

Over the past five to seven years, **THE BOOK FOR CHILDREN HAS BEEN AN ABSOLUTE DRIVER OF THE RUSSIAN PRINTED BOOK MARKET**. Although downloads went up (+10%) in 2018–2019, digital book products for children take merely 5–6% of the online services assortment (mostly fairy tales and stories in the audio format) and do not exceed 0–1% of the turnover of the publishers specialised in children's books.

Children's book in Russia: investment priorities and market realia



Well then, a printed children's book. Its share in the total retail sales of printed books went up from 21% to 28% between 2013 and 2019. Sales of children's books are significantly ahead of the dynamics of the book market as a whole. In 2019, the market turnover for children's books amounted to 237.5 million euros (28.3% of the Russian book market), 9.1% more than in 2018. The entire Russian book market has grown by 3.2% over this period.

It is crucial that, unlike printed books for the adult audience, the growth of the children's segment is ensured by a larger number of purchased copies, rather than by a significant increase in price per book. The consumer price index on the children's market remains within the official inflation rate of Rosstat. Children's books constitute the only segment where the sales volume increased in terms of copies (+6.5%) against 2018, while the average price of an item purchased was 3.68 euros, and the consumer price index totalled 102.47% per annum, according to the 2019 results.

The average purchase price in the children's segment has remained one of the lowest in the Russian book market for at least this decade. The purchase price has been under pressure from the macroeconomic and demographic processes under way in the Russian Federation and can be explained, in particular, by the decline in monetary incomes of the population and traditional prevalence of cheap paper-wrapped books for preschool learning in the demand structure. To a certain extent, this indicator is also negatively affected by the on-going price competition among publishers in the sector of the textbook classics.

EXPERTS SPEAK



BORIS KUZNETSOV,
Director, Rosman
Publishing House:

The children's book represents the most dynamic and attractive segment of the Russian book market. This makes competition in it particularly tough, and it takes the most complex forms when the richest tradition of the Russian children's classics and modern children's literature clash. The excessive share of the so-called "golden fund" largely restrains contemporary authors.



EVGENIY SOSNOVSKIY,
General Director,
Robins Publishing House:

It is an open secret, that the children's literature market feels better in general than that of books for adults. Today, there are many interesting colourful books for young children. The reader's top demand is that on the timeless children's classics, good modern authors (they are few in number, but they certainly exist) and just a children's book of good quality, which is nice to hold in hands, flip through pages and even try with one's little teeth (which is impossible in case of an e-book).



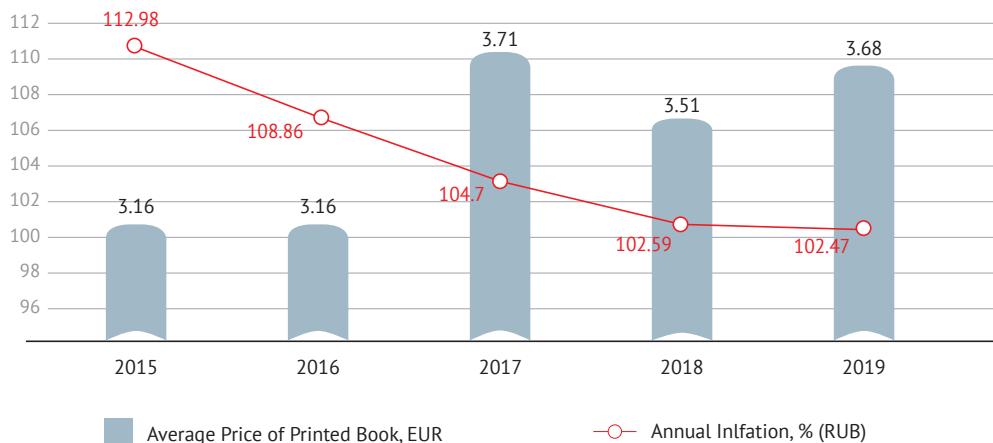
MARINA TODOROVA,
Editor-in-chief, ENAS-KNIGA
Publishing House:

In our view, the Russian children's book market has been developing very similarly to the children's book market in Europe over the past decade. Russia's specificity is in the patchwork of numerous normative acts, which are mandatory but sometimes contradictory. The people's shrinking solvency does not facilitate the situation either. Hence the main challenge – it is not easy at all to produce an affordable book of high quality, to observe all the rules and regulations and make a profit at the same time. We believe that the reader's interest in children's books will stay for the next five years. However, the further development will largely depend on the country's economy as a whole and the birth rate in particular.

chart 1

CHANGES IN THE AVERAGE RETAIL PRICE AND ANNUAL INFLATION IN THE RUSSIAN CHILDREN'S BOOK MARKET

Source: analytics by the Book Industry Magazine





OLGA MURAVYEVA,
Head of the Children's Books
Department – Childhood Planet,
AST:

Children's books are both expensive to create and to publish. Their retail price is often unaffordable to our people. The NAFI survey (which covered 52 entities of the Russian Federation and 1600 people 16+, in August 2019) showed an increase in the number of Russians who were willing to save on education for themselves and their children over the past four years. In 2019, they constituted 10%. Consequently, the personal budget of such Russians does not envisage a purchase of books.

A wide range of product offering with the account of different purchasing ability largely explains a great interest in children's books shown by virtually all retail channels, both specialised in book and non-core. Books for children take a noticeable share in bookstores, on-line shops, FMCG networks and kiosks. The last five years have seen growing sales of children's books mainly in off- and on-line bookstores. Non-core retailing solves

flexibility of publishing houses, curbing investment in new projects. As a result, publishers strive to reach out directly to the reader (bypassing intermediaries) or reduce risks by constantly replicating/cloning successful projects. This second trend explains why the Russian market is dominated by cheap early learning and teaching aids for preschool children (two thirds of the market turnover); another quarter belongs to the classics (the "golden fund"), where the competitiveness of the book is also determined by its price; and it is only the remaining part of the market that belongs to modern literature proper, presented both by foreign and Russian authors, to non-fiction for teenagers and products under global franchise licences.

EXPERTS SPEAK

TATIANA NILOVA,
Director, Early Learning Department, BINOM -
Knowledge Laboratory Publishing House

Russia faces a huge gap between the demands of the capital cities and regions. Not only pricewise, but also from the point of taste and aesthetic preferences. Not every bestseller in Moscow will

In 2019, the market turnover for children's books amounted to **237.5 million euros** (28.3% of the Russian book market), **9.1% more than in 2018.**

the difficult problem of turnover and return on investment for the publisher, but significantly reduces the profit margin, which is not welcomed by many Russian publishers at all. Nevertheless, it is children's book publishers who more often than their other Russian colleagues dare to go beyond the traditional book distribution channels in search of additional/new platforms to present their products to the consumer, actively experiment with FMCG supermarkets and children's goods stores, create their own on-line shops and permanent retail facilities.

Why is this happening?

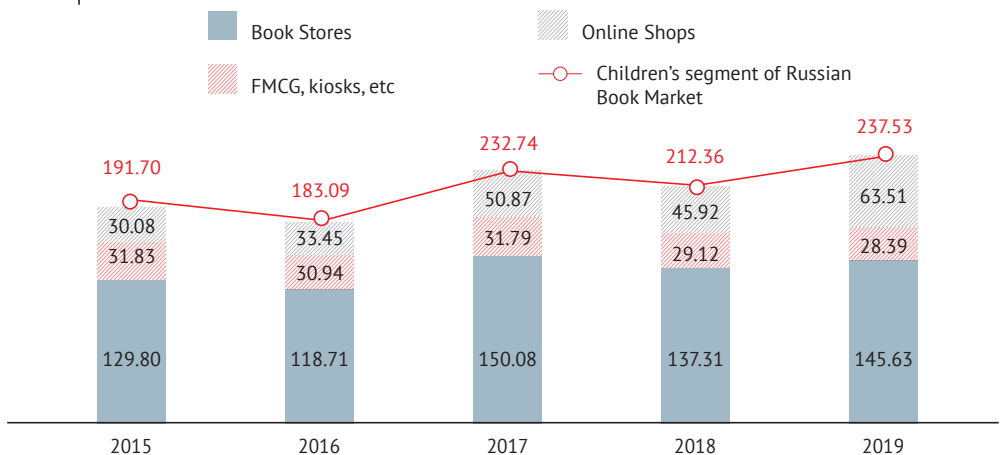
The matter is that the majority of publishers of children's books in Russia are small companies with limited resources; they find it difficult to operate under the condition of commercial crediting of intermediaries. Low turnover (up to 12-18 months for complex projects) and a lengthy return on investment procedure reduces the

sell as successfully in other towns and cities. One must make much more effort to reach their reader there, than they did a few years ago. On the one hand, a clearer segmentation of the target audience helps in the formation of a publishing portfolio, and on the other, the price of a mistake, when choosing a promotion strategy and

chart 2

CHILDREN'S BOOKS REVENUE IN RUSSIA, MLN EUR

Source: analytics by the Book Industry Magazine



The official statistics says that Russia annually issues 16,000 to 18,000 titles for children, each of which comes in 7000 to 8000 copies, i.e. twofold of an average indicator for the industry.

sales channels, becomes higher. What used to be a trend has now become a necessity – we are challenged with the task of developing non-conventional sales forms and sites.

EKATERINA KASHIRSKAYA,
General Director, A Walk Through History Publishing House:

The main problem is to make books available to the reader in all parts of the country. Our publishing house produces educational literature for children, and such books are in demand. A book from the scratch requires serious time and financial investment; without any support from the state, most publishers give preference to translated literature or re-printing books of the Soviet period. We try to make our own projects, but it is a risky, painstaking and lengthy endeavour. Moreover, Russia's system of book distribution makes most books published in the capital inaccessible to parents from the regions.



IRINA BALAKHONOVA,
General Director, Samokat Publishing House:

Small publishing houses are more sensitive than large ones, say nothing about monopolists, to their presence in bookstore chains, regions or large e-shops. Their leverage on third-party sites is limited, and retailers' faith in new names and titles is still low. Even when our stands during fairs gather crowds of people, regions find it difficult to have faith in our product. Nevertheless, new partners – active independent shops – come into fore. They are engaged not only in sales, but in a full-scale promotion of books in regions. Our hope is with them.

The imbalance between the buyer's financial capacity and the growing cost of

children's books production is unlikely to be resolved in the foreseeable future. But it's not only the matter of price. The dairy market experts observe a massive transition of Russians from yogurts to cheaper kefir, however, the children's book market throughout 2018–2019 boasted the top sales of expensive publications under the *Gravity Falls* franchise licence and Joanne Rowling's project *Harry Potter*. In the nutshell, there is no direct correlation between the decline in people's cash income and the trend to buy cheaper products in the children's book segment. On the one hand, this encourages publishers to experiment without looking at the macro trends, but on the other hand, it increases risks associated with projects.

This may be the reason why – despite a low average price on children's books and the generally disappointing dynamics of this indicator over the past three years – publishers' investment in children's books is growing, although not as fast as book dealers wished it were.

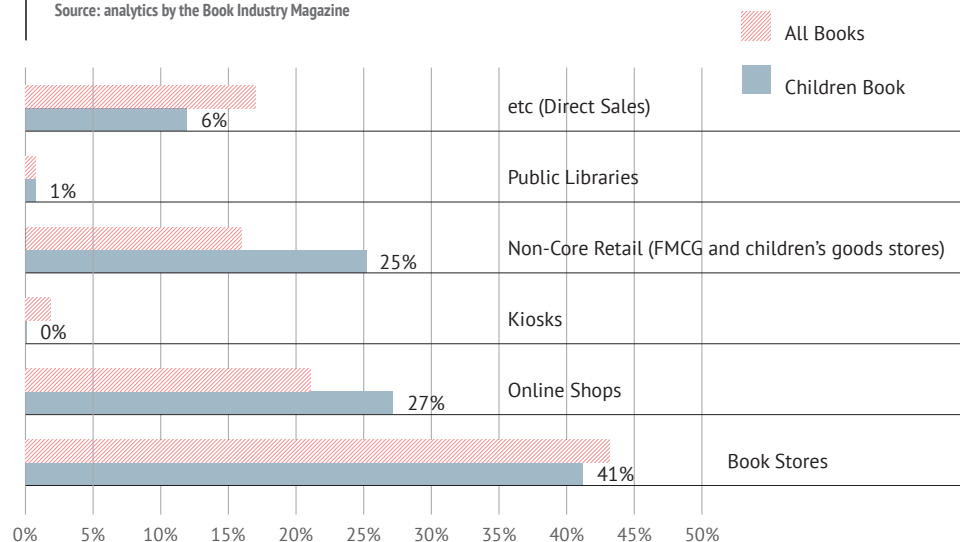
EXPERTS SPEAK

BORIS KUZNETSOV:
The children's book in Russia is at a very interesting stage now re-setting its traditions. The conventional body of literary works, supported by school curricula, gradually gives way to modern books. Comic books or graphic novels, which were always considered a low genre, not good for a book in the Russian tradition, are regaining

chart 3

CHILDREN'S BOOKS: PRIORITY SALES CHANNELS IN 2019

Source: analytics by the Book Industry Magazine



their good name. The very structure of the children's book market is changing – the share of nonfiction is significantly expanding and modern educational play programmes for early learning are being introduced.



TATIANA NILOVA:

Children's literature is enjoying its golden age. There are many young and talented authors and artists in our country, many excellent licenced projects. The readership is so heterogeneous that there are virtually no themes of equal interest to all. We may say that there are closed interest groups of readers. The growth of the young adult segment has completely changed our understanding of teenage reading, moving it into the mass market niche.

There have been no fundamental changes in preschool literature, except for a decrease in the scale of downright typomania. This is good. What is not so good, is the enthusiasm of so-called fighters for the "appropriate" book for children. Sometimes it seems that we are back to the times when Chukovsky, Marshak and Vvedensky were harassed for "propaganda of foreign ideals".

EKATERINA KASHIRSKAYA:

Books on the history of Russia and natural sciences are in demand; formats unusual for our country are gaining popularity, for instance, teaching strip cartoons.

GENRES: CLASSICS VS MODERN ACCENTS

The official statistics says that Russia annually prints 16,000 to 18,000 titles for children, each of which comes in 7000 to 8000 copies, i.e. twofold of an average indicator for the industry. However, the year 2019 saw a setback of this positive dynamics

table 1

TOP 20 RUSSIAN WRITERS OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS BY THE TOTAL PRINTED COPIES, 2019

Source: Russian Book Chamber

	Authors	No. of Editions	Total Printed Copies, thd
1.	Korney Chukovsky	131	1380.47
2.	Nikolay Nosov	86	734.00
3.	Irina Gurina	37	604.00
4.	Agnia Barto	55	522.05
5.	Elena Ulyeva	68	496.00
6.	Samuel Marshak	88	486.50
7.	Edward Uspensky	91	455.00
8.	Irina Sokovnya	1	438.00
9.	Alexandre Volkov	52	420.60
10.	Vladimir Stepanov	41	395.10
11.	Oleg Roy	33	390.50
12.	Alexandre Pushkin	70	379.18
13.	Klavdia Milova	6	297.00
14.	Grigory Oster	54	266.00
15.	Vladimir Suteev	44	261.00
16.	Victor Dragunsky	34	242.20
17.	Sergey Mikhalkov	53	240.00
18.	Andrey Usachev	33	222.00
19.	Marina Druzhinina	26	207.90
20.	Elena Zhurek	10	203.00

table 2

TOP 20 FOREIGN WRITERS OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS BY THE TOTAL PRINTED COPIES, 2019

Source: Russian Book Chamber

	Authors	No. of Editions	Total Printed Copies, thd
1.	Holly Webb	111	1148.50
2.	J.K. Rowling	22	545.50
3.	Astrid Lindgren	49	364.00
4.	Erin Hunter	77	293.00
5.	Rudyard Kipling	34	262.50
6.	H.C. Andersen	47	250.50
7.	Antoine de Saint-Exupery	30	240.00
8.	Lewis Carroll	33	215.00
9.	Gianni Rodari	22	211.20
10.	Mark Twain	30	201.50
11.	Daisy Meadows	34	175.00
12.	Brothers Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm	24	168.01
13.	Frauke Scheunemann	6	168.00
14.	Charles Perrault	22	145.51
15.	Otfried Preussler	11	142.40
16.	Harriet Muncaster	8	122.00
17.	Cornelia Spillman	14	119.50
18.	Tove Jansson	19	110.00
19.	Cressida Cowell	19	99.50
20.	Axel Scheffler	13	99.00

of the children's print. The number of printed titles dropped by 5.6% (against 2018). A significant loss in the total number of copies printed did not happen only due to preserving the average pressrun at the traditional level of 7500-8000 copies. The investment decline characterised mostly literary and fiction texts for children (fairy tales, novels, short stories, poems). Losses totalled nearly 8% of SKU and 12.4% of the total pressrun, in comparison with 2018. On the contrary, scientific fiction and educational texts for children, having lost only 4% of SKU, showed positive dynamics (+2%) in the total pressrun. However, this is not a long-term investment in complex activity books or creative copyright projects, but rather investments in low-margin projects with high turnover. The share of encyclopaedias for children declined from 1.9% to 0.8% of output between 2014 and 2019

The structure of children's books publishing today generally corresponds to the structure of demand in the children's segment of the book market. In fact, two thirds of the book output for children are publications for preschool kids. The stable situation with them is ensured by annual re-print of cheap paperback texts and copy-books to develop writing and numeracy skills, published in dozens of thousands of copies. Although the share of pre-school books in the structure of output for children decreased by 5 points, mainly due to more titles for schoolchildren of 11-16 years, the retail sales have remained practically unaffected. Along with that, book publishing for children of secondary and higher school age was on the rise in 2019 both in terms of the number of titles (+1.9%) and the total number of copies (+1.5%), according to the Russian Book Chamber. However, there is a gaping deficit in literature for teenagers. If it were not for *Harry Potter*, its share in sales of children's books would be less than 1%.

EXPERTS SPEAK

OLGA MURAVYEVA:

The market for children's books has shown a certain growth both in money and the number of copies during the recent years – primarily due to the growth of educational and early learning

books and books for teenagers (mainly translated titles). Currently there is a growing interest in books that educate and entertain at the same time, that are interactive and contain a play component. Classical fiction for preschool, primary and secondary school children is infinitely re-reprinted, but its sales do not grow.

ALEXANDER ALPEROVICH,
General Director,
Clever Media Group

The children's book market in Russia remains very conventional and conservative, as it has been for the past ten years. Therefore, global trends come to us with delay and often take root with difficulty. It may not be easy to bring something new to our market, and we are always very happy and proud when we succeed. Our task is to talk with our young readers and their parents about the most important and burning topics. This year we are particularly proud of the book "Stories for Little Dreamers", where we told children about 50 great Russian women and their achievements. The women's theme is now high profile all over the world, whereas in Russia it is just being opened, and we are glad to be among the pioneers.

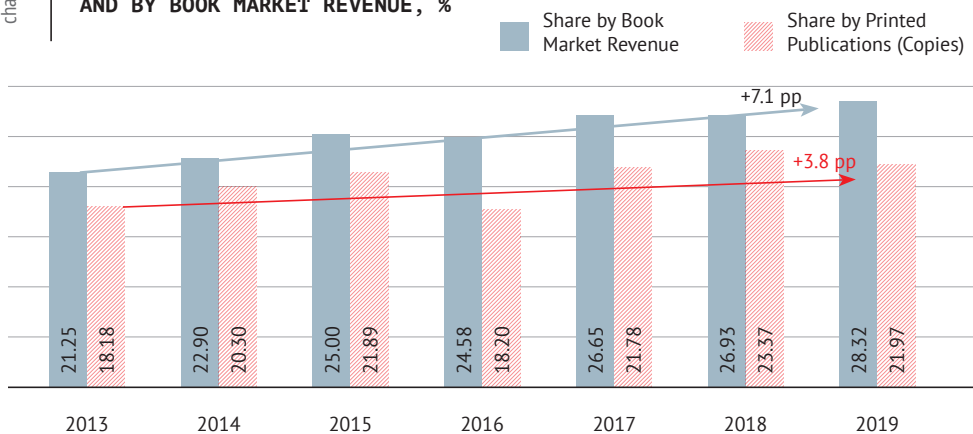


DARINA YAKUNINA,
Polyandria Publishing House:

Russian readers are very fond of books with text, the age of the reader makes no difference. Parents often look for a story with lots of text for a child of three years old, and a classical picture book with two or three sentences per page scares them off, as they think it is good "just for one run". At the same time, this format is the most popular one for pre-schoolers all over the world, because it allows the child to interact with the book directly, it creates a strong emotional involvement through a large number of illustrations. That is why we feel happy every time a book of this format becomes a sales hit – it means that the readers have accepted and appreciated it.

chart 4

CHILDREN'S BOOKS: SHARE BY PRINTED PUBLICATION (COPIES) AND BY BOOK MARKET REVENUE, %



The children's book in terms of quality printing has noticeably improved over the past 3 years. The share of hard cover books is on the rise – from 52% to 57% of SKU, and the share of novelties remains at 97% of the total number of copies and of the total number of titles. However, it is not only teenagers, but also other age groups of children's books readers who experience shortage of literary texts created by modern writers. The Top 10 writers whose books

have been actively re-printed in the last three years, has only two names, which holders are still actively working for the sake of children. One is Irina Gurina who presents texts for toddlers in close cooperation with Flamingo Publishing House (since 2005) – colourfully illustrated books *How the Hedgehog Gosha Got Lost* («Как ежик Гоша потерялся»), *Disobedient Badgers* («Непослушные барсучата»), *Little Hare's Adventures* («Приключения зайчонка») and some others. The other is Grigory Oster, who became famous with his books *Kitten by the Name GAV* («Котенок по имени ГАВ») and *38 Parrots* («38 попугаев») back in the Soviet times; nowadays, he writes books for preschool children. However, the main body of the TOP 10 are classical authors of the Soviet era, who created the so-called golden fund of children's literature, and the first among them is Korney Chukovsky whose unique and still relevant tales are re-printed annually in more than 1 million copies.

The output of translated books is on the rise from 3490 titles in 2017 to 4996 titles in 2019, against the background of a slight decrease in the total number of children's books in Russia. Today, translations from other languages account for about one third of the total number of books for children's audience (36.6% of the number of titles, and 33.4% of the number of copies). In the last three years alone, publishers presented translations from 82 languages, including the languages of the Russian Federation (Adygean, Buryat, Kalmyk, Evenki, Komi, etc.) into Russian. However, two thirds of all translations in the Russian children's book publishing are from English, and its share grew by nearly 6 points during the said period (from 59% in 2017 to 64.7% in 2019). The leader is followed by published translations from French, German, Swedish and Italian – between 500 and 140 SKU annually. The share of translations from other languages does not exceed 1.5% of the total press-run (or 70 titles) per year. Along with that, children's books in foreign languages (and even bilingual) do not exceed 1.3-1.7% of the total number of children's books published in Russia; as a rule, they are books in the Tatar, Chuvash or Bashkir languages, printed by publishing houses of ethnic entities of the Russian Federation.

The unprecedented leadership of translations from the English language into Russian can largely be explained by the prevalence of English-speaking authors on the top list of foreign writers in the total number of books published in 2017-2019.

EXPERTS SPEAK

OLGA MURAVYEVA:

Over the past few decades, no native Russian mega bestseller for children has been created. Certain names (Andrey Usachev, Narine Abgaryan, Masha Rupasova, Nina Dashevskaya)

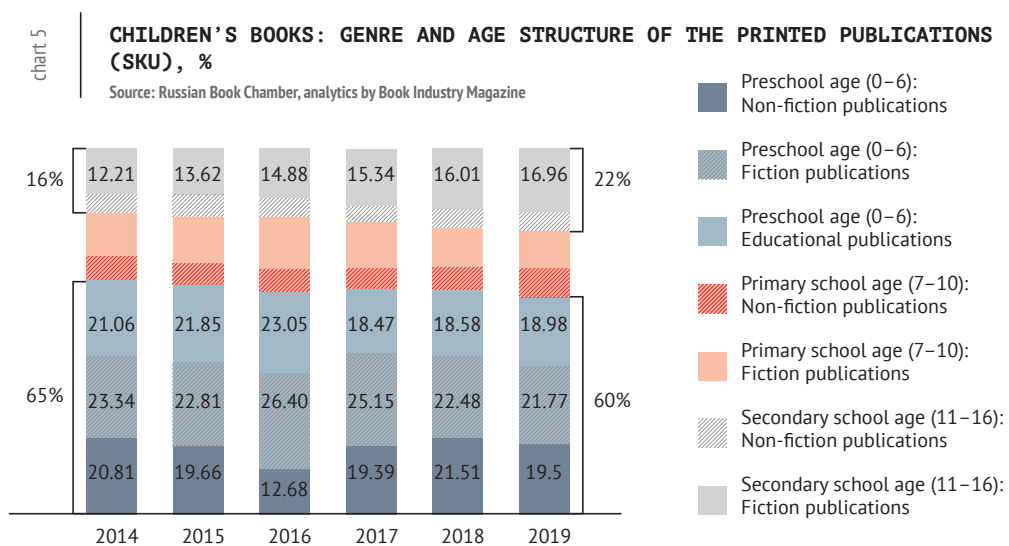
and certain books should be noted. But these names and books of high artistic level are not enough to create a powerful body of modern children's literature, which could counterbalance the Soviet children's book publishing. This flow seems to be gaining strength. However, there are no mega bestsellers in the global book publishing either – more than 20 years have passed since the first book about Harry Potter was published!

ALEXANDER ALPEROVICH:

In my opinion, the eternal themes remain the most popular on the Russian market. If we take trends in early learning and educational books, the formats of material presentation are changing, they become more and more play oriented. But the fields remain the same – the child still needs to learn to read, write, count, get acquainted with the world around and learn to communicate with people. There is demand for the authors who are capable of presenting these topics in an interesting and most relevant form to the modern child.

IRINA BALAKHONOVA:

The past ten years have made the Russian book market more saturated. Most certainly, Samokat and small publishers should be commended for this as they have taken serious risks over these ten years, choosing more and more "difficult" books for an average Russian reader and thus "setting the bar" for them closer to an average European level. Many of the best foreign books have been translated, the picture book has become much more familiar, Russian nonfiction has emerged, and many good publishing houses have been set since 2009, the ones that have introduced new children's books to the Russian market. Its market as a whole has been formed, segmented and saturated. The reader now is ready to perceive what they looked at with surprise – if not with horror – back in 2009. The readers' idea of "beauty" has expanded, and understanding of the literary quality of text is gradually becoming clearer – there is something to compare with the books of "our childhood". The attitude towards graphic novels has changed significantly. We are learning to create our own – Russian – projects (and sometimes we do well), which may be interesting to the international market!



CHILDREN'S BOOK AS A BUSINESS STORY

There are several hundred of publishers engaged in publishing books for children in Russia. In 2019 alone, 710 publishing houses presented their children's books to be included in the public statistics. However, if we talk about the scale of the business, 25 publishers out of these seven hundred cover more than 80% (81% of SKU and 89% of the total number of copies) of the annual number of books published for children. Moreover, three quarters of these 25 leaders are organisations, specialised in children's books. Their competence lies strictly within the field of children's literature and their catalogue is rarely designed for the audience other than children from 0 to 12 years old.

There are the so-called New Wave publishers who take very special position in the children's market in Russia. They strive to launch projects in line with the European tradition. They are Compass Guide, Samokat, Pink Giraffe, Nastya and Nikita, A Walk Through History, Nigma, etc. However, the average number of printed copies of these publishing houses per project (3,000 to 5,000 copies) is actually half the average volume for the children's segment. With the account of price of these undoubtedly high-quality books, their distribution area is usually limited to capitals and cities with the population of one million and more. This is an absolutely objective market reality. After all, despite the markedly increased density of the Russian children's book market over the past 5-7 years, there is still room left. No aggressive moves to gain a market share have been undertaken by the leading players. The publishers not residing in the capital, such as Kirovskaya Printing House (Sunny Stairs brand), Vesna-Design, Vladis from Rostov-on-Don, Leda from Smolensk and Litur from Ekaterinburg, still hold quite strong positions in the children's segment. Almost every regional centre of the Russian Federation has a local printing

establishment with a side job of printing colourings books and writing copy-books for preschool children.

Perhaps, publishers of activity books for preschool children have experienced serious pressure only from children's toys manufacturers in the last 2 or 3 years. In 2016-2018, Simbat Ltd. in cooperation with factories in China introduced the successful imprint Umka to the book market; it put serious competitive pressure on the traditional publishers in the segment of books with moving/music elements. The year 2019 saw another serious player of the non-book market: Filippok & Co Publishing House – as a division of the wholesale company Panorama Group – made a serious statement. The publishing house introduced a series of developmental books for pre-schoolers based on the speed-reading method, with the priority sales in online shops. This publisher works in the high-end segment and is unlikely to seriously influence the traditional competitive market structure.

Equally traditional are the top sales of children's books with the low share of fiction books and a steady volume of repetitive teaching/development text books. It should be especially noted that the regulator's intervention in this market is limited to the minimum, such as marking age limits and application of sanitary standards in relation to the physical parameters of books. There is no ideological censorship in children's book publishing in Russia. Printing of certain texts and authors is determined exclusively by market demand and popularity among the buyers. The leaders of the ratings – books written by leading preschool education methodologists L.G. Peterson, E.V. Kolesnikova and N.S. Zhukova – are equally in demand in Moscow and out in the regions. For this reason alone, they are at the top non-fiction publications for children. Speaking about fiction, only books of the two franchise licences – *Harry Potter* by J. Rowling and *Gravity Falls* by Alex Hirsch – can boast the national market coverage.

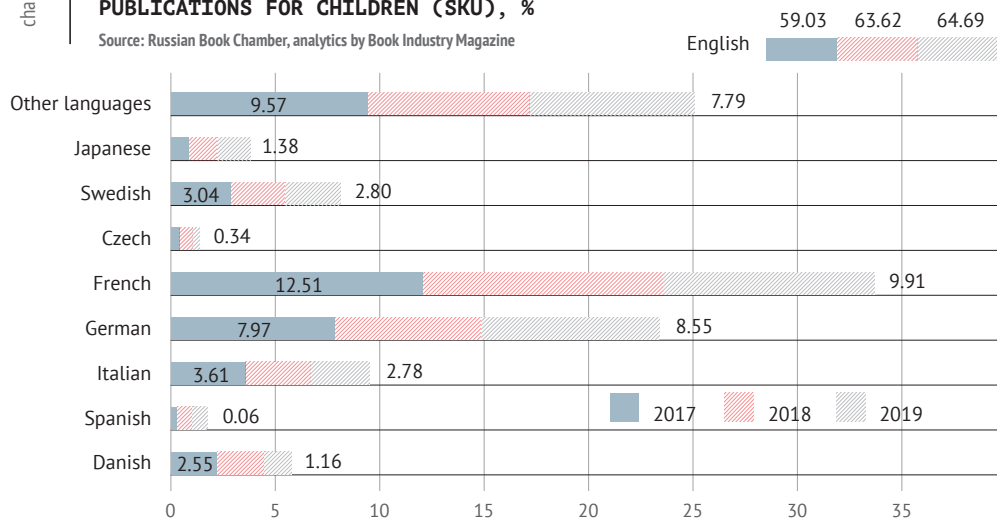
The catalogues of the leading publishing houses look longstanding and well-balanced today. Exmo-AST Holding owns the rights to a number of titles form the "golden fund" of children's classics and pays great attention to the promotion of the

British writer Holly Webb and the *Gravity Falls* franchise. Azbuka-Atticus Group relies on the media support of its licenses, earning money on the *Harry Potter* project. Rosman promotes its own New Children's Book competition, printing books of its winners, as well as new books by Gerald Darrell, Anastasia Orlova, Andrey Usachev, Lyudmila Petrushevskaya and educational games for children. Strekoza Publishing House is experimenting with a literary book for younger schoolchildren, LEO Publishing House presents a wide range of magazines for children's audience, and Labyrinth Press focuses on gift volumes.

chart 6

SHARE OF TRANSLATIONS INTO RUSSIAN IN THE PRINTED PUBLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN (SKU), %

Source: Russian Book Chamber, analytics by Book Industry Magazine



Russian publishers primarily focus on the domestic market. Selling rights abroad today is rather a costly adventure, where the return on investment is obvious only at the level of the publisher's image, rather than at the level of revenue. Only a couple of the leading companies in the children's book segment can boast notable success in this area.

EXPERTS SPEAK



ALEXANDER ALPEROVICH:

In 2017, the sale of own project licenses became a separate business for our publishing house. The rights were sold to 5 countries. In 2018, the rights were sold to 10 countries already. Now, we co-operate with publishers from Europe, Asia and North America, projects were sold to 23 countries. In 2019, the indicators in this business area increased 3.5 times. The interest of our foreign peers is constantly growing, in particular to non-trivial formats. Our bestseller series "15 Books-Cubes" has been translated into 9 languages.



EKATERINA KASHIRSKAYA:

We have sold over 20 of our book projects to China and about 5 licenses to Europe. We annually attend the Fair in Bologna with our own stand and try to present our projects on the international market as comprehensively as possible.

OLGA MURAVYEVA:

We had not started selling rights until late 2016. Unfortunately, we immediately faced many problems: for example, some contracts with authors did not include rights for translation; many famous writers were already represented by major literary agencies; sometimes the rights to illustrative material were not cleared. It took us nearly 3 years to correct the situation and learn to sell. Our children's books are mainly interesting for China, where we signed the major number of contracts.

However, rights were also sold to Romania, Mongolia, Bulgaria, Ukraine and France. Avanta's popular science books and fiction published by Malysh Publishing House attract the highest interest among foreign publishers. The list is quite long.

BORIS KUZNETSOV:

We conclude 50 to 60 contracts a year to sell our copyrights abroad. There was a massive surge in 2019, and we sold about one hundred licenses. I am well aware that these are not very impressive figures, but until recently we were not actively involved in the promotion and sale of our copyrights. Our licenses primarily go to China, Poland, Slovakia, South Korea, Slovenia, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Greece, Turkey, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Azerbaijan.

IRINA BALAKHONOVA:

Speaking about copyrights, I can't help but notice the successful publication of "The Story of an Old Flat" in English by Abraham's Publishing House from the United States. In 2019, the rights to many of our books were sold into the Arab Emirates, Czech Republic, China. The book "How the Lighthouse Works" was awarded as the best non-fiction project for children in the UK.

With no budget procurement bidding for preschool institutions, an official List of Recommended Books under the Federal State Educational Standards for pre-school institutions or other instruments of government regulation, the children's segment of the book market in its seasonal sales pattern is tightly synchronised with the dynamics of demand on educational books. The school campaign months – May-June and August-September – are the high season of sales of goods for children in bookstores, against the backdrop of a generally negative trend in demand during the first six months of a year and the fourth (pre-Christmas) quarter. Graphic novels and cross-media projects could change the situation, but Russian publishers have been very careful so far with experimenting in this direction.

Nevertheless, let us not forget that everything is just beginning for children's books in Russia.

chart 7

THE SHARE OF LEADING PUBLISHERS IN THE TOTAL PRINTED COPIES OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS IN 2019, %

Source: Russian Book Chamber

