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**Translation and the Reader:
A Survey of British Book Group Members'
Attitudes towards Translation**

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DECLARATION

This is to certify that that the work contained within has been composed by me and is entirely my own work. No part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

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19th August 2015

ABSTRACT

In commercial book translation, the reader is the end-user of the translated text; it is for his or her benefit that the translation has been produced, and it is the reading public whose money ultimately goes towards paying the translator's wages. Nonetheless, in Translation Studies, far more attention has been paid to the processes of translation or the finished translation product (see Saldanha and O'Brien 2013) than to the users of such products, with reader-based studies few and far between. For this reason, there is little empirical evidence that the 'effects' and 'meanings' discussed by scholars in analyses of translated texts have any meaningful existence in actual reading situations, while the opinions and preferences of readers with regards to translation are virtually unknown (Leppihalme 1997; Kruger 2013).

The present thesis therefore takes a first step in examining the attitudes of non-professional readers (that is, readers who are reading for pleasure rather than for criticism or analytical purposes) to translated books. The project reports on members of book groups in four UK cities, whose thoughts and opinions regarding translated texts, the act of translation and the role of translators were gathered using a written questionnaire and a series of interviews. Thus, the study combines a Descriptive Translation Studies approach with survey research.

The results of this survey suggest that many readers have limited knowledge about what translation involves, as well as a certain ambivalence towards the finer details of the translation process. In addition, although they reveal a vigorous interest in considering and discussing linguistic, cultural and translation-related issues, readers' primary concern when presented with a text, whether translated or not, is the immediate reading experience. It is hoped that these findings will be useful in informing future approaches to the creation and dissemination of translated books to the British reading public.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 OPENING REMARKS

Over the past decades, Translation Studies has developed into a vibrant and comprehensive discipline, encompassing research into all aspects of the history, process and product of translation. However, one aspect of translation has been consistently overlooked: the end-user, or, in the case of translated books, the reader. Such an oversight is perplexing because, as Christiane Nord notes, a text is ultimately “made meaningful by its receiver and for its receiver” (1997: 30).

Thus, this thesis is a first attempt to record attitudes of readers in the UK regarding translated books and the translators who produce them. The wide variety of translated books available in the UK means that it is crucial to investigate whether some modes of translation, types of texts, source languages or particular translated books are generally preferred to others: for example, what do readers think about culture-specific concepts in translated books? At the same time, it is important to ask whether readers have views about translation in general: whether they see translated books as a category of texts, and, if so, what features they attribute to that category. Finally, since attitudes to translated books may be related to attitudes towards the translators who produce them, the study examines readers’ knowledge of and opinions about book translators and the work they do. Methodologically, the study takes the form of a survey, broadly defined as “the systematic collection of data based on addressing questions to respondents in a formal manner and making a record of their replies” (Kent 2001: 6); such surveys are extremely popular in consumer research and other domains, particularly when dealing with questions of attitudes and values (Keillor et al. 2001: 63).

The thesis begins with a review of current academic impressions on the topic of translation and the reader in the UK, following which the main body of the work reports the results of a survey conducted with a group of such readers (see p14), dealing with their thoughts on reading and buying translated texts, their understanding of and attitudes towards ‘translation’ as a concept, and their opinions of professional translators.

The present chapter explains the theoretical framework for the research project, including the descriptive, target-oriented approach to the material under examination. Next, the chapter defines some of the key terms used in the thesis before discussing the importance of studying readers of translations; the implications of choosing the UK as the area of study are also examined. The chapter concludes by setting out the aims of the study and the data under consideration.

1.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: DESCRIPTIVE TRANSLATION STUDIES

The primary aim of this thesis is to describe the attitudes to translation of a group of readers; this descriptive approach underlies many of the surveys conducted so far in Translation Studies (Kuznik et al. 2010: 335). The idea of description within the translation research community has for many years been associated with Descriptive Translation Studies (hereafter DTS), which is the principal theoretical framework drawn from Translation Studies that underpins the present thesis. DTS is summarised by Theo Hermans as a “descriptive, target-oriented, functional and systemic” approach (Hermans 1985: 10); and it is these elements – descriptivism as a replacement for prescriptivism, a focus on the target text, and a concern with how this target text functions in its target context and system – that form the interpretive framework of the present study.

1.2.1 Target-oriented research

The discipline of Translation Studies has, in general, become increasingly target-oriented. Recent approaches to translation have tended to focus on the target rather than source culture (Hermans 1999: 7), to the extent that Andrew Chesterman sees target-orientation as one of the key memes of modern Translation Studies (2000: 36-37). This is particularly the case in DTS, and especially in the approach espoused by Gideon Toury, whose concern with the target text and situation is much discussed (e.g. Hermans 1985: 10; Chesterman 2000: 37). Toury explains the focus on the target context thus:

Translating as a teleological activity *par excellence* is to a large extent conditioned by the goals it is designed to serve, and these goals are set in, and by, the

prospective receptor system(s). Consequently, translators operate first and foremost in the interest of the culture *into* which they are translating, and not in the interest of the source text, let alone the source culture. (1985: 19)

The principal assumption of target-oriented research is therefore that the translated text will be analysed in relation to its target culture and audience (Hermans 1999: 39; Kenny 2001: 49; Toury 2012: 18); this makes good sense when one considers that, outwith the academy, a translated text will largely be viewed within the context of the target culture, with perhaps only limited reference to the source culture and situation. Nonetheless, the degree to which the target situation should be emphasised as the focus of study continues to be a matter of debate. Early formulations of target-oriented studies stated that “*translations are facts of one system only: the target system*” (Toury 1985: 19, his emphasis), a somewhat restrictive assertion that has been criticised by a number of scholars (e.g. Hermans 1999: 40). As a result, later formulations of the descriptive approach have tended to take the more flexible view that a target-oriented approach does not necessarily mean an *exclusive* focus on the target system: as Toury puts it, “[t]he approach we have adopted has been defined as target-oriented because *this is where observations begin*, but by no means should it be taken to imply that this is where they will also end” (Toury 2012: 31, his emphasis). The present focus in target-oriented approaches is therefore on the idea that the target text and situation is the principal object of study, with the analysis of source texts and contexts playing a supporting role.

Such an emphasis on target texts and receiving situations would appear to presuppose the target reader as an important factor in the analysis of a translated text, particularly since DTS is frequently described as a functionalist approach, concerned with not the *intended* function of texts but the functions they *actually perform* in the target system, and the relations between these functions (Hermans 1985a: 13; Even-Zohar 1990: 9). Certainly, typologies of potential avenues for descriptive research explicitly include the possibility of studying both target text and target-text receiver: Gabriela Saldanha and Sharon O’Brien, for example, suggest ‘product-oriented’, ‘process-oriented’, ‘participant-oriented’ and ‘context-oriented’ as the four main categories of translation research (Saldanha and O’Brien 2013: 5). Yet, as noted in the introductory chapter, a focus on the target reader has failed to prove popular, with most DTS studies being analyses of target texts and the processes and actors involved in their production. Nonetheless, the descriptive and target-oriented framework used in such studies can easily be adapted for the study of the reader of translations. Indeed, a focus

on target cultures and texts is particularly relevant for such studies, for the simple reason that this reflects how readers tend to experience translated texts. Rarely, except in academia, does a receiver read a translated text alongside its source text¹; ultimately, as Basil Hatim and Ian Mason note, the end-user has access only to the final product, not to the decision-making process (Hatim and Mason 1990: 3). Thus, the target-oriented approach to studying translations is ideally suited to research into readers' attitudes to translated texts.

1.2.2 The descriptive element and objectivity

In addition to being target-oriented, DTS also aims, as its name suggests, to describe translation-related phenomena; this is as an alternative to earlier prescriptive approaches whose aim, as Mona Baker notes, “was never to establish what translation itself is, as a phenomenon, but rather to determine what an ideal translation, as an instance, should strive to be” (1993: 236). DTS explicitly distances itself from such prescriptive attitudes to translation (Heilbron 1999: 109; Kenny 2001: 49), aiming instead for a more ‘scientific’ approach that aims to describe and analyse “[...] actually observable or at least reconstructable) facts of real life” (Toury 2012: xi). In the present thesis, these translation facts are readers’ articulated attitudes to translated texts, the aim being not to prescribe what people should think about translation but to describe what they do think about translation.

This intention to ‘describe empirically’, as well as a certain emphasis on the ‘science’ of translation, has been viewed with some scepticism by many translation scholars. One concern is that conducting translation research along ‘scientific’ lines (in particular using procedures originally devised for the study of physical or sociological facts) has the potential to introduce an element of rigidity and inflexibility to Translation Studies, leading to a deterministic view of translation in which any translation is justified since it could not have been other than it is (Berman 1995: 62-63); this, in turn, could devalue the creative work of translators and result in a ‘de-humanisation’ of translation research (Pym 2009: 23-24).

Yet the idea of DTS as deterministic is somewhat flawed, since the act of description explicitly refers not to what something *should* be like, but to what it is like

¹ Subtitles in films and television are an exception, but these fall outside the scope of the present study.

in a certain case; this is true even when generalising. To take a well-known example, an empirical study that concludes that translators tend to use explicitation in their work is a description of a particular state of affairs; it does not follow from this that explicitation is necessary in translation, nor that translators have no choice but to use explicitation in their work. As Chesterman points out, “[a] translator is neither completely free nor completely determined” (Chesterman 2002: 150-151) – s/he will be influenced by a variety of factors that will interact with his or her own choices in order to produce a translated text in a particular fashion. Consequently, the fear that DTS leads to determinism, or indeed to de-humanisation, is unfounded.

A second concern, that DTS implies a kind of neutrality, is more worrying. Both Anthony Pym and Lawrence Venuti caution that the idea of an objective or “value-free” Translation Studies is a dangerous and misleading one (Pym 1998: 14; Venuti 1998: 1), primarily because description itself can never be neutral. The describer is necessarily a human being who is positioned in a certain space (Hermans 1999: 146), holding certain ideologies and beliefs and probably engaging in other non-research-related activities that could affect his or her interpretation of the data (France 2001b: 7). This is especially the case in translation research where the ‘facts’ under study are not necessarily truths that are verifiable in the same manner as those under study in the physical sciences.

It is certainly the case that no research is neutral or value-free. The present thesis, for example, depends on several implicit and ideological assumptions: that translation is a phenomenon worth studying, that a country’s translation rates are meaningful, that attitudes to translation are related to attitudes to language and literature more generally, and so on. Indeed, all research is governed by values and choices, including in the social and physical sciences, where non-positivist researchers are well aware that, for example, the very act of choosing an area to investigate is often a choice based on personal interest (Mann 1985: 14) or economic factors (Babbie 1973: 7), and that it is sometimes political rather than academic concerns that affect which results get published in which journals (Babbie 1973: 7). Similarly, it is widely understood that the empirical data produced by scientific methods can themselves be affected by elements such as measurement errors, data loss, operationalisation of concepts and critical decisions made by the researcher (Babbie 1973: 9), as well as by sociocultural contexts and values (Bergman and Coxon 2005).

In this sense, ‘empiricism’, either in the sciences or in humanities disciplines such as Translation Studies, does not necessarily equal ‘objective’ or ‘neutral’. Rather, it is a way of characterising both the object of study – in this case, the attitudes of “actual” readers (Miall 2006: 293) – and the steps taken, while studying such objects, to ensure that research is conducted in a systematic, consistent and explicit manner (Berman 1995: 14-15; Chesterman 2002: 147). One important aspect of such systematicity and explicitness is the definition of key terms, such as is discussed in the following section.

1.2.3 Defining ‘translation’ within the descriptive approach

Empirical research, then, necessitates a systematic treatment of concepts and terminology; yet, at the same time, the very attempt to suggest limits to the concept of translation is increasingly viewed as a highly suspicious endeavour within DTS, whose proponents often see such attempts as “normative and restrictive” (Hermans 1985a: 13). Similarly, Toury notes that trying to define exactly what translation is *a priori* and regardless of context would be “untenable” since translation is “characterized by its inherent variability” (2012: 26). But while a reluctance to prescribe and limit the purview of translation is understandable, avoiding a definition altogether is unproductive for any researcher wishing to study it as a phenomenon. Hermans himself, who opposes prescriptive definitions, admits that such a stance “implies that the researcher has to work without preconceived notions of what actually constitutes ‘translation’ or where exactly the dividing line between translation and non-translation is to be drawn” (1985a: 13). Similarly, Pym argues that establishing an operational (or a working) definition of ‘translation’ – i.e., “deciding what is or is not to be regarded as a translation” (1998: 55) – does not mean that this operational definition is a prescription of what translation *should* be like in a more general context. Rather, it is a definition of the object of study in the context of a specific research project, which gives the researcher a clear idea of what s/he is investigating and, crucially, allows him or her to deal with borderline cases (op. cit.: 57).

Toury acknowledges this difficulty and proposes a target-oriented working solution to the problem of definition, in which ‘target texts’ will be defined as those which are “regarded as TRANSLATIONS from the intrinsic point of view of the target

culture” (Toury 1985: 21, his emphasis). Thus, in Toury’s conception, any text regarded as a translation by the target culture should be studied as one. In many ways, this is a useful approach, particularly in its flexibility, acknowledging the fact that “the categorisation and acceptance of a text as a translation may vary hugely from culture to culture and from age to age” (Zethsen 2007: 291). However, it also raises a number of unanswered questions that prove problematic for the actual study of translations and translation behaviour. For example, the importance assigned to the source text, even within Toury’s own work, is variable. An early formulation suggests that ‘translations’ (as labelled by the target system) should be selected for study “without reference to their corresponding source texts, or rather, irrespective of the very question of the existence of those texts” (Toury 1985: 21); this includes assumed or pseudotranslations – non-translated texts composed linguistically “as if they were translations” and presented as such (Toury 2012: 47-48). In contrast, a later clarification by Toury asserts that a translation, from the points of view of the target culture, is “any target-culture text for which there are reasons to tentatively posit the existence of another text, in another culture/language, from which it was presumably derived by transfer operations and to which it is now tied by a set of relationships based on shared features” (2012: 31). This inconsistency, and indeed the vague nature of the idea of “set of relationships” between source and target text, has been addressed by a number of theorists, including Hermans, who particularly questions the proposal that pseudotranslations should be analysed in the same way as texts for which there is “factually and empirically” a source text (1999: 51).

Perhaps the most crucial point for the present study, however, is that such inconsistencies and vague categorisations affect the kinds of questions that can be asked about readers’ perceptions of translations. In one sense, Toury’s is a useful proposal when researchers are specifically interested in readers’ conceptions of what translation is and does, since how readers view translation will be dependent on how they themselves define it. If the object of study is target readers’ opinions of translations (as *they* see them), a comment by a reader on how s/he feels about translation will be a comment on how s/he feels about whatever phenomenon s/he perceives as translation. It is arguably irrelevant whether this comment is based on ‘actual’ translation or not, since, as Toury puts it, “their functioning within a culture is no different from that associated with genuine translations” (2012: 29). On the other hand, the status of translated texts in the UK and elsewhere is such that, as Venuti notes, in many cases

“[t]he fact of translation tends to be ignored” (1998: 32) – that is, readers frequently do not know that a text they are reading has been translated. Here, the reader’s view of a text’s (non-)translation status is implicitly contrasted with some other understanding of translation in which the text *is* a translation; in order to discuss such contrasts, therefore, a definition of translation based on something other than the reader’s perception is required.

The present thesis, then, takes two contrasting approaches to defining ‘translation’. In the preliminary discussion (Chapter 2), a text is classified as a translation if the peritext – that is, any textual material that does not form part of the main text but is included in the same volume (Genette 1987: 10), such as cover notes, prefaces, bibliographies and so on – names the translator(s) or contains a translation copyright notice; this mirrors Pym’s helpful proposal that “if a paratext distinguishes between a translator and an author, the corresponding text is presented as a translation” (1998: 62). During the survey, however, no definition of ‘translation’ was given to respondents, with the aim of eliciting their own thoughts about what it entails; therefore, in the remaining chapters (Chapters 5 to 9), it is respondents’ own conceptions of ‘translation’ that are under discussion. In rare cases, such as the discussion of translation as a meaningful category for readers (p99), the two types of definitions are contrasted; such cases will be explicitly signalled.

1.2.4 What is a ‘translated book’?

A further question of definition concerns the types of translated text under scrutiny. The present thesis is particularly concerned with readers’ attitudes to translated books read for pleasure. In this sense, the study’s focus is on what is commonly called ‘literary translation’ – that is, “translation of composed texts that are intended for wide or public dissemination or performance” (Classe 2000a: viii) – as opposed to ‘non-literary’ or ‘technical translation’ – “that of texts with a scientific, technical, technological or legal function” (ibid.). This pair of contrasting terms is widely used in Translation Studies (ibid.; Calzada Pérez 2001: 203; et al.). Using this dichotomy, the object of study of the present thesis – books read for pleasure by a commercial reading public – would be literary translation.

However, the difficulty with this dichotomy lies in the fact that ‘literature’ (and consequently ‘literary’) is very often used as a value term, or, in Mary Louise Pratt’s terminology, an “honorific” (1977: 122). The connotations of the word ‘literature’ are reflected in other terms that are sometimes used as synonyms for it: “serious” writing (Espmark 1993: 19; Enzensberger 1993: 33), “high” or “highbrow” culture (Classe 2000a: viii; Andringa and Schreier 2004: 162; Miall 2006: 185), and “classics” or “masterpieces” (Damrosch 2003: 15) (see p50 for additional discussion on such classifications). This is problematic because the translated texts under study in the present thesis – those read for pleasure – do not all correspond to this narrower definition of ‘literature’.

In contrast to ‘literary translation’ and ‘translated literature’ is the umbrella term ‘book’, which is generally used in such a way as to incorporate a wider range of genres, subject matters and format: novels, plays, poetry, travel guides, self-help books, textbooks, and so on. It is of course recognised that each of these different genres and formats will be perceived by readers in a particular way, and that the content, structure and connotations of each type of book will affect how it is translated and how readers view its translated version(s) – such issues will be further discussed in the next chapter (p39). The scope of the present thesis, however, is not limited to any one of these genres or formats but rather encompasses all of these types. Hence, the object of study is characterised as ‘readers’ attitudes to translated books’. Specifically, ‘book’ will be used to refer to non-serial publications with ISBN numbers² that can be both published and bought, and, thus, ‘translated book’ will refer to a non-serial publication with an ISBN number whose peritext names the translator(s) or contains a translation copyright notice.

1.2.5 Towards an applicable Translation Studies

A final contentious issue in DTS is the extent to which descriptive studies should be applied; that is, whether and how translation research should relate to translation practitioners and teachers outside the academy. Some descriptive researchers are adamant that DTS is a fundamentally non-applied school of research. Toury, for example, states that “it is no concern of a scientific discipline, not even within the

² Books are categorised differently under the ISBN/ISSN system from journals, serials and magazines (ISBN International 2013).

‘human sciences’, to effect changes in the world of our experience” (Toury 2012: 11), while Hermans characterises DTS as “a deliberate shift away from ‘applied’ to ‘pure’ research” (Hermans 1999: 35). In both conceptions, then, the focus is on theoretical research, with practical insights seen as “incidental” to descriptive work (Hermans 1999: 35).

The reluctance of these and other scholars to engage with applied research may be partly a result of a rather rigid understanding of James Holmes’ well-known scheme for translation research, in which theory, description and applied research are presented as “three fairly distinct branches of the entire discipline” (1994: 78). Holmes emphasises that theory, description and applied research are all valuable as areas of translation research and ultimately dialectal in their relationship to one another (*ibid.*). However, scholars in more recent times have appeared to understand the three categories as entirely separate, as in Toury’s assertion that “drawing such conclusions is up to the *practitioner*, not the scholar” (2012: 11, his emphasis). In addition, the emphasis on DTS as a non-prescriptive mode has led some descriptive scholars to be wary of researchers who “want to plough [any] insight back into some practical application to benefit translators, critics or teachers” (Hermans 1999: 7). The limitation of this viewpoint is that the scholars who espouse it seem to have a very narrow understanding of what ‘applied’ research is: often, ‘applied research’ is used as a euphemism for ‘telling translators what to do’. For example, Toury’s definition of ‘applied’ studies focuses on their prescriptive aspect, stating that their aim is usually “to set norms in a more or less conscious way” (2012: 12); Chang, too, seems to assume that descriptive scholars who want their findings to be applicable to the real world all have the aim of “us[ing] their own poetics and ideology to judge those of translators”, a practice that Chang finds “questionable” (2000: 116). Even Holmes, who supports applied research, limits its scope to teaching, translation aids, translation policy and translation criticism (1994: 77-78).

It is certainly true that the role of the translation scholar is not to prescribe action to practising translators, but this does not preclude researchers from seeking to generate knowledge that may be helpful not only to translation practitioners but also to other stakeholders in the translation process, such as publishers, readers and policy makers. In contrast to assertions that applied research is necessarily normative, Saldanha and O’Brien provide a broader definition of the term ‘applied’, in which “applied research is generally understood to mean research on practical problems, research that has an

application in life” (2013: 15); likewise, a number of other descriptive researchers also support the idea that translation theory and research can and should be viewed in terms of how they will relate to real-life translation practice (Even-Zohar 1990: 6; Leppihalme 1997: 196; Rabadán 2008: 103). These commentators tend to recognise that there is often a gap between the concerns of translation researchers and what other stakeholders in the process, including translators, feel they can gain from academic research (Lefevere 1992: 4; Venuti 1998: 28; Chesterman 2002: 146).

In terms of precisely how a link between translation research and translation practice can be achieved, descriptive scholars have emphasised the possibility of translation research that is non-prescriptive but still relevant to practitioners: Edoardo Crisafulli, for example, envisages “a division of labour”, whereby “[although] scholars should not promote a specific translation method/strategy, [...] they may point out potential options at the translator’s disposal”, after which it is up to the translator to “bear[...] the burden of making the final translation choice” (2001: 27-28). Similarly, André Lefevere imagines a “descriptive catalogue” of norms that have governed translations in the past, which would then “enable practising literary translators to gather useful technical hints” (1981: 41). In such cases, research is produced in the form of a descriptive report of what has been discovered, without any suggestion that the data must be applied in a certain way; yet the research is presented in a readily available (and, ideally, understandable) manner so that other stakeholders are able to make use of it as they see fit. In this sense, the research is not ‘applied’ (at least by the researchers); rather, it is ‘applicable’ – it is ready to be used by translators, publishers, policy makers and other stakeholders if they wish to do so. What is advocated in the present thesis, therefore, is descriptive research that practitioners will find both interesting and relevant to what they do when translating, publishing, reading or talking about translations. In this way, researchers can begin to close up the “artificial” gap (Munday 2012: 25) between academic theory and real-world practice, leading to what Itamar Even-Zohar characterises as “thoughts that inspire to some activity and fruitful doing” (1990: 6, in reference to Gould 1986).

1.3 WHY A READER SURVEY?

1.3.1 Reader research in Translation Studies

Given the recent orientation of Translation Studies towards the target text and context (see p2), it would seem reasonable to assume that studies of those who read translations are increasingly common. Certainly, it would appear that research into the relationship between the reader and the text is not unknown in Translation Studies. As Lefevere notes, discussions of textual understanding necessarily involve studying “both texts (objects) and human agents who read, write, and rewrite texts” (1992: 12), while several commentators cite reception by a target audience as the “main concern” of target-oriented research (Chesterman 2000: 24; see also Hermans 1999: 44). Indeed, translation research dealing with the effects and functions of translated texts, such as Hans J. Vermeer’s *skopostheorie* (1989), implies a concern with the text’s reader, while analyses of the texts themselves “continually make reference to readers, viewers, consumers, users, etc” (Gambier 2003: 184).

However, very often these statements on reader reactions are highly abstract or intuitive; studies of actual readers and their relationship to translated texts are rare, with many references to ‘the reader’ or ‘translation effects’ being simply assumptions derived solely from the text itself (or from the researcher examining that text). Examples are manifold. Ernst-August Gutt’s study of relevance theory and translation spends several chapters discussing ‘audience response’ without once mentioning an actual audience (1991); similarly, Michael Cronin states that “[t]he emergence of an emphasis on the reader was the single most striking feature of translation norms in the period after the Second World War”, yet his ensuing discussion of readability in translated texts and target-oriented Translation Studies never once mentions any empirical research involving actual readers (2012: 379 onwards). Other examples include Ping Li’s article on translation in China, which specifically claims to deal with “reader response” yet refers only occasionally to how “the masses” might react to translated books (2012: 31), and Leo Tak-hung Chan’s recent book, which, although it claims to deal entirely with ‘readers, reading and reception’, devotes fewer than twenty pages to discussion of actual readers (Chan 2010a).

Thus, studies such as these show no attempt to incorporate the opinions or thoughts of real-life readers; translation theorists, like other literature scholars, “still tend to proceed as if the meaning negotiated between text and reader can in fact be determined by analysis of the text alone” (Livingstone 1998: 101). The present thesis attempts to challenge this assumption, as described in the next section.

1.3.2 The value of reader-based studies

Outside Translation Studies, in literary studies more broadly, there is a recognition that close textual analysis cannot fully unravel a text’s meaning, and certainly cannot explain its wider reception. Hans Magnus Enzensberger, for example, points out that “a work can be difficult but worthless, famous but unread, a bestseller but of the highest quality, or vice versa, in every conceivable permutation” (1993: 34) – in short, literary merit does not necessarily lead to popularity. Studies of literature in the last few decades have made it clear that text meaning is dependent on the reader, with scholars emphasising the fact that “Storytelling [...] is a two-way affair” (O’Neill 1994: 71);

There are, therefore, several reasons why studies of real-life readers are a useful part of empirical literary research (Suleiman 1980: 26-27; Swann and Allington 2009: 247-248), including research into book translation. First, there is little evidence that the ‘effects’ discussed by scholars in analyses of translated texts have any meaningful existence in instances of non-professional reading, since the only concrete measure of whether a text ‘works’ is whether it works in actual reading situations (Potter 1992: 25). Between the researcher and the reader, there may be all sorts of factors that “cause the intended reading to be resisted, frustrated, uncompleted, or interpreted in a way not expected (or desired) by the author” (Scott 1994: 463) – or, indeed, by the researcher, who is after all a particular kind of professional reader (Rosenblatt 1978: 142; see also Mason 2009: 63). The reason for this may be that, quite simply, what a researcher finds interesting about a text is not necessarily what non-professional readers – that is, those reading primarily for pleasure rather than as part of their job – find interesting.

Second, much of the research conducted in this area deals solely with university undergraduates, leading to a very limited population under study; this may even be the case in some of the few studies conducted in Translation Studies (Mossop 2007: 17). What is particularly concerning about this trend is that those conducting such research

often seem unaware that their populations are relatively homogeneous: for example, Malcolm Hayward claims that his study on genre recognition includes respondents with “a range of reading skills” (1994: 418), by which he means university students of English literature as well as their lecturers. This dependence on the responses of those involved in studying and analysing literature or other texts is problematic because such people frequently read in a different way from people who have only ever read for pleasure (Rosenblatt 1978: 145; Appleyard 1990: 136; Zwaan 1993: 4). Certainly, literature experts are more likely to “provide more extensive, insightful analyses of literary works” and “use a variety of more sophisticated analytical techniques” (Bortolussi and Dixon 2003: 249); yet they may also be more emotionally detached from what they read: Norman Holland comments that close reading “often seems overly intellectual, even sterile, certainly far removed from the root of our pleasure in literature” (1968: 7), while Louise Rosenblatt adds that those readers who have not been “trained to ignore their responses” are most importantly concerned with “the feelings and ideas accompanying the emerging work” (1978: 145). This applies not just to students but to other professional readers such as reviewers, which is why studies of translation that restrict themselves to the analysis of critical reviews (see p46) give only a partial picture of the reception of a work.

In summary, reading situations concerning those trained in particular modes of reading, including students, teachers of literature and literary reviewers, are unlikely to be representative of reading situations involving larger populations of readers. In terms of translation research, this also means that translation scholars are likely to read translated texts in a particular way that is not representative of the wider population; as Chesterman puts it, “translatologists [...] tend to subject *any* translation they come across to a formal examination” (2000: 130). What is required, therefore, is a body of research relating to readers both inside and outside the academy: members of the reading public who must ultimately choose (or not choose) to pay for and read the translated book.

1.3.3 The present study

Of these three potential research strategies – reception studies, experimental studies and surveys – the present thesis takes the form of a survey, defined earlier as “the systematic

collection of data based on addressing questions to respondents in a formal manner and making a record of their replies” (Kent 2001: 6). There are several reasons for this decision. As noted, the use of published documents in reception studies tends to be approached from a historical perspective; consequently, such a study would be inappropriate for the present research, in which the respondents of interest are contemporary readers. Meanwhile, although experimental reader-response studies frequently focus on non-professional readers, the research issues under consideration in such studies tend to be extremely delimited, dealing with narrow text-based topics such as foregrounding effects (e.g. Miall and Kuiken 1994). Given how little research has been conducted into readers of translated texts up to this point, it is difficult to ascertain a specific topic of interest that could be usefully studied using experimental protocols. In addition, the technical and temporal constraints of experimental studies mean that the number of respondents is necessarily limited, leading to a comparatively small dataset. It is for these reasons that the survey method has been deemed the most appropriate for the present study, given its flexibility and its immediacy in terms of the respondents under consideration. More specifically, the survey in the present thesis is two-fold, comprising a written questionnaire (included in the present thesis as Appendix 1) and a series of oral interviews; the methodology underlying these survey tools will be discussed in Chapter 3 (p61).

In terms of respondents, the survey investigates a sample of readers in the UK (specifically, members of book groups in Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh and London – for further details on how the sample was selected see Chapter 3, p69). The reasons for, and implications of, this focus on the UK translation context are discussed in the following section.

1.4 TRANSLATION IN THE UK

The choice of the UK as a setting for the present thesis is partly due to the researcher’s familiarity with the British book market and publishing system, but there are other reasons for focusing on the UK as a research setting, one being that the UK has a large repository of existing sociological data on reading habits that can provide a basis for the present study (see below, p57). In addition, the UK is interesting because of its unusual situation in political, linguistic and translational terms. Politically, the UK is part of the

EU, and as such must conform to certain EU legislation, such as laws relating to traffic of goods (including books) between EU countries (Blake 2007: 130); however, the UK is culturally and socially closer to other non-European countries, in particular the USA. Specifically, the UK and the USA share a language and, in many cases, a publishing system (Pym 2001: 75; Thompson 2010: 12), and, crucially for the present study, their rates of publishing and purchasing translated books are very similar. The following section discusses these rates and their implication for how translated books are viewed by readers in the UK.

1.4.1 Statistics on translation in the UK

In the UK, as in many other Anglophone countries, rates of translation are comparatively low – between 1.5 and 4% of overall book output (Ganne and Minon 1992: 64; Pym 2001: 80; Fock et al. 2008; Hale 2008: 217; Venuti 2008: 11; Donahaye 2012: 27). These translation statistics, as well as the fact that the UK’s main language is English, have been widely discussed by translation scholars. It has become a commonplace to point out that “English has become the most translated language worldwide [but] it is one of the least translated into” (Venuti 1998: 160; see also France 2001a: xix and Pym 2001: 80). For example, perhaps as many as two-thirds of the translated books in Europe have English as their source language (Kovač et al. 2010: 13). Likewise, proportionally fewer translated books are thought to be published in the UK than in any other European country (Büchler et al. 2011: 7), and, indeed, the UK translation rate of 1.5-4% is extremely low when compared to other countries in Europe and elsewhere, as shown in Figure 1 (next page).

Country	Translation rate	Sources
Denmark	60%	Fock et al. 2008: 4
Croatia	50%	Fock et al. 2008: 4
Sweden	45%	Fock et al. 2008: 4
Portugal	44%	Hale 2008: 217
Greece	44%	Fock et al. 2008: 4
Norway	40%	Fock et al. 2008: 4
Lithuania	33%	Fock et al. 2008: 4
Czech Republic	29-33%	Hoffman 2007; Fock et al. 2008: 4; Chan 2010: 2
South Korea	29%	Hoffman 2007; Chan 2010: 2
Finland	26-50%	Budapest Observatory 2011: 53; Fock et al. 2008: 4
Netherlands	25-36%	Linn 2006: 28; Fock et al. 2008: 4
Taiwan	25-28%	Chan 2010: 2; Tan 2011a
Slovenia	25%	Fock et al. 2008: 4
Spain	24-35%	Ganne and Minon 1992: 64; Hoffman 2007; Fock et al. 2008: 4; Hale 2008: 217
Iran	23%	Hoffman 2007
Italy	22-28%	Ganne and Minon 1992: 64; Lottman 2000: 19; Pym 2001: 80; Hoffman 2007; Hale 2008: 217; Fock et al. 2008: 4; Venuti 2008: 11
Bulgaria	18-28%	Budapest Observatory 2011: 36
Turkey	17%	Hoffman 2007
Slovakia	13%	Fock et al. 2008: 4
Latvia	12-14%	Budapest Observatory 2011: 82
Russia	12%	Tan 2011b
Switzerland	9%	Fock et al. 2008: 4
France	8-18%	Ganne and Minon 1992: 64; Pym 2001: 80; Fock et al. 2008: 4; Hale 2008: 217; Venuti 2008: 11; Kovač et al. 2010: 46
Germany	6-14%	Ganne and Minon 1992: 64; Pym 2001: 80; Fock et al. 2008: 4; Hoffman 2007; Hale 2008: 217; Venuti 2008: 11; Kovač et al. 2010: 46
Austria	5%	Fock et al. 2008: 4
China	4%	Hoffman 2007
USA	2-3%	Pym 2001: 80; Hoffman 2007
UK	1.5-4%	Ganne and Minon 1992: 64; Pym 2001: 80; Fock et al. 2008; Hale 2008: 217; Venuti 2008: 11; Donahaye 2012: 27

Figure 1. Translation rates in 28 countries (since 1990)

In terms of flat translation rates, the UK appears to translate substantially fewer books than other European countries; however, the use of publication figures is informative but may not fully reflect the translation situation of the UK. The greatest limit, perhaps, is that obtaining figures on the publication of translated books within the UK system is, as Kathryn Batchelor mildly notes, “very difficult” (2009: 19), meaning that it is often challenging to map translation flows, important as these are for understanding intercultural transfers (Linn 2006: 27). Alexandra Büchler and her colleagues, for example, note that although general data on published books is available via the British National Bibliography and sites such as Nielsen BookData, data on how many of these books are translations is not systematically collected (2011: 8). The same is true of the statistics collected by the Publishers Association (Woodham 2007: 46).

In consequence, the statistics quoted above have been generated in a variety of ways. Some writers fail to specify where their figures come from (Lottman 2000; Fock et al. 2008; Chan 2010a; Dalkey 2011); others make use of information gleaned directly from publishers (e.g. Ganne and Minon 1992; Venuti 2008); and others derive their figures from analyses of UNESCO’s *Index Translationum* (e.g. Pym 2001; Venuti 2008), a database fed by national library resources. However, such data refer solely to

publication rates, which, naturally, need to be approached with “a great deal of caution” (Heilbron 1999: 112), because, as several commentators have noted, the fact that a book is published does not mean that the public will be aware of its existence or choose to buy it (Vanderauwera 1985: 198; Thompson 2010: 392). In consequence, it has been suggested that sales figures may help to contextualise publication figures, particularly when they are drawn from international retailers such as Amazon (Poupaud et al. 2009: 276; Thompson 2010: 45).

Historical bestseller lists are not presently available from Amazon; however, a simple analysis of recent lists from twelve Amazon sites across the world (conducted in March 2012, June 2013 and January 2014)³ gives the following figures:

Country	Average	2012	2013	2014
Brazil	59%	-	69%	48%
Italy	56%	60%	56%	52%
Mexico	52%	-	-	52%
Germany	48%	51%	50%	44%
Spain	46%	58%	40%	40%
France	44%	49%	41%	43%
China	34%	23%	35%	44%
India	9%	-	8%	9%
Japan	7%	12%	2%	8%
Canada	4%	4%	2%	5%
UK	3%	7%	1%	1%
USA	1%	1%	1%	1%

Figure 2. % translated in Amazon bestseller lists, 2012-2014

Of the twelve countries examined, the UK had the second lowest number of translated texts in its bestseller lists, while the three Anglophone or partially Anglophone countries presented the three lowest rates. This mirrors Natasha Wimmer’s findings from 2001: “In a typical week, at least half of the top-10 bestsellers on Amazon.com in France and Germany are books in translations; on the US site, a recent scan showed not a single foreign name on an extended list of 24 top sellers” (Wimmer 2001: 71). Bearing in mind that Amazon is only one single (albeit extremely expansive) online bookshop, these figures appear to support the statistics on publication rates quoted above.

A final indication that translation rates in the UK are low is the percentage of translated books being borrowed from public libraries. Figures from the Public Lending

³ Figures from Amazon (<http://www.amazon.com/>) and its international versions. Figures accessed 02/03/12, 05/06/13, 29/01/14. Brazil and Mexico include Kindle sales only.

Rights website regarding the top hundred most borrowed books between 1992 and 2013 (the only years for which data is currently available) reveal that translated books are scarce⁴:

Year	# translated	% translated	Year	# translated	% translated
1992	0	0	2003	0	0
1993	0	0	2004	0	0
1994	-	-	2005	0	0
1995	0	0	2006	0	0
1996	0	0	2007	0	0
1997	0	0	2008	0	0
1998	0	0	2009	0	0
1999	0	0	2010	1	1
2000	0	0	2011	4	5
2001	0	0	2012	4	5
2002	0	0	2013	1	1

Figure 3. % translated in British library loans, 1992-2013

Although figures from other countries are not available for comparison, the fact that, overall, fewer than 1% of the most borrowed books in the UK since 1992 were translated strongly reinforces the notion that translated books have been under-read in the UK.

1.4.2 The UK publishing industry in context

As well as the present survey being confined geographically (to the UK) it is important to note that it is also confined temporally – namely, to the early years of the 21st century (specifically, late 2013-early 2014). The context encompassing book-publishing and reading habits at this time has several peculiarities that are likely to be relevant to readers’ attitudes towards translation. First, with regards to the business of publishing, the current landscape is one of multinational conglomerates, where, according to Cronin, numerous mergers and acquisitions in the 1980s and 1990s have “transformed” the publishing industry (Cronin 2003: 120). This has led to a situation in which the publishing business in the UK, as elsewhere, is dominated by “a small number of international groups” – Reed Elsevier; Pearson; News International (including HarperCollins); Bertelsmann (including Random House); and Hachette Filipacchi,

⁴ Figures from Public Lending Rights website (<https://www.plr.uk.com/>). Accessed 13/10/14. Lists were searched manually for translated books.

which owns a number of well-known UK publishing imprints (Hale 2008: 218; see also Kornacker 2000; Pym 2001; Kovač et al. 2010). This internationalisation of the publishing industry may be said to have had two main effects on the British book business. First, there is arguably an increased focus on economics. Bookshop retailing is subject to the same drive for profit as any other type of retailing, with “the emphasis [...] firmly on minimum stock and high turnover of ‘product’”, leading to a situation where “the pressure on publishers is to go for high-volume, minimum-risk titles that are guaranteed a market” (Cronin 2003: 120; see also Sapiro 2010: 425). Books likely to sell less, including translated works, are therefore generally published in the UK by smaller, independent publishers (Pym 2001: 76; Büchler et al. 2011: 11); however, since these publishers *are* smaller, they are often only able to produce translated books “with lesser print runs and with only occasional reprints” (Pym 2001: 76). This may arguably be a factor in the low numbers of translated books being published in the UK.

Second, more broadly, this internationalisation of the publishing industry is part of a broader process of globalisation across the board. Such globalisation arguably reflects an increased interest in books (and other cultural products) from countries and cultures other than one’s own, which would seem likely to boost the importance of translation as a tool for intercultural understanding (Wiersema 2004; Yazici 2007: 245). However, a crucial aspect of the globalisation process is the increasing use of English as a shared global language, to the extent that some commentators explicitly equate globalisation with Anglo-Americanisation (e.g. Sievers 2007: 44; House 2009: 34; Zethsen 2010: 549). On this basis, the UK, like other primarily Anglophone countries, principally becomes an exporter, not an importer, of books (Key Note 2012: 22). Again, this is likely to result in lower translation rates, and, crucially for the present study, may affect the way readers in the UK feel about translation and translated texts.

As well as the internationalisation and globalisation of publishing, it is also necessary to take into account certain changes in technology that affect book buying and reading. Books themselves are changing: in particular, sales of e-books have continued to rise over the past few years (Key Note 2012: 6; Datamonitor 2012: 13; Publishers’ Association 2012: 1; Laing and Royle 2013: 110; Milliot 2013). At the same time, access to books is also advancing technologically, especially with the increase of bookselling on the Internet. Crucially, book buyers are now able to access many more books much more easily, including translated books (Donahaye 2011: 107; Key Note 2011: 24; Laing and Royle 2013: 123); they are also easily able to compare retailers on

features such as price, thereby being able to purchase books more cheaply (Bloom 2002: 5; Datamonitor 2012: 11; Key Note 2012: 6). Once more, this may affect how, why and how often readers purchase and read books, including translated books.

The geographical and cultural context of the present survey, then, is that of the UK in the early years of the twenty-first century, in which consumers are likely to be more technologically savvy and more globally aware than in previous decades, but less likely to purchase translated books than their counterparts in other countries.

1.5 AIMS AND THESIS STRUCTURE

1.5.1 Aims and research questions

Using a sample of book group members in the UK, then, the present thesis aims to generate a first overview of translation and translated books from the reader's perspective. Specifically, the research deals with particular questions that have been raised but not yet satisfactorily answered within Translation Studies regarding reader attitudes to translated texts:

1. Do readers in the UK conceive of translated books as a distinct category within the books that are available to them? If so, is this category of books positively or negatively viewed by readers?
2. Do readers in the UK have a positive or negative impression of books from other cultures (including non-translated books), and how does this affect their attitudes towards translated books?
3. Is the purchase and reading of translated books affected by practical considerations such as price and availability?
4. When reading a translated book, do readers in the UK judge the quality of the translation, and, if so, how? What do readers in the UK see as the function of translation in such cases?
5. Are readers in the UK interested in learning more about the translation process and the people who translate books? What skills and qualifications do they expect from translators?

6. Finally, what are the opinions of readers in the UK regarding the low translation rates in British publishing, and how do they think such rates might be improved?

1.5.2 Thesis structure

The next chapter, **Chapter 2**, presents an overview of past research regarding translated books and their reception in the UK. This research has generally been conducted in three main academic fields (Translation Studies, reader-response research and consumer studies) and falls broadly into four categories: general consumer habits, text-specific responses, issues relating to translations in particular, and demographic factors. Relevant studies in these four areas are examined for their implications about how readers in the UK may perceive translated texts, and for the relevance to the research questions listed above.

Chapter 3 discusses the methodological framework of the thesis, which is rooted in empirical survey research. It sets out the method for the survey portion of the study, including an examination of the usefulness of combining self-administered questionnaire research with researcher-led interviews in the study of reader attitudes. The chapter also explains the development of the specific survey tools used, including the design and testing of the written questionnaire, as well as introducing the topics to be discussed in the interview section.

Chapters 4 to 8 then present the findings of the survey. **Chapter 4** reports the demographic details of the survey's respondents and discusses the implications of these details, with particular reference to the broader UK context. **Chapter 5** discusses respondents' use of generic and cultural groupings in understanding and describing translated books, and the extent to which 'translation' is itself viewed as a meaningful category, as well as investigating respondents' attitudes towards books from other cultures. **Chapter 6** examines readers' preferences in terms of translation language and peritextual elements; in addition, the chapter studies how translation quality is assessed by readers of target texts. **Chapter 7** deals with respondents' attitudes towards the translator him- or herself, including their level of interest in the translation process, their understanding of the translation profession and their opinions of the skills required for translation. **Chapter 8** examines respondents' attitudes towards practical considerations

such as price and availability when buying translated books, as well as exploring their thoughts on translation rates in the UK and the potential for increasing awareness of translated books.

Finally, **Chapter 9** summarises the findings of the thesis, discusses their implications, and suggests avenues for further research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 OPENING REMARKS

The present thesis, then, takes a descriptive and empirical approach to generating data that can be both interesting and useful to a variety of stakeholders in the translation process. Evidently, however, such data cannot possibly cover all aspects of translation and translated texts; with this in mind, the specific choice of topics to be addressed in the present survey is largely drawn from a close reading of past research regarding readers and books.

Such research has been carried out in a number of academic disciplines, including Translation Studies, reading research, consumer studies and sociology; and, while each of these disciplines approaches the issue of response to texts in a different manner, there are many instances of similarity and convergence of both research questions and investigative methods. Thus, the present chapter begins with an overview of the principal methods used in reader research, before turning to the findings of those reader-based studies that have particular relevance to translated books.

2.2 METHODS OF STUDYING THE READER

Broadly speaking, research into readers can be classified into four broad methodological approaches: research on text reception, which analyses the academic and critical reception of a work; experimental reader-response research, which uses experimental methods to study readers during the reading process; experimental consumer research, which investigates issues of purchase and consumption using experimental methods; and survey research, which asks readers to answer specific questions related to reading, cultural and consumer habits, and demography.

2.2.1 Research on text reception

One method of looking beyond the text towards the reader is found in studies of reception (generally historical in scope), in which researchers examine the historical and literary context surrounding a work's publication. Such studies of how foreign and

translated texts are received in the UK are prolific, dealing with writers such as Virgil (Rudd 2006), Haruki Murakami (Chozick 2008), Irène Némirovsky (Kershaw 2010), Orhan Pamuk (Türkkan 2010), Alexander Pushkin (Bullock 2011) and Henning Mankell (Craighill 2013).

However, there are limitations to what can be inferred about readers in this kind of study. One concern for Translation Studies specifically is that most (though not all) of these studies are performed within the framework of comparative literature or book history, meaning that the translation element is overlooked, to the extent that some writers fail entirely to mention whether they are talking about the source text or a translated version (e.g. Argyle 2007). Even those scholars who do engage with the issue of translation may be somewhat disparaging – for example, Niall Rudd does explicitly deal with translated versions of *The Aeneid* and other Latin literature but concludes that “good translations are a second best” (Rudd 2006: 2).

In addition, although the focus is broadened from the text itself, it does not necessarily include the reader, with the object of study more frequently being the publication and translation history of a work (e.g. Li 2012) and/or the historical and cultural contexts surrounding the translations (e.g. Bullock 2011). Of course, this is at least partly a result of the (usually) historical nature of the studies and thus the extensive use made of published historical documents, which have the advantage of being accessible, both over time and on a practical level (Bechhofer and Paterson 2000: 138-139). However, even those studies concerning modern authors and reception situations tend to use published documentary data sources such as critical reviews (e.g. Harker 1999; Chozick 2008; Steemers 2012); indeed, analyses of critical, intellectual and commercial reviews of translated books are the closest that reception studies come to investigating the attitudes of a real-life group of readers. Reception studies, then, tend to be, as Anabela Branco de Oliveira puts it, “first and foremost the analysis and discussion of a clippings file”⁵ (2000: 190, my translation).

As a result, there are few reception studies dealing with how books are received by non-professional readers, although some reception theorists do at least acknowledge that such readers exist. Donald G. Daviau, for example, analysing the reception of Thomas Bernhard’s work in the United States, differentiates between “the scholarly or academic reception” and “the popular reception”, noting that the latter “has usually been

⁵ “[A]vant tout et d’abord l’analyse et le commentaire d’un dossier de presse” (Branco de Oliveira 2000: 190)

restricted to the available translations and the reviews and commentaries they have received” (1988: 243). Interestingly, he also comments that these two types of reception “reveal strikingly different patterns”, with “more variation of opinion and more negative views” in the popular reception (*ibid.*), thereby emphasising the need for studies of both kinds of readers. Thus, with one or two notable exceptions – such as Rose, who looks at the reading habits of “common readers” by analysing “oral history, educational records, library records, sociological surveys, and opinion polls” (Rose 2001: 2) – the views of non-professional readers are underrepresented in historical surveys of both books in general and translations in particular.

2.2.2 Experimental reader-response research

What is provided by reception studies, then, is a broad picture, with little focus on actual readers; as Haidee Kruger puts it, such studies “cannot focus on the actual responses of typical readers of books” (2013: 183). In contrast, there is a growing body of experimental work both in Translation Studies and in Literary Studies more broadly that deals with how writers and readers react when confronted with texts.

General studies of reading outside the domain of Translation Studies are well advanced, and many of the results obtained in these studies, though not dealing directly with translations, may well have implications for studies of translated texts. A number of studies, for instance, deal with the processing of culturally unfamiliar materials (e.g. Pritchard 1990; Sasaki 2000; Chang 2008), reactions to genre (Zwaan 1991; Halász et al. 2002; Carminati et al. 2006) and foregrounding effects (Miall and Kuiken 1994; Zyngier et al. 2007).

In addition, within Translation Studies there is an increasing amount of experimental research; however, this frequently deals with the translation process rather than with readers of translated texts. Hermans, writing in 1999, states that in target-oriented Translation Studies “[r]elatively little attention has been paid to such aspects as the linguistics or the philosophy of translation, or the mental and cognitive operations of the translation process itself” (Hermans 1999: 44); in the intervening years, the situation has changed drastically, and an abundance of process-based empirical studies have made use of technically advanced techniques such as eye-tracking (e.g. O’Brien 2006; Alves et al. 2014; see Saldanha and O’Brien 2013: 136-145).

Experimental reader-oriented research in the field, however, continues to be limited. Chesterman noted more than a decade ago the possibility of gaining insight into translation phenomena through experiments such as cloze testing, comprehension exercises and other readability tests borrowed from reader-based literary studies (Chesterman 2000: 131; see also Mason 2009: 64; Toury 2012: 259), but such methods are only just starting to be used in Translation Studies, and even then these are generally used in non-literary areas such as audiovisual translation (e.g. Orero and Vilaró 2012). Those few experimental studies dealing with readers of book translations tend to converge on certain topics of interest, many of which are pertinent to the present research: these include the ability of readers to identify translated texts and the features that they find ‘typical’ of translation (e.g. Tirkkonen-Condit 2002 and Nobs 2003), their attitudes towards elements such as culture-specific concepts and fluency in translated texts (e.g. Farghal and Al-Masri 2000 and Havumetsä 2012), and their understanding of translation as a profession (e.g. Chan 2010b and Budin et al. 2013). Conversely, although studies in reader-response research have dealt with a wide variety of issues concerning literacy and textual understanding, only some of these issues are particularly relevant to the present study – in particular, issues concerning cultural difference (e.g. Pritchard 1990 and Porat 2006) and genre categorisation (e.g. Zwaan 1991 and Hayward 1994). These, therefore, are the principal reader-response topics that will be discussed in the present chapter (section 2.3 onwards).

2.2.3 Experimental consumer research

Within the broad sphere of experimental consumer research, two kinds of studies are particularly relevant to the present thesis: studies pertaining specifically to books and reading, and studies dealing with general consumer topics such as price. Regarding the latter kind of study, it is important to note that they frequently deal with utilitarian products such as calculators (e.g. Dodds et al. 1991; Teas and Agarwal 2000), stereos (e.g. Dodds et al. 1991), cars (e.g. Brucks et al. 2000) and watches (e.g. Teas and Agarwal 2000). In contrast, books are hedonic products (Kamphuis 1991 et al.), defined as those whose main purpose is “to entertain, to give pleasure, to arouse emotions and to fulfil the needs of experience-seeking consumers” (Kamphuis 1991: 473; see also Clement et al. 2006: 155). Such products have specific attributes in terms of both production and purchasing – for example, consumers will rarely buy the same hedonic

product twice (Clement et al. 2006: 156) – with the result that research conducted into utilitarian products may not be automatically applicable to hedonic products such as books. Nonetheless, research into such products has been included in the following discussion for two reasons. First, although books *are* primarily hedonic, they may be the variety of hedonic product that is “most likely to possess features characteristic of ordinary consumer goods”, since they are mass-produced, commercially marketed, sold in shops and able to be consumed at home (Kamphuis 1991: 474). Second, the types of products in the studies discussed below are extremely varied, yet, in many cases, findings are similar across multiple product categories, suggesting that they represent a broad trend in consumer attitudes that could be equally applicable to books and other hedonic products. Consequently, the discussion of experimental consumer research in the present chapter (section 2.3 onwards) does not limit itself to studies of books, but includes research into other hedonic and non-hedonic products.

2.2.4 Survey research

The fourth broad method for studying how readers think about texts makes use of surveys, including questionnaires and interviews. As with experimental studies, survey studies are considerably more abundant within the field of reading in general than in Translation Studies in particular. Often these studies have literacy and education as their main focus, and deal therefore with the reading habits of children and young people (e.g. Clark 2011; McKenna et al. 2012); but surveys of adults have also been conducted, giving some insight into adult reading habits and attitudes (e.g. Fenn et al. 2004; BML 2005; Key Note 2011; see p57 for discussion of the results of these studies). In addition, consumer research provides examples of surveys dealing with books as products. The incorporation of such practical elements into studies of translation, and book translation in particular, may seem reductive, but it is worthwhile to recognise that the study of books and reading is “rooted in the material world [and] this material world is characterized in part, and therefore is to be understood in part, by countable quantities: reams of paper, tons of type, print runs, and percentage returns on capital” (Eliot 2002: 283). This view is espoused by a number of researchers, who have conducted consumer-style surveys on such topics as satisfaction with books (Kamphuis 1991), awareness of

available books (Janssen and Leemans 1988), and bookshop organisation (Stokmans and Hendrickx 1994).

Within Translation Studies, the uptake of survey methods parallels the uptake of experimental studies: although surveys have been conducted in Translation Studies, they have primarily been applied to particular research topics. Again, professional translators themselves are well researched (e.g. Schellekens 2004; Dam and Zethsen 2009; Lafeber 2012), as are, recently, other stakeholders in the translation process, such as publishers and those responsible for commissioning technical translations (e.g. Goldsmith 2008; Chan 2010b; Havumetsä 2012). The end-user of the translated text has generally been surveyed only with regards to audiovisual translation (e.g. Caffrey 2008) or technical translation, such as the translation of tourist leaflets (e.g. Nobs 2003; Cómite Narváez and Valverde Zambrana 2014); and these, along with surveys investigating translator training, make up the bulk of Translation Studies survey research (Kuznik et al. 2010: 324).

There are nonetheless a few surveys of readers of translated books; topics under investigation in such surveys include understanding of cultural references (Leppihalme 1997) and preferences among translations (Chazal 2003). The results of such studies, as well as other relevant research using experimental or reception studies methods, are discussed in the following sections, which are organised by research topic.

2.3 GENERAL PURCHASE FACTORS

A central topic when analysing attitudes to translation, particularly when discussing statistics such as the low rates of translation in the UK (see Chapter 1, p16), is the motivating factors in readers' choice of books. This is evidently a crucial aspect of the reading process, and a number of consumer studies have investigated this issue. Their results suggest that, over and above the individual attributes of a particular book – its theme, subject, content or style (Leemans and Stokmans 1991: 496-497; Ross 2000: 17-18; Laing and Royle 2013: 118) – there are several broader motivations that affect readers' book choice, including familiarity with the author, price, physical features and country of origin, all of which are discussed below.

2.3.1 Brand

One of the most influential factors in how consumers choose whether or not to buy a product is their familiarity with the product's brand, defined as "a name, term, sign, symbol, or design which is intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors" (AMA, cited in Jevons 2005: 117). Studies on branding strongly suggest that brands can affect consumers' attitudes to products: for example, very often, brand name can be used as a cue for judging the quality of a product (Brucks et al. 2000: 363; Kirmani and Rao 2000: 69; Teas and Agarwal 2000: 285; Batra et al. 2012: 3).

The particular relevance of brand research to the purchase of books stems from the idea that the author of a book may function in a similar way to a brand name (Kamphuis 1991: 474; Gardiner 2000: 67; Datamonitor 2012: 11). Clive Bloom points out that, as early as the 1950s, readers were using 'Ian Fleming' as a brand name to reassure themselves about the quality and content of the books they were purchasing, while into the 1990s and onwards other authors such as Stephen King, John Grisham and Catherine Cookson are being used as brands in a similar way (Bloom 2002: 75; see also Poldsaar 2010: 263-264). Indeed, familiarity with a book's author has been found to be a crucial determining factor in several surveys of motivations for book purchase (Kamphuis 1991: 479; Ross 2000: 18; BML 2005: 26; Key Note 2012: 4; et al.).

Thus, a well known author name may confer upon his or her books similar benefits to those conferred upon other products by well known brand names, indicating quality and therefore minimising risk in purchasing (Kamphuis 1991: 474; d'Astous et al. 2005: 11). Thus, books by well known authors are likely not only to sell better but to enjoy a more positive position in readers' attitudes. The consequence for translated books is that, if the author is *not* well known, the book will not benefit from the positive effect of an author brand. This is something that has concerned translation scholars: for instance, in their analysis of translation rates in Europe, Valérie Ganne and Marc Minon point out that authors who have been translated may be at an "additional distance"⁶ from their target audience (1992: 61, my translation). Wimmer, discussing translation in the United States, also suggests that, overall, translated books are simply not as familiar as home-grown books (Wimmer 2001: 73); in brand terms, translated books have less

⁶ "une distance supplémentaire" (Ganne and Minon 1992: 61).

developed brand associations in consumers' memories (Low and Lamb 2000: 360), and are therefore likely to be at a disadvantage. An important issue for the present research, then, is the extent to which readers are familiar with the authors of translated books, and the effect that this may have on their attitudes towards these books.

2.3.2 Price

Price is another important motivator, according to general consumer research that sees price as a major factor in purchasing decisions (for an overview see Dawar and Parker 1994). Despite the fact that books are hedonic products (see above, p27), and that they are therefore more likely to be subject to judgements based on “intangible, symbolic, and aesthetic attributes” than functional assessments (Clement et al. 2006: 156), price *is* an important consideration in many surveys of readers (e.g. Kamphuis 1991: 475; BML 2005: 26; Key Note 2012: 4). For example, a survey by the firm Book Marketing Limited, which questioned 2000 British readers, probed the question of price in some depth. Comments in follow-up interviews indicated that hardbacks were perceived as particularly expensive (BML 2005: 21), with around 40% of respondents saying that they had been interested in a hardback book but had chosen to wait for the paperback edition before purchasing (op. cit.: 19). A similar percentage of respondents said that they had not bought a book because they hoped to find it for sale more cheaply elsewhere – frequently the result was that they never bought the book (ibid.).

Such results indicate that consumers do consider price when purchasing books; this is relevant for the present survey because of the importance of price as a factor in the selection and publication of translated books. It is often noted in Translation Studies that translated books are expensive to publish, due to a number of factors including the purchase of translation rights, hiring a qualified translator, and increased editing (Ganne and Minon 1992: 56; Venuti 1998: 124; Sapiro 2010: 434). What is less clear is whether these costs are passed on to consumers, and if so, how this affects their attitudes towards buying translated books. Certainly, although price is a concern in many reader surveys, opinions on book prices are not usually absolute (i.e. ‘the cheaper the better’) but are framed in terms of value considerations: for example, Jan Kamphuis’ survey of book-buyers in the Netherlands offered thirteen book-buying factors, of which one was ‘price (in relation to quality)’ (1991: 475). Catherine Sheldrick Ross also notes that

willingness to expend both price and effort is related to how much people want to read the book in question for other reasons:

The likelihood of a reader's choosing a particular book can be regarded as a ratio of the degree of pleasure expected from the book divided by the degree of work needed to appropriate, physically and mentally, the book. [Sometimes] readers reported being willing to put themselves on waiting lists, special-order, or pay hard-cover prices to read a book that they expected to yield a high degree of pleasure. (2000: 19)

This reflects broader consumer research in which price has been found to be less important than, for example, brand name (Dawar and Parker 1994: 84) – or, in the case of books, author – to the extent that consumers are often willing to pay a higher price for brands perceived as higher quality (East 1997: 85-86; Low and Lamb 2000: 353); indeed, a higher price may sometimes signal to consumers that an item *is* of higher quality (Zeithaml 1988: 8; Dodds et al. 1991: 316; DelVecchio and Puligadda 2012: 468). In addition, different companies and shops offer different buying experiences (Clay et al. 2002: 354): customers may pay more for a product because of an attribute such as familiarity or shipping times, or, indeed, brand (author) name, which has been shown to be more influential than price on purchasing decisions (Dawar and Parker 1994: 84). This is borne out by Michael Smith and Erik Brynjolfsson's study, which analyses data from an online bookselling comparison site; a majority of consumers in the analysis did not choose the lowest priced book (Smith and Brynjolfsson 2001: 545), suggesting that they were focusing on something other than price. Similarly, in BML's survey, respondents judged a book's value on how much use or enjoyment they would get from it, how much books in general cost in relation to other items, and how thick books were (BML 2005: 22). In fact, Min Ding, William Ross and Vithala Rao give book-selling as a specific example of the complicated relationship between price, quality and other purchase factors:

Consider a recent search for *Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card as an example: Amazon.com carried the book new for \$6.99 but also offered used copies from 47 affiliated sites, varying in price from \$2.98 to \$6.99; new copies from 19 affiliated sites, varying in price from \$3.91 to \$6.99; and collectible copies,

including a first edition, from three sites, varying in price from \$5.15 to \$6.95. There seems to be little or no difference among the options except for price, and Amazon guarantees the reliability of all sites. The mere existence of such a variety of prices implies that at least some people have more complicated utility functions. (2010: 69, n3)

More generally, prices perform the dual function of being “both an indicator of the amount of sacrifice needed to purchase a product and an indicator of the level of quality” (Dodds et al. 1991: 308); hence they may be both a positive and a negative cue, and “[t]he lowest price does not mean the highest sales and there are multiple other factors assumed to influence consumers’ buying decision” (Petrescu 2011: 542). Thus, two different issues must be investigated relating to the price of translated books: first, whether readers perceive them as differing in price from non-translated books; and, second, whether this has a positive or negative effect on readers’ attitude towards them.

2.3.3 Physical features

A third factor in consumers’ attitudes towards purchasing or reading a product is its appearance. While all products have physical cues that may influence purchasers (Dawar and Parker 1994: 84), books are generally presented with a particularly high level of additional information on their cover: Gérard Genette notes that books rarely appear without the reinforcement of peritextual elements such as author names, title, preface, cover illustrations and other elements (Genette 1987: 7).

It has been strongly argued, in both Translation Studies and elsewhere, that both verbal and non-verbal cover elements are important in how readers view a work (Genette 1987: 7; Potter 1992: 17; Harvey 2003: 50); consequently, several text-based studies have made claims about the kinds of effects that such elements may have on the reader. Visually, cover pictures are thought to be essential in attracting new audiences to a book (Pellatt 2013: 89), with many critics arguing that they are vital in situating the work within particular geographical, social and cultural spaces. For example, Marie-Hélène Torres, analysing various French translations of the Brazilian Portuguese novel *Quincas Borba* (Machado de Assis, 1891), comments that, on a very simple level, the palm-tree design on the front cover of the 1997 edition evokes the idea that the novel will transport the reader to a hot, tropical culture (Torres 2002: 11). Similarly, Richard

Watts points out that the 1942 Cuban translation of Aimé Césaire's poem *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (1939) includes cover illustrations by the Cuban painter Wilfredo Lam, and argues that, since Lam's previous paintings deal with both Afro-Caribbean identity and with the avant-garde, his cover will help readers to situate Césaire's work within that same paradigm (Watts 2000: 33). Cover pictures can also help to establish a book's genre or intended audience, as with the 1994 US translation of Banana Yoshimoto's キッチン (translated as *Kitchen*): in featuring a "pretty, hip Asian woman", the book's cover "helps to establish it as a woman's novel" (Harker 1999: 36).

Likewise, the importance of a book's title has been well recognised, both in terms of its powers for attracting readers to a book (Genette 1987: 87) and in terms of text comprehension and interpretation (Genette 1987: 88; Zwaan 1993: 31; O'Neill 1994: 124). In an example of a translated title being both explanatory and provocative, Valerie Pellatt notes that the 2009 memoir 改革歷程完整錄音, 還原歷史 by Zhao Ziyang (which Pellatt translates literally as 'The Course of Reform: The Complete Recordings, the Original History') was translated into English with the title *Prisoner of the State: The Secret Journal of Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang*. Pellatt comments that "the word 'secret' [in particular] appeals to our curiosity — it constitutes intellectual titillation" (Pellatt 2013: 95). Similarly, Batchelor mentions translations of African Francophone novels whose titles are both explanatory and exoticising, such as Paul Hazoumé's *Dogucimi* (1938) – translated by Richard Bjornson as *Dogucimi: The First Dahomean Novel*⁷ – and Ken Bugul's *Le Baobab fou* (1982) – translated by Marjolijn De Jager as *The Abandoned Baobab: The Autobiography of a Senegalese Woman* (Batchelor 2009). Thus, the title of a translated book may also be crucial in framing how a reader perceives it.

A third element included on book covers, the blurb, may also serve to increase a reader's interest in a translated book (Pellatt 2013: 90-91). Again with reference to French translations of *Quincas Borba*, Torres notes that the back cover of the 1995 edition includes blurbs by the well-known writer Stefan Zweig and the respectable publication *Le Monde*. She suggests that such blurbs "reinforce [...] credibility and confidence"⁸ with respect to the novel's intellectual qualities (Torres 2002: 11, my translation; see also p53). Keith Harvey makes the same comment about French translations of 1970s American homosexual novels, noting that blurbs for such books

⁷ Dahomey was an African kingdom in what is now Benin.

⁸ "renforcer l'idée de crédibilité et de confiance" (Torres 2002: 11)

include endorsements from notable French gay right activists (Harvey 2003: 54-55). Harvey also gives examples of the descriptive nature of the blurb, and its potential to reinforce the situation of a work both culturally and thematically: several of the blurbs he considers make reference to the novels' source culture of America's gay scene and to the potentially scandalous nature of the books' content. The result, Harvey suggests, may well be to produce "a strange mixture of alienation and desire on the part of the French gay reader toying with the idea of purchasing the book" (Harvey 2003: 55).

In principle, then, information on a book's cover appears to play a vital role in how that book is perceived. However, despite a wealth of commentary on the potential effects of translated elements like titles and cover illustrations, corresponding reader-based research on the effects of book covers and other peritextual elements has so far been limited. The few surveys that have investigated readers' opinions on the information provided on the cover of a book do appear to support the assumptions made above. In general, the verbal elements of the cover are seen as important factors in choosing whether or not to purchase or read a book (Radway 1987: 20; Kamphuis 1991: 475; d'Astous et al. 2005: 11). Ross's study, which asks readers how they make book choices, finds that titles are important both for familiar books – in which case it is the recognition that is a positive factor – and for unfamiliar books, provided that the title is "unusual [and] catchy" (2000: 15).

In contrast, the effect of the book's blurb may be more problematic. Several studies have found that the blurb is an extremely influential factor in book choice (Ross 2000: 14; BML 2005: 26); yet blurbs are not viewed uncritically by readers. Ross's study suggested that readers see a need to "evaluate [cover] cues critically and skeptically" (2000: 15), while in BML's survey blurbs and descriptions on books were frequently seen as "unhelpful, with too many pretentious and untrustworthy quotes" (2005: 7). In this respect, BML's respondents distinguished between fiction and non-fiction: respondents preferred fiction books to include "a description of the plot and style of the book rather than a literary recommendation" (op. cit.: 29), with blurbs being seen as untrustworthy in such cases (op. cit.: 26-27), while in non-fiction books "expert endorsement" was a positive attribute (op. cit.: 29).

It should be noted at this point that, in contrast to many other products, the inside of a book may also be examined before purchase, with the result that 'physical appearance' need not refer only to peritextual elements on the book's cover but also to the interior peritext. Although interior features have been generally overlooked in

consumer studies, Translation Studies provides some research into interior peritextual elements, in particular introductions and footnotes.

In the case of introductions (or prefaces), because they provide an opportunity for the translator to speak directly to the reader, they have frequently been recommended by translation scholars as “an opportunity for the translator to win over the reader to a certain viewpoint” (Pellatt 2013: 91-92; see also Maier 1996: 258 and Kellman 2010: 13). Yet introductions and prefaces to translated books are generally thought to be rare (Poldsaar 2010: 264; Munday 2012: 51; Norberg 2012: 105), and, when they do appear, may frequently be associated with certain kinds of texts, particularly academic texts or non-fiction (McRae 2012: 69; Munday 2012: 303; Norberg 2012: 105). The effect this might have on the reader, however, is largely unexplored.

Similarly, the effect of footnotes on readers’ attitudes is generally unknown. Some translation scholars have suggested that footnotes or annotations in the body of the text may increase the visibility of the translator in a positive fashion (Hill 2006: 79; Toledano Buendía 2013: 150). However, others researchers have commented that footnotes may be perceived negatively (e.g. Hermans 2007: 127; Lahiani 2008: 93; Pellatt 2013: 92-93); Frank, in particular, argues that footnotes may be perceived as “an admission of defeat in translations” (2007: 118). At the same time, it has been acknowledged that footnotes may have certain formal or textual implications – for example, their presence would be more likely in academic texts (Leppihalme 1997: 113; Smith 2000: 1; Toledano Buendía 2013: 156) – and, again, the attitude that readers might take to finding footnotes in translated books, or in other kinds of writing, has yet to be investigated empirically.

2.3.4 Retailer reputation

The three preceding sections have dealt with the issues of author (as brand), price and appearance, which are three of what Niraj Dawar and Philip Parker call “the four product quality signals that have received the greatest attention in the marketing and economics literature” (1994: 82). The fourth in Dawar and Parker’s list is retailer reputation (*ibid.*). However, the relevance of retailer reputation to book purchasing is limited because books are likely to vary extremely little depending on where they are

bought. Although a small number of studies on retailer branding have used bookshops as an example (e.g. Da Silva and Alwi 2008), none of the reader surveys mentioned in the present analysis suggest ‘retailer’ as a motivating factor in book purchase. Some studies do include ‘publisher’ as a concern (Leemans and Stokmans 1991: 498; Ross 2000: 18; d’Astous et al. 2005: 10; Key Note 2012: 4), but this attribute was not seen to be as important a factor as author, price or appearance. In a survey by the research group Key Note, for example, only 3% of respondents agreed that the publishers had an influence on whether the respondent would purchase a book (3%) (2012: 4; see also Datamonitor 2012), reflecting the broader consumer literature in which retailer reputation signals are much less important than price, appearance or brand name (Dawar and Parker 1994: 88). In any case, as Juliet Gardiner points out, “in the case of most trade books, the publisher is unknown to, or rather ignored by, the majority of purchasers and readers of books” (Gardiner 2000: 68); in consequence, the present survey deals only briefly with the issue of publishers (see p130).

2.3.5 Country of origin

In addition to these four much-discussed motivations, there are other factors for purchase that may be particularly relevant to research into books as products, and, in particular, into translated books. One such factor is the existence of country-of-origin effects: that is, “the positive or negative influence that a product's country of manufacture may have on consumers' decision processes or subsequent behaviour” (Watson and Wright 2000: 1151). In particular, consumer researchers have analysed the contrast between consumers who generally dislike foreign products and those who generally prefer them. The first group is known as ethnocentric consumers, who “believe that purchasing foreign products is wrong” (Steenkamp and de Jong 2010: 24; see also Shimp and Sharma 1987: 280), based on the idea that imported products damage the home economy and cause job losses, or indeed are simply unpatriotic; consumer ethnocentrism may also give consumers “a sense of identity [or] feelings of belongingness” to the home nation (Shimp and Sharma 1987: 280). The opposite tendency – preferring foreign products – is conceptualised in consumer research as ‘cosmopolitanism’. In such cases, “foreign/global brands connote membership in the global elite and enhance one’s status and self-image of being modern and sophisticated”

(Cleveland et al. 2011: 261), which leads to ‘cosmopolitan’ consumers: that is, people who see themselves not only as national citizens but as global citizens, and who therefore show “an openness toward and ability to engage in divergent cultural encounters, coupled with more international and less provincial self-perceptions” (2011: 247). The body of research on this topic has led to the conclusion that, as a general rule, “the more ethnocentric the consumer, the greater the likelihood that he or she will opt for domestic products” (Balabanis and Diamantopoulos 2004: 91). In terms of the implications for the purchasing of translated books, the idea of cosmopolitanism may be a positive one, since cosmopolitan consumers, with an interest in other cultures, may view translated books favourably; at the same time, however, if translated books are seen as foreign products then they may be less attractive to ethnocentric consumers.

Furthermore, it should be borne in mind that country-of-origin effects can interact with other product attributes, in particular with product type. Consumer research has frequently found that country-of-origin preferences may vary according to which country the product comes from and type of product (Teas and Agarwal 2000: 284; Balabanis and Diamantopoulos 2004: 80; Herz and Diamantopoulos 2013). For example, if a country such as France is associated with undertones of “aesthetic sensitivity, refined taste, and sensory pleasure”, then experience-based French products such as wine may be particularly positively viewed (Leclerc et al. 1994: 264; see also Verlegh and Steenkamp 1999: 539). In contrast, consumers may feel more secure buying a car made in a country perceived as ‘functional’ or ‘rigorous’ in testing standards, such as Germany (Leclerc et al. 1994: 263; Verlegh and Steenkamp 1999: 539; Herz and Diamantopoulos 2013: 405). In other words, people associate certain countries with certain product values; by the same token, readers may show preferences for particular kinds of books from particular countries. For example, readers may particularly associate manga comic books with Japan (Wischenbart 2007: 27; Caffrey 2008: 163; Sapiro 2010: 423), or crime fiction with Scandinavia (Kovač et al. 2010: 27; Donahaye 2012: 29). Thus, country of origin could arguably affect readers’ attitudes towards certain kinds of translated books, and is therefore another important issue to be raised within the survey.

2.4 TEXT-SPECIFIC FACTORS

2.4.1 Genre

Literature researchers have long made use of categorisations when discussing textual form, particularly through the use of the concept of ‘genre’; however, the exact meaning of the term ‘genre’ is a complex issue. At its simplest level, genre is a way of defining “aggregations of texts” (Bex 1999: 91), or “organising [texts] into recognisable classes” (Frow 2006: 51). More precisely, the notion of genre in literary analysis appears to comprise two main textual aspects: form and function (Hanauer 1998: 63-64; Bex 1999: 91; Carminati et al. 2006: 205). The formal properties of a text are “the initial clues with which we engage before deciding that such and such a text is an advertisement, a letter, a conversation, a lecture, etc.” (Bex 1999: 91), but the reader must also take into consideration a text’s function, or “what we think the text is actually doing in the situation in which it occurs” (ibid.). Generic categories are also context-specific: genres are “linguistic interactions which are inextricably linked with the meanings that are constructed in the realisations of social acts” (Bex 1999: 99; see also Hayward 1994: 410 and Carminati et al. 2006: 205).

Nonetheless, assigning genres to texts is problematic, since it is frequently unclear how best to define or even recognise certain genres (de Geest and van Gorp 1999: 34; see also Bloom 2002: 85). Discussions of genre appear to disagree on several fundamental issues, such as how large a category of texts can be usefully classified as a single genre. For example, Maria Nella Carminati and colleagues treat ‘poetry’ as a genre, with various poetic styles such as ‘sonnet’, ‘elegy’, ‘ballad’ or ‘epistle’ being classed as ‘sub-genres’ (2006: 206), yet Dirk de Geest and Hendrik van Gorp refer to sonnets, elegies and ballads as genres in their own right (1999: 38). Similarly, in prose writing, genre may be conceptualised at any level from ‘book’ (in contrast to ‘magazine’ or newspaper’) (e.g. van Rees et al. 1999: 350-351) through ‘fiction’ (e.g. Pavel 2003: 204) or ‘novel’ (e.g. Scholes 2001: 141; Cohen 2003: 481) to ‘epic’ (e.g. Scholes 2001: 140-141) or ‘tragedy’ (e.g. Pavel 2003: 205). In addition, the relative importance of form, function and style in assigning genre is also under dispute. Tony Bex gives the example of parodies, which share many of the formal characteristics of the genres they are satirising, but obviously perform a different function that is

nonetheless “directly dependent” on generic conventions (1999: 104); it therefore seems unclear how best to describe parodies – and other similar text types – in generic terms (ibid.; see also James 1989: 35).

Conceptually, then, it is highly problematic to attempt to assign generic terms to texts; yet it is equally certain that readers do categorise the texts they read into genres, and, importantly, they use those categorisations to frame their understanding of the texts (O’Neill 1994: 55; Cohen 2003: 482; Frow 2006: 2). Experimental research supports this assumption, offering a particularly high level of support for the idea that reading strategies differ according to the genre of text under consideration. For example, Rolf Zwaan (1991) asked 40 Dutch-speaking subjects to read the same text; half of the respondents were informed that the text was a newspaper article and half were told that it was a book extract. Zwaan reports that those reading the extract as news read the text faster than those reading it as a book text (1991: 151); however, the latter group recalled more about the surface structure than the former (op. cit.: 153). Similarly, Lázsló Hálász, Mick Short and Ágnes Varga introduced secondary-school students (English, German and Hungarian) to a series of text extracts presented variously as literary (i.e. fiction) texts, non-fiction texts, and newspaper articles. The English students showed significantly more “emotion” in reactions to texts presented as fiction (2002: 204), were more likely to comment on the protagonist’s relationships when the text was presented as autobiographical (op. cit.: 204-205), and commented more on the protagonist’s situation when the texts were presented as newspaper articles (ibid.). In terms of overt generic categorisation, Hayward asked a group of university literature students and faculty members to read very short samples – between 5 and 15 words – from works of fiction and works of history (non-fiction) and decide which were which; despite the brevity of the samples, they were correctly assigned around 80% of the time, from which Hayward concludes that “genre is a quality that is deeply embedded in a work” (1994: 413). Consumer research also suggests that genre is one of the most important factors in choosing whether or not to buy a book (Kamphuis 1991: 475; Ross 2000: 14; Bloom 2002: 46-48). For example, popular genres appear to be romance (Mann 1987: 214; Radway 1987) and crime and thrillers (Mann 1987: 214; Key Note 2009: 14); military history and science fiction also appear to be popular, while travel books and political memoirs are currently less so (Key Note 2009: 14).

Thus, the results of these experiments support the notion that generic categorisations are extremely important in readers’ approaches to reading and

classifying books; as such, they may also be relevant for studies of translation. First, generic conventions may differ according to culture, and, as will be discussed in the next section (p43), culturally unfamiliar formal elements may affect text comprehension and thereby the reader's attitude towards that text. At the same time, the question arises of whether 'translation' is itself a genre. Translation scholars, in choosing to study translated texts, make the implicit assumption that translated texts can be usefully distinguished from non-translated texts; and although translated texts do not generally share formal features or content, they do share at least one function – that of allowing people in one language access to books originally composed in another. Consequently, some translation critics *have* viewed 'translation' as a genre, at least in the sense of considering "translated texts as a separate class of texts" (Hermans 1985a: 9), this being the rationale behind research methods such as corpus studies (see e.g. Baker 1993). Other translation researchers analyse target texts and situations as though the fact of translation is evident: for example, Chan claims that "[r]eaders read translations in the full knowledge that such texts constitute a special category, originally written for a different communicative situation" (2010a: 60).

Yet, as noted at the beginning of the present discussion, 'genre' as a mode of categorisation is largely a matter of convention: as Robert Holub puts it, genres "are 'facts' only because we or the author of a poetics has claimed that certain features of works merit grouping them together" (Holub 1984: 61). Regarding translation, there is evidence that readers of translated texts do not group them together in a categorical fashion. For example, as will be seen later (p48), in some cases readers are unable to identify translations as such (Tirkkonen-Condit 2002: 210; see also Classe 2000a: x; France 2001a: xx), while it is a common complaint of translators that published reviews fail to acknowledge the fact of translation when reviewing translated books (Maier 2010: 15; Büchler and Guthrie 2011: 51; Munday 2012: 237). In such a context, it remains unclear whether or not 'translation' is a meaningful category for readers and how (if at all) their attitudes towards translated texts are affected by their categorisations; this therefore constitutes an important area of investigation for the survey.

2.4.2 Cultural differences

One important aspect of how readers perceive and understand translated books is the fact that, generally, a book in translation will originally have been conceived in a different culture from that inhabited by the target-text reader. It is important to note that ‘culture’ in this context refers not to the humanist idea of culture as what is ‘civilized’ or ‘refined’ (Katan 2008: 70; House 2009: 8) but rather refers to a more anthropological conception of culture as a group of people with “a predictable pattern of shared practices” (Katan *op cit.*: 72; see also House *op. cit.*: 8). In a Translation Studies context, where cultures are contrasted using terminology such as ‘source culture’ and ‘target culture’, what is particularly pertinent is that cultures may differ both in the language they use (hence the need for translation) and in the shared knowledge context within which texts are devised; as Maria Tymoczko puts it, “the source culture [may have] distinct cultural practices, concepts, beliefs, values, and so forth, which do not exist or for which there are no close counterparts in the receptor culture” (1999: 165).

General studies of reading have examined how reader responses may be affected by cultural understanding, with a particular emphasis placed on the concept of the schema, “a structured cluster of knowledge that represents a particular concept” (Thorndyke and Yekovich 1980: 23). Since schemata affect how people comprehend the texts they read (Thorndyke and Yekovich 1980: 24; Pritchard 1990: 275), it is likely that cultural schemata – that is, those schemata that are “formed with all related cultural knowledge within one’s reach” (Chang 2008: 78) – are relevant when dealing with texts (such as translations) that are experienced in more than one culture. Indeed, many experimental studies have found that readers of different cultures do show differences in comprehension of the same text. For example, an early study by Margaret Steffensen, Chitra Joag-Dev and Richard C. Anderson reports an experiment with subjects from the United States and India (1979). In terms of text comprehension, the results show that the Americans read the American passage faster than the Indian passage whereas the Indians read the Indian passage faster than the American passage (*op. cit.*: 18); in addition, the Americans recalled more idea units from the American passage than from the Indian passage while the reverse was true of the Indians (*ibid.*). Likewise, Robert Pritchard’s study asked sixty 11th-grade students, thirty from the US and thirty from Palau, to read culturally familiar and culturally unfamiliar passages about funerals in

order to assess the strategies involved in processing the texts (1990: 273). Pritchard found that “[s]ignificantly more idea units were recalled from the culturally familiar than from the culturally unfamiliar passage” (op. cit.: 289). In addition, he also found that respondents used different processing strategies when dealing with familiar or unfamiliar texts; in particular, “when reading culturally unfamiliar materials, readers rely more heavily on strategies for developing awareness, accepting ambiguity, or establishing intrasentential ties” (op. cit.: 288), suggesting that readers read texts about non-familiar cultures in a different way from the way they read culturally familiar texts. More recently, Zonglin Chang asked four Chinese and English subjects to read two Chinese and two English poems, and afterwards checked their comprehension (2008: 79). All of the subjects showed difficulties in their interpretations of the poems from the unfamiliar culture (op. cit.: 82).

Such discrepancies of interpretation do not only occur across national boundaries (for example, between Chinese and English subjects) but also across cultural differences within countries: for example, readers of different religious backgrounds may understand texts in contrasting ways. Dan Porat conducted an experiment in which he gave a number of Israeli students, some attending a Jewish school and some from a secular school, an excerpt from a school textbook about a historical battle between Jews and Arabs (2006: 253). Porat noted that students interpreted ambiguous elements of the text differently: at one point, although the textbook’s account of the start of the incident noted that “someone” opened fire, “most students drew from the text a malevolent understanding in which either Jews or Arabs shot first” (op. cit.: 268), according to their religious and family background. These findings mirror those of an earlier study by Patricia L. Carrell (1987) involving Catholic and Muslim L2 English speakers, which found that respondents were far more successful in understanding texts dealing with a familiar religio-cultural background, and that “those unfamiliar with the cultural-religious background of the text made culturally inappropriate modifications of the text, including obvious intrusions from their own cultural-religious background” (1987: 474).

Carrell’s study is particularly interesting because, in addition to examining the role of culturally unfamiliar content, it also investigates the effect of unfamiliar style and form on comprehension through the inclusion of some structurally reorganised texts within the experiment. Carrell concludes that, although “unfamiliar content poses more difficulties for the reader than unfamiliar form”, rhetorical form is nonetheless a “significant factor” in text comprehension (op. cit.: 476). The reverse of this finding –

that culturally familiar formal elements may be pleasing to the reader – has been recognised by translation scholars: Marilyn Booth mentions the novel *Girls of Riyadh* (translated by Booth herself from the Arabic بنت الرياض [Banat al-Riyadh] by Rajaa Alsanea), suggesting that the novel’s popularity in English translation is at least partly due to its ‘chick-lit’ style that will be familiar to Anglophone readers (2008: 198), while Esperança Bielsa argues that the reception of English translations of Roberto Bolaño’s work in the US and the UK was positively influenced by readers’ ability to ascribe to his work some of the attributes of already familiar beatnik writers (2013: 170).

These studies, then, although forming only a brief sample of the work on cultural differences and reader response, clearly indicate that cultural differences between a text and its reader may lead not only to difficulties of comprehension but also to unexpected interpretations of that text. Similarly, within the domain of Translation Studies, the main concern of the empirical literature regarding the differences between source and target cultures has been the effect on reader comprehension. In particular, researchers have analysed the effect of culture-specific concepts⁹, which Baker defines as “a concept which is totally unknown in the target culture” (2011: 18).

One such study is that of Mohammed Farghal and Mohammed Al-Masri (2000), who used an experimental approach, asking native English speakers to read and respond to translated verses from the Quran; these verses included a range of culture-specific concepts such as *zaqāt* (≈alms-giving). Half of the respondents were given a questionnaire with closed questions, measuring whether the respondents thought they had understood, and the other half were given a questionnaire with open questions, measuring whether they really had understood. Nearly half of the first group stated that they understood the verses in general, with less than a third indicating that they found the verses difficult to comprehend (op. cit.: 32), while only a fifth of respondents in the second group actually demonstrated a good understanding of the verses they had read (ibid.). A more recent eye-tracking experiment conducted by Kruger (2013) produced similar results. A group of child and adult readers read passages from manipulated versions of two picture books translated from English into Afrikaans; one version used common Afrikaans lexical items while the other used loanwords from English or other southern African languages (op. cit.: 192). Overall, the results suggested that

⁹ Cómite Narváez and Valverde Zambrana list a number of other names for this feature including ‘cultureme’, ‘culture bump’ and ‘culture-bound reference’ (Cómite Narváez and Valverde Zambrana 2014: 72-73).

translations using loanwords were more difficult to process on a cognitive level than those using common words (op. cit.: 221-222). Studies conducted with other target languages, such as Finnish (e.g. Leppihalme 1997), demonstrate similar difficulties in comprehending culture-specific concepts.

Studies in audiovisual translation have also found that culture-specific concepts can lead to a lack of understanding (e.g. Antonini 2007; Caffrey 2008), and the same is true of more general reading studies. For example, an experiment by Miyuki Sasaki (2000) asking Japanese students of English to read an English narrative passage found that they performed significantly better on cloze tests when offered Japanese equivalents for English personal names, place names and cultural terms (2000: 90-91), while İsmail Hakkı Erten and Salim Razı conducted a similar experiment in which Turkish university students with high levels of proficiency in English performed considerably better in comprehension tests when reading a “nativized” version of an American short story than when reading the original version (2009).

These empirical studies, then, strongly suggest that culture-specific concepts increase comprehension difficulty; however, it is important to note that in several of the studies respondents reported a higher level of understanding than they actually achieved (Farghal and Al-Masri 2000: 32; Antonini 2007: 165; Caffrey 2008: 171). Therefore, what is not clear from these studies is whether and how a failure to understand culture-specific concepts might affect readers’ enjoyment of and attitude to these translated texts. Indeed, this aspect of culture-specific concepts has not been examined with regards to translated books, although research into other kinds of translation suggests that readers may consider culture-specific concepts to be problematic. For example, Isabel Cómite Narváez and José María Valverde Zambrana used a set of posters created by the Spanish tourist board (*Turespaña*) as the basis for a survey of ten English speakers (2014: 100). Respondents’ attitudes towards culture-specific concepts varied according to the exact concept under consideration: for example, the words ‘fiesta’ and ‘siesta’ were accepted as loanwords, yet ‘saeta’¹⁰ and ‘calzada’¹¹ were deemed to be too “obscure” to be left untranslated (op. cit.: 103). This study therefore supports the idea that non-comprehension of culture-specific concepts may affect readers’ conscious attitudes to the text under consideration, although it remains uncertain whether the same would be true of such items in book translations.

¹⁰ “flamenco sacred song” (Cómite Narváez and Valverde Zambrana 2014: 103)

¹¹ “Roman road” (Cómite Narváez and Valverde Zambrana 2014: 103)

2.4.3 Fluency

In addition to culture-specific concepts, another stylistic feature has received particular attention in translation-based reader studies: fluency. It is frequently observed in Translation Studies that fluent styles of translation are prevalent in Anglophone countries (Venuti 1996: 205; Robinson 1997: 113; Milton 2008: 110), and this would appear to be supported by empirical research. In business translation, Nina Havumetsä's recent survey asked employees of companies in the Finnish-Russian Chamber of Commerce to choose which potential errors in translated business texts were the most problematic. Factual errors were viewed as the most severe deficiencies, but nearly half of respondents (47%) viewed occasions when "[a]n otherwise correct Finnish-to-Russian translation of an ad is not such as an ad should be in Russia" as a 'very serious error' (2012: 104). In addition, 92% of respondents agreed with the statement that "[t]he translator must mould a difficult-to-read original into a translation with fluent and natural language" (op. cit.: 107). This finding that fluency is preferred is mirrored in other research dealing with particular text-types. For example, both Marie-Louise Nobs (2003) and Cómite Narváez and Valverde Zambrana (2014) find that non-fluent style is negatively viewed in translations of tourist leaflets; the latter study reports that the appearance of features such as "linguistic errors, awkward turn-of-phrases or strange collocations" will lead readers to judge that a text "reads badly" (Cómite Narváez and Valverde Zambrana 2014: 102; see also Nobs 2003: 259).

This apparent preference for fluency in translation is emphasised by studies that analyse reviews of translated books. Venuti reports on a series of reviews concerning his translation into English of a selection of short stories by the nineteenth-century Italian writer I. U. Tarchetti (as *Fantastic Tales*, 1992), which used archaisms and a mix of registers with the aim of "call[ing] attention to the translation as a translation without unpleasurably disrupting the reading experience" (1998: 15). Reviews of the book were generally negative, such that Venuti surmises that reviewers "preferred the translation to be immediately intelligible so as to seem transparent, untranslated, or simply non-existent, creating the illusion of reality" (op. cit.: 19). Similarly, Rainier Grutman gives the example of Marie-Claire Blais' *Les nuits de l'Underground* (1978), written in a combination of Canadian French and intentionally unidiomatic English; the replication of this language in the English translation by Ray Ellenwood (*Nights in the*

Underground, 1979) led one reviewer to describe the translation as an “atrocious bilingual hybrid” (cited in Grutman 2006: 38). Indeed, Sevinç Türkkan points out that even unfamiliar versions of English may be unacceptable in a translated text, citing several British reviewers of Güneli Gün’s translation of *The Black Book* by Orhan Pamuk (*Kara Kitap*, 1990) who complain about the use of American English as a translation strategy (2010: 41).

It should be noted that a few review-based studies provide a more nuanced viewpoint regarding translation fluency. For example, one review of Nadine Jarintzov’s non-fluent translations of a selection of Russian poetry suggests that there is at least some value to such a translation, which allows the reader to “enjoy the true colouring, and, if possible, the design” of the foreign text (anonymous reviewer, cited in Bullock 2011: 359). Similarly, Venuti analyses a series of online reviews of two translations of Dostoevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov* – Constance Garnett’s 1912 translation and Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky’s 1990 translation – and notes that the latter translation, which aimed to adhere closely to the syntax of the source text and make use of nonstandard lexical items such as archaisms, was judged preferable by modern readers, “despite its foreignizing effects”, perhaps because it was “closer to current usage than [Garnett’s] Edwardian English” (Venuti 2008: 123). Yet such comments are far outweighed by those in which fluency is preferred, appearing to confirm the primacy of fluent styles of translation in Anglophone countries (Venuti 1996: 205; Robinson 1997: 113; Milton 2008: 110). Thus, it would appear that, as Angela Kershaw concludes from her interviews with a number of publishers, “fluency is non-negotiable” (2014: 39).

2.5 TRANSLATION FACTORS

2.5.1 Identification of translations

In addition to asking about fluency in translated texts, Nobs (2003) asked respondents about features that might indicate to a reader that a text was translated; in this study, all of the responses specified negative features, with the most common being ‘Grammatical errors’, ‘Unusual and strange style’, ‘Spelling errors’ and ‘Difficulty of

comprehension'¹² (2003: 185, my translation). Similar features are discussed in Tirkkonen-Condit's experiments with Finnish translation students and lecturers, in which subjects expected translations to be "clumsy [and] unidiomatic", with unnatural dialogue, unusual use of pragmatic particles, short sentences, inconsistent style or lexical choices, 'un-Finnish' structures such as nominalisation, complex sentence structure and tautology (2002: 212-213). In addition, although "colourful imagery" and "fresh expressions" were thought to be representative of non-translated texts, these were also expected not to include "deviant" or "disturbing" features, which would indicate a translation (ibid.). A third study on this topic is briefly reported by Toury, who discusses a cloze test experiment performed by Singer in the early nineties (Toury 2012: 261-262). In this experiment, subjects read three translations of a short story – one translated in 1959, one in 1985, and one contemporary with the experiment – and it was found that the older the translation, the more difficult it appeared to subjects, and the more likely it was to be identified as a translation (ibid.). Finally, Axelle Chazal's survey, asking Australian readers to compare two translations of *Le Petit Prince* (Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, 1943), found that the primary means of differentiating between the two translations was "style and/or vocabulary" (2003: 31).

All four of these studies, then, would appear to suggest that it is problematic textual features – such as difficulty of comprehension and unusual style – that are most associated with translated texts, with the possibility that readers' attitudes towards such texts may be negatively affected. Yet, despite this identification of expected translation features, actual ability to identify translated texts as such was limited, at least in Tirkkonen-Condit's experiments. Here, subjects read a selection of translated and non-translated texts in a variety of genres and text types including news items, academic texts and fiction passages and were asked to decide whether the texts were originally Finnish or translated. In the first experiment, respondents were correct in their choices 61.5% of the time (2002: 210), while in the second test, respondents were correct in their choices 63% of the time (op. cit.: 211). Tirkkonen-Condit notes that, in the first experiment particularly, the percentage of correct responses is only slightly higher than would be expected from pure guesswork (op. cit.: 210). The implication from these results is that, although readers have strong (often negative) ideas about what a translation will be like, they are not always aware whether or not they are reading a

¹² "Errores gramaticales", "Estilo poco usual y extraño", "Errores de ortografía" and "Comprensión difícil" (Nobs 2003: 185)

translation. This raises the question of the extent to which ‘translation’ is a useful label or categorisation for readers’ understanding of texts, which will be discussed in the following section.

2.5.2 Translator skills

As well as examining readers’ attitudes to translated texts, research has also been carried out into how translators are perceived, and, in particular, what skills are expected of them. Research on this subject has generally been conducted in the sphere of business and technical translation, with studies frequently focusing on stakeholders in the process of corporate translation. One such study is Andy Lung Jan Chan’s survey of translator employers, in which a key issue is past experience. Somewhat unsurprisingly, “almost all respondents prefer their applicants to have some years of experience”, with the average minimum required by companies being 2.7 years and the average minimum preferred being 3.6 years (2010b: 102).

In terms of translator certification, in Chan’s survey a majority of respondents thought that translator certification made it easier to judge a translator’s linguistic knowledge, although it was not as good a reflection of their subject knowledge (op. cit.: 104); a majority also agreed that translator certification makes the recruitment process easier (op. cit.: 105). This somewhat equivocal attitude to translator certification is also indicated in Philida Schellekens’ survey of British translators and interpreters, in which only half of her respondents had had any kind of translation or interpreting qualification when they entered the profession (2004: 11); similarly, Gerhard Budin, Zita Krajcso and Arle Lommel conduct a series of interviews with employees of various companies that train or hire technical translators, and find that interest in translator certification varies by type of business, corporate sector and company size, with larger businesses and those affiliated with governmental organisations being more likely to be interested in translator certification (2013: 147-148).

In Budin et al.’s case, respondents’ concern was generally that they were unsure about the relevance of general certification to particular domains or tasks; in consequence, many of the companies preferred to have applicants for translation jobs translate sample texts in order to judge their performance in pertinent translation situations (op. cit.: 148). This focus on more specific translator skills is also reflected in

a cross-national survey of translators and heads of translation services (working for the UN, the EU and other intergovernmental organisations): here, the most important skills were “Being able to make sure that all the content of the original is relayed in the translation” and “Being able to express ideas clearly in the target language and having sound knowledge of the source language” (Lafeber 2012: 115).

Reading research, then, provides information about readers during the process of reading, characterising how texts are processed and understood. However, in a study of translated books, it is equally important to examine what readers think and feel in context surrounding the reading process – for example, when they are choosing which books to read. Hence, past research conducted in consumer studies may also be highly relevant, and is therefore discussed in the following sections.

2.5.3 Translations as status goods

A final aspect of book choice that may be relevant to the study of translated books is the dichotomy between ‘highbrow’ and ‘lowbrow’ reading material. It has already been noted that some books are assigned the category of ‘highbrow’ (p9), and others are categorised as “lowbrow” (Andringa and Schreier 2004: 162; Bernardini and Zanettin 2004: 57) or “popular” (Damrosch 2003: 28; Bernardini and Zanettin 2004: 57). In terms of book consumption, two further issues must be addressed: whether such categorisations are generally agreed upon by readers, and how this affects what they buy and read.

Regarding the first issue, it has been acknowledged for some time that ‘literariness’ is not a quality inherent in a work but rather a function of how the work is read and studied (Leemans and Doggenaar 1987: 255-256; O’Neill 1994: 126; Miall 2006: 181), with the result that the differences between ‘high-brow’ and ‘low-brow’ books are difficult to express precisely (see also Enzensberger 1993: 33). Nonetheless, it appears that such concepts are both known to and used by readers, and, furthermore, different readers often agree on which books fall into which category. For example, Hein Leemans and J. van Doggenaar asked a group of Dutch readers to rate a list of fifteen authors as ‘literary’, ‘semi-literary’ or ‘non-literary’; the study found that “individual buyers of literature agree to a considerable extent in their opinion as to whether a given oeuvre can be ranked as literature or not”, with very few occasions of

individual respondents giving a different rating to the majority (1987: 267-268). A similar experiment, this time using book titles, was conducted by Victor Nell in South Africa and found that “[m]erit judgments are often dichotomous, with ‘literature’ or ‘good stuff’ opposing ‘trash’. In our sample, material at these two poles is easily identified” (1988: 145). More specifically, Nell’s study found that the kinds of books classified as “literature” were nineteenth-century works as well as works by Joyce and Conrad, while works classified as “trash” were primarily “formula bestsellers” (ibid.). Later studies echo this distinction: respondents in Ross’s study were scathing about “mass market fiction”, such as romance, westerns and horror (Ross 2000: 16), while Jenny Hartley’s study finds that “genre fiction”¹³, including crime fiction and romance, “gets poor ratings” from book-group readers (Hartley 2001: 63). In contrast, ‘literature’ tends to be conceived of as “difficult” or “dense” (Nell 1988: 146; Lang 2010: 333). The results of these studies therefore appear to suggest that there is a high level of agreement among readers about which kinds of books constitute ‘highbrow’ and which constitute ‘lowbrow’, although Nell does also note that in his survey there was a “large gray area” in between the two poles (1988: 145), suggesting that some books in particular may be less easily characterised.

The effect of such categorisations on attitudes to translation, then, depends on whether translated books as a category are generally conceived as either ‘highbrow’ or ‘lowbrow’. Bearing in mind the lack of empirical evidence on this topic, it would seem reasonable to hypothesise that translated books may be more frequently viewed as highbrow, for the principal reason that a large proportion of the books that have been translated in the UK up to this point have been classics; such titles appear to be an exception to the rule of low translation rates. A brief survey of the *Encyclopedia of Literary Translation into English* (ed. Classe 2000) reveals a variety of ‘classical’ authors translated prodigiously into English: twelve translations (including re-translations) of *Eugénie Grandet* by Honoré de Balzac (Tilby 2000), eight translations of Miguel de Cervantes’ *Don Quixote* (Parr 2000: 254-255), sixteen translations of Dante’s *Divine Comedy* (Crisafulli 2000: 339-340), and twelve translations of *Crime and Punishment* by Dostoevsky (Burnett 2000: 366). Statistics from the *Index Translationum* support this impression: of the top nine authors translated in the UK up

¹³ Note that this use of ‘genre fiction’ as a term implies “formula, a way of cranking out virtually identical texts to serve a culturally debased group of readers” (Scholes 2001: 141). This is in contrast to the use of the term ‘genre’ throughout the rest of the present thesis, in which it refers to “the type of any given work” (Scholes 2001: 141; see also Lamprinou 2011: 2).

to 2008¹⁴, five could be considered ‘classic’ authors (Hans Christian Andersen, Euripides, Anton Chekhov and the Brothers Grimm).

Of course, many of these works have the advantage of being several hundred years old – *Don Quixote*, for example, was first published in 1605 – yet there is some evidence that prestigious literature *is* privileged in translation into English. One corpus study of Italian and English translations suggests that “the texts that normally get translated from Italian into English [...] tend to be very prestigious, canonical works in the source culture” (Bernardini and Zanettin 2004: 58-59), while Pym adds that even larger publishers, who are often reluctant to publish translated books, frequently have translated classics on their lists (2001: 75), and Beth Luey comments that, at least in the case of the United States, the few books that are translated and imported are “in many cases of high quality and great literary and cultural influence” (2001: 48). Indeed, it has been suggested that ‘literature’, in comparison to other types of books, “has the highest degree of cultural diversity”, to the extent that “language diversity appears thus to be located in the upmarket literary publishing [sic], as opposed to commercial publishing” (Sapiro 2010: 428, 436). Thus, even if a particular translated book would not necessarily be categorised as ‘highbrow’ in its source culture, the fact that it is a translation may suggest an element of ‘literariness’ to the target culture reader.

If this is the case, then the purchase of translated books may be helpfully characterised as an example of status consumption – that is, “the tendency to purchase goods and services for the status or social prestige that they confer on their owners” (Eastman et al. 1999: 41). Spiers notes that many kinds of books may be bought for reasons to do with “‘aspirational’ and ‘display’ purchasing” – that is, purchasing as implicative of personal status (2011: 32). Kamphuis, too, refers to “the prestige, the social status one derived from possessing a certain book” (1991: 475), and Alain d’Astous, François Colbert and Imène Mbarek suggest, more bluntly, that book choice may be motivated in part by the desire to “feel[...] that one is an intellectual” (2005: 2). Indeed, one of Kamphuis’s thirteen book-buying factors is ‘cultural value of the book (as perceived by respondents)’ (1991: 475), and, although the exact meaning of ‘cultural value’ is not discussed by Kamphuis, it seems reasonable to assume that the term refers to the fact that certain books are seen as more culturally prestigious than others. Other studies of readers have also suggested that highbrow books may be positively viewed:

¹⁴ 2008 is the most recent year for which British statistics are available. Search performed 15/12/14.

for example, Hartley, looking at what book groups read, states that “[t]he bulk of the titles are what booksellers call literary fiction” (2001: 62).

The advantage of translated books being perceived as status products is that they are likely to be attractive to consumers who have an interest in making purchases based on the status they confer (Eastman et al. 1999: 41; see also Kuksov and Xie 2012: 609); such consumers need not be limited to any one socio-demographic sector (Eastman et al. 1999: 41). At the same time, however, an intrinsic element of the value of status goods is that they are not widely accessible (see Kuksov and Xie 2012: 609-610), with the result that a type of book perceived as ‘prestigious’ or ‘intellectual’ is likely to be one that is not especially popular or widely read. Certainly, general surveys of the reader, such as that reported by Peter Mann regarding adults in the UK, suggest that ‘literary’ novels – what Mann calls ‘serious modern fiction’ – are far less popular than other types of book (1987: 214-215); Mann suggests that “the best selling paperbacks on the whole are light recreational reading” (op. cit.: 215). Similarly, Lefevere notes that the types of books usually classified as ‘literary’ “no longer constitute the preferred reading matter of the non-professional reader” (1992: 3), while Enzensberger suggests that, overall, the “general public” is “all but infallible in spotting – and avoiding” serious literature (1993: 33). Thus, the issue of whether translated books are status products has important implications for how they are consumed, and is therefore another topic that will be addressed in the survey.

2.5.4 AWARENESS OF TRANSLATIONS

As well as being asked about factors affecting book choice, consumers are often also surveyed about where they obtain their knowledge of books. As may be expected, sources of information vary widely, with some sources being viewed as considerably more trustworthy than others. Recommendations from personal acquaintances are seen as excellent sources of book information, being the “most used and trusted sources of advice on books” in BML’s survey (2005: 7) and also considered highly relevant in several other studies (Janssen and Leemans 1988: 569; Ross 2000: 17; Hartley 2001: 53; Rose 2001: 140). Empirical studies of sales data also support the notion that word-of-mouth affects sales figures for books (see Beck 2007: 7). Well-known literature figures are also influential in reading choice: Marija Bergam, for example, mentions the

importance of “the advocacy of Ted Hughes” in the success of Vasko Popa’s work in the UK (2013: 241), while on a more anecdotal note, DeNel Rehberg Sedo comments that:

When book club readers find out I am doing work on book clubs, inevitably for the next book the first question I am asked is what titles I would recommend or what titles I have heard about. I received this question so often that I have termed it ‘The Eternal Quest’ for what to read next. (2003: 81-82)

Also positively viewed by readers are other individuals or groups who might be expected to have particular book-related knowledge. Libraries and bookshops are well regarded as sources of information (Leemans and Doggenaar 1987: 257; Janssen and Leemans 1988; BML 2005: 7), and, indeed, borrowing from libraries is a substitute for buying new books for around a third of readers (Mann 1987: 215; Sedo 2002: 19; BML 2005: 17). An important part of this source of knowledge is promotional activities such as book displays, which have in recent years become increasingly concentrated on smaller numbers of books (Gardiner 2000: 65). There is little research on the extent to which translated books are included in such displays, but anecdotal evidence suggests that they are rare, except in specific cases where the fact of translation is itself used as a promotional strategy. An example of this is given in Figure 4, showing a temporary display at a major bookshop in Edinburgh.



Figure 4. 'Found in Translation' at Waterstones (2011).

There are also informational links between books and other media outlets. Book programmes on television or the radio are seen useful sources of information (Leemans and Doggenaar 1987: 257; Janssen and Leemans 1988; BML 2005: 7). For example, a study by Richard J. Butler, Benjamin W. Cowan and Sebastian Nilsson in the USA found that books featured on ‘Oprah’s Book Club’ – a segment of Oprah Winfrey’s talk show between 1996 and 2011 – “not only received a terrific initial boost in sales following their selection, but also enjoyed prolonged popularity after their original surge” (Butler et al. 2005: 23; see also McGinley and Conley 2001: 209 and Sedo 2002: 11). Similar analyses of the effects of ‘Richard and Judy’s Book Club’ (airing as part of the *Richard & Judy* television programme, 2004-2009) suggest that the programme generated around £150 million of additional book sales in the UK (Lang 2010: 18). In addition, the positive effect of television and film on book sales continues via film or TV adaptations of books, which can be useful in introducing readers to new book titles (Leemans and Stokmans 1991: 498; Ross 2000: 17; BML 2005: 26; Craighill 2013: 207).

Attitudes to published reviews, another potentially privileged source of information, are more problematic. As noted in the introduction (Chapter 1, p25), in reception studies the influential potential of press reviews is frequently taken for granted, with reviews being viewed as barometers of reception (as in Harker 1999; Türkkan 2010; Bielsa 2013; et al.), espousing the attitude that reviews “can form a valuable source of information for the immediate reception of literary works” (Stemers 2012: 45). Yet consumer-based surveys reveal that readers are sometimes sceptical of the value of published reviews. Janssen and Leemans, for example, cite the belief of publishers and booksellers that “the commercial success of a literary book depends to a considerable extent on reviews, interviews with the author and mentions in literary columns” (1988: 563); yet, when they surveyed buyers who had just purchased a book from a bookshop, over a third had bought a book that had not recently received media interest (op. cit.: 567-568). Similarly, published reviews were seen as a good source of information by Ross’s respondents (2000: 17), but only in the case that the reviewer has “tastes known to be compatible” to those of the reader in question (op. cit.: 12). Likewise, while Audrey Laing and Jo Royle’s study cites newspaper reviews as the fourth most important factor in influencing book purchases (2013: 118), BML’s survey found that reviews in the press are “a less influential source of information” than personal recommendations or advice from libraries and bookshops (2005: 7), with many

respondents being “sceptical about press reviews, feeling that authors tended to be nice to other authors” (op. cit.: 29).

Bestseller lists, as well as lists of books that have won prizes, are similarly problematic (Ross 2000: 17). Readers may use such lists as sources of information (BML 2005: 26), but the fact that a book is a bestseller or a prize-winner is not automatically a positive endorsement. Amongst established critics, the cultural value of literary prizes is much debated, with commentators such as James English reporting that “the discourse surrounding cultural prizes has long been predominantly negative in tone” (English 2005: 187), frequently because “it is said that they systematically neglect excellence and reward mediocrity [and] turn a serious artistic calling into a degrading horse race or marketing gimmick” (op. cit.: 25). Some reader studies are equally ambivalent about the impact of literary prizes on readership of prizewinning books: for example, Hartley’s examination of the most chosen books by a series of book groups found that “their top ten, listed for the period June-December 1999 [...] bears no relation to the bestselling paperbacks of the year” (2001: 67). Nonetheless, it is generally recognised that conferral of a literary prize upon a particular book, or inclusion of a book in a bestseller list, does have a strong positive effect in terms of publicity and sales. Alan Sorensen’s comparative analysis of bestseller lists and sales figures demonstrates large increases in books recognised as ‘bestsellers’, even if such increases “reflect an informational effect rather than a promotional effect” (2007: 716), while English pointedly notes the phenomenon of “the Nobel laureate’s out-of-print titles suddenly appearing in attractive new boxed-set editions and translated into every major language” (English 2005: 11).

The relevance of these sources of information for studies of attitudes towards translation is that such attitudes depend on readers having at least some awareness and knowledge of translated books. Readers’ reliance on outlets such as bestseller lists and published reviews for information about books may be problematic if translated books are underrepresented in these outlets, as is often thought to be the case: numerous translation scholars have noted that “[r]eviews editors in the UK and Ireland are notoriously poor at ensuring adequate space for translation reviews, proper recognition of translation quality, and even translators’ names” (Büchler et al. 2011: 13; see also Maier 2010: 15). Even when translated books are reviewed, the fact of translation is rarely mentioned, let alone the translator (Büchler and Guthrie 2011: 51; Donahaye 2011: 109). Türkkan’s study of reviews of *The Black Book*, indeed, reports that “book

reviewers read the translation as if it were a transparent copy of the original work [...] Reviewers read and comment on the English text and on its stylistic aspects assuming transparency” (2010: 41-42). Similarly, Jeremy Munday looks briefly at a series of reviews of Gabriel García Márquez’s *Strange Pilgrims*, translated by Edith Grossman, in which “the book is almost overlooked as a work of translation” (2012: 237).

Although there have been few empirical studies specifically dedicated to this issue, the possibility of the invisibility of translation and translators is an important question because the amount of information consumers have about a product may affect their attitude towards it. In many cases, a high amount of information is positive because this information has value (Ariely 2000: 235; see also Janssen and Leemans 1988: 563); on a very basic level, if a consumer is unaware of a book then s/he cannot purchase it. In addition, increased product knowledge – or perceived increased product knowledge – gives consumers more confidence to buy a product: for example, shoppers are more likely to make impulse purchases the more they know about a product (Harmancioglu et al. 2008: 34). Hence, simply being less familiar with a translated book may mean that readers feel less well disposed towards it, and they may also be less inclined to buy a translated book if they know little about it. As such, familiarity with the translated nature of a work is an important research area for understanding readers’ attitudes towards translations, and, again, is included in the present survey.

Past research on the reader, then, has indicated a number of topics that may be highly relevant in affecting how readers feel about translated books, in terms of both acquiring and reading them. These topics are therefore addressed in the questions that form the present questionnaire (Appendix 1) and the interview schedule (Appendix 2). In addition to such topics, the questionnaire includes a number of demographic questions, which are the subject of the next section.

2.6 DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

In addition to the text-based factors that are of interest in examining how readers feel about translation, there are also demographic features that may affect respondents’ attitudes to translated books. The demographic patterns and tendencies referred to in the present discussion are drawn from empirical studies conducted in the UK in both

reading research and consumer studies, and refer only to those demographic variables that have consistently been shown to correlate with attitudes to reading.

First, numerous studies have found that age affects reading habits and preferences. In terms of reading habits, an early study by Mann found that, although “age was not a serious discriminating factor”, the older respondents in his study read slightly more than the younger ones (1987: 213), while BML’s study also found that book reading was highest among those aged 55-64 or 65 and over (2005: 31). The study conducted by Clare Fenn and colleagues mirrored this in that respondents aged 16-24 were the least likely of all age groups to read for pleasure (2004: 50). In contrast, the pattern for *buying* books is less straightforward. In BML’s survey, those aged under 24 and those aged 65 or over bought the fewest books (2005: 11); similarly, Key Note found that those over 65, as well as those under 19, were least likely to buy both hardback and paperback books (2011: 45). The highest buying groups were 35-44 in Key Note’s survey and 25-44 in BML’s survey (Key Note 2011: 45; BML 2005: 11). Kelly Gallagher and Steve Bohme likewise found that younger consumers – in this case, those under 29 – bought the fewest books; however, they also found that consumers over the age of 61 accounted for nearly one-third of all book purchases (2009: 249).

In addition to age, survey results suggest that, in the UK, men and women vary in their reading and book-buying habits. Numerous surveys of children and young people find that girls read more and have higher literacy than boys (Sainsbury and Schagen 2004: 377-378; Logan and Johnston 2009: 207; Clark 2011: 6-9), and such trends appear to continue into adulthood. Michael Skaliotis found that women were more likely to read for pleasure than men (2002: 5), as did Fenn et al. (2004: 47) and BML (2005: 31); the latter study also found that women were more likely to read for longer each day than men (2005: 31). In addition, both studies showed that women were more likely to buy books than men were (Fenn et al. 2004: 47; BML 2005: 11; see also Key Note 2011: 45). Likewise, level of education also seems to have an effect on reading practices. In general, those with higher levels of education read more often (BML 2005: 31; Skaliotis 2002: 5); they also buy more books (BML 2005: 11). Since education, age and sex all appear to be linked to reading practices, then, it is important to measure them as part of the present questionnaire.

Another variable that seems to be related to reading habits is that of ethnicity. In contrast to the three previous variables, for which measurement is relatively straightforward, ethnicity is “particularly fuzzy and problematical”, both conceptually

and politically (Bulmer 2012: 109); elements that an ethnic group might share, Martin Bulmer suggests, include “kinship, religion, language, shared territory, nationality or physical appearance” (Bulmer 2012: 110; see also de Beet 2005: 31-32). Nonetheless, many reader studies have included ethnicity in the demographic profiles of their respondents and found differentiation on that basis. Christina Clark’s 2011 survey of young people in England, for example, found that ethnic background (operationalised as race) was associated with certain reading habits, with young people from black or mixed-race backgrounds being more likely to read every day than young people from white or Asian backgrounds, and also being likely to read for longer periods of time (2011: 7-8); overall, white children enjoy reading the least (op. cit.: 6). Likewise, studies in the US have also found differences in reading habits between racial groups (Scales and Rhee 2001: 181; Griswold et al. 2005: 129). Outside the category of race, nationality has been shown to affect reading habits (Skaliotis 2002: 4) as well as attitudes to translation (Eurobarometer 2012: 130). This latter survey, of respondents in 27 European countries, also found that respondents who spoke more than one language were more likely to view translation as important to their reading activities than those who were monolingual (op. cit.: 140). Finally, as has been noted, nationality and cultural group are important factors in textual understanding (see p42). Consequently, ethnicity is measured in the present questionnaire, operationalised as the variables of country of birth, nationality and languages understood.

A final demographic variable that appears to relate to reading habits is socioeconomic status. As with other variables such as sex, results for this variable tend to be reasonably stable across age: children from higher socioeconomic groups tend to read more than children from lower socioeconomic groups (Greaney 1980: 340; Clark 2011: 46), and this continues into adulthood. In terms of adult reading, several studies have found a higher level of book-reading and book-buying among those of a higher socioeconomic group (Mann 1987: 213-214; BML 2005: 11; Gallagher and Bohme 2009: 250; Key Note 2012: 22); in particular, Gallagher and Bohme note that in 2008, higher socioeconomic groups accounted for less than half of the British population but 59% of the book-buying public (2009: 250). More generally, Fenn’s 2004 study and a 2011 survey by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) both found that cultural participation and interest in general tended to be higher among higher socioeconomic groups (Fenn et al. 2004: 72; DCMS 2011: 66).

However, it should be noted that socioeconomic status is extremely difficult to measure (Burton 2000: 860; Buckingham and Saunders 2004: 62; Harrison 2012: 89); this is particularly true of survey studies, in which socioeconomic status is generally an overall assessment derived from a series of questions relating to employment status, size of business and role within it, business sector, working hours, income and housing status (National Centre for Social Research 2000; Scales and Rhee 2001; ONS 2011; Harrison 2012). In the present survey, it has been judged that the negative consequences of including a long battery of socioeconomic questions – for example, increased survey length and therefore increased likelihood of respondent fatigue – outweigh the benefits of being able to investigate associations that may or may not exist between socioeconomic factors and other variables. Consequently, the variable of socioeconomic status has not been included in the present survey.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND DATA

3.1 OPENING REMARKS

Past research into readers and consumers, then, offers a broad range of potential topics for exploration in a survey of readers of translated books. Researchers exploring some of these topics – such as readers’ ability to identify translated books – have yet to reach a general consensus, meaning that there is much scope for further research in these areas. In other cases, conclusions derived from multiple investigations into non-translated books or utilitarian products – for example, the effect of country-of-origin factors – are largely untested in terms of their potential implications for translated books. With that in mind, the present chapter examines how issues of reception, reader response and book consumption may be investigated with particular reference to translation, and presents the methodology and data utilised in the present survey.

As discussed in the introductory chapter, examples of survey research in Translation Studies have so far been limited; in consequence, the research methods underpinning the present thesis are drawn not only from Translation Studies but also from more general social science-based survey techniques. This chapter therefore begins with a discussion of surveys in social research, particularly with regards to research into attitudes, then goes on to examine techniques of questionnaire and interview research as they apply to the issues of reader response and book consumption discussed in the previous chapter.

3.2 SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND THE STUDY OF ATTITUDES

The main aim of the present study, then, is to examine a certain kind of translation-related phenomenon (readers’ attitudes towards translated books) in order to provide a descriptive report that will be of use both in translation research and in real-life translation situations. More specifically, the phenomenon under discussion is the results of a reader-based attitude survey on the subject of translation, with responses gathered from book group members in four UK cities.

3.2.1 Translation Studies and surveys

As noted in Chapter 1 (p1), surveys are extremely popular in consumer research and other domains, especially when the object of study is attitudes towards a particular phenomenon. However, due to the limited use made so far of surveys in Translation Studies, a translation-based survey methodology per se has not yet developed (Orozco 2002: 71; Kuznik et al. 2010: 337; Saldanha and O'Brien 2013: 151). Consequently, the approach for the present survey is rooted in more general survey methodology, with reference to specific translation and interpreting survey studies where appropriate. In particular, the methods for the survey part of the thesis are drawn from research into attitudes, as discussed in the following section.

3.2.2 What are attitudes?

Attitudes have been defined in different ways in the social sciences, but perhaps the most widely cited definition is that of Alice Eagly and Shelly Chaiken (Albarracín et al. 2005: 4; Vargas et al. 2007: 104): they define 'attitude' as "a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor" (Eagly and Chaiken 1993: 1). Thus, an attitude has both underlying and expressive elements, and is an evaluation or judgement about an object's perceived positive or negative attributes.

Crucially, however, attitudes are not factual information, but rather psychological constructs that vary across people (Albarracín et al. 2005: 5; Moser-Mercer 2008: 144; Groves et al. 2009: 42), and, as such, "attitudes are not immediately accessible to the researcher interested in measuring them" (Roberts 2012: 195-196; see also Krosnick et al. 2005: 22). This is in direct contrast to much research in Translation Studies, where the object of interest is often directly observable (for example, the linguistic structure of a translated text), and it is a particular concern for empirical studies, which, as noted earlier (p4), focus on translation 'facts'. In the case of attitude research, investigators make judgements about the latent constructs of attitude from behaviour, such as the responses to a questionnaire; however, it may be debated whether this is sufficient to make empirical claims about the attitudes underlying such behaviours. The assumption of almost all measures of attitude is that people do have

some kind of latent feeling about other people, groups and objects. Recently, however, attitude researchers have questioned whether this is the case, particularly since different measures of attitudes have sometimes produced different results; in addition, attitude reports are not always stable over time (Cook and Selltiz 1964: 36; Bohner and Wänke 2002: 5; Eagly and Chaiken 2005: 746). This has been taken by some critics to mean that attitudes themselves are not stable over time, or, indeed, that there is no such thing as an underlying disposition; it could be that ‘attitudes’ are just spur-of-the-moment (‘on-line’) associations of cues, ideas and context (Schwarz 2000: 163; Bohner and Wänke 2002: 23). If this is the case, then the attitude evoked by a particular survey question, for example, will not be the same as a related attitude evoked in other contexts.

Yet this appears to overlook a crucial aspect of the organisation of attitudes: the comprisal of both stable and variable elements. To return to Eagly and Chaiken’s definition, attitudes are intrinsically made up of both a tendency and an expression of that tendency. In other words, while the expression of the attitude may vary, the basic tendency is likely to remain consistent; as Jon Krosnick, Charles Judd and Bernd Wittenbrink put it, “the underlying ingredients from which [an attitude] report is built [...] are relatively stable” (Krosnick et al. 2005: 24). By implication, these ‘underlying ingredients’ – that is, the overall attitude – can be measured through a variety of indirect means such as questionnaires, which have been used to study attitudes in a variety of fields including consumer research (e.g. 2000; Steenkamp and de Jong 2010), reading research (e.g. Fenn et al. 2004; McKenna et al. 2012) and Translation Studies (e.g. Merkel 1998).

3.2.3 Attitudes towards translation

The attitudes under scrutiny in the present study are, of course, those dealing with translation and translated texts. This kind of subject is in contrast to the majority of attitude research, which is generally social – for example, a fruitful area of study has been discrimination research, focusing particularly on attitudes towards different races and ethnic groups (Cook and Selltiz 1964; Eagly and Chaiken 2005: 763; Vargas et al. 2007). The present research thus differs from much other attitude research in a number of ways: it deals with attitudes towards products rather than people or groups, meaning

that it arguably has less of a moral dimension, and the topic under discussion is one that is less common in political and social discourse. That said, attitude research in the sphere of the arts is not unknown; surveys have been conducted into attitudes towards television (e.g. Davis and Westbrook 1985; Albarran and Umphrey 1993), museums (e.g. Kinoulty 2006; Britain Thinks 2013) and music (see e.g. Bullock 1973). In addition, as noted in the previous section, there are specific studies on attitudes to reading, particularly with regards to children (e.g. Sainsbury and Schagen 2004; Logan and Johnston 2009; McKenna et al. 2012). Such research makes use of many of the same survey techniques as research into social attitudes – scaled questions, demographic comparisons, thematic discussion, and so on.

3.2.4 Status of responses

Attitude surveys, then, are perceived to be a valuable sector of survey research that measures the part of social reality that deals with people's evaluations of objects. That said, unlike other types of surveys (for example, those dealing with demographic information), "attitudes are not immediately accessible to the researcher interested in measuring them" – that is, they cannot be directly observed (Roberts 2012: 195-196). This is problematic because, even if an underlying attitude towards an object does exist, expressions of that attitude are likely to vary. In some cases, this reflects an actual change in attitudes (Eagly and Chaiken 2005: 746); however, in other cases, attitude expressions can be affected by context (Cook and Selltiz 1964: 36; Bohner and Wänke 2002: 5; Eagly and Chaiken 2005: 746; Krosnick et al. 2005: 24), and in particular by the way these expressions are being measured. In addition, it is well recognised that the formulation of the research tool – in the present case, the questionnaire and interview guides – can affect the answers that respondents give; in this sense, data are 'created' rather than collected (Buckingham and Saunders 2004: 28; Groves et al. 2009: 149). What is commonly conceived of as 'data collection', then, is more accurately "a process of selectively choosing empirical phenomena and attributing relevance to them with respect to the research question" (Bergman and Coxon 2005); indeed, this is the case in all kinds of research, whether in translation or any other field.

Consequently, the approach taken in the present thesis is that survey findings, and in particular the results of attitude surveys, do not necessarily represent an objective

‘truth’. Rather, they are context-based responses resulting from an interaction of factors including the design of the survey tool and the situation of the respondent. That said, the way in which people respond to the survey is assumed to be substantially determined by their underlying attitudes to the topics and objects described in the survey, and it is in the context of these underlying attitudes that the survey results have been analysed.

3.3 THE PRESENT SURVEY

As specified earlier, the mode of survey research used in the present study is a combination of two stages: a self-administered online questionnaire and a series of face-to-face semi-structured interviews.

3.3.1 Self-administered questionnaires

Questionnaires differ from other types of survey (for example, interviews) in several ways, with perhaps the most important difference being that they are standardised. This is one of the main reasons for the most often-cited advantage of the questionnaire over other data-gathering methods: its “economy” in terms of both time and money (Gorden 1975: 77; Bechhofer and Paterson 2000: 74; Greener 2011: 39). In addition, the data gathered through structured questionnaires is particularly amenable to statistical analysis (Keillor et al. 2001: 63), while standardised questionnaires are also partially or wholly replicable (Webb et al. 1981: 167).

In terms of conducting standardised questionnaires, there are two broad approaches: interviewer-based surveys (face-to-face or on the telephone), and self-administered questionnaires, in which the respondent reads and answers the questions him- or herself (Bechhofer and Paterson 2000: 74). Different survey modes have different advantages and disadvantages, and there are differences in responses between survey modes, particularly on certain topics (Duffy et al. 2005: 637). It is therefore extremely important to select the most appropriate mode, both from a theoretical point of view and based on what is “feasible or practical for each overlapping approach” (Webb et al. 1981: 164). In the present study, the questionnaire stage takes the form of a self-administered questionnaire. This is a survey mode that has become increasingly popular in recent years, often replacing both mail-based and telephone survey

techniques (Duffy et al. 2005: 616; Couper and Miller 2008: 831; Baker et al. 2010: 716); and it is the type of survey used for translation and interpreting research in, for example, Delia Chiaro and Giuseppe Nocella's study of quality factors in interpreting (2004) and Chan's examination of Chinese readers of translated books (2010a).

The self-administered questionnaire method is a good way of generating data from a large number of respondents in a comparatively short time frame and at a lower cost than other methods (Kent 2001: 10; Duffy et al. 2005: 617; Malhotra 2008: 914), while the nature of the questionnaire tool means that the results are easily analysed and that relationships between variables is facilitated (Kent 2001: 10; see also East 1997: 305). In addition, self-administered questionnaires are more convenient for respondents because they can answer at their leisure and fit it in around their own lives (Gorden 1975: 304; Duffy et al. 2005: 618; van Selm and Jankowski 2006: 438).

Specifically, the questionnaire used in this thesis was primarily distributed online, with a paper version available to respondents on request. Questionnaires administered online are particularly appropriate for self-completion since they are fast to administer (Ilieva et al. 2002: 365; Duffy et al. 2005: 617; Couper and Miller 2008: 831-832) and fast to analyse, since the data is generated electronically (Ilieva et al. 2002: 366-367; van Selm and Jankowski 2006: 438; Malhotra 2008: 914). Furthermore, online surveys are effective in mitigating the potential loss of researcher control in self-administered questionnaires: for example, online questionnaires increase the researcher's ability to ensure that respondents answer questions in a certain order. Thus, a self-administered questionnaire is particularly appropriate for the present study: it allows for the generation of data from a large number of geographically diverse respondents, while the standardised, electronic nature of the data facilitates a clear, in-depth analysis of findings.

At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that researchers using self-administered questionnaires are limited in their ability to clarify anything or check that questions have been understood (Gorden 1975: 305; Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1992: 259; Peytchev et al. 2010: 633-634); equally, respondents are not easily able to ask questions, as they would in a face-to-face or telephone survey (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1992: 259). With this in mind, the questionnaire was carefully pretested and piloted before being rolled out to respondents (see p73 for details of the pretesting method).

3.3.2 Interviews

The second part of the present survey takes the form of a series of interviews with members of some of the book groups included in the questionnaire part of the survey. In contrast to the questionnaire, these interviews were unstructured¹⁵, meaning that the questions are “open-ended and flexible” (Maughan 2004: 99) and the same questions were not all posed in the same order to all respondents, although in such cases the interviewer is likely to have a number of particular topic areas s/he wishes to cover (Breakwell 2000: 240; see Chapter 2 of the present thesis for a discussion of the topic areas covered).

The advantages of unstructured interviews complement those of questionnaires. While questionnaires are necessarily standardised, the unstructured interview is respondent-led; in the words of Juliet Corbin and Janice M. Morse, “[p]articipants are asked to tell their story as they see it, feel it, experience it” (2003: 339). Thus, the interview’s primary advantage is that it allows the researcher to probe for full details of a response and permits the respondent to request clarifications (Groves et al. 2009: 154; Greener 2011: 87). This is particularly important in surveys dealing with topic areas that have not been widely researched so far, and in which respondents’ conceptualisations of the issues under discussion may be largely unknown to the researcher, as is the case with the present study.

That said, there are also certain limitations to the interview method, particularly in terms of their practicality for large studies. First, the fact that the respondent can guide the interview means that parts of the interview may not be relevant to the topic the interviewer is studying (Webb et al. 1981: 166), while the infinite range of possible questions and answers means that statistical analysis of the responses is extremely difficult (Gorden 1975: 61). Fortunately, however, the popularity of interviews as a research tool has led to a large body of work on methods of dealing with interview data, meaning that although analysing interviews is less straightforward than analysing standardised questionnaires, it is by no means an insurmountable hurdle (for details of interview analysis in the present study, see p78). A related limitation is that conducting interviews is also time-consuming, with the result that interview studies of larger

¹⁵ The term ‘unstructured’ is that used by Maughan and others (e.g. Breakwell 2000; Corbin and Morse 2003). Other terms for this types of interview include *nonstandardized* (e.g. Gorden 1975), *informal* (e.g. Mann 1985) and *open* (e.g. Kvale and Brinkmann 2009).

populations or samples are often unfeasible (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009: 115); yet this discrepancy is not necessarily an obstacle, since the combination of a small number of interviewees with a larger number of survey respondents allows for a broader overview of the issues under consideration than would be possible from interviews alone. This bimodal approach is discussed in the following section.

3.3.3 Integrating questionnaire and interview research

The main advantage of using both questionnaire and interview research in tandem is that it enables researchers to deal with multifaceted and complex phenomena (Greene 2008: 20; Tashakkori and Teddlie 2010: 272-273), using multiple methods of observation to incorporate these different aspects: this is what is termed ‘triangulation’ (Denzin 1978: 28; see also Yin 1994: 13). However, it should be noted that triangulation does not assume agreement between methods of observation and varying data sources. Despite some definitions that do appear to presuppose such agreement – Sharlene Hesse-Biber, for example, conceives of triangulation as a process by which “the researcher is looking for a convergence of the data collected by all methods in a study to enhance the credibility of the research findings” (2010: 3) – inconsistencies between the results of different data sources is entirely possible. Indeed, a variety of outcomes are plausible: Julia Brannen, for instance, lists **corroboration** (“The ‘same results’ are derived from both qualitative and quantitative methods”), **elaboration** (“The qualitative data analysis exemplifies how the quantitative findings apply in particular cases”), **complementarity** (“The qualitative and quantitative results differ but *together* they generate insights”) or **contradiction** (“Where qualitative data and quantitative findings conflict”) (2005: 176; for similar schemes see Kelle 2001 and Bryman 2006).

In terms of carrying out research based on both questionnaire and interview responses, there are few procedural guidelines (Bryman 2007: 19; Greene 2008: 18), and the range of approaches to integrating the two kinds of data is vast. Nonetheless, the combination of a quantitative questionnaire followed by qualitative interviews is widely used, in what Hesse-Biber calls an “explanatory sequential design” – quantitative research followed by qualitative research that helps to explain the quantitative results (Hesse-Biber 2010: 105; see also Moran-Ellis et al. 2006: 51 and Harrison and Reilly 2011: 12-15).

3.3.4 Book group members as a study sample

Within the context of reading and translation in the UK, the present study surveys members of book groups¹⁶ in four UK cities: Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh and London. As noted in the introductory chapter (p15), the translation situation of the UK, including its comparatively low rates of publishing and selling translated books, means that it is a fertile ground for research into how readers view translations. In principle, then, the population of interest in the present survey is made up of everyone who purchases, borrows and reads books in the UK – that is, those people to whom the previously-cited statistics refer. As such, the survey makes no attempt to limit respondents in terms of their geopolitical status (for example, whether or not they identify as ‘British’). Rather, its focus is on finding respondents who are culturally involved in reading in the UK and who are therefore likely to purchase or otherwise consume books there.

At the same time, it is evidently impossible to examine all readers in the UK, and it was for this reason that a purposive sample was chosen of readers who attend book groups in the UK. Purposive sampling is defined as “selecting interviewees or focus group participants by virtue of characteristics thought by the researcher to be likely to have some bearing on their perceptions and experiences” (Barbour 2006: 52); in this case, book group members have several characteristics that make them particularly appropriate for a study of reader attitudes to wards books in translation. On a practical level, book group members tend to read more than the average person (Sedo 2002: 14-15), which increases their likelihood of having read a variety of books and being able to compare and contrast them. In addition, the very purpose of book groups is precisely the discussion of books and reading: reasons for attending book groups given in academic studies generally list “the opportunity to talk about what one reads” as one of the most important factors (Barstow 2003: 6; see also Kerka 1996: 83 and Long 2004). Consequently, book group members are likely to be comfortable with expressing themselves on the subject of reading and evaluating books.

Furthermore, the book group, although not a new phenomenon, has in recent years become an increasingly important part of reading culture in the UK and elsewhere (Hartley 2001: vii; Burwell 2007: 281; Scharber 2009: 433), to the extent that reading in

¹⁶ This is the term used by Sandra Kerka (1996), Barbara Fister (2005) and Bridget Kinsella (1996); other terms include ‘book club’ (e.g. Sedo 2002; Burwell 2007) and ‘reading group’ (e.g. Hartley 2001; Swann and Allington 2009).

groups has become a “Great British institution” (Viner 2013); one estimate is that there may be as many as 50,000 book groups in Britain (Hartley 2001: vii). Thus, members of book groups form an important segment of readers, and, as noted in the previous section, are highly likely to purchase or otherwise consume books in the UK. As a result, while the remainder of this thesis will refer to the respondents and the population from which they have been drawn as ‘readers in the UK’, this is intended as a geographical rather than cultural or political term (see also p58).

Naturally, the choice of members of book group members as respondents has certain implications, particular with regards to their demographic profiles. One important trend concerning book groups is that their members are overwhelmingly female. In the UK, as well as in the USA and other countries where book groups have been studied, the majority of book group members are women (Hartley 2001: 25; Sedo 2003: 71; Barstow 2003: 4; Swann and Allington 2009: 250), to the extent that some scholarly articles view book groups as an overtly female phenomenon (e.g. Barstow 2003; Long 2004; Burwell 2007). Such a gender-specific viewpoint would seem to oversimplify the make-up of book groups, which do often include men (Kerka 1996: 83; Sedo 2002: 14; Barstow 2003: 4); however, it would not be surprising if the majority of respondents to the present survey were women. Additionally, the average age of book group members is often older than the national average age (Hartley 2001: 30), and are likely to be highly educated, often to university level; this is particularly true of face-to-face groups (Hartley 2001: 33-34; Sedo 2003: 74; Long 2004: 353). In consequence, the sample of respondents to the present survey is unlikely to be demographically representative of the UK population as a whole, and hence there should be no attempt to make statistical inferences from the survey to the broader population.

The particular concern of the present thesis in choosing book group members as its object of study is, as noted, a desire to investigate the attitudes of a group of readers who do not primarily read professionally (see p25). Academic research has used a variety of terms for such readers, each with a different focus – “ordinary reader” (e.g. Rosenblatt 1978: 138; Miall 2006: 175), “actual reader” (e.g. Appleyard 1990: 6; Damrosch 2003: 4) and “real reader” (Livingstone 1998: 45-46; e.g. Swann and Allington 2009: 262). The present thesis is particularly concerned with the non-professional reader, leading to an emphasis on reading situations in which the primary aim is not to analyse, review or criticise the text in a professional capacity. This kind of

reading will be termed ‘reading for pleasure’ (Sudman and Bradburn 1982: 23; Fenn et al. 2004; BML 2005).

Given the large number of book groups in the UK, focus was limited to members of book groups in four UK cities: Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh and London. Although, as noted, the survey did not aim to be statistically representative of the UK, it was supposed that the inclusion of respondents from a variety of cities across the country would yield a richer, more varied set of responses than a focus on a single city. The four cities under consideration were chosen as the capitals of each constituent UK country.

3.3.5 Survey ethics

The present thesis endeavours to uphold the general ethical principles of academic work: openness in reporting methods, results and research sponsors; willingness to accept accountability; and avoidance of harm to participants (Gorden 1975: 149; Denzin 1978: 331; Oppenheim 1992: 83). Survey research in particular entails additional ethical considerations, due to the involvement of respondents; the two most important such issues are informed consent and confidentiality (Groves et al. 2009: 384).

In the survey setting, informed consent refers to “obtaining the voluntary participation of the people involved, and informing them of their right to withdraw from the study at any time” (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009: 70). For the questionnaire part of the present survey, respondents were given details of the study in an introductory email, which included information regarding the research topic, the method of filling in the survey online, the approximate length of time the survey would take, and the researcher’s contact details. This information was repeated in the introduction to the questionnaire itself, with the additional advice that if respondents wished to withdraw during the questionnaire, their answers would not be recorded and they would no longer be part of the survey. For the interview part of the study, respondents were again sent an introductory email detailing the continued aims of the survey and the proposed scheduling of the interviews; when interview participants volunteered, they were given additional information about when and where the interviews would take place, as well as how the results would be reported.

In addition, interviewees were assured that their results would remain confidential – that is, that their identities would be unknown except to the researcher

(Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1992: 86). Full anonymity – in which neither the researcher nor anyone else can identify particular information with a particular participant (ibid.) – is evidently impossible in face-to-face interviews; however, anonymity was assured in the questionnaire part of the survey.

Finally, ethical approval for the research was sought and obtained from the University of Edinburgh.

3.4 SURVEY PREPARATION

3.4.1 Questionnaire preparation

The questionnaire largely consisted of closed, multiple-choice questions and was therefore designed to deal with translation-related issues that could be discussed in such terms: for example, whether respondents could specify a translated book that they had read. Although it is generally considered good practice to adapt questions from previous surveys (Sudman and Bradburn 1982: 14; Punch 2003: 32; Mercer et al. 2012: 133), this was largely impossible in the present questionnaire due to the limited number of previous surveys dealing with translation-related issues.

The decision was also made not to use scaled attitude matrices in the questionnaire. In contrast to one-off questions where the answer to a question is analysed on its own, an attitude matrix asks a number of questions about the same concept or issue, following which responses to these questions are “summed or averaged to give an indication of each respondent’s overall positive or negative orientation towards that object” (John 2012: 2). While attitude matrices can be useful in minimising random errors (Streiner and Norman 2008: 14; John 2012: 9), the process involved in constructing and testing entirely new matrices is particularly time-consuming and expensive (Streiner and Norman 2008: 5). Given the dearth of existing and previously tested attitude matrices in the field of translation, and the small scope of the present project, it was deemed impracticable to develop – and test with sufficient rigour – a series of attitude matrices in this case.

The questionnaire began with an introduction (Babbie 1973: 150); this explained what the study was about, emphasised the importance of the respondent to the study, explained that the questionnaire would be anonymous, gave contact details for the researcher, and thanked the respondent for their time (Gorden 1975: 339; Sudman and

Bradburn 1982: 217). The introduction also gave clear, general instructions about how to fill in the questionnaire (Babbie 1973: 150), as well as explaining how the results would be used. Demographic questions were asked at the end of the questionnaire (Bechhofer and Paterson 2000: 79; Oppenheim 1992: 132; Zellman et al. 2010: 276).

3.4.2 Testing the questionnaire

The questionnaire was tested in two stages: a preliminary testing stage using cognitive testing and a pilot stage. Pilot testing differs from preliminary work because while preliminary work involves only some elements of the study, pilot tests are “miniaturized walkthroughs of the entire study design” (Babbie 1973: 205).

The method used for the preliminary test of the present questionnaire was cognitive interviewing, which involves “the administration of draft survey questions while collecting additional verbal information about the survey responses” (Beatty and Willis 2007: 288). Cognitive interviewing was chosen as the main testing method due to its efficacy using small numbers of testers (Schwarz and Oysterman 2001: 135; Willis 2005: 7) and its focus on how questionnaires are understood and processed by respondents (Schwarz and Oysterman 2001: 135; Willis 2005: 3; Yan et al. 2012: 505).

Protocols for cognitive interviewing vary widely according to the type of research being conducted (Beatty and Willis 2007: 294-295). Since the present thesis deals with a self-administered questionnaire, testers were interviewed retrospectively rather than being asked to perform think-aloud testing: this allowed for testing of respondents’ ability to fill in the questionnaire with no interviewee input or interference (Schaeffer and Presser 2003: 81-82; Willis 2005: 52; Beatty and Willis 2007: 293-294), as well as a rough measurement of the time taken to complete the questionnaire. The cognitive interviewing therefore took the form of retrospective probing: once the respondent had filled in the questionnaire, s/he was asked a series of questions relating to his/her understanding of the terms and questions involved. The cognitive test included probes on technical terms, ease of answering memory questions, appropriateness of response options and strength of attitude towards topics (Willis 2005: 69-75).

The present questionnaire was tested in late August 2013 with a convenience sample of three respondents known personally to the researcher. Two of the three

interviewees were members of book groups, and the third, though not currently a book group member, was an avid reader. These respondents answered the questionnaire in paper format under survey conditions, each taking approximately fifteen minutes to do so – well within Keith Punch’s recommendation that a survey should be shorter than half an hour (Punch 2003: 35). Cognitive interviews were conducted with each respondent immediately afterwards (Willis 2005: 182), and these lasted around an hour each. When taken as a group, the cognitive interviews led to a number of amendments, of which the most important are listed below. (These and all other questions in the survey may be found in Appendix 1, which presents the full questionnaire.)

3.4.2.1 Frequency of book-buying (question 3)

The questionnaire initially used a version of the question from the 2004 ONS survey, which asked how often people bought books for themselves, with answers such as ‘At least once a week’, ‘At least once a month’, ‘Every 2 or 3 months’, and so on (Fenn et al. 2004: 101). However, the cognitive tests suggested that stating the number of books per week was difficult because it varied week on week – respondents thought in terms of years then averaged them. So the question was changed to ask about yearly rates of book buying, adapted from BML’s survey (2005: 10).

3.4.2.2 Elements of good and poor translations (question 17)

This question gave respondents a list of possible translation traits (neologisms, footnotes, use of regional English and so on) and asked them to specify if this would indicate a good or bad translation. The main issue with this in cognitive testing was the trait ‘Foreign names, places or objects’, since cognitive testing suggested that respondents made differentiations between these: for example, foreign names of people and places were classed separately from other foreign terms. In addition, how respondents felt about foreign terms depended on how familiar they were with the terms in question. Therefore, this feature was split into three different question topics – ‘Foreign names of people or places’, ‘Foreign words whose meaning is understandable from the context’ and ‘Foreign words whose meaning is not understandable from the

context’ – and included in the questionnaire in this form. However, since this appears to be a complicated issue, it was also examined in more depth during the interview stage.

3.4.2.3 Translation as a job (question 18)

This question asked respondents to specify which other writing- or editing-based job was most similar to translation, with the original options given as ‘author’, ‘editor’, ‘proofreader’ and ‘ghost writer’. During the cognitive testing, it was suggested that ‘editor’ was an unhelpful term because of the wide variety of tasks included in the editor’s role; consequently, this option was replaced by ‘summariser or précis writer’, which one of the respondents suggested as being a similar role to a translator’s.

Following the amendments as a result of the cognitive pre-testing, the web version of the survey was finalised and sent out to a second convenience sample of six people (none of whom had been part of the cognitive test). None of the testers experienced any technical problems, nor did they draw attention to any further important problems with the questionnaire.

3.4.3 Interview preparation

As noted, the interviews conducted in the present research were unstructured, with the result that the principal element of preparation was the construction of an interview guide¹⁷. Given the dynamic nature of the qualitative interview, the interview guide was not highly structured, but included an outline of the topic areas to be covered within the interview and a list of possible questions and/or probes (Gorden 1975: 74; Breakwell 2000: 240; Barbour 2006: 115). The topic areas to be covered were those on which little previous research had been conducted or regarding which there seemed to be some confusion: for example, the issue of good and poor translation features mentioned above (p74). The interview guide is included in Appendix 2.

Each interview began with a briefing, used to gain the informed consent of the interviewee, as well as to explain the purpose and structure of the interview and the functioning of the sound recorder; respondents were also asked whether they had any

¹⁷ Also called the ‘interview schedule’ (e.g. Bechhofer and Paterson 2000: 63)

questions (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1992: 82; Kvale and Brinkmann 2009: 128).

3.5 METHODS OF ANALYSIS

3.5.1 Questionnaire analysis

The results of the questionnaire were analysed with a combination of Microsoft Excel (2003) and SPSS (version 19)¹⁸.

3.5.1.1 Chi square testing

The main statistical test used in SPSS was chi square (χ^2), a test measuring goodness-of-fit and association between variables. The chi square test was chosen because the majority of variables in the present questionnaire are categorical – that is, they measure the qualities (not quantities) of a case, and these qualities do not possess any underlying order. When dealing with categorical variables, non-parametric tests such as chi square are the most suitable for analysis (Siegel and Castellan 1988: 35; Cramer and Howitt 2004: 112; Pallant 2010: 113).

It is important to note that chi square tests may only be performed on sufficiently large sample sizes, which can be determined according to the expected cell frequency of results tables. The expected cell frequency refers to the number of answers in each response category that would be expected if all the categories were equal: for example, in a sex-balanced group of 100 men and women, the expected cell frequency for each category ('male' and 'female') would be 50. To ensure that sample sizes were sufficiently large for statistical tests to be accurate, the present analysis followed two principles of stringency: that expected cell frequency be more than five in at least 80% of cases (Siegel and Castellan 1988: 49; Cramer and Howitt 2004: 23; Pallant 2010: 217), and that no expected cell frequency be lower than 1 (Siegel and Castellan 1988: 49; Cramer and Howitt 2004: 23). For some questions, due to a high number of response categories or a low number of respondents giving a particular answer, one or

¹⁸ *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences*, a programme for quantitative statistical analysis.

both of these conditions were not met; in such cases, the analysis was deemed to be insufficiently accurate, and results for such tests are not reported.

In the particular case of 2x2 tables – that is, tables in which both variables have only two categories each – the number of potential categories of response (otherwise known as ‘degrees of freedom’) are very low, which can result in over-large chi square values. In consequence, different rules of stringency are applied in order to compensate for this over-estimation. Generally, the only difference is that the chi square value is reported using Yates’ Continuity Correction (Siegel and Castellan 1988: 116; Cramer and Howitt 2004: 183; Pallant 2010: 219); this value is still reported as χ^2 . However, if any of the expected cell frequencies is lower than 5, the statistical test used is Fisher’s Exact Probability Test (Siegel and Castellan 1988: 123; Pallant 2010: 217), which generates a lower χ^2 value.

When the above conditions of stringency are successfully met, the results are reported using the chi square value (χ^2), the degrees of freedom, the number of respondents (n) and the *p*-value (p). The *p*-value represents the probability of any given result occurring by chance. In the present thesis, the result was deemed statistically significant if the *p*-value was lower than 0.05 and non-significant if the *p*-value was 0.05 or above (Cramer and Howitt 2004: 151; Gravetter and Wallnau 2007: 240; Marsh and Elliott 2008: 153). In other words, if the *p*-value is lower than 0.05, then findings are highly unlikely to be due to chance.

All percentages are rounded to 0 decimal places; consequently, percentage values may not always add up to 100%.

3.5.1.2 Recoding

As noted in the previous section, when a small number of participants chose particular answers or where there were a high number of answer categories, the expected cell frequencies were too low to conduct chi square testing. In some such cases, answers were grouped together to give fewer response categories (with higher expected cell frequencies). Provided that such categories are still meaningful, this is standard procedure for when the analysis requires less detail than is provided in the actual survey or when fewer categories are required (Siegel and Castellan 1988: 49; Cramer and Howitt 2004: 23).

The variables treated in this way vary according to the question under consideration; however, three demographic categories were given simplified measures that were used several times during the analysis. First, the variable of age was analysed using both the 10-year age bands used in the questionnaire and a simplified three-tier measure using the categories ‘20-39’, ‘40-64’ and ‘65+’ (each with an approximately equal number of respondents). Second, the variable of education was used in both a complex five-category form (‘No formal education’, ‘GCSEs or equivalent’, ‘A-levels or equivalent (including non-degree university education)’, ‘University degree’ and ‘Other’) and a simplified two-tier form (‘University degree’ and ‘No university degree’). Third, the variable of national identity was simplified to a two-tier form (‘Includes British’ versus ‘Does not include British’).

Finally, it will be noted that, although the questionnaire resulted in 205 useable sets of responses (see p79), total responses for individual questions do not always add up to 205 – this is due to missing answers to individual questions, which have been ignored in analyses. In addition, ‘don’t know’ or ‘not sure’ answers were excluded from most analyses; they have, however, been included in questions where the high number of such responses indicates an interesting general uncertainty about a particular question or topic.

3.5.2 Interview analysis

Interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed by the interviewer. Transcriptions included elements such as acknowledgement tokens¹⁹, pauses and hesitations; however, these are generally omitted in the discussion of results to allow for easier reading. In addition, identifying elements such as names of people or libraries were omitted from the transcripts in order to preserve confidentiality (see p71).

Following transcription, the interviews were manually coded by topic for inclusion in the analysis.

¹⁹ “Acknowledgement tokens [...] include such things as: *yeah, mm hm, uh huh, mm::, okay, right* and *oh*. These are utterances that take a turn at speaking but do not take over the conversational floor” (Irvine et al. 2013: 97-98)

CHAPTER 4: RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

4.1 OPENING REMARKS

Based on the principles of sociological survey research, then, a two-part survey was developed combining a questionnaire part and an interview part. Following tests to ensure the efficacy of the survey tools, the questionnaire and interview were rolled out to members of book groups in Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh and London. Thus, the present chapter gives an account of the respondents who took part in the survey and reports their demographic information.

4.2 QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENTS

The online version of the questionnaire was prepared using the Bristol Online Survey Tool (<http://www.survey.bris.ac.uk/>). A paper version of the questionnaire was also prepared using the same pagination and layout as the online version. The questionnaire was fifteen pages long (including an introductory and a closing page) and included twenty-eight questions.

For the questionnaire part of the survey, leaders of 17 book groups in Belfast, 20 book groups in Cardiff, 45 book groups in Edinburgh and 222 book groups in London were contacted by email and requested to forward the questionnaire link to their members (see Appendix 3 for a list of the book groups contacted). Paper copies of the questionnaire were also provided to anyone who requested them. A thank you message combined with a reminder to complete the survey was sent one week before the survey closed. The questionnaire was open from 16th September 2013 to 16th November 2013, and the last paper survey was returned on 24th December 2013. Overall, 205 usable questionnaire responses were received (see Figure 5, next page).

City	Online responses	Paper responses	Total responses	Number not in book clubs	Useable responses
Belfast	9	6	15	0	15
Cardiff	26	0	26	0	26
Edinburgh	57	6	63	3	60
London	93	17	110	6	104
Total	185	29	214	9	205

Figure 5. Responses from book groups

It was noted earlier that, given the nature of the present thesis using book group members, the questionnaire sample would be likely to differ from the population of the UK in a number of ways (p70). A series of goodness-of-fit tests analysing the demographics of the questionnaire respondents showed this to be the case, as discussed in the following sections.

4.2.1 Countries of the UK

The sample received responses from members of book groups in all four constituent countries of the UK. The majority of responses were from London (51%), followed by Edinburgh (29%), Cardiff (13%) and Belfast (7%); this is in line with the fact that England is the most populous of the four UK countries, followed by Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland respectively (ONS 2012a; see Figure 6). However, the specific make-up of the sample was such that there was a difference in the proportional populations of the current sample as compared with the national average; this is shown in Table 6. This difference is significant ($\chi^2 (3, n=205) = 179.859, p <.001$). Thus, compared to the national make-up of the UK, England is under-represented and the other countries are over-represented in the sample.

Country	UK population (ONS 2012a)	Current sample
England	84%	51%
Scotland	8%	29%
Wales	5%	13%
Belfast	3%	7%

Figure 6. UK population versus current sample

4.2.2 Sex

The current sample is predominantly made up of women. A chi square goodness of fit test indicates that there was a significant difference in the proportions of women and men in the current sample (78.5% women, 21.5% men) as compared with the national average (51% women, 49% men) (ONS 2012a) ($\chi^2 (1, n=205) = 62.2, p < .001$). Thus, women are over-represented in the present sample as compared to the national average.

4.2.3 Age

The years of birth of respondents ranged from 1928 to 1990, meaning that, as of 31st December 2013, respondents were aged between 23 and 85. The mean average age of the sample was 53.6 years and the median age was 56 years.

A goodness of fit test using ten-year categories – the standard categorisation used by Fenn et al. (2004), BML (2005) and others – indicates that there was a significant difference in the age proportions in the current sample as compared with the national population ($\chi^2 (6, n=199) = 59.789, p < .0001$). In the total population, the median age is 40.3 (CIA 2014); hence, the sample used in the current thesis is older than the national population (see Figure 7). Comparing expected to actual frequencies reveals that the 60-69 age group is over-represented in the sample (residual +32.7), while 20-29 and 40-49 are under-represented (residuals = -19.1 and -17.0 respectively).

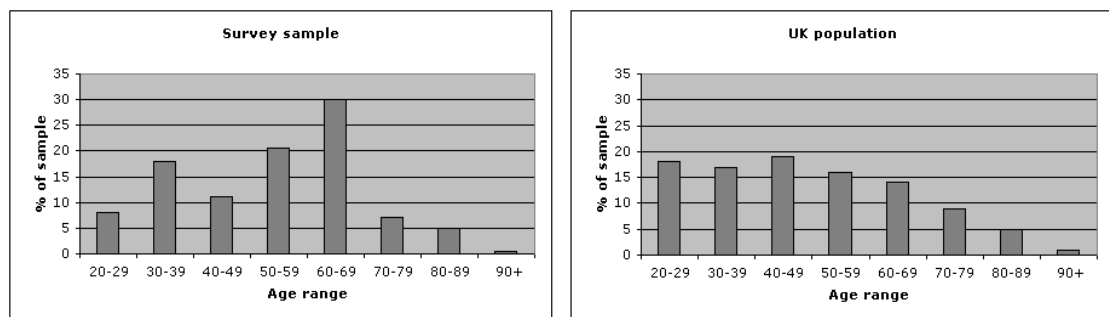


Figure 7. Age: current sample vs. UK population

4.2.4 Education

Respondents had attained a variety of educational qualifications, ranging from no formal qualifications to at least one university degree. When compared with national data (ONS 2012b; NISRA 2013a; Scotland Census 2013a), there was a significant difference between the educational levels in the current sample and national proportions ($\chi^2(4, n=205) = 374.021, p < .001$). Nearly three-quarters (72%) of respondents in the present sample had a university degree, as compared to 26% of the total UK population (ONS 2012b; NISRA 2013a; Scotland Census 2013a). The sample therefore has a much higher level of education than the national population (see Figure 8, in which ‘None’ = no formal qualifications, ‘Level 1+2’ = GCSEs or equivalent, ‘Level 3’ = A-Levels or equivalent, and ‘Level 4’ = degree or equivalent).

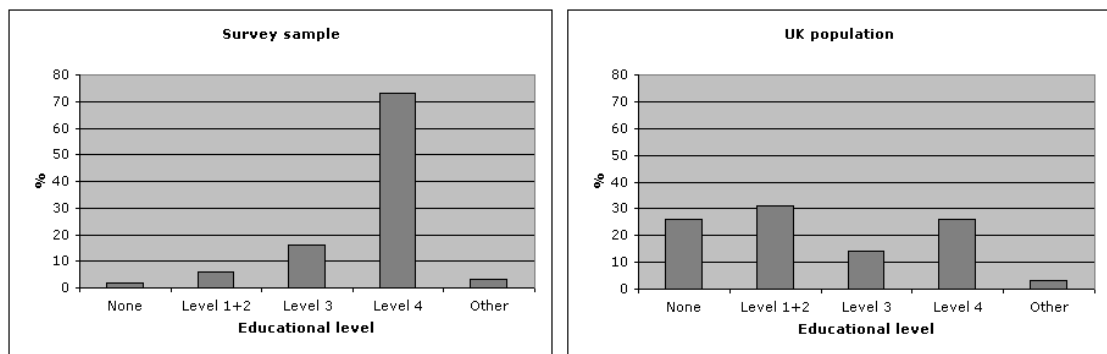


Figure 8. Education: current sample vs. UK population

4.2.5 Country of birth and nationality

In terms of respondents’ country of birth, the most common country was England (57%), followed by non-UK countries (18%), Scotland (13%), Northern Ireland (6%) and Wales (5%). Overall, 82% of respondents were born in the UK and 18% were born in another country, while in the UK population as a whole, 87% of people were born within the UK (ONS 2012c; NISRA 2013b; Scotland Census 2013b). The current sample therefore has a higher proportion of people born outside the UK, and this is statistically significant ($\chi^2(1, n=205) = 4.620, p < .032$).

Respondents were also asked for their (self-designated) national identity, with the possibility of choosing as many options as they wished. The results are shown in Figure 9, where ‘British +/- UK nationality’ means that the respondent specified

‘British’, either with or without an additional UK nationality (‘English’, ‘Scottish’, ‘Welsh’, or ‘Northern Irish’), ‘Non-UK’ means that the respondent did not include either ‘British’ or any of the UK nationalities, and ‘British + non-UK nationality’ means that the respondent specified a non-UK nationality in combination with a British or UK nationality.

British +/- UK nationality	English only	Non-UK	Scottish only	British + non-UK nationality	Welsh only	NI only	Total
87	53	28	14	11	8	4	205

Figure 9. National identity of current sample

Simplifying the results, 86% of respondents included at least one UK nationality (‘English’, ‘Scottish’, ‘Welsh’ or ‘Northern Irish’) and/or ‘British’ in their answer. This means that the current sample has a lower proportion of respondents identifying as at least partially British than the national population, in which 92% of people include at least one British identity in describing themselves (ONS 2012d; NISRA 2013c; Scotland Census 2013c). This difference is statistically significant ($\chi^2(1, n=205) = 8.918, p < .003$).

4.2.6 Languages

Respondents were asked whether their first or main language was English. Although examples given in the questionnaire were designed to deal primarily with books translated into English, those whose first language was not English were included in the results because it was assumed that their participation in a British book group indicated their ability to read a book in English. In the sample, 92% of respondents indicated that their main language was English, and 8% indicated that they had another first language.

From the UK census it would appear that 89% of people have English as their first or main language (NISRA 2013d; ONS 2013; Scotland Census 2013d²⁰), meaning that the present sample has a higher proportion of English speakers than the UK population as a whole; however, this difference is not statistically significant ($\chi^2(1, n=205) = 2.138, p < .144$).

²⁰ The Scottish census reports only which language is used at home, and the figure given is those who speak English only at home. The number of people speaking English and another language was not reported in the census information.

In addition, respondents were asked whether they knew any language other than English well enough to read a book in that language; if so, they were asked to specify the language(s). 61% of people said that they were unable to read any languages other than English. The UK proportion of people who can only speak English is 61% (Eurobarometer 2012: 15), meaning that the present sample matched the UK as a whole on this measure.

In terms of the other languages understood by those who were multilingual, the most common was French (53 respondents), followed by Spanish (20), German (16) and Italian (11). Other languages were listed by 18 respondents.

4.2.7 Reading habits

As well as demographic variables, respondents were also asked about their general reading habits. First, they were asked how many books they had borrowed or bought for themselves in the last year. All respondents had bought or borrowed at least one book over the past year, the most common answer being that the respondent had bought or borrowed 11 or more books for him- or herself in the past year (86%), followed by ‘6 to 10’ (9%) and ‘1 to 5’ (3%). Thus, according to BML’s categories (BML 2005: 10), the vast majority of respondents in the questionnaire were heavy readers, meaning that the respondents in the present questionnaire buy many more books than the respondents in BML’s survey (see Figure 10).

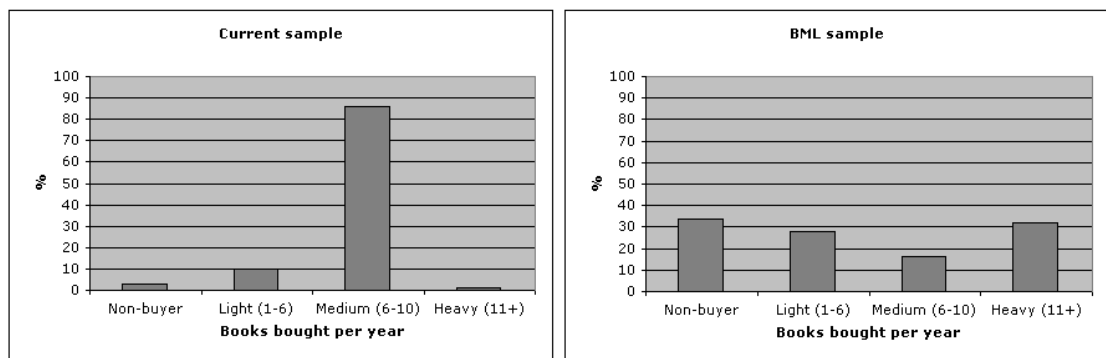


Figure 10. Yearly book purchase

As a second indicator of reading habits, respondents were asked how long they spend reading books in a normal week. Excluding those who stated that it varied from week to

week (25 respondents), the most common answer was '6 to 10' (38%), followed by '0 to 5' (32%), '11 to 15' (17%), '16 to 20' (8%) and '21 or more' (5%).

4.3 INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS

Following the questionnaire, face-to-face interviews were conducted with seven members of Edinburgh book groups. As with the questionnaire part of the survey, contact was made via the leaders of these book groups, who were contacted by email and requested to forward the interview request to their members. Interviews were conducted with everyone who responded to the initial call for participants. After analysis of the data generated from these interviews, it was deemed that responses had reached saturation point: that is, the point at which "the collection of new data does not shed any further light on the issue under investigation" (Mason 2010). Consequently, no further calls for interviewees were made.

Interviews were conducted face-to-face at various venues in Edinburgh between 31st March and 6th May 2014. The average interview length was 51 minutes. In order to preserve confidentiality, respondents chose their own identifiers; for the same reason, detailed demographic information is not reported. In summary, however, the seven interviewees were:

Helen, who worked in science and education, but is now retired. She is a native English speaker and does not read any other languages. She is presently a member of a 'Books in translation' book group.

James, who was reading for his first attendance at a poetry group. He is a native English speaker who is particularly interested in Scottish works, but does not read any foreign languages.

Susan, who works in education. She is on the mailing list for a library-based book group and also runs a general book group at her place of work. She is a native English speaker who is particularly interested in North American writing, but does not read any other languages.

Sean, who attends a number of different book groups that focus on different genres of books. He is a writer and a native English speaker, but since he also reads French and Spanish he has done some amateur translation for friends.

Beata, who works in the social sciences and runs a general book group. She is a native Polish speaker, but is fluent in English. As such, she has done some technical translation in the past.

Kirsty, who works in education and attends two general book groups: one at work and another outside work. She is a native English speaker and reads no other languages.

Sara, who attends a books-in-translation group, and works part-time as a technical translator. Her native language is English and she also reads German and Spanish.

4.4 SUMMARY OF THE SURVEY SAMPLE

As expected, then, the sample in the present thesis differs demographically from the UK population in a variety of ways. The respondents in the questionnaire sample are more likely to be living in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland than would be the case in a statistically representative national sample, while all of the interviewees live in Scotland. The present sample is also older than the national population, contains more women, and has higher educational qualifications; these results mirror findings from other studies of book groups (see p70). In addition, the current sample has a higher proportion of people born outside the UK and a lower proportion of people identifying as at least partly British than the overall population, although the proportion of English as a first language and levels of multilingualism do not differ significantly from the UK population as a whole.

Consequently, as discussed in the previous chapter (p70), the results of the survey presented in the following four chapters are not necessarily statistically representative of the whole population. Rather, they should be treated as an in-depth examination of a particular group of readers that may also be used as a starting point, or point of comparison, for analysing the translation attitudes of other samples of the UK population.

CHAPTER 5: TRANSLATION, CULTURE AND GENRE

5.1 OPENING REMARKS

The present chapter analyses the first set of data generated by the survey, regarding the ways in which readers' attitudes to translated books may be related to and influenced by their mental categorisation of such books. In particular, the chapter deals with how readers classify books according to genre, source culture, and, indeed, whether they are translated or not, considerations which will serve as a basis for further discussion in later chapters.

5.2 GENRE

5.2.1 Questionnaire results

The primary question on genre in the present survey was an open question, asking respondents, “**What types of books do you most like to read?**” The majority of answers (93%) were given in genre terms such as ‘novels’, ‘classics’, ‘contemporary fiction’, ‘chick lit’, ‘science fiction’, ‘fantasy’, ‘plays’, ‘biographies’, ‘travel writing’, ‘crime’, ‘literary fiction’, ‘history’, ‘cookery’, ‘poetry’ and ‘politics’, with the genres specified thereby representing a wide range of books. For quantitative analysis, the answers relating to genre were categorised into whether they indicated a preference for fiction, a preference for non-fiction, or a preference for a balance of the two.

Preference	Belfast	Cardiff	Edinburgh	London	Total
Mostly fiction	10	16	30	50	106
Mostly non-fiction	3	1	3	6	13
Mix	1	8	22	41	72
No genre terms	1	1	4	6	12
Total	15	26	60	104	203

Figure 11. Genre preferences

As indicated in Figure 11, fiction was preferred by a majority of respondents (52%); the next most common preference was a mix of fiction and non-fiction (35%), and then a preference for non-fiction (6%). Thus, the preference for fiction over non-fiction is statistically significant ($\chi^2 (1, n=119) = 72.681, p <.001$).

In terms of how genre preferences related to demographic variables, there was no significant association between genre preference and education (simplified measure) ($\chi^2 (2, n=191) = .393, p <.822$), nor country of birth ($\chi^2 (2, n=191) = 1.582, p <.453$), whether respondents identified as British ($\chi^2 (2, n=191) = .919, p <.632$) or multilingualism ($\chi^2 (2, n=191) = 1.974, p <.373$). The only demographic variable with which genre preference was significantly correlated was sex ($\chi^2 (2, n=191) = 6.356, p <.042$). Men were more likely to prefer non-fiction or a mix of genres (residuals +3 and +2 respectively) and less likely to prefer fiction (residual -5), while women were more likely to prefer fiction (residual +5) and less likely to prefer non-fiction (residual -3) or a mix of genres (residual -2).

5.2.2 Discussion

As noted earlier (p39), the critical literature has long used genre as a meaningful way of discussing and categorising texts (James 1989: 33; O'Neill 1994: 55; Bex 1999: 87; Frow 2006: 2; et al.). The present results suggest that the same is true of readers, since over 90% of respondents answered the question about preferred 'book types' in genre terms. In addition, respondents were comfortable with categorising books into 'fiction' and 'non-fiction': 60% of the questionnaire respondents specifically used one or both of these terms, as did all of the interviewees. Overall, fiction was more popular than non-fiction (as was the case in Fenn et al. 2004: 9). However, analysing the results more closely, the two categories appeared to play different roles in respondents' reading practices. For example, in the interviews, Helen stated that she mainly read fiction for pleasure, while non-fiction was "for work", while Kirsty noted that both of her book groups tended to focus on fiction – Kirsty's own choice of a book of poetry for a recent meeting had been met with some scepticism by other members of the group. Similarly, one questionnaire respondent stated, "I most like fiction" but added that "[s]adly, most of my time is spent reading business books". The implication in many of these responses is that fiction books are read for pleasure while non-fiction books are read for

work or educational purposes. At the same time, the fact that nearly half of respondents (45%) either had a preference for non-fiction or enjoyed reading a mix of books means that this was not an absolute rule. Additionally, the results of the questionnaire suggested that men and women may have different preferences, with men preferring non-fiction and women preferring fiction. This mirrors findings from previous surveys (Tepper 2000: 255-256; Fenn et al. 2004: 47; Gallagher and Bohme 2009: 248). Thus, a more measured conclusion to draw would be that, while fiction books are generally more popular in reading for pleasure, non-fiction books are likely to appeal to some particular audiences as enjoyable reading material.

Respondents also appeared happy to categorise their reading preferences into specific genres. As noted above, for the questionnaire, the genres specified were extremely varied, including ‘classics’, ‘chick lit’, ‘science fiction’, ‘travel writing’, ‘crime’, and ‘cookery’; the interviews, too, made reference to historical fiction, poetry, thrillers, philosophical novels, short stories, war literature, horror, LGBT books and memoirs. What is striking is that mentions of different genres were not simply expressions of personal preferences (of the form “I personally enjoy...”); judgements about objective value were also made with reference to certain genres. Susan, for example, said that Sue Grafton’s detective novels were among her “favourite” books and that they were a “treat” to read, particularly on holiday; yet she characterised them as “rubbish”, in contrast to what she called “literature”. Similarly, Sean specified that the book groups he went to mostly focused on “literary fiction” (presumably in contrast to general fiction), while Kirsty pointed out that *The Shadow of the Wind* by Carlos Ruiz Zafón was a “literary” novel, which she thought was a positive attribute; and Beata approached the issue from the opposite side when she stated, “I don’t want to just read popular fiction [...] I *don’t* want to read what everybody is reading”. Even in the questionnaire responses, there were both implicit and overt references to the literary value of certain genres. Nineteen people (9% of total respondents) specifically expressed their preference for “literary fiction” (presumably, again, as opposed to general fiction), while others referred to “serious” or “well-written” fiction. Two respondents who read fiction were careful to specify that this did not include “romance” or “chick lit”; in contrast, one respondent who enjoyed chick lit nonetheless described it as “trashy”. Finally, one respondent specifically described an interest in reading books that had won the Man Booker Prize. Thus, the respondents to the present survey do make distinctions between ‘literary’ and ‘popular’ books, particularly in fiction, and,

often, those books categorised as ‘literary’ are viewed more positively than those described as ‘popular’ (as in Leemans and Doggenaar 1987, Nell 1988, and Hartley 2001; see also p50).

Yet this distinction should not be taken to imply that the respondents themselves can be characterised as ‘highbrow’ or ‘lowbrow’. Many of the answers given to the question on preferred genre in the questionnaire demonstrated an interest in a wide range of genres:

“Classics, sci-fi, nature non-fiction”

“Contemporary fiction; contemporary and classic women authors; sci-fi and fantasy; crime; books in translation set in any country I am visit[i]ng when I travel”

“Contemporary literary fiction, poetry and detective novels”

“Crime fiction, History fact and historically based fiction. poetry, politics fact and fiction” [sic]

“Fiction – sci-fi especially. Also like light hearted comedy, drama, modern classics”

“history, geography and travel, crime, fiction, food and wine”

“modern fiction, crime fiction, biographies, classics”

“‘serious’ novels, crime fiction, non-fiction re nature, gardening, wildlife, novels featuring other countries/cultures” [sic]

Hence, although books themselves may be classed as ‘literary’, ‘trashy’, ‘popular’ and so on, few individual respondents to the present survey can be classed as espousing solely ‘highbrow’ or ‘lowbrow’ reading tendencies (see also Nell 1988: 4; Rose 2001: 371; Barstow 2003: 11-12).

The importance of this discussion of genre to the question of attitudes towards translation is that, certainly in the present survey, the comments that respondents made about translation did sometimes vary according to the type of book under discussion. In contrast to what might be expected (see p51), ‘translation’ was not particularly associated with ‘highbrow’ books, nor with any specific genre such as ‘thrillers’ or ‘fantasy’. However, some respondents did appear to view translation as related to fiction rather than non-fiction texts. One questionnaire respondent, when asked which types of books he enjoyed, stated that he had not included any non-fiction works because “I assume you are interested in my fiction reading practice”. In the interviews, Helen made

the same assumption, and specified that this was as a result of the orientation towards translation:

I don't think I would notice if anything I read [as non-fiction] from my previous academic life was in translation. All the conversation I've had with you up [until] now has been as if we were talking about fiction.

Indeed, James, who was an avid reader of both fiction and poetry, specifically commented that his translation reading practices differed between the two, stating that although his fiction reading consisted of some 20% translated works, the amount of poetry he read in translation was “probably nil, actually”. Thus, although these two interviewees – and all of the others – were extremely comfortable talking about *fiction* in translation, it is striking that the possibility of translated non-fiction or poetry was something that they found more unusual or unfamiliar.

Genre, then, although not a unique concern of Translation Studies, plays an important role in readers' categorisation and analysis of books, and as such is an issue that seems pertinent in the study of how readers perceive translated books in general, as well as their specific attitudes to particular translated works.

5.3 READING ABOUT OTHER CULTURES

5.3.1 Questionnaire results

Relating to the cultures that people like to read about, respondents were asked the following question: “**Some people prefer to read books from their own cultures, while other people prefer to read books from other cultures. Which of the following statements most fits your preferences? Please choose one option.**” The options given were “I prefer to read books from my own culture”, “I prefer to read books from other cultures” and “I like reading books from my own culture and books from other cultures about the same”.

As shown in Figure 12, a majority of respondents (74%) stated that they preferred to read books from a mix of cultures, including their own culture and others. This preference was statistically significant ($\chi^2(2, n=205) = 161.717, p < .001$). At the same time, nearly a quarter (23%) of respondents said that they prefer to read books from their own culture, compared to only 3% of people who preferred to read books

from other cultures – again, this was statistically significant ($\chi^2 (1, n=54) = 29.630, p <.001$).

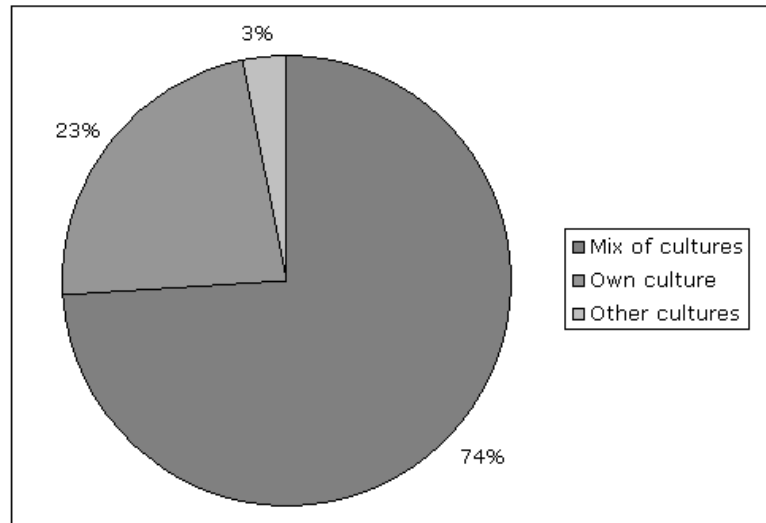


Figure 12. Preferred cultures

In terms of how culture preference relates to other variables, there was no significant association between respondents' culture preferences and their sex ($\chi^2 (2, n=205) = 2.234, p <.327$), education (simplified measure) ($\chi^2 (2, n=205) = 2.524, p <.283$) or country of birth ($\chi^2 (2, n=205) = .126, p <.939$). Nor was there a significant association between national identity ('British' versus 'Non-British') and culture preferred ($\chi^2 (2, n=205) = 1.375, p <.503$).

5.3.2 Discussion

The clearest result of the questions dealing with culture is that books from other cultures were extremely popular. Although nearly a quarter of respondents preferred books from their own culture, over three-quarters of respondents enjoyed reading about other cultures some or most of the time. The range of different cultures of particular interest to questionnaire respondents was broad, and expressed in a variety of ways. Some respondents mentioned specific countries of interest, the most popular being India (22), the USA (18), France (13), Russia (13), Italy (11) and China (10); in other cases, respondents mentioned larger geographical areas: 'Africa' (20) (sometimes 'East Africa' or 'West Africa'), 'Asia' (18) (including 'Middle East', 'Far East' and 'South East Asia'), 'South America' or 'Latin America' (14), and 'Nordic countries' or

‘Scandinavia’ (12). Similarly, the interviews also gave rise to discussion about books from a wide range of cultures, including Russia, Poland, Italy, German, Nigeria, France, Spain, Japan, Colombia, Ireland, Sweden, Norway, Canada, Australia and the USA.

These results suggest that most people conceived of culture in a geographical way, but it is also interesting to highlight the few people who conceived of culture differently. Two people mentioned the ‘Arab world’ and one mentioned ‘women’s culture’, suggesting a more socio-political conception of culture; seven respondents conceived of ‘cultures’ as historical periods, including ‘Colonial history’, ‘Renaissance Italy’ or ‘The Tudors/Roman’; and three others included ‘Imaginary ones!’ or fantasy worlds, such as those found in science fiction. This appeared to reflect a conception of ‘culture’ as general sociocultural context, as explained by Helen in the interviews:

I think, also, that [culture] isn’t just a geographical thing. [...] If you’re reading *Jane Eyre*, it’s in another culture in that it’s in another time. And so, you know, I’m using ‘culture’ in [the] sense of the meanings and constructions that people put on events.

Similarly, when Kirsty was asked whether she enjoyed books from other cultures, she answered that she had no particular interest in other geographical areas but that she did enjoy books from other time periods, in particular the Victorian era. Susan and James, too, both compared unfamiliar temporal settings with unfamiliar geographical settings: as Susan said, “it’s not only the language and the culture but it’s historical, as well, so there are lots of different layers of meaning there.” ‘Culture’, then, as perceived by respondents, is not solely a question of geography but reflects a broader idea that a cultural group is one sharing a set of traits or values, a time period, or a physical space; consequently, ‘other cultures’ refers to a group whose traits, values or ways of living are distinct from one’s own (see also Katan 2008: 72; House 2009: 8; Garayta 2010: 31).

This conception of culture is emphasised in respondents’ explanations of why they are interested in reading about other culture. The questionnaire respondents were not specifically asked about this aspect due to the high number of potential answers; however, some respondents nonetheless provided commentary on why they enjoyed reading about cultures distinct from their own. In general, it was felt that reading books from other cultures (including other time periods) gave “an interesting glimpse” into lives other than one’s own; this was also possible when “learning about the unfamiliar within [your] own countries”. Books from other cultures were also good for “escapism”, allowing one to “immers[e] yourself into a different culture”.

These kinds of themes – difference, unfamiliarity, escapism and exploration – were also discussed at greater length by some of the interviewees. Beata commented that she deliberately tries to choose non-British books for her book group, because “I want to learn more, on top of what I have seen when I travel, or when I lived abroad”. Similarly, Helen commented that finding a display of “books from elsewhere” in a local library was a happy surprise – “I found this *enormously* exciting, invigorating, and really enjoyed it”. This enjoyment came largely from the perceived contrasts between her own world-view and those of the writer or characters of the book: “It’s really the meanings people make, and the differences [in] the way they go about *making* those meanings.” Sara also stated that books from other cultures offered diversity in terms of how people communicate – “how we structure an argument, how we organise a text, our choice of vocabulary, you know, all that kind of thing” – and James, too, mentioned difference as a driving factor:

You know, it’s one way to expand your horizons in terms of other cultures, other ways of thinking, other ways of living, et cetera. [...] That’s my driver for reading at all, really – yeah, full stop. But my curiosity, you know, doesn’t stop with the bounds, the coastlines of the country! It’s a bit more extensive than that.

James’s mention of ‘curiosity’ is particularly interesting. More specifically, James stated that he had “a fairly enormous curiosity about people”, the implication being that interest in differences goes hand-in-hand with recognition that, despite those differences, there is some kind of shared human experience. Susan referred to this idea more overtly:

I remember reading books in Australia written by Australians [...] And some of them are based in history, or you can see the roots of that coming through, which is different to the experience of the homeland per se, home Europe [...] And you’re aware of that when you’re reading it. It’s English, and yet it’s Aussified, or it’s Canadianified, or Americanified, or something. So. I’m very aware of all that, and I’m very interested in that, and I like reading it because I think that, in a way, it links to our experience *here*, and what happened to people who went away. And I’m very curious about that [...] It still resonates with me, I think.

Thus Susan’s interest in such books appears to be a combination of similarity and difference: that is, a recognition that people of different cultures share certain experiences, coupled with a desire to learn more about how these experiences may vary between cultures and societies.

The attitude suggested by many of the responses to the present survey is therefore a cosmopolitan one (see p38): sixteen questionnaire respondents (10% of

those who answered the open question on preferred cultures) specifically noted that they were interested in as wide a variety of cultures as possible, while six of the seven interviewees made comments indicating a similar desire to “expand [one’s] horizons” (James) by reading books from a large number of different cultures. The implication, therefore, is that translated books are unlikely to be negatively viewed as a result of their unfamiliar origin; rather, this is likely to be a positive factor in purchase and consumption. The next section explores this issue in more detail.

5.4 TRANSLATED BOOK AS FOREIGN PRODUCTS

5.4.1 Questionnaire results

Question 8 addressed the topic of whether, given their associations with non-British cultures, translated books are perceived as foreign products. Using the example of an English translation of *Notre Dame de Paris* by Victor Hugo, translated by a British translator and published by a British publishing company with the title *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, the question asked respondents to state whether such a work would be best classified as a French book, a British book or both a French and British book. As shown in Figure 13, the most common answer was that it would be a French book (62%), followed by the answer that it would be both (30%), then that it would be British (4%).

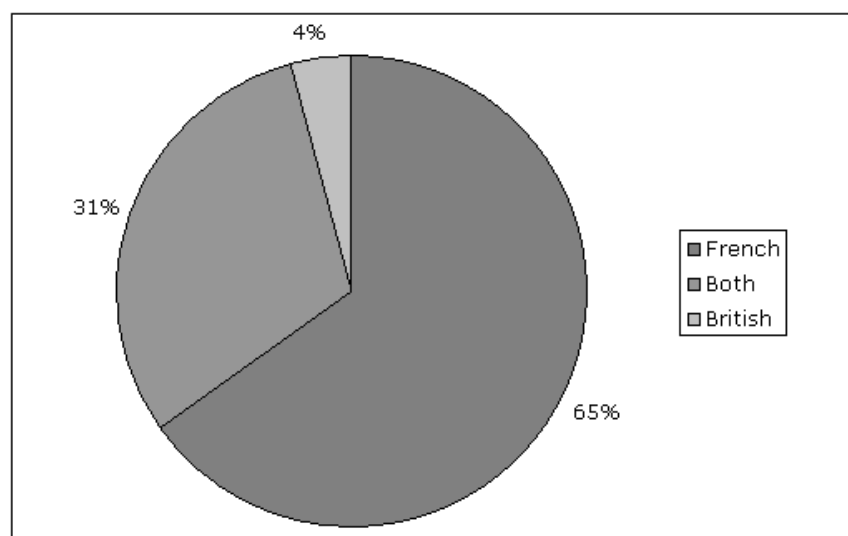


Figure 13. Cultural origin of *Hunchback*

Excluding those who said ‘Don’t know’ (4%), significantly more people thought that *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* would be a French book than those who thought it would be a British book or those who thought it would be a British/French book (χ^2 (2, n=197) = 110.142, p <.001). There was no significant association between opinion on identity of *Hunchback* and sex (χ^2 (2, n=189) = 1.231, p <.540), country of birth (χ^2 (2, n=189) = 2.403, p <.301), whether respondents identified as British (χ^2 (2, n=189) = .595, p <.743) or whether they were multilingual (χ^2 (2, n=189) = .228, p <.892)

There was, however, a significant association between opinion on identity of *Hunchback* and a simplified measure of education (χ^2 (2, n=189) = 7.835, p <.020). Those respondents with a university degree were significantly more likely to say that *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* would be a French book (residual +5) and less likely to say that it would be a British book (residual -1) or both a British and a French book (residual -4); meanwhile, respondents without a university degree were more likely to say that *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* would be a British book (residual +1) or both a French and British book (residual +4) and less likely to say that it would be a French book (residual -5).

5.4.2 Discussion

The results of this question indicate that, in some cases, the translated book will continue to be identified as a product of its source country or culture, with nearly two-thirds of respondents stating that a British translation of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* would remain a French book. It should, of course, be noted that this result is based on a single example: a well-known novel by a well-known French author, whose title (even in English) suggests a French setting. Consequently, it would be specious to claim that the results to this question would necessarily be replicated in the case of other translated books, particularly those whose authors are less well known or whose source culture is less explicitly signalled, either in the peritext or within the text itself.

That said, the results to this question are broadly in line with other findings in both the questionnaire and the interviews, which did indicate strong overall associations between a particular book and that book’s source culture, even if the book has been translated into English. A later question (which is discussed at greater length in Chapter

7, p130) indicated that 95% of respondents would be able to remember the source language of a translated book, which strongly indicates a strong association between a particular book and that book's source culture, even if the book has been translated into English. The interviews, too, give many examples of this in practice. For example, when James was asked how he would summarise *Crime and Punishment*, he said that he would "give it a nationality first off" by calling it a "Russian novel" before going on to discuss its content – here, both culture ('Russian') and genre ('novel') are quickly mentioned. Similarly, Helen states that she "probably would" mention the source culture of a book:

[If for example I was reading a Polish book] I probably would say it was by, you know, a Polish author and set in Poland, or I would say it was by a Polish author but *not* set in Poland or something... I might say something like that.

Sara, too, thought that she would specify the nationality of the author ("I would probably say it's by a Hungarian author, that's probably what I would say"), while Kirsty thought that she would be more inclined to mention the cultural setting described within the book itself – discussing *The Shadow of the Wind*, she commented that she would say that it was "set in Spain", not that it was "a Spanish book".

However, it is not unfailingly the case that translated books are associated with their source culture in readers' minds. Sean was a particular exception to the trend that source culture would generally be mentioned when referring to a book, since he commented that whether or not he mentioned the book's source culture would depend on the book under discussion:

If I was describing *Madame Bovary*, I wouldn't necessarily feel it's relevant to mention that it's set in France, I would say it's about a frustrated woman, who's been disappointed in her marriage, and the frustrations that she feels within that role. Whereas if it was something like *War and Peace*, I'd kind of have to say, 'Well, you know, it was set in nineteenth-century [...] Russia, at the time of the Napoleonic Wars' so the historical setting and the location of the book would be relevant [...] depending on what the book is.

Sean's comments here suggest that although in some cases the cultural milieu of the book is an essential part of understanding the book's meanings and functions, in other cases the content of the book, as well as the reader's understanding of it, need not be so firmly rooted in the source culture. This perhaps explains why, in several instances, interviewees were unable to identify a book's culture: James, for example, talking about the style of *The Good Soldier Svejk* (*Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka za světové války*,

Jaroslav Hašek, 1923, translated by Cecil Parrott), stopped himself to note that “I don’t know if it’s Polish, it might be Polish”²¹; similarly, Sean discussed in some detail the critical reception of *My Struggle* (*Min Kamp*, Karl Ove Knausgård, 2009-2011, translated by Don Bartlett) but referred to it as a Danish book instead of a Norwegian one. Thus, in some cases, the translated book’s source culture was in doubt in readers’ minds, and the precise mode of referring to a translated text’s source culture appeared to vary between readers

Overall, however, there was a clear tendency to associate a translated book with its source culture, particularly among the questionnaire respondents, which suggests a strong association between a book’s content and its source language and/or culture. What is less clear is the extent to which this assignation of culture can be viewed as analogous to the concept of ‘country of origin’ in consumer terms, and therefore the extent to which it could affect book choice or sales. It was suggested in the previous section (p94) that many respondents demonstrated a cosmopolitan attitude towards books, with the potential result that, broadly speaking, books from cultures other than the UK might be positively viewed. However, none of the interviewees talked about any particular culture in terms of its effect on writing quality or book value. Indeed, in the interviews, Helen stated that the issue of whether *Hunchback* was a British book or a French book was “not a question I would ever have asked myself”, adding that none of the answer categories given in the questionnaire was particularly appropriate: “No! No, no, no no no, it strikes me as, you know, an English translation of a French book”. In addition, nearly a third characterised *Hunchback* as both a British and a French book, problematising the suggestion that it could be generally be classed as a ‘French product’. In this case, at least, the assignation of a single ‘country of origin’ category to the book is unlikely to be particularly meaningful in understanding how it functions as a product.

That said, one aspect of country-of-origin research that does appear to have an equivalent in book purchasing is the association of certain product types – in this case, book genres – with particular countries of origin (see Chapter 2, p38). In some cases, culture and genre interacted in respondents’ comments to form what could be characterised as a sub-genre. Scandinavian thrillers were one such example: three of the

²¹ Hašek is a Czech writer, and the book, set in Austro-Hungary, includes Czech, German and Polish-speaking characters.

questionnaire respondents said that they enjoyed Scandinavian thrillers²², with one adding, “I discovered it before the craze!”, while, in the interviews, Susan noted that “there’s been a huge surge in [...] the Nordic noir books” and Sara mentioned that she had recently read some of them (“Scandinavian thrillers”). For these respondents, then, the ‘crime/thriller’ product type was particularly associated with certain countries of origin – in this case, Norway, Sweden and Denmark (see also Deahl 2011 and Craighill 2013).

Thus, the question of whether translated books can be usefully characterised as ‘foreign products’ in discussions of consumer attitudes to them is very much an open one. It seems certain that, broadly speaking, the source culture of a book is an important aspect of how readers understand that book. What is less clear is whether the fact that a book is translated is equally important to readers; this is the topic of the following section.

5.5 TRANSLATION AS CATEGORY

5.5.1 Questionnaire results

In the questionnaire part of the survey, respondents were asked: “**To the best of your knowledge, have you ever read a translated book?**” The answer options were ‘Yes’, ‘No’ and ‘Not sure’. The majority of respondents (188 – 92%) answered ‘yes’, six (3%) answered ‘no’, and eleven (5%) answered ‘Not sure’.

The seventeen respondents who answered ‘No’ or ‘Not sure’ had their answers checked against their responses to a later question (question 22), which asked them to tick which books they had read from a list (compiled by the researcher). Of eleven respondents who answered ‘Not sure’, seven (64%) had ticked off at least one translated book from the list, and of six respondents who answered ‘No’, three (50%) had ticked off at least one translated book from the list.

When asked to recall a specific translated book that they had read, 82% of total respondents were able to name a specific title or series that they were familiar with.

²² Referred to by respondents as ‘Scandinavian crime’, ‘Nordic noir’ and ‘Scandic noir’.

5.5.2 Discussion

The first important inference to be drawn from these results is that readers are at least aware of the difference between translated books and non-translated books. 82% of the questionnaire respondents were able to think of a particular translated book that they had read, while general answers given throughout both the questionnaire and the interviews made it clear that not only did readers understand the difference between translated and non-translated books, but they could also compare the two and give critical opinions on translated books, translation and translators.

However, this cannot be taken to mean that the translation status of a book is important to readers in the same way that its genre, source culture or content are. A first indication that ‘translated’ may actually be a less salient factor is the periodic confusion about whether books one has read are translated or not. As mentioned, of the seventeen questionnaire respondents who said they had never read a translated book or who were not sure whether they had, ten went on to say they had read a book that is actually translated: *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* by Stieg Larsson and *The Snowman* by Jo Nesbø were ticked six times each by people who said they had not or may not have read a translated book; *Pippi Longstocking* by Astrid Lindgren was ticked three times; *Madame Bovary* by Gustave Flaubert was ticked twice; and *Love in the Time of Cholera* by Gabriel García Márquez and *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho were ticked once each. For these respondents, then, these particular books, despite being translated, did not come to mind when asked about translated books particularly.

The interviewees also showed some signs of confusion when it came to classifying books as ‘translated’ or ‘not translated’. Helen suggested that, indeed, readers “might not know” that a book was translated; trying to think of an example of such a book, she added:

I don't know, I can't think of anything, but there may well be stories that... I mean I suppose Hans Christian Andersen [stories] are not written in English originally – they can't be, can they? Nor the Brothers Grimm. No, they can't be, I think one's in Danish and the other's in... [Interviewer: *German, I think.*] Scribbly pointy German, yeah.

Here, it appears that Helen would not have classed Andersen's or Grimms' fairy tales as translated books simply because she had never thought about it before – when asked to consider the question, she not only realised that both sets of stories *were* translated but

was also able to state the source language of one of them. Other interviewees also exhibited some uncertainty, but, unlike Helen, were ultimately unable to come to a conclusion about whether a particular book was or was not translated. Asked for an example of a translated book she had read recently, Susan mentioned Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half a Yellow Sun*, reporting that "that was a story that I think carried very well in translation". It was only when asked about the book's source language that she questioned her assumption:

Ah, now there you are. It's written by a Nigerian *person*, but whether you actually... I couldn't swear to the fact that it was originally written in Nigerian, you're right, it might have been written in English by her. But her background is Nigerian, and I think she lives in Nigeria still. And her other books – *Purple Hibiscus* is one that I'm just going on to shortly – I'm not sure if it's in translation.

Kirsty, too, struggled to remember whether *Half a Yellow Sun* was translated, although she suspected that it was not, and she was also uncertain about *If This is a Man* (Primo Levi, 1947, translated by Stuart Woolf). Even when interviewees *were* aware that a book had been translated, this was sometimes a result of guesswork or assumption. Sean said that he would "generally" be aware that he was reading a translated book before he began, but said that this might be "mainly because of the surname of the author [...] I guess that's how I would automatically make an assumption about whether something has been translated or not". Sara, too, said that she primarily used source culture to decide whether it was worth checking if a book had been translated.

These kinds of comments are particularly interesting when compared to translation scholars' assertions on the same topic. As noted, some translation theorists appear to be certain that translated books constitute a "special category" for readers (Chan 2010a: 60), while others are equally certain that readers usually have no idea that they are reading a translated book (Fawcett 1995: 181; Classe 2000a: x; France 2001a: xx) (see p41). The responses to the present survey suggest a situation somewhere between the two extremes. It appears incorrect to assume a reader will always pick up a translated book, note that it has been translated, and read it with that in mind; but, at the same time, it is also clear that many readers are aware that they are reading a translated book and, as the remainder of this thesis will show, have strong views about the implications of translation for meaning and enjoyment. Indeed, for several of the interviewees, an understanding that a book was translated was viewed as an important part of the reading experience. Sara said that she would "very definitely" be aware

whether or not a book she was reading was translated, adding, “If I didn’t know, I’d find out. I’d want to know before I started reading. Yes.” James was even more insistent, apparently seeing non-awareness of translation as a failing, and was aghast at the idea that a reader might not know that the book s/he was reading had been translated. He commented that “I’ve never read a book that was translated that I didn’t know that from the word go” and added:

Unless you’re pretty bloody dense, that’s self-evident [...], you *know* it’s a translation! [...] I’m going to be judgemental and say that these people are amateur readers! (laughs)

Yet he too showed one instance of uncertainty about whether a book was translated or not – when explaining that he had disliked reading some of Murakami’s books, he asked, “Does he write in English, d’you know, or is that translated?” Similarly, although Susan had several instances of being unsure whether a book was translated or not, she commented that such moments of uncertainty or assumption were “foolish”. Thus, there was a certain level of expectation that readers should be aware of the cultural origins of what they were reading; indeed, James’ reference to “amateur readers” reveals an awareness of the importance of translation to the form and meaning of texts. Yet, at the same time, ascertaining whether or not books were translated did not always seem to be a point of particular interest to interviewees, and even those showing a great interest in the translation process showed moments of uncertainty about whether it had occurred in particular cases.

Other responses to the survey emphasise that translation status is not one of the most pertinent attributes of a book. In addition to the fact that only four questionnaire respondents (2%) listed ‘translated’ as a type of book that they enjoyed, the interviewees showed little more inclination to categorise books according to whether they were translated or not. As noted earlier, some of the interviewees were asked to say how they would summarise books to other people (p97); while source culture, genre and descriptions of content were common attributes to include, the fact that the book was translated was less frequently mentioned. Sean, for example, said that he would discuss the book’s subject, and, in some cases, would specify the culture in which the book was set – however, the specific fact that the book was translated did not appear to occur to him as something relevant to mention. Similarly, Beata’s summary (of *Les Misérables*) focused on culture and genre, as well as time period – she said that she might eventually

“mention that it was initially written in French or something like that”, but suspected that this would be as a result of talking about the author. Sara also thought that the fact of translation would be implied rather than stated:

Thinking about Sándor Márai, I read *Embers* not so long ago. Would I say that it was a translation? I would say it's a book by a Hungarian author – I probably wouldn't add that I don't speak Hungarian, and so I think it's sort of fairly self-explanatory! (laughs) I don't know. [...] I think you can guess that it's a translation by the fact that I don't speak Hungarian! (laughs) I would probably say it's by a Hungarian author, that's probably what I would say.

Sara did go on to specify that, in certain cases, she *would* mention that a book had been translated. For example, her summary of *Collection of Sand* (Italo Calvino, 1984, translated by Martin L. McLaughlin) put the fact of translation in pride of place:

It's a wonderful collection of essays, by Calvino, that was translated very recently by a guy who is a lecturer down in England somewhere, I've forgotten where (laughs), who translates from Italian, and I'm very grateful to him! In terms of content, it's very wide ranging, and covers all sorts of things, as Calvino does!

Sara stated that this reference to translation was due to the fact that she had been seeking the book for some time, and that it had only just been translated – “I was so happy that I found it!”; thus, for practical reasons, the translated nature of the book was at the forefront of her mind. Helen, too, thought that she “probably would” mention the fact of translation – though “not necessarily” – while James thought that although the translated nature of the book “would not by any means be the *first* thing” he told someone, “the fact it's a translation would definitely be mentioned” at some point.

However, when asked specifically if he classified books into ‘translated’ and ‘non-translated’ in his mental library, James replied:

That's a very interesting question. (pause) Well, not terribly consciously, although the knowing is always there – but it's not at the forefront of my feelings or thoughts about any particular work. You know, it's a *mélange*, it's in there, but it's not prominent, no.

This reference to a ‘*mélange*’ is particularly interesting, suggesting as it does that the fact of translation is one of a series of factors that mingle together to form the overall impression of a book. In particular, responses in the interviews suggested that ‘translated’ as a category converged with ‘foreign’ as a category. Susan was explicit about associating the two categories:

I *love* reading books in translation, *but* that includes American and Canadian English [...] Having spent a year in Canada, I realised just how different the language and culture are, although they're very similar. And that difference, that area of difference, is just as powerful as somebody coming, I think, from a different country and speaking a *completely* different language.

Helen and Beata, too, emphatically made the point that differentiating between translated books and books from other cultures was not particularly meaningful for them in terms of choosing books:

I think I've nothing to say on whether they're in translation or written in English but in another culture. It's more that they're *from* somewhere else, and they're *set* in another social and cultural context, that I like. (Helen)

I don't really pay attention if it was translated or not [...] I don't pick books that necessarily *had* to be translated, but I don't necessarily make an emphasis on picking foreign authors who *only* write in English either. [...] The point actually is to pick from other cultures. (Beata)

In an example of putting this into practice, Sean failed to distinguish between source culture and nationality of writer:

A good friend of mine [...] speaks Spanish as well, so if I was reading a book that was set in Spain I would think, 'Well we have that shared interest'. She might want to read it specifically because it's *from* a Spanish writer, so in that case I would [mention it].

In Sean's comment, a 'book set in Spain' becomes a book 'from a Spanish writer', despite the fact that these two categories are not necessarily interchangeable; meanwhile, in later discussions of style and content (see Chapter 6, p116), interviewees moved continuously between discussing translated books and English-language books set in other cultures. Helen compared the 'otherness' of a book written in Polish to the 'otherness' of a historical novel such as *Jane Eyre*; Beata, in her discussions of *Les Misérables*, switched between talking about the French source text and two English target texts; and Susan's discussion of narrative language seamlessly elided translated books and English-language books:

I started reading recently one of the Scandic noir ones [*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*] and I thought it was very badly written in English. [...] I thought it was very poor English, and I didn't have patience with it. I completed the story, but I found it irritating. It wasn't well written. And I also get irritated by books that are written... Even *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, which [I've also read recently], I find its style of writing awkward, and it's not the *best* English.

Whereas something like Mildred Taylor's *Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry* is excellent English, or *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and I love that.

Such discussion suggests that classifying books into 'translated' and 'non-translated' is far less of a concern to readers than it is to translation scholars. In practice, the case seems to be closer to the situation acknowledged by José Lambert, Lieven D'hulst and Katrin van Bragt, who recognise that, although translated books may "constitute an entirely separate sub-group", they may also sometimes "become indistinguishable from 'original' literary texts" (Lambert et al. 1985: 150). This also appears to reflect the attitude taken by British booksellers, who generally shelve translated books among English-language originals (Sapiro 2010: 430; see also Goldsmith 2008: 1), and who, even when separating the two, do not appear to be particularly strict about the difference between 'translated' and 'foreign' books – for example, the display of 'translated' books pictured earlier (p54) includes a (non-translated) book by Chinua Achebe. Overall, it seems clear that assigning the category of 'translated' to a book may not always reflect how readers perceive and understand that text, and that British publishers are right to assume that "[t]he fact of translation is not a selling point in itself" (Kershaw 2014: 39).

5.6 SUMMARY

Overall, then, the discussion in this chapter provides evidence for the importance of both generic and cultural categorisations in readers' attitudes towards translated texts. Genre categories were of paramount importance to readers in describing and talking about books, and readers showed preferences for (and antipathy towards) various genres and sub-genres. Similarly, the cultural setting of a book was deemed to be an essential part of the book's identity, and, again, many readers chose or avoided books based on the culture or country these books described.

The same cannot be said of the category 'translation'. Readers frequently failed to distinguish between translated books and non-translated books, and were sometimes unsure about whether books they had read were translated. Translated books – like non-translated books – were conceptualised in terms of genre, culture, storyline and content, not in translation terms. Simply put, when it came to book choice and reading enjoyment, whether or not a book was translated was irrelevant to readers.

CHAPTER 6: TRANSLATION PREFERENCES

6.1 OPENING REMARKS

In terms of choosing, recommending and enjoying books, then, ‘translation’ is not a meaningful category for readers. Nonetheless, the results reported in the previous chapter indicate that respondents to the present survey were familiar with a range of translated books and, furthermore, that they frequently formed strong opinions on those they had read. The present chapter examines some of these opinions in more detail. Specifically, it discusses the immediate attitudes that readers form in reaction to reading translated books, analysing respondents’ opinions on the purposes of translated books, how they are presented as products, and textual features in translation.

6.2 LITERAL VERSUS FREE TRANSLATION

6.2.1 Questionnaire results

Question 7 asked: “**Thinking about the relationship between translated books in English and their originals in a different language, would you say that [...]**” The response options were:

- A good translation has the same meaning as the original book, but in English
- A good translation is one translator's interpretation of the original book
- A good translation is like an English summary of the original book.

There was also an option to put in one’s own answer, which was used by twelve respondents (6%). One person did not respond to this question, leaving 204 usable responses. The results for this question are shown in Figure 14 (next page).

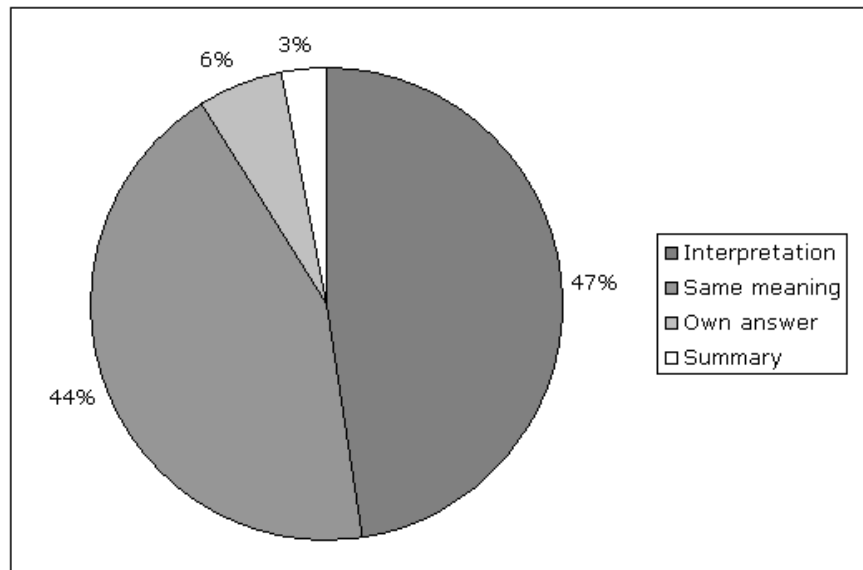


Figure 14. What is a good translation?

Looking at those who chose one of the three given categories (that is, omitting those who gave their own answer), the most common answers were that a good translation is an interpretation of the original book (48%) and that a translation has the ‘same meaning’ as the original book, but in English (44%), as compared to 3% of people who thought it should be a summary. This preference was significant, ($\chi^2 (2, n=192) = 79.344, p <.001$). Overall, slightly more people thought it should be an interpretation than the people who thought it should have the same meaning – however, this was not a significant difference ($\chi^2 (1, n=186) = .344, p <.557$).

Chi square tests for independence could not be run against this three-category measure, largely due to the low percentage of people who said that a good translation should be like a summary. Chi square tests were therefore performed omitting this category – that is, comparing only the desire for interpretation to the desire for same meaning (186 respondents). In terms of whether respondents’ choice of what a good translation should be like was related to any demographic variables, variables that were not significantly correlated with opinions on good translations were age ($\chi^2 (6, n=181) = 7.519, p <.275$), age (simplified measure) ($\chi^2 (2, n=181) = 3.411, p <.182$), education (simplified measure) ($\chi^2 (1, n=186) = .036, p <.849$), degree subject, ($\chi^2 (2, n=127) = 2.672, p <.263$), country of birth ($\chi^2 (1, n=186) = 1.026, p <.311$), whether the respondents identified as British ($\chi^2 (1, n=186) = 1.550, p <.213$), multilingualism ($\chi^2 (1, n=186) = .233, p <.629$) and English as first language (Fisher's Exact Test ($n=186$), $p <.572$).

The only demographic variable with which the opinion of whether a translation was an interpretation or had the same meaning was significantly correlated was sex ($\chi^2(1, n=186) = 7.823, p <.005$). Looking at expected frequencies, we see that women are significantly more likely to say that a translated book should have the same meaning as the original book but in English (residual +8), while men are more likely to say that a translation is one translator's interpretation of the original book (residual +8).

6.2.2 Discussion

Although the present question refers to the general concept of a 'good translation', the potential response categories place the emphasis on one particular aspect of translation quality much discussed by translation scholars: the balance between literal and free translation strategies. Looking particularly at the first two response options, while a conception of translation as 'interpretation' suggests an element of fluidity and dynamicity, a preference for translated books that have the 'same meaning' as their source texts implies a direct equivalence between source and target texts. The central issue under debate here, therefore, is, as Kearns puts it, "the degree to which strategies may involve manipulating a source text in its transition to a target text" (2008: 284; see also Munday 2012: 304).

With that in mind, the most striking aspect of respondents' answers to this question is that the two most popular answers – that a good translation is one translator's interpretation of the original book and that a good translation has the same meaning as the original book – offer drastically opposing views of the purpose of translation. Hence, as a group, the respondents do not strongly endorse either strategy; approximately equal numbers of people chose each, and two respondents chose both:

"A good translation lies somewhere between the first two options [i.e. 'has the same meaning as the original book, but in English' and 'is one translator's interpretation of the original book']. It should be true to the original in content, but also modified so that the translation 'flows' well"

"a mixture of the first 2 points. A literal translation can miss subtle cultural nuances"

The interviewees also espoused an ambivalent attitude towards the appropriateness of literal and/or free translation strategies; for example, there was some evidence that readers thought of translation as a highly constrained practice. Discussing translation

quality, Sean wondered “to what extent a translator would be allowed to adapt what’s been put down on the page” and voiced his belief that “if it’s there in black and white [in the original] they have to translate it as it appears”; being multilingual, he was fully aware of the limits of literal translation but nonetheless thought that he would “presume literality” as far as possible. Beata, too, seemed to think that literality was expected of translators:

[In my Kindle version of *Les Misérables*] it just seemed like the translator didn’t go and translate *every single word* [...] And I’m not sure, you know, *in* the profession how that would be seen – you know, is this translation somehow not as *worthy* as another one, where you almost translate every word?

This idea of constraint with regards to the source text was also espoused by Sara, who noted that if a source text is badly written, “the poor translator’s stuck with that!” – that is, the translator may have limited scope for ‘changing’ what appears in the source text, even in cases where this results in a problematic translation.

At the same time, however, Sara, Beata and Sean all recognised that translation could not just be a case of finding literal equivalents of words. Sara stated that, for her, literal translation was impossible, saying, “there is nothing that strictly goes from A to B or B to A – it just doesn’t work”, while both Sean and Beata commented that, in any case, literality would not necessarily be something to strive for. Sean acknowledged that “sometimes you would have to adapt what’s been put down on the page, quite significantly, in order to make it intelligible to a foreign reader”; meanwhile, Beata expressed a preference for the apparently abridged version of *Les Misérables* to the longer version she was also reading (see p118), and was careful to comment that “I don’t think I’m losing out on anything”.

Overall, the divided questionnaire responses combined with the interviewees’ comments suggest that neither an extremely literal approach nor an extremely free one would be viewed as resulting in a ‘good’ translation. Instead, when asked to think about translation in these particular terms, it was a balance between the two that was most appreciated by readers.

6.3 PERITEXTS

6.3.1 Questionnaire results

Question 14 asked: “**When reading a translated book, which parts of the book would you usually read?**” Respondents were asked whether they read, did not read or sometimes read the front cover, back cover, ‘About the author’ section, introduction, translator’s note, footnotes and main body of a translated book.

This question was answered only by those who said that they had read a translated book (188 people). Within this group, respondents who stated that they did not read the main body of the book were judged to have misunderstood the question and were eliminated, leaving 183 results²³. The results are shown in Figure 15.

	Front cover	Back cover	‘About the author’	Introduction	Translator’s note	Footnotes	Main body
Yes	169	151	142	119	106	92	183
No	1	7	5	7	15	11	0
Sometimes	8	20	30	48	56	71	0
Total	178	178	177	174	177	174	183

Figure 15. Parts read

The most commonly read part of a translated book (other than the main body) was the front cover (95%), followed by the back cover (85%), the ‘About the author’ section (80%), the introduction (68%), the translator’s note (60%) and the footnotes (53%).

Two further questions have implications for discussion of the peritext. Question 16 asked respondents about their ability to remember various details about a translated book (see p130). The most commonly remembered aspect was the title, with 98% of respondents saying that they would or would sometimes remember it. In addition, Question 17 asked respondents to discuss whether certain features were indicative of well translated or badly translated books. Most of these features will be discussed in the section on translation language (p116); however, three features are particularly relevant to the present discussion: title, introduction and footnotes. Regarding the title, a majority of respondents (53%) were unsure about whether a foreign-sounding title would be a positive or negative feature of a translated book; however, both

²³ Note: column responses do not add up to 183 as some respondents left one or more columns blank.

introductions and footnotes were positively viewed: 68% of respondents thought that an introduction by the translator would indicate a well translated book, while 79% of respondents stated that footnotes would give the same indication.

6.3.2 Discussion

It has already been noted (p33) that books rarely appear without peritexts, which may be extremely pertinent to how readers view a work – and this certainly appears to be the case in the questionnaire results, in which all peritextual elements were generally read by a majority of respondents. In addition, footnotes and a translator’s introduction were both classed as signs of a good translation by a majority of respondents, implying that peritextual elements are very important in how translated books are understood and perceived. The following sections offer further discussion regarding some of the most pertinent peritextual elements.

6.3.2.1 Front and back cover

The front and back covers were the two peritextual elements read by most respondents (front cover 94%, back cover 84%); this mirrors the results of past studies that suggest the importance of a book’s appearance (Radway 1987: 20; Kamphuis 1991: 475; d’Astous et al. 2005: 11). In terms of verbal elements, it was shown earlier that titles are of central importance in allowing readers to make initial judgements about a book (Genette 1987: 88; O’Neill 1994: 124; Ross 2000: 15). The present questionnaire supported this assumption in that 98% of respondents stated that they would remember the title of translated books they had read, while the interviewees also generally seemed to remember titles, although there were some moments of difficulty: Helen hesitated over *If This Is a Man* by Primo Levi, while Susan could not recall the name of a Dostoevsky book she was talking about. As to the effect of certain kinds of titles, interviewees discussed this issue very little. Regarding the questionnaire question, Kirsty and James both briefly expressed the idea that a foreign-sounding title would be a positive attribute in a translated book, and the only other respondent who mentioned titles and translation was Beata, who briefly wondered why the title of *Les Misérables* remained in French even in translation.

Beata was also the only interviewee to talk about the blurb, another verbal element available on the cover. As noted, it appears that readers tend to approach blurbs with a more critical eye than they do other elements of the peritext (Ross 2000: 15; BML 2005: 26-27; see p35), and this was certainly true of Beata. Although she avidly read virtually all elements of book peritexts, including the copyright page, and did use these elements to make decisions about whether to read books, she refused to read critics' reviews (at least, those contained in the peritext), with the view that "that's just too much selling for me":

There's this weird thing, where they would spend the first three or four pages including reviews. I just don't get it. [...] 'Beautifully written, blah blah blah', by this obviously popular author, which in the end turns out to be her friend or something. Let's face it. It is like that. I try not to be a sceptic, but the older I get, the more [I think], 'Really? I bet you she's your sister.' (laughs)

Thus, although books covers appear to be an important factor in book choice and attitude, it is not necessarily the case that all aspects of a book's cover will be noticed or recalled.

6.3.2.2 Introduction and translator's note

Introductions, including translators' notes, were not as frequently read as covers but were still read by a majority of respondents: 68% usually read the introduction, while 60% usually read the translator's note. The reluctance of some readers to read the introduction or translator's note can perhaps be explained by the association of such prefatory texts with particular kinds of academic or classical texts (see p36). This perception was reflected to some extent in the interviews. When Susan was asked about the contents of introductions in books she was familiar with, she referred to classic texts such as Charles Dickens and Oscar Wilde, and stated that introductions were "usually by a professor from some university". Sean, too, when asked about introductions, began to discuss "Penguin Classic edition[s]" that might contain introductory material, usually involving literary criticism; and, indeed, and this was a key reason why he personally tended to avoid introductions:

Some of the Penguin classics tend to have spoilers [...] in the nineteenth-century editions, 'cause they just feel that everybody's gonna know the story of *Hard Times* or *Great Expectations*, so, you know, we're just gonna analyse its literary

merit – and I don't want my reading experience to be spoiled, so that's why I skip it.

For other interviewees, despite this association with particular kinds of texts, introductions were generally perceived to be both useful and interesting. Susan and Beata both described using introductions as references during the course of their reading, as a way of keeping track of characters (Susan) or chronology (Beata), while Helen commented that she had recently been reading books by Beat Generation authors including Allen Ginsberg and William S. Burroughs, as well as works by Graham Greene and Samuel Beckett, and that she had read the introductions to all of these. In other cases, introductions gave information about publishing history – as in Sean's mention of the preface to *Suite Française* (Irène Némirovsky, 2004, translated by Sandra Smith), which “explains what had happened to the manuscript, why it wasn't finished, and why it had taken fifty years to get published” – or cultural conventions, as in Helen's mention of a guide to Russian naming conventions in *Anna Karenina*.

Two underlying themes are particularly noticeable here. First, most of the interviewees stated that they read introductory material *after* having read the main body of the book. Beata stated that, often, introductions “really [don't] have anything to do with the book itself, it's just about the author. So that kind of research I would do really *after* I read the book, *if* I'm interested”. Similarly, James commented that “I value introductions, very much so. But I like to go to them and inform myself *after* I've read the book” (the exception to this rule was non-fiction books, in which he read the introductions first), while Helen agreed that “sometimes it's better to read the introduction *after* you've read the book”. Thus, introductions to books were generally viewed as additional resources to be examined after having read the book.

A second crucial motif of the discussion on introductions to translated books is that little reference is made to the translated nature of the text. In the questionnaire, respondents were specifically asked for their attitudes to “An introduction by the translator explaining the decisions he or she has made”, and over two-thirds thought that this would be a sign of a good translation. Yet the low number of references to this type of introduction in the interviews suggest either that such introductions are rare or that, in practice, people do not pay a great deal of attention to them. When asked specifically about introductions written by translators, Susan responded:

I'm not aware of it, but it doesn't mean they're not there. And if they *are* there, maybe I'm not reading them. Because I'm not aware of remembering that. The only other thing I can think of is things like family trees, sometimes, or diagrams, but that's not to do with the language and translation. I can't *think* of that, no.

Sean, too, pointed out that such information in translated books was rare:

Seldom would I find notes about the translation process. It's more to do with... not the origins of the text so much as the delay in translating the text into English, or why this text was relevant in its country of origin, [or] something like that.

This accords with research into translation peritexts that finds a similar focus on the source culture, text and author, with introductions being used as an “extra-textual note for the Western reader to understand the social and cultural space within which the novel is set” (Herrero 2005: 228; see also Kellman 2010: 13 and Pellatt 2013: 100). Indeed, only two interviewees mentioned introductions specifically written by translators. James stated that he had sometimes read introductions referring to the translation process and that such details “are enriching in themselves, you know, add another wee layer onto the experience that you've had with the book”; similarly, Sara said that she would “absolutely” read a translator's note, and that she would “take note of what the translator was referring to, and if he or she mentioned any idiosyncrasies, or hiccups, or difficulties, or peculiarities”. Sara also thought that she would tend to remember this information later on; this was in direct contrast to Beata, whose tendency to read virtually all parts of a book's peritext – “I will look at the *pictures*, I will read *everything* [...] ‘Cause I want to know *exactly* which year they wrote it in, *how* many editions there were, you know” – did not mean that she would retain the information: “it's a complete waste for time for me to do this, ‘cause I will never remember *any* of it”.

Hence, although many scholars support the use of translators' introductions being used to talk specifically about the translation process (e.g. Maier 1996: 258; Venuti 2008: 273-274; Pellatt 2013: 91-92), few of the respondents were familiar with such introductions, suggesting that, at present, their usefulness is limited.

6.3.2.3 Footnotes

As with introductions, footnotes were generally viewed positively by questionnaire respondents: over three-quarters (79%) thought that footnotes were a sign of a well translated text, while just over half (53%) said they usually read the footnotes. In the interviews, interest in reading footnotes depended on whether the reader was enjoying the book; as James said:

If the book has gripped me, then I'm going to go for everything [...] so I'll want the footnotes – you know, I'll build them into the text. If I'm not so engaged, they might get left by the wayside. But it's a sign of a successful read for me, if, you know, all the minutiae, I want that stuff.

James also noted that, in his opinion, footnotes were preferable to endnotes as they were more accessible and “in the moment, as it were”. Similarly, Kirsty expressed a preference for footnotes over glossaries or other peritextual materials, as footnotes provide information that may be required but do not “interrupt” the reading process. For these two, then, footnotes were very helpful.

Again reflecting the comments on introductions, footnotes appeared to be associated with certain kinds of classic texts. For example, Helen was reluctant to discuss footnotes in translated texts on the basis that, “I rarely read anything in translation that's not fiction, so it's usually pretty light” (meaning that it would therefore be unlikely to have footnotes), while Sean stated, “I more often come across footnotes in say a nineteenth-century English book than I would do in a... I seldom come across footnotes contained within a translated text”. Sean added that he had recently read several non-fiction books that made extensive use of footnotes, and in those cases “I was constantly checking the footnotes”; this mirrors James' distinction between introductions to fiction and non-fiction books (this chapter, p113).

At the same time, the use of footnotes to make comments about translation strategy was generally unfamiliar to the interviewees; as Sean stated:

I've never come across a footnote which kind of goes, ‘Oh, you know, I had difficulty translating this bit’ or giving background information. It doesn't seem to be the way that translators work. I suppose it seems, to them, ‘Oh’, it's kind of drawing attention to their presence, kind of going, ‘Hello!’

This was the only mention of potentially disruptive nature of footnotes (see p36), and, in any case, Sean does not necessarily espouse this view but rather recognises it as a

potential concern for translators. Indeed, despite the association of footnotes with academic texts, the respondents to the present survey did read such notes, and appeared to find them useful.

In general, then, peritextual features in translated books were often read and enjoyed by respondents, but their efficacy in promoting awareness of translation was extremely limited, particularly in fiction texts. As such, respondents' attitudes towards peritextual elements differed considerably from those of many translation critics. Whether the same is true of textual features is the subject of discussion in the following section.

6.4 TRANSLATION LANGUAGE

6.4.1 Questionnaire results

Question 17 asked: **“As with non-translated books, the standard of translated books can vary. In your opinion, which of the following features would show that a book has been well translated, and which features would show that it has been badly translated?”** The features for which a response was required were:

- “Foreign names of people or places, for example ‘Rue Ganterie’ or ‘Señor Don José de Rey’”
- “Foreign words whose meaning is understandable from the context”
- “Foreign words whose meaning is not understandable from the context”
- “An introduction by the translator explaining the decisions he or she has made”
- “Footnotes explaining some foreign words or ideas”
- “Neologisms (new words), for example 'snickt' or 'monomyth’”
- “Sentences that are easy to understand straight away”
- “Sentences that sound unusual or foreign”
- “Archaisms (old words), for example 'chuse' or 'betimes’”
- “A foreign-sounding title, for example *Mistero Buffo* or *The Harafish*”
- “Use of regional English, for example Yorkshire or Cockney”

The peritextual features of ‘Introduction’, ‘Footnotes’ and ‘Foreign-sounding title’ have already been discussed (this chapter, pp 112, 115 and 111 respectively). The present section discusses those features that form part of the main text: foreign names and words, neologisms, archaisms, sentences that are easy to understand straight away, sentences that sound unusual or foreign, and use of regional English. Of these textual features, three were judged to be indicative of a well translated book by a majority of respondents: these were ‘Sentences that are easy to understand straight away’ (85% of respondents), ‘Foreign words whose meaning is understandable from the context’ (76%) and ‘Foreign names of people or places, for example 'Rue Ganterie' or 'Señor Don José de Rey’ (72%).

Two features were judged by a majority of respondents to be indicative of a badly translated book; these were ‘Foreign words whose meaning is not understandable from the context’ (79% of respondents) and ‘Sentences that sound unusual or foreign’ (56%).

There was one feature for which a majority of respondents answered ‘Don’t know’ when asked if they indicated a well or badly translated book: ‘Neologisms (new words), for example 'snickt' or 'monomyth’ (51%). There were also two features for which there was no majority answer: ‘Archaisms (old words), for example 'chuse' or 'betimes’ (‘Don’t know’ = 45%, ‘Badly translated’ = 37% and ‘Well translated’ = 18%) and ‘Use of regional English, for example Yorkshire or Cockney’ (‘Don’t know’ = 38%, ‘Well translated’ = 34% and ‘Badly translated’ = 28%).

6.4.2 Discussion

6.4.2.1 Style

The most popular textual feature of all those listed was ‘Sentences that are easy to understand straight away’ (85% of respondents), while ‘Sentences that sound unusual or foreign’ was viewed as the most problematic (56%); these results support the impression that fluency and naturalness in translated books are extremely important to readers (Venuti 1996: 205; Milton 2008: 110; Garayta 2010: 38; see p46). Furthermore, it was sometimes made clear in the interviews that, regardless of whether a book was translated, there was a limit to how difficult reading should be, both in terms of style

and length of book. For example, Kirsty stated that she was “pretty open” about what she was willing to read, but sometimes long or difficult books could take up too much time: referring to *The History of Aspirin*, a (non-translated) book group choice, she stated that she would not have chosen it herself because it was “dense”, the sort of book that a reader could not “skim”. Similarly, Beata, who was partway through reading *Les Misérables* (in four different versions – see below, p125), mentioned several times that she was discouraged by its length, to the extent that she expressed a preference for a translated version that she thought might be abridged:

I preferred the Kindle version actually, whatever that translation was. It seemed like the [translator] – I mean, I would have to find the sentences, and match them to see if I’m right – but it just seemed like the translator didn’t go and translate *every single word* [...] into English, because it reads easier, and it reads *faster*, and I think if we printed out the Kindle version, it would be much smaller than the other translation. [...] I think they’re still getting the point across, you know, it’s still a green tree, but it’s not taking fifty adjectives to describe it.

Here, Beata expressly favoured a less literal translation on the basis that it was easier to read.

At the same time, some interviewees provided a more nuanced view of difficult language in books. Indeed, in contrast with complaints about books being too difficult, some interviewees had disliked books because they were not challenging enough. Susan discussed a recent re-reading of the Nancy Drew books, which she had enjoyed as a child but now found “so predictable” and “easily written”, while Sean expressed a dislike for Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* because “his style was quite unadorned, very simple, [...] just quite *plain* sentences” – Sean had listened to the audiobook and found it “a bit repetitive to listen to”. Both these interviewees, then, generally approved of fluency in translation but did not necessarily want ‘easy’ language. This contrasts somewhat with the overall questionnaire results, in which ease of understanding was perceived as more important than natural-sounding sentences (though both were positively viewed). What both sets of attitudes have in common is that there is a differentiation between ‘fluent’ language and ‘easy’ language, belying the idea that fluency in translation is the same as a simple, uncomplicated rendering. Again, this problematises the notion of broad foreignisation strategies that incorporate all kinds of ‘difficult’ elements (see p108), and, in turn, raises the question of whether other elements traditionally perceived as ‘foreignising’ may be equally problematic. One such element – the culture-specific concept – is discussed in the following section.

6.4.2.2 Culture-specific concepts

Just as challenging language can occasionally be preferred in reading, the same appears to be true of culture-specific concepts. As noted, evidence from experimental research suggests that foreign elements can result in difficulties of comprehension (Farghal and Al-Masri 2000; Sasaki 2000; Hakkı Erten and Razi 2009; see p44 of the present thesis), and, consequently, some translation critics appear to believe that readers object to any foreign elements in a translated book (e.g. Venuti 2008: 4, Markås 1993: 71). However, in the present survey, this was not the case. In the questionnaire, the features ‘Foreign words whose meaning is understandable from the context’ and ‘Foreign names of people or places’ were both viewed very positively (76% and 72% of respondents respectively). In the interviews, too, culture-specific concepts were generally talked about in favourable terms. Beata expressed her exasperation at the idea of source-language place names being omitted or adapted, stating, “I don’t expect people to be translating names or cities [...] To me that’s important, because it tells you where they come from, you can pinpoint probably the location, and those are the kinds of things that I *do* want to know”. Similarly, Kirsty said that foreign names are to be expected, and that a book set in another country, whether translated or not, “has to be authentic”, while James gave the example of Sartre, judging his work to be “pretty French, even in translation!” due to “the context [...] – place names, people’s names, et cetera, you know. Food that’s mentioned, the drinking habits!”

Thus, the present survey shows no evidence of wholesale rejection of culture-specific concepts, but rather indicates that, in many cases, such items are favourably regarded. The only situations in which culture-specific concepts were negatively viewed were in cases where their presence hindered understanding: the feature that people most thought would indicate a bad translation was ‘Foreign words whose meaning is not understandable from the context’ (79% of respondents). Details of such occasions were given in the interviews. Kirsty, for example, noted that when characters’ names were unfamiliar “you might have to work a bit harder to remember who’s who”, although she added that this could also be a problem with books set in a familiar setting. Similarly, Susan described a certain amount of difficulty in keeping track of names in Russian or Chinese novels:

It's the sound of the names, it's foreign to us, so it's difficult for some reason – for *me*, maybe not others! – to remember them. So I have to keep checking which character's which. Whereas if it was Bob and Sue and Jim or something [...] I seem to be able to remember who the characters are.

At the same time, Susan pointed out that unfamiliar items may appear to become less troubling as the reading process continues: “Almost as you get through the book, you start to perceive it as part *of* the language of the book, and you almost learn that new part of language”.

Regarding culture-specific concepts, then, it appears that respondents expect a fine balance. Such items are positively viewed as part of the representation of a foreign culture – as Isabel Garayta comments, a certain “experience of ‘otherness’” is to be expected and celebrated in a translated text (Garayta 2010: 32; see also Chesterman 2000: 65). At the same time, an overabundance of unfamiliar or incomprehensible items in a translated book may interrupt the reading process and therefore be off-putting to readers. Consequently, attitudes towards culture-specific concepts appear to vary from reader to reader and from book to books; this also seems to be the case with features such as dialects, neologisms and archaisms, which are discussed in the next section.

6.4.2.3 *Dialects, neologisms and archaisms*

Respondents' attitudes towards dialects, neologisms and archaisms were, in general, somewhat equivocal. In the questionnaire, when asked about whether they regarded neologisms and archaisms as positive or negative features, neologisms were somewhat preferred to archaisms. However, more strikingly, around half of respondents (51% for neologisms, 47% for archaisms) answered “Don't know”. There are two potential explanations for such a high level of ‘Don't know’ responses: either the issue was something that had not been considered before by many respondents, or their attitudes towards neologisms and archaisms were dependent on context. Both of these possibilities were supported in the interviews, in which, although neither neologisms nor archaisms were discussed at great length, comments that were made on the subject were mixed. In general terms, neologisms were seen as interesting textual features: James stated, “I love neologisms!”, while Helen commented that Beckett's use of neologisms in *franglais* was “hilarious” and demonstrated that the author was an

“accomplished linguist”. Yet the assessment of neologisms in a translated book was rather more problematic, with James explaining:

I love neologisms, but in the context of translation... [...] If you imagine *A Clockwork Orange* translated into another language, you would want to *retain* those neologisms. Yeah. So looking at it from English into other [languages], *yes*. From [other languages into English], I really don't know about that one. I'm clear about it from English into other languages, I'm less certain about the other way around – which doesn't make any sense at *all*.

This was one of the few occasions during either the interviews or the questionnaire where translated books and non-translated books were held to different standards. Here, despite a general interest in language and a specific interest in neologisms, James nonetheless appeared to be sceptical about the merits of their use in translated books. One possible explanation for this uncertainty may be found in the discussion of archaisms. Again, very little was said in the interviews on the topic of archaisms, but two of the three interviewees who spoke on the subject espoused very similar points of view: Helen noted that “sometimes an archaism will be included to make the point” (in the source text), with the result that an archaism in a translated book might be justified, while James said of archaisms in translated books that “if they reflect the [original] text, I'd be happy with that”. This is interesting because it contrasts with the relatively negative view of archaisms in the questionnaire and also with Kirsty's point of view; when asked about archaisms (specifically English archaisms used in translations of foreign books), she understood this as occasions on which “translators used the wrong word”, and she thought this would also be “jarring”. In Kirsty's case, then, as for many of the questionnaire respondents, archaisms are simply out of place in a translated book.

A more fruitful discussion topic, though one focusing on similar themes, was dialect. Again, responses to the questionnaire were mixed: around a third of respondents stated that ‘Use of regional English’ was a positive feature in translated books, just under a third viewed dialect negatively, and the most common response (38%) was ‘Don't know’. In the interviews, preferences for dialect appeared to vary according to both personal taste and the kind of book under discussion. In particular, Scottish dialects (in non-translated books) were mentioned several times, with interviewees displaying a range of attitudes towards them. James was particularly enthusiastic about Lallans (Scots) language in books he had read:

I've had an affection with the Scottish language since I was in primary school. I just think some of the words are just fantastic. And they're quite onomatopoeic [...] Well, like 'dreich', for instance (*points out of the window*), somehow it fits. You know, there's a whole bunch of them, so yeah, I like the language.

He also mentioned having enjoyed books that made use of other dialect forms; for example, he described the mix of dialects used in the novel *Sozaboy: A Novel in Rotten English* (by the Nigerian writer Ken Saro-Wiwa) as “fantastically rich [...] it's incredibly rewarding”.

In contrast, both Susan and Sean were generally averse reading books in Scottish dialect. Referring to novels such as *Trainspotting* (Irvine Welsh) or *Buddha Da* (Anne Donovan), Susan stated:

I don't enjoy Scottish dialect. I find it uncomfortable, I feel like it's... It is another language, I *don't* enjoy reading it. [...] I find that uncomfortable, and difficult to read, I wouldn't choose to read it all. I would *avoid* it.

Sean also referred to *Trainspotting* and *Buddha Da* as examples of how “irritating” and “tiring” it was to read long passages of dialectal language. He contrasted these books with the work of writers such as Ernest Hemingway and Emily Brontë, whose more sparing use of dialects was viewed more positively: in such cases, limited use of dialogue for characterisation was “believable, and fine”. Susan also espoused this more nuanced attitude to dialect in her discussion of *The Help* (Kathryn Stockett, 2009) and *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* (Mildred Taylor, 1976), both of which make use of African American English; she commented that the non-standard English “intensifies and is very important in the whole message” of the novels, and that “it adds to the experience with those – it's very important”. Nonetheless, she pointed out that large parts of both novels – the “main framework of the book” – were in Standard English, and that she preferred that to be the case.

For Sean in particular, an important aspect seemed to be the additional effort expended in reading in such cases. He commented, for example, that large passages written in an unfamiliar dialect results in the reader having to “strain your concentration to try and figure out ‘What does that actual word mean?’ And sort of going over it in your head to try and get what they're trying to *say* – that becomes quite wearying.” In addition, he mentioned that such unfamiliar dialect could be “distract[ing]”, resulting in a less satisfying reading experience:

You become aware of the process of reading, you become self-conscious of reading, 'cause of that little [...] struggle to kind of get what's being said. So that's kind of what it does, when the words are being played with, you know what I mean, [it] makes you conscious that you're reading, and you just can't lose yourself in it, and do it without thinking.

Other interviewees made similar comments. Helen pointed out that “[t]here is an issue of being able to actually read it”, stating that dialect could often be “coherent for that book” but that “[t]he *load* can build up, can't it? You know, how many difficult things you're carrying, to read, before it becomes too difficult”. James also acknowledged that large amounts of dialect meant that “you have to work at it a bit!”, but argued strongly that in many cases (such as his example *Sozaboy*), such ‘work’ was generally worthwhile because “it's incredibly rewarding”. Beata, too, hinted at the idea that effort expended is balanced against enjoyment; talking about *The Fanatic* (James Robertson, 2000), she commented that “[even] the Scottish book club members were also saying, ‘Oh my God, this wasn't so easy to read!’”, but that those who really struggled with the book were the ones who “were just not captured by the story as much as [the rest of us]”. The implication, therefore is that, as was the case with culture-specific concepts and complex language, features like dialect are extremely interesting but can become problematic if so unfamiliar or difficult that the reading experience is disrupted; as Helen put it, “it's whether it can pull you along sufficiently for you to get to the end, or not”.

It should be noted, however, that many of the comments about dialect reported above were made in the context of non-translated books, raising the question of whether such features in translated books would be viewed in a comparable manner. On the basis of the present survey responses, it appears that similar rules *are* applied to both translated and non-translated texts. In the questionnaire, several respondents commented that question 17 (“In your opinion, which of the following features would show that a book has been well translated, and which features would show that it has been badly translated?”) was difficult to answer on the basis that, as one respondent put it, “[it] depends”. More specifically, in the interviews, those interviewees who enjoyed dialect in non-translated books were also positive about it in translated books – James, for example, stated that dialect and non-standard language would be equally welcome in a translated book as in a non-translated book, on the basis that dialect is a crucial part of the source text:

To me a translator's job – OK, there's partly the kind of prosaic aspect, when you want to encompass the bones of the story – but you also want to capture the author's voice as well. So no, I want that experience to come across in a translation. To me a successful translation – that would be part of the parcel, really.

When specifically asked how a translator might go about conveying dialect in the target text, James said that “the translator would be seeking to *locate* the language, if you like, in a similar social circumstance and strata, in his own society” – he gave as a positive example *The Good Soldier Svejk* (see p97), which uses “working class English” to convey social differences in the source text. In contrast, Kirsty thought found the idea of equivalence in dialects problematic, stating that, for example, “trying to ascribe a Cockney dialect to someone who's the equivalent in Spain” would be noticeable and potentially misleading.

Thus, James and Kirsty espouse highly contrasting approaches to the translation of dialect; yet they appear to share the assumption that any non-standard dialect in a translated text would reflect an equivalent dialect in the source text. Indeed, this was an underlying supposition throughout the interview discussions of style and language in translation. It has already been noted that both Helen's and James's impression of archaisms in a translated book would be that they were a reflection of a deliberate strategy in the source text; and Helen spoke in a similar way about style, specifically in reference to the idea of complicated sentences, saying, “that's a risk that the author's taken. It's not for the translator to undo it”. Kirsty, too, asserted that target-text style should be directly related to that of the source text, and she was also explicit about situations in which undefined culture-specific concepts would be acceptable: if they had appeared undefined in the source text then they were tolerable in the target text, but a term that would have been understandable in the source but was unclear in the target text would be problematic. This attitude was one that was generally espoused regardless of the feature under discussion: overall, although personal preferences for certain text features varied, it was generally thought that such features were acceptable *if* they reflected features of the source text. What is particularly interesting about such a judgement is that, very often, readers of translated books do not have access to the source text in order to establish whether such features appear there or not – the implications of this are discussed in the following section.

6.5 JUDGING TRANSLATION QUALITY

The results reported so far demonstrate that respondents to the present survey were comfortable not only with talking about translated books but also with making judgements about translation quality. While such considerations are an important aspect of Translation Studies research, this research is usually conducted on the basis of a comparison between source and target texts or between multiple translations of the same text (e.g. House 1997). Such comparisons were occasionally made by some of the respondents in the survey; as one questionnaire respondent said, “[I] have sometimes read a translated book in English and in the original language and experienced them as different books”. Perhaps the most striking example of reading multiple versions of a translated book was Beata, who at the time of the interview was reading *Les Misérables* and owned four different versions: two in French – a paperback and an e-book – and two in English (with different translators), one in e-book format and one in hardback; her reading of the text had included passages from all four versions, depending on where she was, which version she had to hand, and how quickly she needed to read on each occasion. Based on her reading, she had not noticed any differences between the French versions (one of which was a revised edition), but she did express a preference among between the English translations: as noted earlier, she preferred the e-book version because “it reads easier, and it reads faster” (see p118). At the same time, Beata also noticed some differences between the French versions and the English translations, commenting in particular that some place names from the source text – such as ‘Bishop de Digne’ – were redacted in the English versions to give ‘Bishop of D---’, which she disliked. In Beata’s case, then, the non-inclusion of some descriptive elements was positively viewed, yet the omission of place names was criticised; the implication is that, as suggested earlier (p108), there is a fine balance between literality and flexibility in translation strategies.

But this was an exceptional case; generally, respondents had not compared source and target texts, or, if they had done so, could not remember any notable variations. Sara had read multiple translations of books in the past and stated that she had generally preferred one of the translations, although she was unable to recall any specific examples; James, more recently, had read two different translations of *The Master and Margarita* and enjoyed both equally, saying, “I can’t actually remember any

major distinctions in the two books”. In most other cases, respondents had only read a single translation of a book, confirming the expectations of translation scholars such as Lefevere (1992: 1), Damrosch (2003: 22) and Chan (2010a: 14). And yet, as indicated throughout the present chapter, respondents are confident in making judgements about translation quality, whether or not they have read the source text – how, then, do they make such judgements?

Perhaps the most commonly mentioned method of assessing the quality of translated books is through the analysis of language (of the translated book). It has already been shown that respondents take note of stylistic and linguistic features of books, and many comments by the respondents suggest that it is these features that enable them to judge a translation’s quality. Some of the interviewees were explicit about this. Helen, for example, said, “I probably wouldn’t be judging the quality of the translation, I’d be judging the quality of the read”, while Susan specified that one of her key criteria in a translated book was “good English” (which she would also want in a non-translated book); for this reason she disliked *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*:

I thought it was very badly written in English. Whether it is also in Swedish [I don’t know]. But I thought it was very poor English, and I didn’t have patience with it. I completed the story, but I found it irritating. It wasn’t well written.

It is presumably for this reason that fluency is so highly regarded by respondents, since it is one of the few criteria that is available to readers of translated books: as Beata noted, “the only thing really that relates directly to translation that I would notice is how the book reads. You know, how does it flow?” Related to this were the references to textual invisibility, as in Sean’s comment:

A good translator essentially is doing the job so [that] you’re not even aware of their presence. [...] I think that’s what a great translator aims to achieve, you know – you’re not even *aware* that they’re weaving the words together, it’s just seamless, it feels like you’re reading a masterpiece.

Five of the other six interviewees made similar comments: a book is well translated if one “didn’t at all feel that it was in translation” (Kirsty) or if one “didn’t notice it was a translation” (Sara), if the translator “becomes[s] anonymous” and can “be transparent” (James), or if “we don’t even notice that they’re doing it” (Beata). Helen summed up this theme by saying, “In practice, on a day-to-day basis, I just read [a translated book] as if it was a glass window”. As a group, then, the interviews appeared to confirm the frequent assertion that textual invisibility is one of the key norms of translation in the

UK (Venuti 2008: 1, et al.), thus echoing the belief that, for a reader, the greatest praise that can be made of a translated text is that “you didn’t realize you were reading a translation!” (Neil Hewison, cited in Büchler and Guthrie 2011: 51; see also Becker and de Haan 2012: 21).

One result of this preference is that respondents were generally averse to elements that may draw attention to the fact of translation. Unsurprisingly, such an effect would be most likely to occur as a result of unusual language, which the interviewees characterised in a variety of ways: “things that sound pompous or stilted or not quite right” (Sara), language that “feels weird” (Beata), “clunky” prose or dialogue that “didn’t seem plausible” (Sean) or “slightly odd phrasing” (Kirsty). The effect of such features would be, in Kirsty’s words, “jarring”, while Sara commented that “hiccup[s]” in language would lead her to ask, ““Is that really the word they wanted to use?”” It is presumably for this reason that many of the interviewees were sceptical about the idea of deliberate foreignisation techniques. Specifically, the interviewees were asked how they would feel about translators using some of the features from question 17 (see p116) as a deliberate strategy of drawing attention to the fact of translation; and the reactions were very strong, with most of the interviews being opposed to the idea. James said, “I don’t think I necessarily agree with that as a self-conscious strategy”, and Sean commented that “My gut feeling is that it would be disruptive. And I imagine I wouldn’t like it”; Kirsty, too, thought that such a strategy would be problematic. This opposition appeared to derive from several considerations. First, it was felt that such a strategy would misrepresent the source text: Sean argued that such a strategy would “disrupt the effect that the writer’s aiming to achieve”, while Kirsty wondered, “If the author wants you to read it [in a certain way] [...] why would they want you to [keep noticing]?” Similarly, the deliberate emphasis on the fact that the translated text is not the source text was not looked upon favourably by the interviewees. Kirsty pointed out that in many reading experiences, “you want to be transported”, “want to be immersed”; “jarring” elements prevent such immersion and are therefore problematic. Sean echoed this view:

If a translator were to do that, it’s very much putting focus on the fact, ‘This is a translator, I am here’ – and that’s not what the original author’s been aiming to do, to draw you into an imaginary world – so that would place the interpreter between the imaginary world and the reader and just change the whole experience. Again, partly prejudiced by my own reading, and my enjoyment of

writing – I’m just like, ‘No! That would be completely self-defeating!’ And really annoying, probably.

Approaching the question from a slightly different viewpoint, James thought such a strategy would be patronising since it appeared to rest on the assumption that the reader was too stupid to know what they were reading:

I think as a technique, as a strategy in a self-conscious way, I wouldn’t particularly go along with that. In fact, it’s almost... It’s verging on the insulting, in a way. It’s kind of ... It’s a bit condescending almost, maybe?

Finally, Kirsty pointed out that there were other, better ways to draw attention to translation, such as “writing ‘This is a translation’ in big print on the cover” or including footnotes – this would be “less intrusive and more acceptable”.

In contrast, Helen and Sara were both intrigued by the idea of translating in this way. Helen said, “I think that sounds quite interesting, yes. Yes, I do think it sounds quite interesting”, and added: “it gives you that extra layer, doesn’t it, an extra sort of space to get perspective and parallax [so] that’s not unreasonable”. Sara shared this attitude but acknowledged that not all readers would agree and that therefore “it might turn a lot of people off”; nonetheless, she was generally positive about the idea:

It seems an approach that could work in many genres. Not everywhere, but I certainly think it’s something that I would find interesting, because I think it would also challenge the reader a lot more, instead of just sitting down and consuming fiction the way most of us do. It would actually require us to invest a little bit more. [...] I can see how I’d find that quite a relevant, valid argument to put forward.

Sara’s and Helen’s comments, then, do indicate that, for some readers at least, a translation approach that allowed them to engage with the issues at stake in translation process would be welcomed.

6.6 SUMMARY

What is clear from the preceding discussion of translation features is that most readers take an active interest in issues of language and translation, and enjoy engaging with such topics. This is evident in the interest that many respondents showed towards peritextual elements such as introductions and translators’ notes, which would therefore appear to be promising and fertile places for discussion of translation issues. That said,

it should not be assumed that all readers will read – or remember – the content of introductions and translators’ notes either during or after reading a book. Rather, their main focus is likely to be on the body of the text, which was where the majority of respondents made their judgements about how well the book had been translated and whether they enjoyed reading it. Here, within the text itself, readers were more likely to prefer an immersive rather than analytical experience: fluency was highly regarded, while text features such as culture-specific concepts and uses of dialectal language were viewed positively providing that they did not hinder understanding of the text. Overall, the implication was that translators, like source-text writers, are expected to judge carefully how and when such features are included in a book.

CHAPTER 7: PERCEPTION OF TRANSLATORS

7.1 OPENING REMARKS

The comments on translation cited in the previous chapter – from the questionnaire respondents as well as the interviewees – demonstrate that, despite some ambivalence towards the relevance of translation as a generic category, the readers in the present survey have taken sufficient interest in the concept of translation to give in-depth, detailed opinions about translated texts. As noted, however, such opinions are frequently based on a consideration of the target text and situation, which raises the question of how readers integrate the translator into their understanding of the translation process. This aspect of attitude towards translation is discussed in the present chapter.

7.2 TRANSLATORS AND AUTHORS

7.2.1 Questionnaire results

Two questions dealt particularly with the contrast between authors and translators. In Question 16 (mentioned earlier in Chapter 5, p97, and Chapter 6, p110), respondents were asked, ‘**After you have read a translated book, which pieces of information would you usually remember?**’ The question dealt with the title, author, translator, source language and publisher of a translated book, and respondents were asked whether they would, would not, or would sometimes remember these aspects after reading a translated book. 188 people answered this question – that is, only those who said they had read a translation. The results are shown in Figure 16 (next page).

	Title	Author	Translator	Source language	Publisher
Yes	169	150	6	148	10
No	4	7	118	9	110
Sometimes	13	31	46	25	50
Y + S	182	181	52	173	60
Total	186	188	170	182	170
% Y + S	98%	96%	31%	95%	35%

Figure 16. Parts remembered after reading

The most commonly remembered aspect was the title, with 98% of respondents saying that they would or would sometimes remember it (for discussion see p110). Then followed the author's name (96%) and the source language of the book (95%; for discussion see p97). 35% of people said they would or would sometimes remember the publisher of the book, and 31% of people would or would sometimes remember the translator.

Question 13 also dealt with remembering names of authors and translators. As a follow-up to question 12, in which respondents were asked: "To the best of your knowledge, have you ever read a translated book?", question 13 asked: "If 'yes' [that is, if they had read a translation], can you give an example of a translated book you have read (at any time in your life)?" 168 people named a specific translation as an example, a list of which can be found in Appendix 4. They were then asked if they could remember the name of the author and/or the translator of the book they had specified. 154 people (92%) correctly identified the author of the book, while only 23 people (11%) correctly named the translator.

Looking at whether ability to name the translator was associated with any of the demographic variables, there was no significant association between ability to name the translator and age (simplified measure) (χ^2 (2, n=164) = 4.413, p <.110) or education (simplified measure) (Fisher's Exact Test (n=168), p <.420), nor the variables of sex (Fisher's Exact Test (n=168), p <.791), degree subject (χ^2 (2, n=124) = 1.162, p <.559), multilingualism (Fisher's Exact Test (n=168), p <.505) or genre (χ^2 (2, n=159) = 2.639, p <.267).

7.2.2 Discussion

It has already been noted that authors are an extremely important factor in book choice (Kamphuis 1991: 479; Ross 2000: 18; BML 2005: 26; Key Note 2012: 4; et al.), with the possible result that a book by a foreign author (at an ‘additional distance’ from the reader; see p30) may be less positively viewed. However, the present findings do not support this assumption: over nine-tenths of respondents believed that they would remember the author of a foreign book, and a similar proportion were indeed able to do so correctly. The implication, then, is that there is nothing inherently problematic about remembering or being familiar with the name of a non-British author. The interviewees, too, showed themselves to be aware of several books from particular authors’ oeuvres, as well as having knowledge of and opinions about authors’ styles and preferred content: Helen commented that she had read “several Ecos” as well as a number of books by Calvino; Sean stated, “I don’t like Murakami”, based on a reading of several of his novels; and James talked at length about his experience with different works by Sartre. Again, the implication of such comments is that foreign authors are subject to the same kinds of attitudes and analysis as British writers. Thus, contrary to what might be expected (see p30), a foreign author is not necessarily a weaker ‘brand’ than a British author name.

Nonetheless, responses to questions about foreign authors did indicate some difficulties, particularly of memory. In the questionnaire, fourteen people were unable to name the author of a translated book they had read, while in the interviews non-British author names were often forgotten. James stumbled over Haruki Murakami – “Is it Hurakami, Murakami...?” – and Sean misremembered Gerbrand Bakker as ‘Gerhard Bakker’, while the names of Karl Ove Knausgård, Anton Chekhov and Primo Levi were also forgotten even as their works were discussed in detail. Whether such misrememberings are a function of the unfamiliar nature of non-British names, however, is far from clear. There were also times when respondents forgot the names of domestic authors: for example, James recalled that he had recently read a book of poetry called *Bones & Breath* but could not recall the Scottish author’s name (Alexander Hutchison). In addition, names of non-English Anglophone writers were also misremembered: neither Susan nor Kirsty could recall the name of the Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie when discussing her novel *Half a Yellow Sun*, while Sean

needed prompting to recall that the Japanese-British novelist Kazuo Ishiguro was the writer of *The Remains of the Day*. Thus, it would be disingenuous to assert that translated books are at a disadvantage due to the foreign names of their authors, since familiar and foreign names appear to be remembered – and forgotten – equally.

The name of the *translator*, however, is markedly overlooked by comparison. Under a third of respondents said they would sometimes remember the translator's name, which was reiterated when only 11% of respondents could name the translator of a specific translated book they had read (thus, nearly seven times as many people could name the author as could name the translator). The interviewees also showed an extreme inability to name the translators of books they talked about. Of all the interviewees, only Sara could name a book translator: she recalled that many of Saramago's novels had been translated by Margaret Jull Costa, and that Anthea Bell and Michael Hofmann were translators from German. None of the other interviewees was able to make a similar comment, nor did they appear surprised when this was pointed out to them: for example, James explicitly stated, "while I've always appreciated what a translator's done, I couldn't tell you the name of *one* translator that I've ever read", while Sean commented that the only translators he would be able to name were those who were already familiar to him as writers, such as David Mitchell (author of *Cloud Atlas* and translator of *The Reason I Jump: One Boy's Voice from the Silence of Autism* by Naoki Higashida).

It seems evident, then, readers are not generally familiar with translators' names; what is less clear is why this is the case. One potential explanation is that translators' names are simply not available to readers. It is a common complaint in Translation Studies that the fact of translation is downplayed in published translated books: it has already been noted that reviews often ignore the fact of translation (p56), and, on translated books themselves, it is often the case that the translator's name does not appear (Herrero 2005: 228; Sapiro 2010: 434; McRae 2012: 70). Sean commented on a case in point:

I've got a feeling I recently noticed an instance where I was looking to find out who the translator was, and it wasn't there, and I just found that curious, that I couldn't find it easily. [...] Not because I wanted to find out and remember it forever! Just the fact that it didn't seem to feature, prominently.

In such cases, a failure to recall the name of the translator is understandable, given that the information often seems to be unavailable to readers in the first place. But this does

not explain all instances of inability to recall a translator’s name, because it appears that, in many cases, the name of the translator *is* available. The interviewees appeared to assume that the translator’s name would be included somewhere within the translated book: apart from in the specific case just mentioned, Sean stated that the translator’s name is usually “there if you want to look for it”, while James thought that in the books he read the translator’s name was “just about always” mentioned – Susan and Beata also recalled numerous instances of reading “Translated by” in the opening pages of a book. The implication is that, in some cases at least, the translator’s name is available, and, indeed, read, but that it is not necessarily recalled later. This points, then, to a lack of interest in the translator, which is an issue discussed in the following section.

7.3 INTEREST IN THE TRANSLATOR

7.3.1 Questionnaire results

Question 15 asked respondents, “[W]hat **information do you like to have about a translated book before you read it?**” The response options were:

- “I like to know that the book is translated and to have some information about the translator”
- “I like to know that the book is translated, but I do not need to know anything about the translator”
- “I prefer not to know that the book is translated until after I have read it”
- “I do not care whether the book is translated or not”.

This question was only answered by the 188 people who said they had read a translation; three of these left the question blank, resulting in 185 responses.

	Total	%
Some information	67	36%
No information	66	36%
Afterwards	7	4%
Don't care	45	24%

Figure 17. Information wanted about translator

As Figure 17 shows, the most common response was a desire to know that the book is translated and to have some information about the translator (36%), followed by a desire to know that the book is translated but without a need to know anything about the translator (36%); these were followed by a lack of interest in whether the book is translated or not (24%). 4% of people said that they preferred not to know that the book was translated until after they had read it. The difference between those who wanted some information about the translator and those who did not particularly want some information about the translator was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 (1, n=136) = .118, p <.732$).

The amount of information wanted about a translated book was not significantly associated with sex ($\chi^2 (3, n=194) = 1.222, p <.748$), country of birth ($\chi^2 (3, n=194) = 4.087, p <.252$) or identifying as British ($\chi^2 (3, n=194) = 3.758, p <.289$). However, there was a significant association between education (simplified measure and the amount of information wanted about a translated book ($\chi^2 (3, n=194) = 11.150, p <.011$). Those respondents with a university degree were more likely to want to know that a book was translated, either with some information about the translator (residual +3) or without (residual +3), while those without a university degree were more likely not to care whether a book was translated or not (residual +3) or only want to know after they had read it (residual +4). The amount of information wanted about a translated book was also correlated with multilingualism ($\chi^2 (3, n=194) = 12.384, p <.006$). Those who spoke more than one language were more likely to want to know the book was translated but be uninterested in the translator (residual +11) and less likely to want information about the translator (residual -5), but they were also less likely not to care whether or not a book was translated (residual -6). In contrast, those who only spoke one language were more likely not to care whether a book was translated (residual +6), but more likely to want information about both the translated book and the translator (residual +5) and less likely to want to know the book was translated but not want information about the translator (residual -11).

7.3.2 Discussion

On a broad level, these results suggest a lack of interest in the translator as a person: over a third of people did want to have some information about the translator, but an

equal proportion did not want to know anything about the translator, and a quarter of respondents did not care whether a book was translated or not. In the interviews, too, despite a general interest in books' contexts, the translator was of little concern. As noted earlier, Sean has looked up the translator's name but "Not because I wanted to [...] remember it forever!", while James said that he tended to forget the translator's name immediately after reading it: "I'll always [say] 'Oh, who's the translator?', oh, name, and then out!". For James, even a translator who had done a good job would remain "some vaguely amorphous, unreal agency behind the scenes". The clearest example of the discrepancy between interest in the book's general context and specific interest in translation was Beata, who in general showed a strong desire to have extra information about the books she was reading (see p112); one particular example was her research pattern during and after reading *The Red Tent* by Anita Diamant:

The most insane research I did once was after I read, I think it's Anita Diamant, *The Red Tent*. [...] And I *really* loved the story. And then I spent *hours* Googling each city, because in the story they travel a lot in the Middle East, and I would look up the cities that they would mention. And I would practically draw a map for myself, where did they go, and some cities didn't exist any more, and they were renamed or something, so that took some more research to dig into exactly where they went.

However, when asked if she would ever put that kind of research effort into the language or translation aspect of the story, she said, "To be fair I don't think it ever really occurred to me to do that", adding, "Poor translators, no, I never think of them!" After reading the translator's name, she commented, it "doesn't even get stored" in her memory. This sentiment was echoed by Susan, who, when told that other interviewees had struggled to name translators, concluded that, "It mustn't be important to us then". This would indeed appear to be the case: in general, the name of the translator is simply not seen as an integral piece of information relating to a book in the same way as the author's name, or indeed the genre or culture of the book (see Chapter 5, p87 onwards).

Once again, then, a lack of interest in the translator as a person is implied; yet, as was shown in the previous chapter, respondents have strong opinions about the *work* done by the translator – that is, the translated text. Consequently, it is worthwhile exploring in more depth respondents' attitudes towards how a translator goes about his or her work, beginning with, in the following section, their attitudes towards the skills required by a translator.

7.4 TRANSLATOR SKILLS

7.4.1 Questionnaire results

Regarding specific translator skills, question 18 asked: “**Professional translators have different kinds of qualifications and experience. In your opinion, which of the following kinds of experience or qualification is most important for a translator into English?**” Respondents were asked to rank the three most important kinds of experience or qualification from the following list:

- Qualification from a university
- Qualification from a professional organisation
- Perfect knowledge of two languages
- Past experience as a translator
- Past experience as a writer
- Is a native speaker of English
- Has lived or currently lives outside the UK

The results of this question are reported in two ways. Figure 18 shows the most important types of qualification or experience according to (a) the number of respondents who ranked each feature as most important and (b) the total rankings of each feature. The latter analysis is conducted in the following way: response options that received a ‘1’ from a respondent were allocated 3 points, options that received a ‘2’ were allocated 2 points, and options that received a ‘3’ were allocated one point. In cases where respondents had ranked more than three options, rankings 4-7 were ignored.

In both tables, answer sets in which respondents had used any of the numbers ‘1’, ‘2’ and ‘3’ more than once were omitted, leaving 189 responses. Note that, in both analyses, the ranking of skills is extremely similar, suggesting a high level of consistency.

Skill	Ranked most important	%
Perfect knowledge of two languages	123	65%
Is a native speaker of English	23	12%
Past experience as a translator	19	10%
Past experience as a writer	9	5%
Qualification from a professional organisation	7	4%
Qualification from a university	7	4%
Has lived or currently lives outside the UK	1	1%

(a)

Skill	Total score
Perfect knowledge of two languages	455
Past experience as a translator	232
Is a native speaker of English	173
Past experience as a writer	142
Qualification from a professional organisation	65
Qualification from a university	40
Has lived or currently lives outside the UK	30

(b)

Figure 18. Translator skills

7.4.2 Discussion

Regarding the skills of a translator, then, some skills are clearly rated much more highly than others. A “perfect knowledge” of two languages was ranked the most important skill by some margin. Other skills ranked as important were past experience as a translator or a writer, and being a native speaker of English (i.e., the target language). As with the discussion on translation quality (p125), the emphasis appears to be on the writerly or linguistic skills necessary to produce a ‘good’ target text, which is a viewpoint also espoused in some of the open answers to a later question on what a translator’s job involves (see p140): for example, one questionnaire respondent said that “The [translator] must have v. gd knowledge of both languages and have sense of style and a sensitivity for both langs.” In the interviews, Sean also thought that experience of writing would be helpful; regarding David Mitchell’s translation of Naoki Higashida, he commented that:

Even though I’ve never read David Mitchell, he’s a respected writer, so I kind of think, ‘You’ve paid attention to the craft of *writing*, if you’re translating this into English, you’ve made a conscious attempt to get it right working as a *book*, not just writing in terms of getting the words down’. So, yeah, that would influence my decision, if I knew something about the professional translator.

The priority assigned to the writerly, target-oriented aspect of a translator’s work was mirrored by the fact that qualifications from either a professional body or a university

were seen as much less important. It has been noted that, in business translation, certification is sometimes viewed sceptically by those who hire translators (p49), and the case appears to be comparable with translated books. Similarly, “Has lived or currently lives outside the UK” was ranked as the least important translator skill, suggesting that immediate text-based skills were more of a concern to respondents. That said, although having lived in the source country was not seen as particularly important, an awareness of cultural and literary context was viewed more positively. In open sections of this and other questions, respondents mentioned the importance they attached to a thorough understanding of the source text and culture; for example, regarding the comparison between translation and other professions, one respondent said:

I don't think it is like any of these, but I couldn't really say what it is like. Maybe more like an English teacher - reading a piece of work and trying to get into it's [sic] meaning and tones.

Another specified that a translator “must know [the] language and culture” of the source text, while a third said that a translator was a “[r]esearcher and poet”. The latter comment is particularly interesting in that it incorporates two contrasting aspects of translation: accuracy and creativity. This was also evident in the interviews. James was specific in saying that there are two sides to a translator’s role: “there’s partly the kind of prosaic aspect, when you want to encompass the bones of the story – but you also want to capture the author’s *voice* as well”. Sean made a similar comment about the translator’s aim: “Sometimes it’s just to translate what’s *written*, but also to try and capture the musicality of an original piece, or the syntax, because languages vary so significantly”. Overall, as one questionnaire respondent put it: “[Translators] are both author and proof-reader; the nuances of translation make it both an art-form (creative) and a science (precision)”.

This contrast between the two elements is further emphasised in the responses to Question 19, regarding translation as a profession, which is discussed in the following section.

7.5 TRANSLATION AS A PROFESSION

7.5.1 Questionnaire results

In a further attempt to characterise respondents' ideas about the role of the translator, question 19 asked: “**In comparison to other writing-related jobs, would you say the work done by a translator is most similar to the work done by [...]**” The response categories were:

- An author
- A proofreader (that is, someone who reads a document to find and correct mistakes)
- A summariser or précis writer (that is, a person who takes the main ideas from a piece of text and rewrites them in his or her own words)
- A ghost writer (that is, a writer whose work is published with someone else's name)
- Other (please specify)

As shown in Figure 19, the most common response was that a translator's work was most similar to the work done by an author (33%), followed by the work done by a summariser (18%) or a ghost writer (18%), and finally the work done by a proofreader (17%). In addition, 15% of respondents suggested their own answers to the question (see discussion below).

	No. of respondents	Percentage
Author	68	33%
Summariser	37	18%
Ghost writer	36	18%
Proofreader	34	17%
Other	27	15%

Figure 19. Jobs similar to 'translator'

In analysing associations with demographic variables, those respondents who gave their own answers were excluded. For the remaining responses, there was no significant

association between how a translator's job was perceived and the variables of sex (χ^2 (3, n=175) = .728, p <.867), country of birth (χ^2 (3, n=175) = 1.001, p <.801) or multilingualism (χ^2 (3, n=175) = 4.974, p <.174), nor the simplified measures of age (χ^2 (6, n=170) = 3.521, p <.741) and education (χ^2 (3, n=175) = 4.351, p <.226).

7.5.2 Discussion

What is perhaps surprising about these results is that respondents appear to have a high level of respect for the translator's work – the most common response to the question (given by a third of people) was that a translator's job was most similar to an author's. This suggests that respondents perceived a high degree of autonomy and creativity on the translator's part, which was also reflected in some of the open answers that people gave to this question in the questionnaire. For example, one respondent mentioned the ingenuity necessary in translating jokes:

[A translator's job is] sometimes having to be creative because an idea might not translate exactly into another language - for example particularly jokes that involve a play on words that might not work in the other language so something creative to give a similar joke in the new language might be needed.

This recognition of the inventiveness of the translator was also present in the interviews. It has already been noted that respondents were aware of the balance between literal and free translation (p108), and this was taken to imply that a translator was therefore a creative person. James commented that "to capture, in some sense, the essence of something, that's an enormously accomplished and creative thing to do", while Susan recognised that, for these reasons of creativity, a translator was a "powerful presence". Sara went even further in arguing for the autonomy of the translator:

To give the translator [his or her] due, I think there is scope for acknowledging that that person also has some literary ability, or some insights, or a voice that should be heard. And can be acknowledged as being distinct from that of the original author, really.

Yet, at the same time, the responses to the survey do not unconditionally invoke the image of translator-as-creator; 35% of respondents to the questionnaire characterised the translator as a summariser or proofreader, roles which are arguably much less creative. Indeed, many of the 'Other' answers provided to the question emphasised the prosaic aspects of a translator's job – three people suggested that a translator was more like an

editor – “that is, someone who presents the "meat" of the writing, which is already existent, in the best light” – while two others described a translator as a “labourer” or a “secretary”. This characterisation of a translator’s work as editorial rather than creative is emphasised by the fact that respondents stated that they would be more likely to remember the name of a book’s publisher than its translator (see p130).

At the same time, the association of translation with work such as proofreading and editing may also point to the importance of accuracy in translation. It has already been noted that many of the interviewees’ judgements about translation features were made under the assumption that they would reflect similar features in the source text (p124), on the basis that stylistic choices were the author’s prerogative and that they were “not for the translator to undo” (Helen). Indeed, this idea of faithfulness to the author’s work was seen by James as perhaps the most important aspect of the translator’s job:

Interviewer: Who do you think a translator should be trying to work towards [...]?

James: The author. First and foremost, the author. And, you know, devil take the hindmost as far as the consumers are concerned! [...] Yeah, yeah, I’ll stick with that. Maybe not devil take the hindmost! (laughs) But first and foremost the author, and *then* the reading public.

Such statements imply that readers are highly concerned with what translation theorists such as Toury have termed ‘adequacy’ – that is, the attempt to represent effectively a source text in a target language and culture (Toury 2012: 69-70). Yet, for respondents, a desire for adequacy on the translator’s part did not necessarily preclude a degree of creativity as well, as shown in the comment of the questionnaire respondent who said that a translator is “[A] combination of Author and Summariser as they are not creating the piece of work but reworking it into another language using their understanding of the original text”. Helen’s word for this combination was “authenticity”:

What goes into authenticity, you know, that’s what I *imagine* the translator is doing. And that’s made up of various parts of their professional knowledge and judgement, and one part of that would be literality.

Naturally, this concept of faithfulness to the author has additional implications for how translators are perceived. Notably, although it was often acknowledged during the questionnaire and interviews that translators could be inventive, there was nonetheless perceived to be a hierarchy of creativity, with the author well above the translator.

Certainly, when talking about the importance of the translator, both James and Beata prefaced their statements with provisos referring to the author's elevated status: James began with "OK, it's not the same as writing the book, but [...]" while Beata said, "No they didn't come up with the original idea, and no they didn't write the book, but [...]" Likewise, Helen situated the source-text author as an authority with regards not just to the source text but also to the translation, in particular saying that an author's endorsement of a translation "reassures" her about the translation's quality:

Often authors express themselves happy with the translation. [...] That sort of back-stop check that the author provides – when they say 'I was pleased with this' – is telling you that according to one person, who might be expected to have quite an acute view, that's been achieved.

Such references to the continued importance of the author raise a further question about the effect of this has on the status of the translation: if the source author and text are hierarchically above the translator and target text, then will translated texts be regarded as inferior to 'original' works (see e.g. Hermans 1985a: 8)? A belief in the superiority of the source text was revealed in some comments from the open sections of the questionnaire: for example, one respondent said that "[a] good translation is sympathetic to the author's intentions but cannot be identical", while another commented that, "[a] good translation is 'good' but never the same as reading the original language". On a similar note, while none of the interviewees made this point explicitly, they did refer on several occasions to the inherent unfeasibility of the ideal translation. Sean, talking about his own amateur translations for friends and family, said that what he generally aimed for was "the impossible, which is effectively to mirror that text in another language"; he noted that such a mirroring was "never possible to achieve". Sara, indeed, was so doubtful about the possibility of translation *per se* that she disputed the term itself:

I don't know that there *is* such a thing as a perfect translation [...] because you always have to sacrifice *something*. And I think in a way I don't *like* the term 'translation' very much, I much prefer a 'rendering' or a 'rewriting'. Partly in acknowledgement of the fact that there is nothing that strictly goes from A to B or B to A – it just doesn't work. Impossible. There's better and there's worse, but [that's all].

If translation is necessarily flawed – or, in some cases, impossible – then how does this reflect on the translator? Interestingly, in the interviews, the importance and skill of the translator was not in question. Beata recognised that in cases of translation it was "the

translator who made it basically available to us now, otherwise we wouldn't be able to read it", and so did Susan: "if you didn't do it we couldn't read it". Bata also thought that, in some ways, translating might be a more challenging task than writing:

I'm really starting to think that it's harder for a translator. Like if you look at certain authors, they seem to churn out a book a year, you know, some writers are so prolific – I'm not sure that that's possible for a translator! [...] Let's face it, those books are not gonna be easy to translate, they're not gonna take five minutes, so I dare say that it's probably taking longer to translate it than originally write it.

The result of such an impression was, at times, a sense of sympathy for translators, with Sara describing them as "neglected" and Beata commenting, "I feel really bad for them! Oh, poor unappreciated people!"

Finally, respondents had considered the fact that translations – and translators – could vary in quality. Regarding the question that asked about what a good translation would be like, in which one of the answer categories was 'A good translation is one translator's interpretation of the original book', one respondent wrote that, "A good translation is a *good* translator's interpretation of the original book" (my emphasis), thereby demonstrating a recognition that translators are not one homogeneous group. Similarly, Susan and Sean both showed awareness of debates about translation quality made by critics: Susan recognised that "some people will say, 'Oh, the translation by so-and-so is-is better than...'", while Sean factored such debates into his choice of translated books:

[With classic texts] I would perhaps in that case try and check out when it was translated and by whom. You know for example, Flaubert, Dostoevsky, someone like that. [...] You know, some translations are better than others, so it would be worth my while, picking one that's respected.

Ultimately, translation was perceived to be a special, unique job. 15% of respondents gave their own answers to the question of what sort of profession translation most resembles, and many made it clear that a translator's job was not 'most like' any of the other writing-related jobs mentioned in the text. One respondent said that she "consider[ed] it a stand alone profession, equally as important in it's [sic] own right", while another commented that "translating is an art in itself and cannot be compared to the choices above". The word "unique" was used by three respondents to refer to translation, and one respondent said simply, "this question makes no sense. [A] translator is a translator!"

7.6 SUMMARY

The results discussed in the present chapter have presented a set of highly contrasting attitudes towards the translator, which frequently reflect some of the debates under discussion in Translation Studies: visibility versus invisibility, experience versus qualifications, and adequacy versus creativity. Ultimately, the translator was viewed as an important but anonymous presence, with many of the skills and attributes of a source-text author but without the associated interest in knowing more about the translator as a person. As with the discussion of peritexts and translation features, respondents were generally more concerned with the identity and quality of the translated text itself than how it was produced.

CHAPTER 8: TRANSLATED BOOKS IN THE UK

8.1 OPENING REMARKS

The previous chapters have analysed readers' attitudes to particular issues relevant to what translated texts are like on the micro-level, and have found that respondents' primary concern is the reading experience itself – that is, how the translated text functions as a book. With this in mind, this final results chapter widens its scope to investigate the way that readers view the functions of translated books within the wider literary context of the UK, examining whether practical issues such as price and availability affect readers' attitudes towards translated books. The chapter also asks respondents to consider broader trends that may affect the purchase and consumption of translated books, including the status of the English language and the attitude of the UK towards other cultures.

8.2 PRICE

8.2.1 Questionnaire results

When asked about the price of translated books in the UK as compared to books originally written in English, a significant majority of respondents (76%) thought that there would be no difference in price ($\chi^2(2, n=205) = 177.785, p < .001$). Of those who expressed a difference, more people (22%) said a translated book would be more expensive than those who thought it would be cheaper (2%); this result was statistically significant ($\chi^2(1, n=205) = 35.280, p < .001$). These results are shown in Figure 20.

	No. of respondents	Percentage
No difference	155	76%
Translated book more expensive	46	22%
Translated book cheaper	4	2%

Figure 20. Price of translated books

Simplifying the measure of price into two categories – those who thought a translation would be more expensive against those who thought it would be less expensive or the

same price – there was no significant association between impression of prices and age (χ^2 (2, n=199) = .726, p <.696), education (χ^2 (1, n=205) = .001, p <.980), country of birth (Fisher's Exact Test (n=205), p=.514), identifying as British (Fisher's Exact Test (n=205), p <1.000), multilingualism (χ^2 (1, n=205) = .283, p <.595) or genre (χ^2 (2, n=191) = 2.390, p <.303).

There was, however, a significant association between perception of prices and degree subject studied (χ^2 (2, n=139) = 6.278, p <.043). Those respondents whose university degree was in a language or literature subject were more likely to think that a translated book would be the same price as or cheaper than a non-translated book (residual +2), as were those whose degree was in a humanities subject (residual +2). In contrast, those who held a science degree were more likely to think that a translated book would be more expensive than a non-translated book (residual +5).

8.2.2 Discussion

As noted earlier (p31), the cost of producing books is of increasing concern to publishers (Cronin 2003: 120; see also Sapiro 2010: 425), and translation researchers have been quite clear that translations are more expensive to publish (Ganne and Minon 1992: 56; Venuti 1998: 124; Sapiro 2010: 434). In terms of *buying* translations, however, a lack of research in Translation Studies and elsewhere means that it has remained unclear whether these increased publishing costs are passed on to consumers. The results to the present survey indicate that, at the very least, any increased costs are not noticed by consumers, with over three-quarters of respondents thinking that translated books and non-translated books would cost about the same. Across the whole survey, only four respondents or interviewees mentioned price as a relevant issue without prompting: one questionnaire respondent referred to the additional costs to publishers incurred when publishing a translation, while Sean referred briefly to the potential effect of low translator wages as potentially detrimental to translation quality. Only one questionnaire respondent and one interviewee – Susan – mentioned price as a potential factor in book purchase; the former simply answered “Cost?” to the question on why translated books were under-read in the UK, while Susan commented that one advantage of buying from Amazon was that “it’s just so easy, and the prices are so good”.

Price, then, does not emerge as a particularly relevant factor when discussing translated books, which is perhaps to be expected given the complexity of the price-attractiveness relationship when talking about books (see p31). In this regard it is perhaps pertinent that respondents with degrees in a science subject were more likely to think of translated books as more expensive than non-translated books. A potential explanation for this might be that certain kinds of non-fiction or scientific books cost more to translate than other texts, and that these costs are passed on to readers. Without any systematic evidence to support this supposition, however, it remains hypothetical; and it does not alter the fact that, overall, while price appears to be something that some respondents do consider, there is very little evidence that it greatly affects translation purchase. Hence, it is perhaps more likely that translation purchase (and indeed borrowing) is affected by availability, which is the issue discussed in the following section.

8.3 AVAILABILITY

8.3.1 Questionnaire results

When asked whether translated books would be easier or harder to find in a bookshop or online than books originally written in English, a majority of people (53%) thought they would be harder to find, nearly half (46%) of people thought a translated book and a book originally written in English would be equally easy to find in a bookshop or online while only 1% of respondents thought a translated book would be easier to find. These results are shown in Figure 21.

	No. of respondents	Percentage
Translated book harder to find	108	53%
No difference	93	46%
Translated book easier to find	3	1%

Figure 21. Availability of translated books

Within those who saw a difference, people were significantly more likely to say that a translated book would be harder to find than those who thought it would be easier to find ($\chi^2(1, n=111) = 99.324, p < .001$).

In order to perform chi square tests for independence, the answer categories were simplified into a two-category measure – those who thought a translated book would be harder to find than a non-translated book versus those who thought a translated book would be easier or equally easy to find. There was no significant association between perception of translation availability and sex (χ^2 (1, n=204) = 2.057, $p < .151$), degree subject (χ^2 (2, n=139) = .429, $p < .807$), COB (χ^2 (1, n=204) = .578, $p < .447$), identifying as British (χ^2 (1, n=204) = .000, $p < 1.000$), multilingualism (χ^2 (1, n=204) = .283, $p < .594$), English as first language (Fisher's Exact Test (n=204), $p < .205$) or genre (χ^2 (2, n=191) = .192, $p < .908$).

Two variables, however, were shown to be associated with perception of translation availability. The simplified measure of education ('University degree' versus 'No university degree') was significantly correlated with perception of translation availability (χ^2 (1, n=204) = 5.798, $p < .016$): respondents with a university degree were more likely to think that a translated book would be harder to find (residual +8), while respondents without a degree were more likely to think that a translated book would be similarly easy or easier to find than a non-translated book (residual +8). At the same time, while the simplified measure of age showed no significant correlation with perceptions of translation availability (χ^2 (2, n=198) = 4.860, $p < .088$), the more detailed measure did show significant correlation (χ^2 (6, n=198) = 15.771, $p < .015$). Younger age groups – ages 20-29, 30-39, 40-49 and 50-59 – were more likely to think that a translated book would be harder to buy in a bookshop or online than a non-translated book (residuals +3, +4, +1 and +1 respectively); older age groups – 60-69, 70-79 and 80+ - were more likely to think that a translated book would be equally easy or easier to buy than a non-translated book (residuals +2, +1 and +5 respectively).

8.3.2 Discussion

In contrast to the results regarding price (p146), a significant proportion of respondents did appear to view translated and non-translated books differently with regards to availability. This is an interesting finding because most of the results reported so far appear to imply that translated and non-translated books are treated in a similar fashion by readers – in terms of categorisation (p105), stylistic preferences (p123) and so on – yet, in this case, over half the respondents saw a difference between translated and non-

translated books, and nearly all of these think that translations will be harder to find than non-translations.

This idea that translated books may be less available than non-translated books was supported to some extent in the interviews. In general, Sara said that she was “appalled at how little has been translated into English, or gets translated into English” – she was aware of the statistics regarding translation rates (which she described as “abysmal”), but she added that she had seen firsthand how few translated books are available in the UK in comparison to other countries:

The amount of literary translation from other languages than English is minimal, you know, it’s pathetic. And, you know, from being in bookshops abroad I can see how much is translated *into* that language, whether it’s France or Germany or Spain.

Sara went on to discuss a particular book that she had wanted to read in translation but that had been unavailable for some time:

I remember there was a book by Calvino that I really wanted to read which hadn’t been translated, and [I] thought, ‘I either have to learn Italian, or I’ll read the book in German!’ (laughs) I didn’t [do] either, I waited, and it has now been translated, and I was ecstatic, so... It was worth the wait. But yes, it’s that kind of frustration with the things that you *do* want, that you still think, ‘This is something that I really want to read’, and it’s not available in English, or I can’t read the languages it was written in.

Beata told a similar story:

I picked Herta Müller [for the book group], and we read *The Passport*. And after I read it – she’s a very accessible writer – so after I read it, I thought ‘Oh I wanna read more of her stuff’, and there were other books that get mentioned, all the time, but they were not translated. So I am *aware* that sometimes you *can’t* find something, only because it wasn’t translated yet. And because I don’t speak Hungarian, or German, I just can’t read it.

Although these two stories are perhaps isolated incidents, there does appear to be evidence of a more endemic lack of availability of certain translated books. In addition to the questionnaire responses, one of the book group leaders contacted for the survey pointed out in an email that:

One of the problems with reading “foreign” books within our reading group is the availability of multiple copy books from within our library system. I am looking for 10 copies of any given book and often find it a challenge to find 10 or 11 books per year that are acceptable to the group.

According to this account, libraries do not generally expect translated or non-British books to be among their more popular acquisitions, and that they are therefore not made available in sufficient numbers for book groups to read together; again, the problem is not one of desire to read translated books but rather of practical ability to do so.

These results would seem to correspond with the fact that, as noted in the introduction (p16), translation rates in the UK are relatively low (Pym 2001: 80; Hale 2008: 217; Donahaye 2012: 27; et al.), and, as a result, are likely to be scarce on bookshop and library shelves. The covariation results for this question add a further dimension to the discussion. Here, the perceived lack of translation availability was particularly strong among those respondents who might be expected to have wide access to books of different kinds: respondents with a university degree, and younger age groups (who may arguably be more likely to be familiar with a variety of online and offline outlets from which to buy books – see p20). The reasons for this tendency are unclear, but one potential explanation is that, since such groups *are* familiar with widespread and multimodal access to books, they may perceive any problems with accessing books as more unusual and therefore more striking. Evidently, further research with other groups of readers would be required to support or contradict this possibility.

Finally, it is important to note that not all respondents perceived a problematic lack of availability of translated books. Nearly half of questionnaire respondents thought that translated and non-translated books would be equally easy to find in a bookshop or online, while several of the interviewees espoused a similar view. Susan, for example, commented on the struggle to find certain books, but in her case these were not translated ones:

I remember finding it very hard to get books that were written by nineteenth-century Scottish women, sometimes. [...] I do read Scottish classic books and so on, and I was particularly interested at one stage – when I was at university probably – in female writers. And I find *them* difficult to find. [...] I wanted them and I couldn't get them.

Susan had not had a comparable experience with translated books; nor had James, who was confident that he would be able to find any translated books he was interested in: “I don't feel that it's limited, there's quite a richness of translated work out there [...] Definitely, yeah, I think there's an enormous richness of literature available translated into English”.

Some respondents, then, are content with the selection and availability of translated books available in the UK. However, the attitudes of a majority of questionnaire respondents, as well as Beata's and Sara's stories, suggest that there is perceived to be a widespread lack of availability of (at least some) translated books, reinforcing the impression of scarcity suggested by low publication rates.

8.4 DIFFICULTY OF TRANSLATED BOOKS

8.4.1 Questionnaire results

Question 11 asked about the difficulty of reading translated books in comparison to reading non-translated books. A majority of people (71%) stated that the two kinds of books would be about the same level of difficulty, while a quarter of people (26%) thought that they would be harder to read and only 3% thought they would be easier to read, as shown in Figure 22. This preference is statistically significant (χ^2 (2, n=204) = 144.353, $p < .0001$).

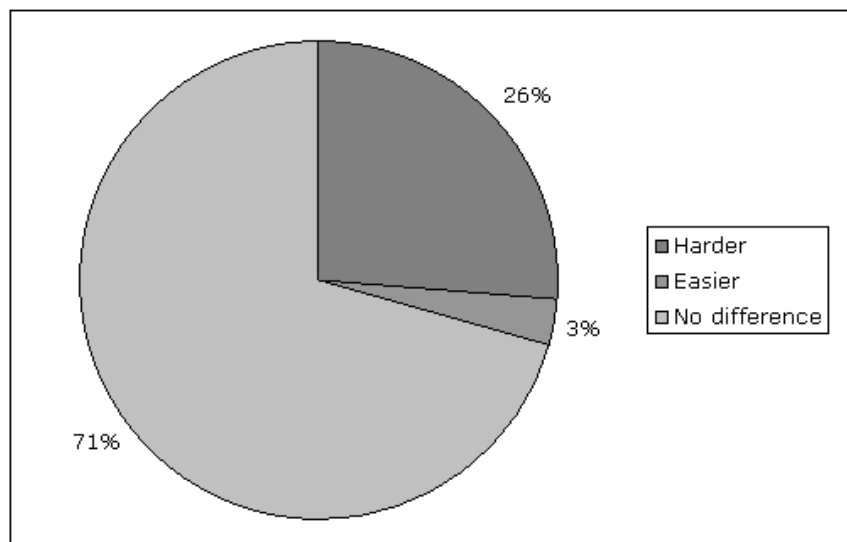


Figure 22. Ease of reading translated books

Comparing all three categories to demographic variables, there was no significant association between this variable and perceived ease of reading translated books (χ^2 (2, n=204) = 2.009, $p < .366$). Further chi square tests were run against a simplified measure of ease of reading translated books, using two categories: 'translated books are harder to

read' versus 'translated books are the same or easier to read'. There was no significant association between perception on ease of reading translated books and the simplified measure of education (χ^2 (1, n=204) = .000, $p < 1.000$) or whether respondents identified as British (Fisher's Exact Test (n=204), $p < 1.000$); however, there *was* a significant association between this variable and a simplified measure of age (χ^2 (2, n=198) = 7.459, $p < .024$). People aged 20-39 and 40-64 were more likely to think that a translated book would be harder to read than a non-translated book (residuals +3 and +4 respectively), while people aged 65 or over were more likely to think that a translated book would be similarly easy or easier to read than a non-translated book.

For other variables, there was no significant association between perception on ease of reading translated books and sex (χ^2 (1, n=204) = .686, $p < .407$), degree subject (χ^2 (2, n=138) = 4.393, $p < .111$), country of birth (Fisher's Exact Test (n=204), $p < .150$), multilingualism (χ^2 (1, n=204) = .048, $p < .826$) or preferred genre (χ^2 (2, n=190) = .870, $p < .647$).

8.4.2 Discussion

Reflecting the results on price (p146), a large majority of respondents did not imagine that there would be a difference in difficulty level between reading a translated book and reading a non-translated book. This suggests that difficulty level is unlikely to affect whether they choose to buy or read a translated book.

Regarding the minority who did think that translated books would be harder to read, some of the answers to a later question on low translation rates (see p154) expound on this theme. Several respondents thought that a translated book might be perceived as "hard to understand", "more challenging" or "inaccessible", with the possibility that "they won't understand some of it"; in this sense, one respondent compared the attitude to translated books to attitudes to subtitled films. Indeed, two respondents talked about their own problematic experiences with the language of translated books:

"Some books lose a lot in the translation and foreign names and places are not familiar making reading more difficult as you cannot always remember [or] know where that [place] is in relation to others and know if someone is male or female"

“Sometimes with foreign names I find it a bit confusing compared to English names to remember who is who when reading a book that has been translated.”

This point, also made by Susan and Kirsty in the interviews (see p119), reflects the well-researched notion that culture-specific concepts may increase a text’s difficulty (Leppihalme 1997; Farghal and Al-Masri 2000; Kruger 2013; see p44). Thus, while the majority of respondents do not perceive translated books to be inherently more difficult than non-translated books, it may be worth bearing in mind that, for some few respondents, the knowledge that a book is translated may be off-putting.

Broadly speaking, then, practical issues such as price and ease of reading do not appear to be particularly influential in whether respondents choose to read translated books, although (lack of) availability of translated books is a concern. It is therefore important to consider other factors that may affect the purchase and consumption of translated books on a wider scale; some such factors, as suggested by respondents, are discussed in the following section.

8.5 LOW TRANSLATION RATES

8.5.1 Questionnaire results

Question 21 informed respondents that “**People in the UK read very few translated books compared to other countries**”, and asked respondents if they had any idea why this might be.²⁴ This was an open question, meaning that respondent were able to give any answer they wished; hence, the responses are qualitative, and have been analysed thematically rather than statistically. Although the responses do not necessarily explain objectively why translation rates in the UK are low compared to those in other countries, they do serve to highlight those factors that readers perceive as relevant to the translation situation in the UK.

The range of answers given by respondents to this question was extremely wide; responses also varied in terms of their length and level of detail. Despite this variety, however, the vast majority of answers could be categorised as dealing with particular themes to do with the translation context in the UK. The most common theme in the open responses was the hegemony of the English language (appearing in 82 answers),

²⁴ For a reminder of statistical translation rates in the UK and elsewhere, see p9.

followed by the idea of British insularity (69 answers). Other themes mentioned were lack of awareness or knowledge about translation (37 answers), the role of publishers and availability (32 answers), and the inherent problems of translated texts (23). The discussion that follows will be divided into these themes.

8.5.2 Discussion

8.5.2.1 *The power of English*

The most common suggestion as to why translation rates might be low in the UK was the powerful status of the English language and, as a result, the enormous variety of books originally written in English. It has been acknowledged both in Translation Studies and elsewhere that English has become the *lingua franca* of international exchange (Robinson 1997: 35; Pym 2001: 79; House 2009: 34; see p20), and this was reflected in many of the answers to the present question. For many respondents, the hegemony of non-translated English-language books was simply a question of numbers: one respondent noted that there are “gazillions of English language books to choose from, so if you stick with those, you could happily read every day until you die anyway”. Indeed, some respondents believed that “[t]he majority of written texts” are in English, meaning that there are “enough” – or even “too many” – books in English without translated books being sought out. It was also noted by several respondents that, as a result of the vast number of English-language books on sale, even a large number of translated books would make up a smaller proportion of the total books available:

“Huge variety of texts in English language – translated books probably make up a smaller percentage of the potential options when compared with other countries.”

“Doesn't seem hugely disproportionate to me: if you're anglophone then 25% of the world's books are in your language; German, 4%. The 2%-13% divide on rates of reading translated books between the two countries is not terribly far from an inverse of their relative proportions of world literature. Similarly Turkey: 1% of the world's books are in Turkish, they read 40% translated.”

This is also the argument made by Pym and Chrupala, who, based on figures from the *Index Translationum*, suggest that “there are many translations *from English* simply because there are many books published *in English*” (2005: 28, their emphasis). They plot the number of books published in each language against the number of translations

from each language and find, as might be expected, that the more books are published in a language, the more books are translated from that language (op. cit.: 33). The figures for English “more or less” follow the general pattern of the data (ibid.), which means that there will naturally be a higher number of translations from English than from other languages publishing fewer books overall. Hence, respondents’ impression that the sheer number of books originally written in English is an important factor in low translation rates appears to be supported by empirical evidence.

What is not suggested by Pym and Chrupala but is referred to by a number of the questionnaire respondents is the high quality, and especially “wide variety”, of books in English. Respondents mentioned the “rich culture of book writing in the UK” and suggested that “[t]he UK is a very literate and literary society”; as a consequence, it was thought, “[w]e have plenty of fantastic literature in our own language”. The point was made that ‘English-language’ does not necessarily mean ‘British’, with one respondent mentioning that “[e]ven if I leave my own British culture I can read many other anglophone cultures”. Reference was made to the “wealth of English language material” available from countries such as the US, Australia, New Zealand, the Commonwealth, Africa, and, indeed, “all over the world”. In the words of one respondent, even without translation, British readers are “spoilt for choice!”; in consequence, as another respondent commented, there is “no need to read translated books in order to have broad choice”.

This discourse generally reflects analysis conducted within Translation Studies, because although the majority of English-language books are published in the United States or in the UK (Pym and Chrupala 2005: 37), other countries play an important role in Anglophone book production. In discussions of English-language trade publishing, Carol Blake mentions Canada, Egypt, Israel, Hong Kong and Singapore (2007: 130), John Thompson mentions Australia, New Zealand, South Africa (2010: 12, n5), and Büchler et al. add the “considerable international success” of recent English-language books written by authors from Commonwealth countries in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean (2011: 17). Finally, Jennifer Jenkins describes the rise of European Englishes and Englishes from East Asia and Latin America, and notes that, despite the fact that English in these countries is generally not institutionalised, the English speakers from these countries who use the language as a lingua franca may well constitute the world’s largest group of English speakers (2006: 164). In short, cosmopolitan readers such as those in the present survey (see p94) may not require translated books in order to enjoy

reading about other cultures; even if almost all books in the UK are originally written in English and there are very few translations, it seems likely that these English-language books do in fact offer British readers access to a wide variety of non-UK cultures, “effectively fulfilling much of the diversifying role that translations play in less extensive target languages” (Pym 2001: 80; see also Ganne and Minon 1992: 64 and Ginsbergh et al. 2011: 231). Hence, the overall argument is that “[t]he international sway of English coincides with the marginality of translation in contemporary Anglo-American culture” (Venuti 1998: 88); this would explain, for example, why other Anglophone countries such as the USA and Canada also have low translation rates (see p16).

At the same time, it should be recalled that the growing power of the English language is accompanied by the increasing influence of Anglo-American culture (Sievers 2007: 44; House 2009: 34; Zethsen 2010: 549; see p20). For those already situated within this culture, the effect may be that, as the questionnaire responses have indicated, the preponderance of Anglophone books and other cultural products is so high that translations from other languages are often deemed unnecessary (see also Bassnett 1993: 11). However, the corollary of this situation is arguably that this may increase translation rates in other countries, as described in the interviews by Beata:

That’s not really surprising, is it, [that translation rates in the UK are low compared to other countries]? [...] Because the world seems to be obsessed with America. And the UK used to run half of the world. So people are also interested in what happens in those two countries. And English is the universal airline language, business language – so a lot of people *do* speak those languages, and eventually, to *improve* those skills, I think, they do end up reading in English, or, at least, asking for a translation of an English-written book. [...] The rest of the world usually knows more about America than the Americans know about the rest of the world, so why would this be different? (laughs)

In short, Beata and other respondents suggest, the power of the English language means that translation rates out of English increase, while translation rates into English decrease.

8.5.2.2 *British parochialism*

A key issue in the translation situation of the UK, then, is the wide range of books available as English-language source texts, meaning that those readers with a positive interest in other cultures are able to satisfy this interest without reading translated

books. However, it appears from the answers to the present survey that, in the respondents' eyes, such readers are actually extremely rare in the UK. Regarding low translation rates in the UK, many respondents posited something inherent in the British character that prevented British readers from being interested in translations, or, indeed, in other cultures more generally. Some respondents were fairly gentle in their expression of this idea, suggesting that there was a certain reluctance among British readers to approach anything unusual or different in their reading material; they made reference to the "natural conservatism" and "[w]ariness" of the British reader, with one respondent stating that "we are quite narrow in our reading" and another suggesting that "British people can be remarkably incurious". Although this assumed narrow-mindedness was sometimes couched in positive terms – as for example when one respondent said that British readers were "proud of their own culture and heritage" – more often the reluctance to engage with other cultures was portrayed in negative terms, with British readers being described as "ignorant" and suffering from a "lack of curiosity and imagination", "[n]arrow mindedness", and a "[l]ack of openness to new experience". Indeed, many respondents went even further, suggesting that sales of translation in the UK were likely to be hampered by the "insularity", "cultural isolation", "nationalism", "parochialism", "xenophobia", "UK-centrism", "non-cosmopolitanism", "arrogance", "chauvinism" and "prejudice" of the British character. One respondent summarised this argument as follows:

British people can be quite ethnocentric - interested predominantly in their own culture. This is perhaps a generalisation, but even when they travel they are often disinterested in the culture of the country they visit tending to stick to English-style places. Although there are people from various countries and cultures resident in the UK, they don't appear to have much interest in the countries/cultures of others which they could experience via translated books, for example.

In the interviews, Sean drew similar parallels between a lack of interest in translated books and a wider hesitancy about other cultures, comparing a reluctance to read translated books to a reluctance to try foreign foods – "It's like they're not that curious, not that innately interested in trying different things". James, too, described a "sort of abject parochialism" in the lack of interest in translated books, while Helen referred to the "insularity" of the British population; and Sara linked the low rates of translation to an ambivalence towards learning foreign languages:

We're very *limited*, I think, in terms of how we approach other languages other than English, culturally. You know, it's reflected in the way other languages are taught in *school*, it's reflected in the way we crack *jokes* about other languages – you're seen as pretentious if you try to pronounce something in French, the French way! [...] You know, it's things like that. So I think we have a slightly warped attitude. (laughs)

Indeed, this was a key sub-theme of the 'lack of interest' trope, in the questionnaires as well. There were multiple references to the "poor record" of learning foreign languages in the UK, with respondents pointing out that "[w]e as a nation tend not to be good at speaking [foreign] languages". The opinion of many respondents seemed to be that "[t]here is a very low level of people in the UK who can speak multiple languages and I think this turns people off reading even translated books", principally because such monolingualism "limits horizons" and "narrow[s] interest in other language and culture". In short, in the words of one respondent, British readers were seen to be "insular and mostly semi-literate".

Again, this reflects much of the discourse in Translation Studies, in which British readers are frequently characterised as insular or, indeed, xenophobic (e.g. Markås 1993: 76; Pym 2001: 81; Sievers 2007: 41). Yet it also contrasts strongly with other themes running throughout the survey, in particular the idea that Anglophone books already contain a wide variety of cultures (see previous section, p156), as well as the finding that a majority of the survey respondents do enjoy reading such books at least some of the time (p91). One potential explanation is that, as previously noted, the respondents to the present survey form a particular sample of readers who may espouse a more cosmopolitan view of reading than the general population (see p70); alternatively, the differences between the 'cosmopolitan readers' in the present survey and the 'insular British public' may be smaller than they appear, bearing in mind that respondents are self-reporting. In either case, the possibility of a certain degree of parochialism among British readers is seen by respondents as an important factor in the low translation rates in the UK.

8.5.2.3 Knowledge of translations

As a contrast to the idea that British readers were actively averse to books from other cultures, it was also suggested by many respondents that there was a general lack of familiarity with translated books. As such, British readers may not have either the

“awareness” or “knowledge” of foreign books or translations, and several respondents commented that a book by “a writer whose name is not known” is unlikely to tempt a reader. In short, in the UK “people are not aware of translated works and are not aware in the first place of the works that are written by famous foreign authors”. The general consensus among this group of respondents was that “people may be unaware of the [breadth] of translated books available”.

It has, of course, already been noted that information about books, including translations, may derive from a variety of sources – personal recommendations, the media, book reviews, bestseller lists and so on (see p53) – and it seems logical to assume that if these sources do not offer information about translated books, then readers will not learn about them. Indeed, various information outlets were considered by respondents to be particularly poor at offering such information about translated books. For example, it was suggested that translated books were “not given as much space in media (reviews, etc)” and that this dearth of reviews meant that “we don't know what's available”. This echoes criticisms made by translation researchers about the poor representation of translated books in reviews (Maier 2010: 15; Büchler and Guthrie 2011: 51; Munday 2012: 237; see p56). Other respondents mentioned book listings, suggesting that “many people read from the Best sellers list” and that, if translations do not feature here, then they may be overlooked. It was also noted that book prizes tend to focus on English-language works – one respondent said that “we advertise English language prizes and new authors more than other languages” while another thought that an increased focus on “non-English language literary prizes” would help.

The interviewees took a similarly critical view of access to knowledge about translated books, including additional information sources in their discussion. Susan described the book lists sent out to readers by some libraries, and noted that very few translated books were mentioned there – “it's mostly British fiction writers that seem to be listed”. Helen also mentioned libraries, noting that although a library she visited had formerly included a display dedicated to books from other cultures, this was no longer the case:

[In my local library] they used to have a display of books – books *from elsewhere*, shall we say... [...] Sometimes they were in translation and sometimes they were not, so there would be stuff from India – which had been written in English – but was from another culture. And I found this *enormously* exciting, invigorating and really really enjoyed it. [But on a recent visit] this display had disappeared [...] so I asked, in case this same display appeared

elsewhere. They said no no, that didn't happen any more, and that would've been the interest of some of the librarians at the time, in bringing that to readers. So I was a little bit disappointed!

This anecdote emphasises the importance of both book displays and libraries more generally for learning about new books (Leemans and Doggenaar 1987: 257; Janssen and Leemans 1988; BML 2005: 7; see p54), meaning that a failure to highlight translated books in libraries or in other promotional displays may result in a lack of knowledge of such books among readers.

Overall, then, there was a general impression that media and other sources were not especially forthcoming in promoting translated books, although this was not absolute – for example, in the interviews, Sean commented that the book review section of the *Guardian* newspaper discussed at least one translated book each week, and he was able to think of specific examples of translated books that had been reviewed in this paper (a new translation of *Madame Bovary*, the controversial publication of *My Struggle* by Knausgård, and so on). More broadly, a particular exception to the lack of reference to translated books was television and radio outlets. While it was thought that, in general, “[t]here is not enough discussion about [translated books] on radio & TV ‘book’ programmes”, it was also acknowledged that television and radio could and did play an important role to play in promoting translated books in other ways. One respondent commented that “TV programmes have made me more aware of translated books”, while a number of others used the example of Scandinavian crime drama to illustrate how television can play a positive role. One respondent noted that “‘S[c]andiwegian’ authors only got major publicity after BBC4 started buying in relatively cheap series to fill their schedule”, and other personal stories bore this out, including one respondent who stated that:

I became quite addicted to Scandinavian crime novels from the Swedish Wallander series (most certainly NOT the K Branagh version). Having read the complete series I then went on to read the complete MARTIN BECK series, then on to the Indriadson books and now some Norwegian authors, such as Karin Fossum.

Such comments were, unfortunately, confined to Scandinavian crime drama. This suggests that, despite the potential of television and radio programmes to convey book-related information (e.g. Leemans and Stokmans 1991: 498; Ross 2000: 17; Craighill 2013: 207; see p55), there are limits to respondents’ use of television and other media to generate interest in translation.

This impression of existing but limited opportunities for learning about translated books through media sources was the underlying thread of the discussion on this theme, with the general consensus being that “[the] media haven't promoted these books as well as the[y] could”. There was no single way to learn about new books – reading websites, bestseller lists, radio programmes, discussion with others, reviews and bookshop displays were all mentioned – and much of the time the interviewees gave the impression of learning about new books, as James put it, “by osmosis”. The impression gained from the respondents and interviewees, then, is of a general shared discourse among readers and media outlets regarding new books, in which, apparently, there is a lack of information about translated books.

8.5.2.4 Availability

The implication of the views in the preceding section is that translated books are available, but that due to a lack of promotion they are unknown to readers, and therefore go unread; indeed, this is the approach suggested by the question, which asked why readers in the UK do not *read* translated books. However, the basis for the assertion that translated books are under-read in the UK is, as noted in the first chapter (p16), largely based on publication figures – that is, about the existence of translated books in the UK – and many respondents to the questionnaire did indeed comment that low reading rates could be due in part to a lack of translated books *to* read. A common word used by respondents was “availability”, with many espousing the view that “[t]here doesn't seem to be a very wide range of translated works available”: there was seen to be “[l]ess choice” or “not a wide selection” when it came to translated books, with the result that “[t]he number of translated books versus non-translated books is not balanced. The more translated books there are made available, the more likely they will be chosen”. This echoes the impression gained from the earlier question regarding the purchase of translated books (this chapter, p148; see also Pym 2001: 80; Hale 2008: 217; Donahaye 2012: 27), in which over half the respondents thought that translated books would be harder to get hold of than non-translated books.

Regarding the reasons for such a lack of availability, the most mentioned factor was the attitude of publishers to translated books. It was supposed by many respondents that a major influence on low translation publication rates was a “lack of investment

made by publishing companies”. The principal motivation behind this perceived reluctance to publish translated books was thought to be “[m]oney”, with respondents pointing out that “it costs more to have a book translated first before publishing in the UK” – this echoes the concerns of translation scholars about publishing costs (Ganne and Minon 1992: 56; Venuti 1998: 124; Sapiro 2010: 434). Generally, it was thought that publishers tended to focus on bestsellers and less challenging books such as “sex and shopping novels” or “TV chefs/celebrity memoirs”. These same points also applied to booksellers: one respondent pointed out that “chainstores [sell a] limited selection of books”. The result of these preferences by publishers and booksellers was, according to one respondent, a situation where “English writing is what is predominantly on the bookshelves”.

That this problem was circular was pointed out by several respondents: one commented that “access and availability of foreign books is not in a publisher’s interest unless it is deemed to have a worthwhile return in terms of capital investment”, while at the same time another pointed out that, “if they’re not bringing [translated books] to market, then people won’t buy them”. In the interviews, Beata described the situation as a “self-fulfilling prophecy”, while another questionnaire respondent summed up the problem: “because [translated literature] doesn’t sell well/isn’t stocked, we find ourselves stuck in a downward cycle when it comes to having translated literature published/stocked in bookshops”.

8.5.2.5 Translation as problematic

The four factors mentioned so far with regards to low translation rates in the UK imply that readers are not averse to reading translated books, but that, on the contrary, other contextual factors (such as the power of the English language) have resulted in a situation where translated books are overlooked through no fault of their own. One final theme appearing in answers to the present question, however, was that there was something inherently problematic about translated books themselves.

The principal objection to translated books *per se* was that they might be deemed more challenging than a non-translated book; the potential problems of reading a translation were invoked several times. One respondent thought that, because there are “a lot of people who don’t want to be overly challenged by their reading”, it would be

possible that “an overseas author’s name could put them off”. This view appeared to be shared by other respondents: for example, one suggested that there might be among British readers “a cultural perception of things other than English being ‘foreign’ or ‘arty’”, while another commented (somewhat pointedly) that translations are not necessary in the UK because “airport novels and sex and shopping novels are written in English by [E]nglish speakers”.

These comments form an interesting contrast with an earlier survey question on difficulty of reading translations, in which the majority of respondents did not think that a translated book would necessarily be more difficult to read than a non-translated book (see above, p152). One potential explanation for such a contrast is that, as with the issue of British parochialism (p159), respondents to the present survey are, or view themselves to be, more open to challenging material than the wider population. It is possible that, even though the respondents themselves do not find translated books especially challenging or difficult, they recognise the potential for other readers to view translated books in this way.

That said, it should be noted that while ‘British parochialism’ was seen to be a problem with the *readers* of translated books, comments about the ‘challenging’ nature of translations were often directed *at the books*, not at the readership. Indeed, some respondents were content to include themselves implicitly among those who found translations difficult: one respondent said of translated books that “[m]any are not very appealing, either in their subject matter, or the author’s style”, and others agreed. Reference was made to the “comfort zone” of one’s own culture, and to the increased difficulty of understanding a book set in a different cultural context, making it “difficult to empathise with the scenarios” – particularly if they deal with “subjects of historical and cultural experiences that shame and upset our present political choices and urges”.

This focus on political and cultural engagement suggests another explanation for the contrasting responses regarding whether translated books are difficult: it may be that the notion of ‘difficulty’ in translation carries two distinct meanings for respondents throughout the survey. The earlier question regarding whether a translated book would be hard to read was posed during a set of questions about practical issues such as price and availability, with the possible implication that the kind of ‘difficulty’ under consideration was a concrete, linguistic one. Answers to the later question, meanwhile, may have been formulated in the context of broader translation issues, leading to an understanding of ‘difficulty’ as a more political, cultural or philosophical issue. In such

a conceptualisation, translated books may be easy enough to *read*, but challenging to *understand*. Indeed, it was suggested by other respondents that books from other cultures may be seen, not only as different and therefore problematic, but actually as inferior in terms of quality. One respondent suggested that “there is a general tendency among British people (who have English as a first language) to consider things written in a foreign language as inferior to books written originally in English”, while others agreed, speaking of a “mistrust of literature of other cultures” and the “[i]llusion that UK writers are better than other countries’ writers”. Overall, suggested one respondent, “[w]e assume that the best literature is written in English”.

Finally, there were a few respondents who believed the act of translation itself was problematic. One respondent warned that translations “are only easy and interesting to read IF the translation is good” (her emphasis), and many others described a possible “[p]erception that translations are less well written than original language books”. Being faced with a “badly translated” book that “won’t be accurate”, or that at the very least will “lose something of their character in the translation”, was seen as a distinct possibility; certainly, some respondents gave examples of being put off by bad translations they had read in the past. One, who thought that “[t]raditionally, translated novels have tended to be long and heavy”, had “loved read[ing] A[s]terix le Gaule in French, but found the early translations into English really annoying”; another’s experience of translated books had led her to conclude that “[m]any translations are not very good, awkward use of language/idiom often jars when reading. I would read more translations if they were good”. Overall, the implication was that people who had read one badly-translated book “may well have been put off for life”.

This is a particularly interesting discussion theme because it would appear to support the claims of many translation scholars that readers see translated books as inherently inferior to non-translated books. Assessing reader attitudes towards translation, critics have claimed that readers view translated books as “suspect” (Berman 1984: 15, my translation), “second-hand” (Hermans 1985a: 8; Baker 1993: 233), “marginal, derivative and second-rate” (Vieira 2000: 1324) and “parasitical” (Apter 2008: 73). Certainly, the survey comments just cited do suggest that, for some readers, such negative evaluations may seem accurate. Yet it is important to note that these readers were very much in the minority. Much more frequently, respondents were inclined to attribute low translation rates to outside factors such as the power of English

or the reluctance of publishers to make translated books available, without any suggestion that translated books were problematic in and of themselves.

Arguably, the implication of such a viewpoint is that, were these outside factors to change, translation rates might increase. Consequently, the following (and final) results section discusses ways of encouraging readers to read more translated books.

8.5 READING MORE TRANSLATIONS

8.5.1 Questionnaire results

Question 20 asked: “**Which of the following would most encourage you to read more translated books?**” The response options were:

- Cheaper translated books
- More information on translation as a profession
- More advertising for translated books
- Translated books on a wider variety of subjects
- More shops and websites stocking translated books
- Better translations
- Translated books shelved separately in bookshops
- Translations marked as such

Due to a printing error, the final response option, ‘Translations marked as such’, was not included in the paper copy of the questionnaire. For this reason, the statistical analysis of results includes only the results from the online questionnaire (176 people). The results of this analysis are shown in Figure 23.

	No. of respondents	%
More advertising for translated books	39	22%
Translated books on a wider variety of subjects	34	19%
Better translations	29	16%
<i>Other answer</i>	27	15%
More shops and websites stocking translated books	26	15%
Translated books shelved separately in bookshops	8	5%
Cheaper translated books	7	4%
Translations marked as such	6	3%

Figure 23. Reading more translated books

8.5.2 Discussion

A key aspect of the responses to the present question is that they seem to reflect respondents' comments about why translation rates are low (preceding sections). The most supported method of encouraging readers to read more translated books (22% of respondents) was increased advertising, echoing earlier comments on the lack of promotion for translated books (p159). In responses to the open question on low British translation rates, it was thought that there was a "lack of advertising", with a perceived difference in how translated and non-translated books are advertised: one respondent suggested that "books in other languages do not seem to be as widely promoted as books written in English and so we may not be as aware of them", while another wondered if maybe "maybe English language publishers are better at promoting/translating their books" than publishers of translated works. One respondent stated simply that "[t]ranslated books need more advertising in [the] UK".

Similarly, 15% of respondents believed that an increase in shops and websites stocking translated books would be beneficial to translation sales, espousing a similar attitude towards an increased awareness and availability of translated books. Some additional answers given by respondents echoed this sentiment:

"I will read translated books that I am aware of from reviews, my knowledge of literary history and recommendation."

"Information about the book"

"More and better reviews in English language newspapers, magazines and on line"

"More information about what books have been published; my choices about what to read are generally based on published reviews or word of mouth recommendations"

“more recommendations from people I trust”

“More reviews of translated books”

“through word of mouth recommendation”

As with the previous question, reference was also made to problems inherent in translated books. The second most common answer was “Translated books on a wider variety of subjects” (19%), which suggests that respondents primarily associated translation with certain kinds of books. Details were not given by any of the questionnaire respondents; however, based on earlier discussions of the association of translation primarily with fiction texts (p90), it may be fair to say that an increase in non-fiction translations would be viewed as beneficial to translation sales. 16% of respondents also said simply that “better translations” would be an encouragement towards reading more translated books, implying a perception that many translated books are of poor quality. Again, this theme was taken up in the ‘Other’ answers provided by some respondents:

“MORE translated books of good calibre”

“I am influenced by whether I think the book sounds interesting”

“What the books are about”

A third issue was that of translated books as a separate selling category. In the questionnaire, 8% of respondents thought that separating translations from non-translations, either by marking translations more clearly or shelving them separately in bookshops, would have a positive effect on translation sales; as has already been noted (p105), this is currently an uncommon practice in the UK. Given the importance of promotional displays to sales of books, such a move would seem intuitively to be a positive one. However, in the ‘Other’ section, one respondent wrote the opposite:

“translated books in with English fiction, not differentiated”

Similarly, in the interviews, Sean in particular was certain that this would be a counter-productive measure:

My gut feeling is, that if it *were* the case that in Britain they started having a translated books section, that would not make any significant difference to picking up translated books – it might even have the opposite effect, that it might

deter people from going. [...] I think highlighting the fact that it's a foreign language would be likely to act as a deterrent, more so than... It wouldn't bring any kind of desirable exoticism to that section of the bookshop! (laughs)

Sean's opinion addresses both the widespread opinion that British readers are uninterested in foreign cultures (see p157) and the fact that, for the majority of readers, 'translated' is not presently a meaningful way of categorising books (p105). This point was not explicitly in the wording of the question, but was commented upon in the 'Other' by 12 respondents (7%) who stated that, ultimately, the fact of translation was irrelevant:

"I choose the book first regardless of whether or not it is translated."

"i do not consider whether of not a book i like is in translation" [sic]

"I don't choose books for translation criteria"

"I read books that sound interesting to me, regardless of whether they have been translated."

"I would neither choose nor avoid translated books based on any of the above"

"It doesn't matter to me as long as the book interests me"

"If a book sounds appealing then I will go and read it - the fact that is translated do[esn't] factor into my decision making"

"Book just needs to be good, doesn't matter whether it's translated"

This point of view was also espoused by many of the interviewees: Susan's choices for her book group were related to "whether they're recommended by other websites, or by ourselves, if we've read them and enjoyed them, and we maybe think we could read them again" rather than "the originating country or ethnic background of the writer", while Sean stated that, ultimately, whether or not a book is translated "doesn't bother me, or enter into the equation". Sara perhaps reflected the views of many of the respondents when she concluded that "When I want to read a book, I want to read a book, it doesn't matter whether it's translated or not".

8.6 SUMMARY

Many of the results reported throughout the thesis have indicated that readers' primary concern with a translated text is the reading experience, and that their decisions and quality judgements about translated books are made in a similar manner to the way they

decide upon and judge non-translated books, with little differentiation between the two types. With that in mind, it is perhaps unsurprising that most of their explanations for the low rates of translation publication and purchase in the UK referred not to problems with translated books *per se* but to wider outside factors such as the hegemony of the English language in the UK publishing system. As in previous chapters, respondents recognised the value of translation, and suggested numerous ways in which some of the problematic systemic issues could be counteracted, thereby demonstrating a broadly positive overall attitude towards translated books.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

9.1 OPENING REMARKS

This thesis has intended, through the use of a survey combining questionnaire and interview data, to investigate and analyse the attitudes of a group of readers in the UK towards translated books. As such, the four preceding chapters have explored in detail various aspects of such reader attitudes. This concluding chapter summarises the findings of this exploration, discusses the implications of these findings for both researchers and translators, and makes suggestions for how further research might build upon the study here.

9.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study's findings fall into six major thematic areas that correspond to the research questions posed in the introductory chapter (p21).

9.2.1 Translation as a category

Do readers in the UK conceive of translated books as a distinct category within the books that are available to them? If so, is this category of books positively or negatively viewed by readers?

The most important finding of the survey was that, most of the time, whether or not a book is translated was simply not a concern to readers. While respondents fully understood the concept of translation and were usually able to identify books as 'translated' or 'not translated' when specifically asked to do so (although not in every case), such information was rarely at the forefront of their minds, and did not factor into their mental categorisations of books; this is in contrast to other categories that *were* used in choosing and then discussing books, such as genre and cultural setting. 'Translated', however, was simply not a meaningful category in respondents' minds; thus, whether or not a book was translated was highly unlikely to be either a motivating or a discouraging factor in book choice.

9.2.2 Books from other cultures

Do readers in the UK have a positive or negative impression of books from other cultures (including non-translated books), and how does this affect their attitudes towards translated books?

In contrast to the lack of concern regarding whether or not a book was translated, cultural information was frequently embedded in the mental representation of a book (in much the same way as genre). Respondents generally – though not always – remembered the cultural origins of books they had read, and sometimes selected books to read on that basis. In addition, certain cultures were associated with certain genres: for example, Scandinavian crime books were mentioned by a number of respondents. Overall, respondents enjoyed reading books from other cultures, which they felt allowed them to “expand [their] horizons”; in consequence, the foreign origin of a book could be a motivating factor in reading it, with positive implications for the consumption of translated books.

At the same time, however, despite the high level of interest in foreign cultures shown by respondents, many believed that such an interest was unlikely to be widespread among the British population. Indeed, respondents frequently viewed their country-people as potentially insular or even xenophobic, which they felt could hamper a wider uptake of translated books.

9.2.3 Practical considerations

Is the purchase and reading of translated books affected by practical considerations such as price and availability?

Practical considerations regarding book purchase appeared to be relevant in some cases but not in others. Overall, price was not considered to be a particularly important issue, with respondents seeing little difference in price between translated and non-translated books. In contrast, availability of translated books was cited as a concern for many respondents, both in terms of whether certain translated books existed and in terms of whether those that did exist would be available to readers. Several interviewees recalled

times when a book they wanted to read had simply not been translated into English; more generally, it was thought that even those books that had been translated would frequently be unavailable in bookshops and libraries, with respondents also criticising a general lack of promotion and advertising of translated books in comparison to non-translated books. Overall, an increase in the publication and promotion of translated books was called for by respondents.

9.2.4 Judging translation quality

When reading a translated book, do readers in the UK judge the quality of the translation, and, if so, how? What do readers in the UK see as the function of translation in such cases?

Respondents had strong views on what translated books should be like in terms of function, style and content. The purpose of translation was a contested issue: some respondents espoused a desire for equivalence of meaning, some expected a high degree of interpretation from the translator, and some required a balance of the two. In terms of language, fluency was almost universally preferred, although this was not to be taken to mean that translated books should be ‘simple’ or ‘boring’. Culture-specific concepts were positively viewed, as being essential to the cultural location of the text; likewise, most respondents also enjoyed the use of non-standard English. However, this latter preference was not universal – some respondents actively disliked the use of dialects, especially in non-dialogue – and, additionally, it was admitted that too much of any challenging features could sometimes hamper reading. The idea of in-text foreignisation was met with mixed reactions: some respondents found the idea intriguing, while others thought that such a strategy would be extremely disruptive.

Overall, translated books were judged in a similar way to non-translated books. With a few rare exceptions, judgements about translation quality were based entirely on the translated text itself, which may explain why certain features are more positively viewed than others: for example, use of dialect to reflect the language and culture of certain socio-geographical groups or subcultures is common in Anglophone writing, as is inclusion of non-English names and terminology (in the work of writers such as Chinua Achebe). At the same time, while some respondents demonstrated an analytical

reading style, the majority indicated a preference for becoming absorbed in a book during the reading process, with the result that textual invisibility – of both the translator and the author – was supported in both translated and non-translated books.

The implication from this and other parts of the survey discussion was that translated and non-translated books were generally held to similar standards: few respondents appeared to view translated books as inherently problematic; more often, translated and non-translated books were discussed in similar terms, with discussion in the interviews frequently eliding the two. This reinforces the idea that respondents did not consider ‘translated’ to be a particularly meaningful category for discussing books.

9.2.5 Attitudes towards translators

Are readers in the UK interested in learning more about the translation process and the people who translate books? What skills and qualifications do they expect from translators?

Regarding respondents’ attitudes towards translators themselves, answers generally demonstrated a great respect for book translators, with the recognition that they do “a phenomenally good job”; it was widely appreciated that without translators, a vast array of books would be unavailable to readers in the UK. At the same time, there was a general sense that the translator is subordinate to the author, to the extent that ability to remember the names or works of specific translators very limited. The combination of these two viewpoints resulted in a general belief that the translator is “an anonymous but powerful presence”.

Certainly, the non-salience of ‘translated’ as a category raises the question of translator visibility, which, for the present respondents, was generally low. While peritextual features (such as introductions and footnotes) were generally read and enjoyed, such reading did not necessarily mean that the information contained within it would be retained. In addition, the most valued translation skills were those with direct impact on the text – perfect knowledge of source and target languages, experience as a translator or writer, and being a native target-language speaker – rather than more abstract skills such as professional qualifications.

9.2.6 Low translation rates in the UK

Finally, what are the opinions of readers in the UK regarding the low translation rates in British publishing, and how do they think such rates might be improved?

The question of the translation situation in the UK generated a variety of responses. The most important factors suggested by respondents to explain low translation rates were the power of the English language and Anglo-American culture, and an inherent parochialism in the British population; other factors included a general lack of awareness about translated books and a low availability of such texts. Regarding the power of English, respondents commented that British readers did not ‘need’ translation in order to have access to a wide variety of reading material, and it was also argued that the interest of other countries in Anglophone culture was likely to have a positive effect on levels of translation in those countries, widening the discrepancies in translation rates. In addition, as noted, respondents frequently viewed their country-people as insular, even though they themselves demonstrated high levels of interest in other cultures.

As noted above (p172), there was also concern with how translations were packaged and promoted: respondents believed that translated books were not promoted particularly well, and thought that publishers did not publish enough translated material, with the result that translated books would be less available than non-translated books. Specific promotion ideas such as separate shelving for translated books gained mixed reactions, but, overall, respondents were in favour of increased publication and promotion of translated books.

9.3 IMPLICATIONS AND POSSIBILITIES

The present survey has generated a large amount of data regarding respondents’ opinions on translation and translated books. The primary importance of the findings in the present survey is that they are among the first of their kind. The attitudes of non-professional readers with regards to book translation, in the UK or elsewhere, have up to this point received extremely little attention in translation research, with the result that the data generated by the present survey are highly informative.

Overall, most respondents to the present survey had a positive view of translation. Despite the UK's low translation rates and a perceived lack of translator awareness, the comments made in this survey were thoughtful, reasoned and detailed, revealing a lively interest in translation issues. That said, regardless of whether a book was translated or not, respondents primarily wanted to engage with the content of the text, being much less concerned with the processes that had produced it. As such, attitudes towards translated books mirrored attitudes towards other cultural products such as non-translated books, films and so on: what mattered most to respondents was not the ins-and-outs of production, but the *reading experience*.

It is perhaps for this reason that, while respondents' answers to many questions reflected Translation Studies discourse on the same topics, there were also several occasions on which their opinions differed strongly from the viewpoints of translation scholars, for example in the lack of concern with price as a motivating factor. These occasions serve to emphasise the importance of including non-professional readers in translation research rather than relying solely on assumptions deriving from textual analysis.

This thesis has taken a first step in generating valuable data regarding reader attitudes towards translation, but it must also be recognised that the results of the present survey may be limited in their generalisability, particularly since they are based on a purposive sample. Respondents gave their answers to a specific set of questionnaire and interview questions, and in a few cases found these questions to be problematic (e.g. question 17, p116); further surveys on similar topics would be advised to think carefully about how such questions are phrased to avoid confusion as far as possible. In addition, responses to both the questionnaire and the interview were provided in a particular context: respondents were being asked by a Translation Studies researcher to answer questions specifically about translation. As such, it is possible that their willingness to engage with translation issues was unusually high or that they espoused a more positive attitude towards translation than would normally be the case.

What is required to complement these results, then, is further research using a variety of reader-based techniques. As well as the opportunities offered by surveying members of books groups in cities other than the four referred to in the present study, the attitudes of other groups of readers (or non-readers) are also likely to prove interesting – those who only read at home on their own; those who primarily borrow their books from libraries; those who buy books for children; those who make use of e-

books or audiobooks; and so on. Such groups could be studied using the same questionnaire-interview approach as the present survey, or, alternatively, other tools such as reading diaries, experimental reader-response techniques (see p26) or observational methods could generate different kinds of data and thereby serve to explore other facets of attitudes towards translation. In particular, data that could be analysed using more stringent statistical tests would be an interesting point of comparison (see Kuznik et al. 2010: 338).

Finally, comparable research conducted in other countries would be extremely illuminating in providing a contrast with the ability to shed light on some of the cross-national statistics on translation rates. If, as the present research suggests, readers in the UK are not particularly proactive in seeking out translated books, survey research in countries with higher translation rates may reveal some of the reasons behind their increased desire for reading translated material.

9.4 CONCLUSION

This thesis has aimed to broaden the scope of Translation Studies by demonstrating the value of research into the non-professional reader of translated books. Such readers, although having little direct influence on the immediate process of translation, are vital stakeholders in the sphere of translation, with the result that their opinions about translated books should be an essential part of a well-rounded Translation Studies. This thesis has shown that generating and examining data about readers' attitudes is not only desirable but eminently possible, particularly through the judicious use of interdisciplinary methodologies and tools. Thus, the reader attitudes reported in this thesis are illuminating both as a snapshot of the people who purchase, read and enjoy the fruits of the translator's labours, and as a building block in what promises to be a highly rewarding new area of Translation Studies.

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APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire

Books and Translation Survey (University of Edinburgh)



Page 1 Welcome

This is a survey about books, and in particular books that have been translated from other languages.

When answering the questions, please think about **books you are reading or have read for pleasure** - that is, not about books you have read for work or study. If you sometimes read books on an electronic reader or listen to audiobooks, please include these when thinking about your answers.

The survey should take 15-20 minutes to complete. Your answers will be anonymous. You will be free to withdraw at any time up until you submit the survey, in which case your answers will not be recorded.

Please answer each page fully before turning to the next page, and try not to return to any pages once you have finished them.

If you have any questions about the survey or the research project behind it, please contact Catherine Campbell at the University of Edinburgh: xxxxxxxx@sms.ed.ac.uk.

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this survey.

Page 2

Preliminary information

1. Are you a member of a book club or reading group in Edinburgh?

Yes

No

2. Is English your first/main language?

Yes

No

Page 3

Reading habits

These questions are about your reading habits. Remember, please only think about books you have read for pleasure, not for work or study.

3. In the last year, about how many books did you buy or borrow for yourself? Please choose **one** option.

- None
- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11 or more
- Don't know

4. In a normal week, about how many hours do you read books for pleasure? Please choose **one** option.

- 0-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 21 or more
- It varies a lot week by week

5. What types of books do you most like to read?

Page 4

Books from different cultures

6. Some people prefer to read books from their own cultures, while other people prefer to read books from other cultures. Which of the following statements most fits your preferences? Please choose **one** option.

- I prefer to read books from my own culture.
- I prefer to read books from other cultures.
- I like reading books from my own culture and books from other cultures about the same.

6a. If you enjoy reading books from other cultures, are there any countries or cultures that you particularly like reading about?

Page 5

Translated books

The questions on this page are about translated books. For each question, please choose **one** answer only.

7. Thinking about the relationship between translated books in English and their originals in a different language, would you say that:

- A good translation has the same meaning as the original book, but in English
 - A good translation is one translator's interpretation of the original book
 - A good translation is like an English summary of the original book
 - Other (please specify):
-

8. Imagine an English translation of the French novel *Notre Dame de Paris* by Victor Hugo. The translation is called *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, the translator is British and the publishing company is also British. Would you say that *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* is:

- A French book
- A British book
- Both a British and a French book
- Don't know

Page 6

Translated books in the UK

The questions on this page are about translated books compared to books originally written in English.

For each question, choose **one** answer only.

9. Thinking about the price of translated books in the UK, would you say that:

- A translated book is likely to cost more than a book originally written in English
- A translated book is likely to cost less than a book originally written in English
- Translated books and books originally written in English probably cost about the same

10. And in terms of buying translated books in the UK, would you say that:

- A translated book will probably be harder to find in a bookshop or online than a book originally written in English
- A translated book will probably be easier to find in a bookshop or online than a book originally written in English
- Translated books and books originally written in English are probably equally easy to find in a bookshop or online

11. And thinking about what translated books are like to read, which of the following statements is closest to your opinion?

- Translated books are likely to be more difficult to read than books originally written in English
- Translated books are likely to be easier to read than books originally written in English
- Translated books and books originally written in English are likely to be about the same level of difficulty

Page 7

Reading translated books

12. To the best of your knowledge, have you ever read a translated book?

Yes

No

Not sure

13. If 'yes', can you give an example of a translated book you have read (at any time in your life)?

a. Off the top of your head, can you remember the author of the book?

b. Off the top of your head, can you remember the translator of the book?

Page 8

Reading translated books

These questions are about reading translated books. If you have never read a translated book, please ignore the questions on this page and turn to the next page (page 9).

14. When reading a translated book, which parts of the book would you usually read?

	Yes	No	Sometimes
a. Front cover	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Back cover	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. 'About the author' section	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Introduction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Translator's note	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Footnotes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Main part of book	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. And what information do you like to have about a translated book before you read it?

- I like to know that the book is translated and to have some information about the translator.
- I like to know that the book is translated, but I do not need to know anything about the translator.
- I prefer not to know that the book is translated until after I have read it.
- I do not care whether the book is translated or not.

16. After you have read a translated book, which pieces of information would you usually remember?

	Yes	No	Sometimes
a. Title	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Author's name	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Translator's name	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Original language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Publisher's name	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Page 9

Good and bad translations

17. As with non-translated books, the standard of translated books can vary. In your opinion, which of the following features would show that a book has been well translated, and which features would show that it has been badly translated?

	Well translated	Badly translated	Don't know
a. Foreign names of people or places, for example 'Rue Ganterie' or 'Señor Don José de Rey'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Foreign words whose meaning is understandable from the context	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Foreign words whose meaning is not understandable from the context	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. An introduction by the translator explaining the decisions he or she has made	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Footnotes explaining some foreign words or ideas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Neologisms (new words), for example 'snickt' or 'monomyth'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Sentences that are easy to understand straight away	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Sentences that sound unusual or foreign	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Archaisms (old words), for example 'chuse' or 'betimes'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. A foreign-sounding title, for example <i>Mistero Buffo</i> or <i>The Harafish</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Use of regional English, for example Yorkshire or Cockney	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Page 10

Translators

The questions on this page are about translators and the work they do.

18. Professional translators have different kinds of qualifications and experience. In your opinion, which of the following kinds of experience or qualification is most important for a translator into English?

Please **rank your three most important kinds of experience** by placing '1' in the box next to the most important kind of experience, '2' in the box next to the second most important kind of experience, and '3' in the box next to the third most important kind of experience.

	Rank
a. Qualification from a university	_____
b. Qualification from a professional organisation	_____
c. Perfect knowledge of two languages	_____
d. Past experience as a translator	_____
e. Past experience as a writer	_____
f. Is a native speaker of English	_____
g. Has lived or currently lives outside the UK	_____

19. In comparison to other writing-related jobs, would you say the work done by a translator is most similar to the work done by:

- An author
- A proofreader (that is, someone who reads a document to find and correct mistakes)
- A summariser or précis writer (that is, a person who takes the main ideas from a piece of text and rewrites them in his or her own words)
- A ghost writer (that is, a writer whose work is published with someone else's name)
- Other (please specify): _____

Page 11

Translated books

The questions on this page are about why people read translated books.

20. Which of the following would **most** encourage you to read more translated books? Please choose **one** option.

- Cheaper translated books
- More information on translation as a profession
- More advertising for translated books
- Translated books on a wider variety of subjects
- More shops and websites stocking translated books
- Better translations
- Translated books shelved separately in bookshops
- Other (please specify): _____

21. People in the UK read very few translated books compared to other countries. In your opinion, what might be the main reason for this?

Page 12

Books you have read

22. Have you read any of the following books?

	Yes	No	Not sure
a. <i>The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo</i> (Stieg Larsson)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. <i>A Game of Thrones</i> (George R. R. Martin)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. <i>Call the Midwife</i> (Jennifer Worth)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. <i>Madame Bovary</i> (Gustave Flaubert)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. <i>The Snowman</i> (Jo Nesbo)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> (Jane Austen)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. <i>Freakonomics</i> (Steven Levitt, Stephen Dubner)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. <i>The Shadow of the Wind</i> (Carols Ruiz Zafón)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. <i>The Da Vinci Code</i> (Dan Brown)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. <i>Jane Eyre</i> (Charlotte Brontë)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. <i>The Alchemist</i> (Paulo Coelho)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. <i>Twilight</i> (Stephenie Meyer)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. <i>How to Be a Woman</i> (Caitlin Moran)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. <i>Dreams from My Father</i> (Barack Obama)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. <i>The Kite Runner</i> (Khaled Hosseini)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p. <i>Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy</i> (John Le Carré)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
q. <i>Love in the Time of Cholera</i> (Gabriel García Márquez)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
r. <i>Pippi Longstocking</i> (Astrid Lindgren)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
s. <i>A Short History of Nearly Everything</i> (Bill Bryson)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
t. Any of the <i>Harry Potter</i> series (J. K. Rowling)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Page 13

Demographic questions

The questions on the next two pages are factual questions about you.

23. What is your sex?

- Male
- Female

24. In which year were you born? _____

25. What is your highest completed level of education?

- Standard Grades, GCSEs or O-Levels
- Highers, Advanced Highers, A-Levels or IB
- University qualification below degree level
- University degree
- No formal qualifications
- Other (please specify): _____

25a. If you studied at university, what subject area was your university degree? (select all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological sciences | <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business | <input type="checkbox"/> Medicine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry | <input type="checkbox"/> Modern languages |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classics or pre-modern languages | <input type="checkbox"/> Philosophy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economics | <input type="checkbox"/> Politics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education or teaching | <input type="checkbox"/> Psychology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English language or linguistics | <input type="checkbox"/> Sociology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theology or divinity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Translation studies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geography or geosciences | <input type="checkbox"/> Veterinary sciences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History or archaeology | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information technology | |

Page 14

Demographic questions

26. What is your country of birth? Please choose **one** option.

- Scotland
- England
- Wales
- Northern Ireland
- Republic of Ireland
- Other (please specify): _____

27. How would you describe your national identity? (select all that apply)

- Scottish
- English
- Welsh
- Northern Irish
- British
- Other (please specify): _____

28. Thinking about the kinds of books you usually read in English, do you understand any other language well enough to read a book in that language?

- Yes
- No

28a. If 'yes', which language(s)?

Page 15
Final Page

Thank you for taking part in this survey. The results will be analysed to give a clearer picture of how British readers feel about translation and translated books.

If you have any questions about the survey or the research project behind it, or if you would like to receive a copy of the survey results, please contact Catherine Campbell at the University of Edinburgh: xxxxxxxx@sms.ed.ac.uk.

APPENDIX 2: Interview schedule

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

IDENTIFIER	
DID QUESTIONNAIRE?	
LENGTH OF INTERVIEW	to

Briefing

- What the project is about
- Thirty minutes to an hour
- Mostly respondent talking
- Audio-recorded then transcribed
- Reporting – statistics then quotes from people

Topics

Questionnaire

What did you think of it? Did you find it interesting?

Book group

Why did you join?

What kinds of books does the group read?

Interest in other cultures

Is your book group interested in other cultures?

Why are people interested in books from other cultures?

Are books from other cultures different from British/American books?

Awareness of translations

Awareness of book's cultural background – but not awareness of translation?

In your mind, do you class books into 'translations' and 'non-translations'?

Do shelving arrangements have an effect?

Availability of translations

Would you envisage having problems getting hold of a translated book?

Publishers blame readers and readers blame publishers – whose fault is it really?

Reading translations

Do you approach them as you would any other book?

Do you read the introduction, footnotes etc.?

Translation language

Question 17 (page 9) – lots of ‘don’t knows’ – why was this?

Should it be obvious it’s a translation? Foreignisation vs. domestication.

How do you judge the quality of a translation?

Translators

How much do you know about translators?

Question 19 (page 10) on ‘What is a translator?’ – How creative is a translator’s job?

What are the most important things a translator should do?

Translations you’ve read

Any translations you’ve particularly enjoyed?

Any translations you’ve disliked?

Finishing up

- Any questions?
- Real name or pseudonym?

APPENDIX 3: Book groups invited to take part in the survey

Belfast book groups

Ardoyne Library Reading Group
Belfast Central Library Reading Group
Body in the Library Crime Book Club
Book Club at the Crescent Arts Centre
Chichester Library Reading Group
Common Grounds Book Group
Cregagh Library Reading Group
Dundonald Library Reading Group
Falls Road Library Reading Group

Finaghy Library Reading Group
Holywood Arches Library Reading Group
Lisburn Road Library Reading Group
Ormeau Road Library Reading Group
Photo Book Club Belfast
Shankill Road Library Reading Group
Suffolk Library Reading Group
Whiterock Library Reading Group
Woodstock Library Reading Group

Cardiff books groups

Cardiff Books
CardiffRead
Central Library Reading Group
Ely Library Reading Group
Fairwater Bookworms
Gay Men's Book Club Cardiff
Grange Readers Book Club
Gumtree Book Group
Heath Evangelical Church Reading Group
Llandaff North Library Reading Group

Llanrumney Library Reading Group
Radyr Readers
Rhiwbina Library Reading Group
Rhydypennau Library Reading Group
Roath Readers
Rumney Library Reading Group
Saucers & Dragons Reading Group
Whitchurch Library Reading Group
Wordtree Booktree

Edinburgh book groups

Balgreen Library Bookgroup
Blackhall Library Bookgroup
Blackwell's (Edinburgh) Book Group
Bonanza! Non-Fiction Book Group
CA(I)RE Bookgroup
Central Library Bookgroup
Chatter and Verse Poetry Bookgroup
Chattering Chapters
Colinton Library Bookgroup
Corstophine Library Bookgroup
Craigmillar Library Bookgroup
Currie Library Bookgroup
EDI Great Reads
Edinburgh Book Group
ESOL Chatabout Reading Group
Found in Translation
Fountainbridge Library Bookgroup
Fountainbridge ESOL Reading Group
Gay Book Group

Gilmerton Library Bookgroup
Kirkliston Library Bookgroup
Leith Library Bookgroup
McDonald Road Library Bookgroup
Morningside Library Bookgroup
Newington Library Bookgroup
Oxgangs Library Bookgroup
Parents'/Carers' Book Club
Piershill Library Bookgroup
Portobello Library Bookgroup
Ratho Library Bookgroup
Sighthill Library Bookgroup
Sofi's Book Group
South Neighbourhood Library Bookgroup
South Queensferry Library Bookgroup
St Anne's Parish Church Book Group
Stockbridge Library Bookgroup
Talk Discuss! Edinburgh
Wester Hailes Library Bookgroup

London book groups

1000 Books Book Club
ABC Book Group (Hainault Library)
Beautiful Life Reading Group
Aldersbrook Library Reading Group
Artizan Street Library and Community Centre
Ashburton Library Reading Group
Audio Reading Group (Barking Library)
Balham Library Golden Years Reading Group
Balham Library Reading Group
Battersea Library Reading Group
Battersea Park Library Reading Group
Beckenham Library Reading Groups
Bedfont Library Reading Group
Belvedere Book Explorers
Bengali Book Group
Biggin Hill Library Reading Groups
Black Reading Group
Blackheath Village Library Reading Group
Blue Anchor Library Reading Group
Book Breaks @ Ideas Store
Book Corner Book Club
Bookaholics (Hainault Library)
Bookends (Barking Library)
Bookmark Club
Bradmore Green Library Reading Group
Brentford Library Reading Group
Bromley / Orpington Book and Wine Club
Bromley Central Library Reading Groups
Burnt Ash Library Reading Group
Camberwell Library Reading Group
Camden Girls Book Club
Canada Water Library Reading Groups
Castelnau Library Crime Reading Group
Castelnau Library Reading Group
Catford Library Reading Group
Central London Book Group
Cheam Library Reading Groups
Chipping Barnet Library Reading Group
Chislehurst Library Reading Group
Church End Library Reading Group
Church Street Library Reading Group
Clapham Library Reading Group
Clapton Library Reading Group
Coffee, Cake and Book Group
Croydon Central Library Reading Groups
Cubitt Town Book Club
Dagenham Library Reading Group
Durning Library Reading Group
East Barent Library Reading Group
East Finchley Library Reading Group
Feltham Library Reading Group
Finsbury Library Reading Group
Forest Hill Library Reading Group
Fulham Central Library Reading Groups
Fullwell Cross Library Crime Group
Gants Hill Library Reading Group
Girly Book Club
Golders Green Library Reading Group
Grove Vale Library Reading Group
Hale End Library Reading Group
Ham Library Reading Groups
Hampton Hill Library Reading Group
Hampton Library Reading Group
Harlesden Library Reading Groups
Hayes Library Reading Groups
Hendon Library Reading Group
Higham Hill Library Reading Group
Homerton Library Reading Group
Hook Crime Readers Group
Hooked on Books (Hook Library)
Hounslow Library Reading Group
I Love Books Club
Ickenham Library Reading Groups
Idea Store Bow Reading Group
Idea Store Chrisp Street Reading Group
Idea Store Whitechapel Reading Group
Isleworth Library Reading Group
Islington Central Library Reading Group
Islington Comic Forum
I've Never Read Her
John Harvard Library Reading Group
Kilburn Library Reading Group
Kingsbury Library Plus Reading Group
Kingston Library Reading Group
Latin American and Spanish Book Group
Lea Bridge Library Reading Group
Lewisham Library Reading Groups
Leyton Library Reading Group
Leytonstone Library Reading Group
Maida Vale Ladies Book Club
Maida Vale Library Reading Groups
Manor House Library Reading Groups
Marylebone Library Reading Groups
Mill Hill Library Reading Group
Morden Library Reading Group
Mottingham Library Reading Groups
Much Ado About Books
Multilingual Poetry Group (Whitechapel)
N4 Library Reading Group
Newington Library Reading Group
North Chingford Library Reading Group
North Library Reading Group
Northcote Library Reading Group
Northolt Library Reading Groups
Nunhead Library Reading Group
Old Malden Library Reading Group

London book groups (continued)

Orpington Library Reading Groups
Osidge Library Reading Group
Osterley Library Reading Group
Paddington Library Reading Group
Peckham Library Reading Groups
Petts Wood Library Reading Group
Pimlico Book Club
Primrose Hill Library Adult Book Club
Psychology & Multicultural Literature Group
Purley Library Reading Groups
Putney Library Reading Group
Queen's Park Library Reading Group
Rainbow Reading Group (Croydon)
Reading (Lane) Book Group (Hackney)
Redbridge Library Reading Group
Richmond Library Reading Group
Richmond Museum Historical Novels
Robert Jeyes Library Reading Group
Ruislip Manor Library Reading Groups
Rush Green Library Reading Group
Sanderstead Library Reading Group
Seasons Reading Group (Battersea Library)
Seven Kings Library Reading Group
Shoe Lane Library Reading Group
Shoreditch Library Reading Groups
Shortlands Library Reading Groups
Silver Circle Reading Group (Southfields)
Silver Circle Reading Group (Wandsworth)
Sister Heart Book Club
South Lambeth Library Reading Groups
South Norwood Library Reading Group
South Ruislip Library Reading Group
South Woodford Library Reading Groups
Southborough Library Reading Group
Southfields Library Reading Groups
St John's Wood Library Reading Groups
St Pauls Cray Library Reading Groups
Stamford Hill Library Reading Group
Stoke Newington Library Reading Groups
Surbiton Library Reading Group
Sutton Library Alternative Reading Group
Sydenham Community Library Reading Group
The Library @ Deptford Lounge Reading Group
The Library @ Westcroft Reading Group
Thornton Heath Library Reading Groups
Tolworth Community Library Reading Group
Tooting Library Reading Group
Torrison Road Library Reading Group
Tudor Drive Library Reading Group
Turning Pages Book Group (Canary Wharf)
Twickenham Library Reading Group
Valence Library Reading Groups
Wallington Library Reading Group
Walthamstow Library Reading Group
Wanstead Library Reading Groups
West Wickham Library Reading Group
Whitehall Historical Group
Wood Street Library Reading Group
Woodford Green Library Reading Groups
Worcester Park Library Reading Groups
Yeading Library Reading Group