” South African English) culture forms the background for most originally produced South African English children's books (though it probably largely does for imported books). Many of the original English and Afrikaans books produced in South Africa, in fact, deal with the experiences and cultural background of black South African children. For example, Niki Daly’s Jamela books (see, for example, Daly, 2001 ST-E, 2005 ST-E, 2007 ST-E), originally written in English, deal with the experiences of a little black girl, Jamela, living in a typical South African suburb/township. The writing process itself (rather than translation) brings this particular culture to an English readership – but an English readership that is diversified in terms of cultural background. However, these books (like other children’s books dealing with the lives of black South African children written in English) have been translated into some of the African languages. It is therefore almost as if translation, in an odd and circuitous process, is used to bring black South African children’s culture to them in translated storybooks originally produced in English, by English-speaking authors. An additional potentially complicating factor is the fact that many South African children’s books with black characters are written by white authors, which raises questions about representation, culture and identity even before the effects of translation are considered. Specifically, the appropriated dynamic of white authors writing about black characters forms an interesting and
contentious research question, viewed from an aesthetic, ideological, sociological and economic perspective (see, for example, Inggs, 2002; Yenika-Agbaw, 2008).

This is clearly a complex situation, where easy correlations between language, culture and translation cannot be assumed due to the intricate and often problematic relationships between language, culture, race, ideology and power. Related to this (and the fact that the translation of children’s books in a multicultural South Africa takes place in various linguistic and cultural scenarios characterised by different relationships of power) is the fact that the tension between domestication and foreignisation cannot be reduced to a simple equation where translation is seen as a way of bringing the “foreign” into the ambit of the “domestic” in the way that literary translation is conventionally conceptualised in largely monocultural countries. The multiplicities of domestics and Foreigns with in South Africa, and extending outwards globally, problematise simple distinctions between domestic and foreign, ultimately destabilising what is meant by “domestic” and “foreign”.

These largely contextual factors also play a crucial role on the textual level, most obviously as far as translation decisions regarding cultural adaptation (with the projected child and adult reader in mind) are concerned. The next chapter focuses in more detail on developing a theoretical framework for this study that is sensitive to these complexities, while Chapter 4 presents analyses of a sample of translated children’s texts (between English and Afrikaans, and vice versa) to substantiate some of the claims made in Chapter 2 and 3.

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43 This matter is of some interest to the argument presented in this thesis, though not a central focus. It is touched on again in Chapter 5. However, the complexity of the issue should be emphasised. While it seems relevant to question whether white authors writing about black characters and experience can do so authentically, or should do so, ethically (particularly in the context of asymmetrical power and economic relationships in South Africa), it is also true that creative writing is not limited to own experience. In the context of children’s literature, an analogous argument would be to say that adult writers cannot and should not write about the experiences of children, since they are not children themselves.