

Paper or Digital: A Comparative Reading with Teenagers of a Poe Short Story

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Introduction

The impact of technologies on reading processes is a source of interest in international research in line with the current transformations taking place in written production. In this changing context, one of the ideal ways to advance in the characterisation of new forms of reading is to make a comparative study in order to contrast reading in its different formats. This perspective has been explored from different methodological standpoints, dealing with different aspects of the impact of digitisation on textual comprehension (Ackerman, and Goldsmith 2011; DeStefano, and LeFebre 2007; Mangen, Walgermo, and Brønnick 2013; Rice 1994). The results of these studies, regardless of whether they are based on digitised texts or native digital texts on the Web, show higher levels of comprehension among those who read on paper as opposed to those who do so on electronic displays, especially when certain actions are required of the reader or when the texts are long, complex and elaborate (Stoop, Kreutzer, and Kircz 2013). Aspects such as scrolling, the hypertext structure and discontinuity of text affect the cognitive processes involved in comprehension and reading speed.

Nonetheless, previous research has scarcely examined the specific nature of digital literary works. We therefore propose to show some differences found in the interpretation of the work of fiction “The Tell-Tale Heart” by Edgar Allan Poe, in print and digital versions (an iPad

app),¹ from two groups of young people that took part in two literary discussions on the tale.

We are concerned, therefore, with literary texts, a field where the production of digital works constructed with non-verbal elements has been mainly confined to two creative processes: adaptations of existing works and *native creations* (Turrión 2014) – products originally created in the new formats. The adaptations of classic works of universal literature (our area of study) hold an important place in the market and have brought about an introduction of this literature to the medium in which many children are used to reading. Some examples of these types of productions are the adaptations for iPad of *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Don Quixote* or the tales by Poe which were chosen for this research for their brevity and suitability to the children at whom they are targeted.

As products constructed on pre-existing works, some iPad adaptations tend to be based on the text and therefore maintain their *bookish nature* (Turrión 2014) which coexists to a greater or lesser extent with non-verbal elements such as multimodality, hypertextuality and the possibility to interact with the work, which are the three basic pillars of digital literature (Bolter, and Grusin 2000; Landow 2006; Ryan 2001a, 2001b). These works aim to find a balance between the original text and the other elements, using the latter in a more or less integrated fashion and introducing different levels of interaction complexity. The trend, however, is to use digitality as a complement in order to enliven and create emotion through sound, touch or movement. We are therefore dealing with re-interpretations of original texts which present us with the paradox of having different works at our disposal but that are basically the same; this allows us to contrast between the reading of the print and digital products as proposed in this study.

The comparison of readings of the same work allows us to observe not only to what degree digital elements help with its interpretation, but also to study what the features of digital reading are – in other words, the elements that this interpretation revolves around and what reading abilities are demanded by these types of works. Here, the proposed contrast is based on the interpretive differences of the works read – two versions with the same common basis, but with their differences – this is the variable on which the comparison is upheld.

This research is a qualitative case study which compares the effects of the application of a particular variable, in this case a digital work, by

1 This work was published by Play Creatividad and received the award for best fiction app in the Publishing Innovation Awards 2013.

analysing what occurs in literary discussions. The chosen comparative methodology pivots on the textual variable and not on the configuration features of the subjects participating in the research. In this way, we have tried to minimise the possible distortion factors in the analysis of the data by choosing subjects with similar characteristics: two groups of three fifteen-year-old adolescents with good academic results, solid reading habits and good levels of comprehension. We also decided to choose teenagers who did not know Poe's works and had not read any digital literature. This affected the interpretation of the results as it seemed to cause an essential difference between both groups due to the inequality in the skills required to read the digital product and the greater level of familiarity of the other participants with printed texts; this confirms that reading digital literature demands different skills from those required to read traditional literary works.

Indeed, reading digital works supposes that readers have the same interpretive keys in order to enjoy this fiction as they would in other formats. In this respect, an adaptation period is necessary in order to become familiar with this new way of telling stories. Although there has been an increase in recent years in digital reading (Rainie, and Duggan 2012) and a greater familiarisation among teenagers with productions that have points in common with digital fiction such as videogames, audiovisual products and graphic narrative, most of the public is still quite unaware of digital literature. For this reason the emergent research on this issue can collaborate with the integration of this type of literary work in educational planning.

The transcriptions of two one-hour literary discussion sessions on Poe's tale were used for analysis. Both groups participated separately in these sessions. Each group read the work and discussed it afterwards with the help of a facilitator – this methodology is used by GRETEL (Colomer, and Fittipaldi eds. 2012; Fittipaldi 2012; Silva-Díaz 2005) and is characterised by its double didactic/research dimension (Margallo 2013). This is important for this research because one of the groups was facing a reading format with which they had no experience and therefore the training dimension required more emphasis than in the other group, although in both cases meaning was constructed and developed during the conversation. We analysed the collective guided response to the literary text immediately after reading. Therefore, we did not study the individual responses to a series of questions, but rather the flow of the conversation from which we separated the nuclei of interest that arose from the tale. Therefore, the analysis of the data came from the text and not from the reader (Margallo 2013) and led to the configuration of categories linked to the constructive elements of the story.

The questions this study intended to detect were:

- What differences and similarities arise in a literary discussion where there is a negotiation of meaning between two groups that read two different versions of the same story?
- What elements affect the interpretation of the printed work and the digital work?
- What differences emerge regarding the interpretation of the function of the literary conventions that give meaning to the work?

As already mentioned, the literary work is the focal point of this research. It is therefore important to analyse its characteristics.

Printed work

“The Tell-Tale Heart”, published by Edgar Allan Poe in 1843, is a story told in the first person of the obsession with the diseased eye of the old man with whom the narrator lives. This obsession leads him to plan in detail and to carry out the murder of the old man whose body he hides under the floorboards in the living room. When the police arrive, alerted by a neighbour, the murderer goes from being calm to becoming nervous and gives himself away when he hears the heartbeat of the old man which sounds ever more strongly in his imagination.

“The Tell-Tale Heart” is a brief but complex tale because it obliges the reader to bring various interpretive skills into play. There is a premonitory aspect in the title which invites the reader to make predictions and points out the symbol which will lead to the outcome of the story. The figure of the narrator around whom the story develops is a murderer, an anonymous character who attempts throughout the tale to demonstrate his sanity before his listeners.²

The structure of the tale can be summarised as follows:

- an initial argument in which the narrator attempts to justify his own sanity by telling the story in the present tense and addressing the readers;
- the chronological account of what happened and the narration of the murder which is presented in the past tense from the murderer’s perspective;
- the return to the present where the narrator explains the outcome of the story and in so doing makes his paranoia clear.

² For the reading of the printed version we used Julio Cortázar’s Spanish translation (Poe 2012; see also Ciudad Seva, n.d.). In Cortázar’s translation the narratees are discursively referred to as “*ustedes*” [polite form of you plural] who “take [him] for a madman”.

The divergence between the tense of the discourse and the tense of the story (present tense for the narrative and past tense for what has been narrated) denotes the compositional nature of the tale and underlines the plane of discourse which recounts the events that take place in flashback and emphasises how these are experienced by the narrator/protagonist. He makes the objective of his confession clear from the beginning: to prove his sanity before the conviction of all others. The text seems to be woven around the dichotomy of “sanity/madness” in terms of how both of these ideas are understood and related to each other.

According to the narrator’s discourse, sanity is associated with the idea of control, which is how the murderer behaves at the start. However, what others understand as madness is, for the protagonist, nothing more than “an acute over-awareness of the senses”. His most exacerbated sense is hearing and it is his auditory perceptions (sometimes imaginary) that become the milestones of the tale: hearing the old man’s heartbeat which is associated with his imminent death: “The old man’s hour had come!”; hearing the ringing of the bells which announces the arrival of the police; hearing the heartbeat of the dead man under the floorboards, a hallucination which becomes ever stronger and finally hastens the outcome of the story.

As the story advances the protagonist loses control and his passions come to the fore: he admits that he has become a prisoner of “instinct” and of “fury”, of an uncontrollable horror. He then goes from his initial feeling of “triumph” at managing the situation to a subsequent breakdown due to the imaginary sound which drives him insane and obliges him to confess: the sound of the heartbeat of the murdered old man.

Digital work

The digital version of the tale forms part of the app which contains several of Poe’s most disturbing tales.³ Together with the complete text, the remediation proposes a set of multimodal elements that explore new ways of storytelling. Illustrations, sounds, music, background textures, graphic use of fonts and animated images with which the reader can interact, all strive to configure a product where the transition to the screen has an influence on the telling of the story. But on what aspects of Poe’s text do these multimodal elements have an effect?

The initial app stimuli are visual and audio. On the title page the reader already hears sombre music of rising tension that is present throughout the story, providing indications as to the tone and genre even before the text

³ “The Oval Portrait”, “The Tell-Tale Heart”, “The Masque of the Red Death” and “Annabel Lee”.

has begun to be read. The screen background, which evokes a yellowing page, affects the bookish nature of the app and offers clues to the period in which the tale was written and when the narrated events took place.

The visual and audio resources characterise the classic version in an attempt to show some elements that are not mentioned in the text. The inclusion of images at certain key points in the story attempts to represent the scenario of the characters and show both the atmosphere and the period in which the story takes place; the audio resource, used in cinematographic style, attempts to underline the exacerbation of the narrator's sense of hearing and also underlines the points of greatest narrative tension. Therefore, we can hear the old man's breathing when he feels he is being observed in the darkness, we hear his heartbeat and scream of horror before dying, and we perceive the sound of the bells which announce the arrival of the police. These resources, together with the change in tone and rhythm of the music, direct and conduct the reading rhythm and help the reader to enter into the tale, making it possible to feel some of the sensations experienced by the narrator. The different animations also attempt to affect this latter aspect. Many of the moving images – some of which can be activated by the user – are intended to place the reader in the narrator's perspective and therefore help to enter into the story. The reader's participation, however, is secondary. There is no relation between narrative development and user interaction, although there are three cases in which the interaction – beyond wishing to situate the reader in a given perspective – also has a discursive purpose: the animation of the lantern with which the reader discovers the text where the narrator tells how he observed the old man with a lantern for eight nights; the animation of the clock, which shows the time when touched and with it the arrival of the police and the emergence of the passions and loss of control of the protagonist; the animation of the eyes which underlines the obsessive character of the protagonist and his ability to distort reality by placing the faces of the policemen, disfigured by his obsession, in the foreground.

Therefore, the multimodal elements of the app play on some of the aspects implicit in the original print version and are complex for the adolescent reader to interpret. The illustrations, textures, audio resources, animations and even in some cases the pictorialisation of the text, all aspire to fill some of the voids in Poe's text in an effort to contribute to the comprehension of the tale. The result is a product in which the context, genre and tone are initially more noticeable than in the original. And this aspect brings us to a key question: to what degree do the variations introduced in the digital version facilitate or make more difficult the comprehension of Poe's tale?

How the children build meaning: prominent elements in digital and print reading

From here onwards we will focus on the aspects of the story that both groups emphasised in the discussion. Initially, the most important element might be – as we have said – that while the readers of the print version only had to focus their attention on the words, the app readers were faced with a large amount of multimodal stimuli which might have distracted them from the text and diverted their attention towards other components. The difference between the two versions created divergences in the way both groups interpreted the story and these appeared on both global and specific levels of comprehension. We will now explain the most important aspects.

Inferential reading

As we have pointed out, one of the key elements in the tale is the type of focalisation selected in order to tell the story and the implications that this decision entails in both the act of narrating and in the act of reading. Poe introduces multiple unspoken elements in the plane of expression which play with the written text and must be stimulated by putting into operation the inferential ability of the reader. Those who read the print version not only made inferences while they were reading and recognised the places where these inferences were possible (regarding, for example, the motive of the murderer, the setting, the features of the narrator or the identity of the narratees), but they also realised the importance of the voids in the tale. In fact, they pointed this out as a key aspect in the text: “Ada: The text works because you ask yourself things”; “Eugenio: Yes, that’s the potential of the story. The more things you ask yourself the more you come to imagine”.⁴

The readers of the digital version, however, suggested that the multimodal elements prevented them from imagining in the same way as when reading in print because the app “does it all for you”. But although these visual, audio and kinetic stimuli seemed to demonstrate the unspoken elements in the text, the readers affirmed that there was a lack of information (especially referring to spaces and characters) and they did not see the voids as structuring elements in the tale but as a narrative defect: “Mariana: There is a lack of description and too many illustrations”. This general perception led them to consider the experience as more recreational than creative, distancing them from what they understood as literary reading, leaving aside inferential reading and

⁴ English translations of all quotations in other languages have been provided by Tim Mc Quaid.

linking the experience to that which they normally had with audiovisual media.

Use of metalanguage

Perhaps for this reason, while the readers of the print version were attached to the text and continually went back to it to explain their arguments using quite sophisticated literary metalanguage (“internal narrator”, “protagonist”, “linear storyline”, “flashback” and “secondary characters”), those reading the digital version did not share this requirement. It would seem that the product they were using was so remote from what they considered literature that they did not perceive the need to use metalanguage (they did so on few occasions and in a very basic way) and, as we shall see, this even led them to leave out some central paratexts such as the title.

Reader involvement

This difference in the perception of the product has implications with regard to the elements that all the readers involved considered important in order to enter into Poe’s fiction. Those who read the print version coincided that the narrator has the ability to introduce the reader into the story from the first paragraph and they linked this with the method selected for telling the story. Leo made reference to the language used, underlining the importance of the repetitions, the constant appeals to “you”, the poetic use of the language and the fact that the narrator’s feelings are present throughout the tale, helping the reader to enter into the story: “Leo: The feeling he shows also helps you to put yourself in his shoes. The emotion, the obsession, the ‘breathlessness’ is how you get into it”. Eugenio pointed out the detail with which the narrator explains the events and Ada underlined the importance of the clues left by the narrator throughout the tale in order to comprehend both what he says and what he leaves unsaid: “Ada: He leaves clues in the middle of the story [...]. As if it were a puzzle, he doesn’t explain everything, he doesn’t give you much information, but he gives you key information”.

The readers of the app version, on the other hand, initially did not share a single opinion regarding whether it was easy or not to get into the story. While for some the format was a help (especially due to the audio resources, the illustrations and the interactive proposals such as the lantern), for others it was an impediment. Emma claimed that the format put her off and many of the multimodal resources distracted her: “Emma: I didn’t like it [the music] because it distracted me from reading, [...] when I was reading and those things appeared [animated images],

they put me off [...]. There were a lot of things that distracted me and I couldn't go back to reading because the format confused me a little."

Jordi, who describes himself as a non-classic reader (by "classic" he understands a reader of print novels), expressed that the audio, visual and animation resources helped him to put himself in the narrator's situation. In spite of the differences, all the readers ended up pointing out the role of the multimodal resources in the creation of the atmosphere and although they recognised that these helped them to enter into the story, they shared the feeling that they become repetitive elements that tire the reader and underline the foreseeable nature of the tale.

Type of story

One of the aspects perceived differently by the readers of the print and digital versions is the nature of the story. While the readers of the print version stressed its capacity to cut short the reader's expectations, the readers of the digital version pointed out that the text is totally foreseeable, similar to the American films where simply by seeing the beginning you know how it is going to end. It is interesting that the readers of the print version explained the unpredictability of the text by referring to how "different" it is compared to what they normally read, the lack of definition of good and evil, the ambiguity of the "truths" it conceals, the doubts it leaves the reader with on finishing the reading and the complexity of the construction of the main character, while the readers of the digital version based their arguments on the predictability of the story by describing the plot (which they only remembered vaguely) rather than reflecting on how the story is constructed.

Recommendations

These differences led both groups to respond differently to the question of to whom they would recommend the tale. Those who read the print version decided to recommend it to more experienced readers who would be capable of reaching a better understanding than them and who would enjoy experimentation and less classic forms of storytelling; the readers of the app version thought of younger readers who would enjoy multimodal elements or of "less classic" readers who would not be interested so much in narrative complexity (which they did not see anywhere) such as multimodal resources that could take them away from the monotonous reading of printed books where you only find "black words on a white background" (Jordi).

As the conversation developed, the reading focused on different elements regarding the construction of the work of fiction. We shall now see some of these and how they were described by the students.

Genre and framework

Regarding the genre, the readers of both the print and digital formats categorised the story as mystery fiction. Nonetheless, while the latter group suggested that the storyline came close to being a “thriller” because it keeps the reader hooked until the end, the group that read the app version considered that the tale could fall within the “horror” genre since the atmosphere created by the imagery and sound seemed to adhere to the Gothic. These elements gave the latter group an idea of the setting; as Emma states, “we know what we know from the images because he doesn’t describe very much”. The readers of the print version were also aware of this lack of information on the framework and, although they could imagine the “cold” and gloomy atmosphere of the story, they realised that there is a deliberate uncertainty, an intended choice not to give information because what interests the narrator is something else: “to prove that he is not insane” (Leo).

Structure

We will now revise how both groups reflected on aspects of the structure of the tale such as the title, the distinction between the tense of the story and the tense of the discourse and on how the story ends.

The readers of the print version made reference to the title of their own accord and at the beginning of the conversation, while those who read the digital version only realised the existence of the title towards the end of the second session and this was due to the intervention of the facilitator who proposed that they investigate its possible meaning.

The title is therefore one of the first elements that attracted the attention of those who read the print version. This group considered it a key element due to its capacity to anticipate and condense the nucleus of the story: the obsession of the protagonist who ends up giving himself away because he hears the imaginary heartbeats which perhaps, as Leo states, are simply those of his own heart:

Leo: He feels worse and worse. He starts to remember more, sees the images more clearly, he gets more paranoid thinking that they’re laughing at him... And his own tell-tale heart that continues to go thump, thump, thump, thump, and in the end he says: it was me! [...] He gives himself away, so it is his heart that is the tell-tale.

The readers of the app version, on the other hand, did not notice the title and, when asked by the facilitator, said that they had not seen it. This could be linked with the readers’ sense of removal from the medium in which they were reading; with the feeling they seemed to have that they were not reading literature. When thinking of the title, they also

recognised the nucleus and anticipation functions, although they did not manage to clearly specify the former and considered the latter to be a weak point in the text because it made the story foreseeable: “Jordi: It already tells you that the heart is a tell-tale [...]. The title is already giving away the ending”.

The temporality construction is another aspect underlined by the readers in the discussion. Both groups perceived temporal shifts in the story, however the readers of the print version were better able to explain the framework structure of the story and used appropriate metalanguage to do so: “Eugenio: [...] [I]t’s done in flashback, he goes back in time to tell what he did every day”.

The readers of the print version seemed to recognise – albeit implicitly – the existence of both planes (story and discourse) because they reflected on what was written and on how and for what purpose it was written. This recognition of both planes was not so clear in the case of the readers of the app version, although they showed their awareness of the different tenses using body language and phrases such as this one from Mariana: “as though it already happened and he’s explaining it now”.

The ending is another element on which there seemed to be contradictory opinions between both groups. Those who read the print version pointed out its unpredictability and reflected on its open nature as one of the strong points of the story due to the “small amount of information you have to summarise” on finishing the text. Also, “it makes you part of it and at the same time distances you from the truth”, and allows you to reflect that “maybe there is no truth at all” (Leo). This complexity, based on the choice of point of view, went unnoticed by the readers of the app version; they showed their dislike and lack of understanding of the ending and thought it was abrupt. The contributions regarding this element showed that the illustration in the digital version where the murderer appears with the old man’s bleeding heart in his hand was read literally by the students, leading them to wrongly believe that the heartbeats came from the heart of the old man. The subsequent conversation on this point allowed them to become aware of this and analyse how the image prevailed over the words and led them to read in a particular way.

Narrative tension

Narrative tension runs throughout “The Tell-Tale Heart” and comes to a climax at the end of the tale when the murderer admits he is guilty and shows the place where the body is hidden. Although this element was recognised by both groups, the readers of the app version considered that this was *crescendo* and more due to the typographical and audio resources etc. than to the verbal language. It is interesting to note that these students

paid more attention to the animations but that they understood them to be “marginal notes” more than resources with a clear discursive function, perhaps because in the app they saw these as serving more as a means of providing atmosphere and entertaining the reader.

Also, as we have seen, when evaluating this intensification, the repetition was seen negatively by the readers of the screen version: “Mariana: It tired me because it was very repetitive. He was constantly saying that the noise was annoying him and it kept getting louder and louder. And then I thought: I understood that the first time you said it”.

Focalisation

The internal focalisation is a fundamental element in the story as it leads us to observe the events from the perspective of the murderer. Although they did not refer to it as such, those who read the print version underlined this aspect and pointed out that perhaps it is this that allows the reader to enter into the story more quickly. In the discussion, they also stated that the choice of this point of view meets a discursive objective: the need of the narrator to demonstrate his sanity.

Leo: He justifies that he isn’t mad by explaining what happened. I say this because of the beginning, because he’s the one who starts by saying: now listen, I’m not mad, because a mad person doesn’t do things so carefully. He’s kind of justifying what happened as if they were accusing him of everything, maybe he’s accusing himself.

Eugenio: Yes, he wants to use the story to explain that he isn’t mad.

The readers of the app version also recognised the narrator as the protagonist who attempts to convince everyone of his sanity, but they did not point out this type of focalisation as a deliberate choice in order to explore certain effects.

When addressing the subject of the possible narratees, those who read the print version repeated the importance of the hypothesis construction and considered two possibilities: one of these, suggested by Leo, is that the narrator explains his version of events to another part of himself; in his madness he builds a monologue in which he seems to split himself in two. The other, defended by Ada, suggested that he is explaining his story to real people in a police interrogation and before a psychiatrist who has diagnosed him as insane. During the discussion, students worked on these hypotheses and mentioned how interesting they found this complexity, this “void” created on purpose so that the readers can create their own ideas:

Eugenio: This is one of the interesting parts of the story because he makes you have two points of view. You don’t know if he’s telling it to someone or if he is talking, as Leo says, with two imaginary parts of himself. Then you think:

Is he talking to someone? Is he talking to someone in his imagination? This part of the story is difficult to understand.

When hypothesising on the narratees, the readers of the app version seemed to randomly float ideas, referring to “family members or friends” of the narrator (Mariana), to the police (Emma) or to the readers (Jordi), which also showed the confusion in this group between the planes of story and discourse.

Conclusions

One of the main conclusions of this case study is the confirmation that the readers of the print version achieved a more profound interpretation of the meaning and a greater understanding of the structural threads of the story since their assertions via the comments in the discussions made explicit the function of the key elements of the tale.

Although the adolescents in both groups were unable to precisely state the central importance of the character’s psychology, there were notable differences between the two. It was observed that the readers of the screen version showed greater confusion when dealing with key aspects of the work such as the function of the narratee or the indeterminacy of the framework – elements to which they did not seem to give importance – or the misrepresentation of the ending by presupposing that the old man’s heart was still beating without questioning the version of the deluded narrator-murderer. On the other hand, those who read the print version clearly perceived the nature of the narrative voice, the functionality of the narratee in the story and they reflected in a discerning manner on the ending. Therefore, the readers of the digital version seemed to remain on a more storyline level than those who read the print version.

The reason for the inadequate interpretation of the function of the discursive elements may be related to the construction of the digital device where aspects such as the framework or the ending, for example, are manipulated and transformed in the app, mainly by visual elements. The images which aim to immerse the reader in the story actually show aspects which are of little importance in the original story and cause misinterpretation. The fact that the app readers’ attention must focus on many more stimuli other than the written word can cause, for example, the indeterminacy or the importance of the narratee to go unnoticed in Poe’s story. The digital readers did not seem to observe the multimodality as part of the discourse, perhaps because the digital resources in the app do not always function discursively. Nonetheless, when they did observe this aspect, the students perceived them as secondary issues and in some cases they were even misleading.

Moreover, both groups showed differences regarding inferential reflection, the use of metalanguage and the understanding of the author's intentional use of indeterminacy in some aspects of the story. Those who read the print version activated their literary competence and applied it to their reading while those who read the app version did not fully manage to do so. The latter seemed to be obstructed by the distracting display of non-verbal elements and by the prejudice with which they approached the work by not considering it a literary product that should be read using the *same* keys as printed literary stories. For example, rereading did not take place in order to argue their theories – which did occur in the case of those who read the print version. The readers of the app sometimes seemed like learner drivers, more aware of the material aspects of the device than the act of reading itself.

One of the questions that arises from these results and requires more research is whether this difference is due to the readers' lack of training or familiarisation with the construction of multimodal fiction or if it is the multimodality that eclipses or distorts the principal purpose of the work. In this regard we suspect that there is a need to modify the foundations of the reading processes applied to works of fiction.

In light of this evidence, one might ask if the digital readers made the most of the reading experience offered by the app. As observed in the analysis, the students perceived the music and sound as immersive elements in the story but did not experience the same with the images, the movement and the possibility of interaction with some of the resources; these latter elements made following the story difficult and led them to think they were resources to make the story easier for inexperienced readers. In fact, we may be led to believe that the digital readers were embarking on a type of reading which required them to pay special attention to elements that, for them, were *alien* to literary works. Their disorientation when faced with a work that they were unable to put into any category known to them led to a lack of overall activation of their literary competencies. This explains the differences regarding the construction of meaning and it positions the reading experience within the normal parameters in the familiarisation process with digital production. This study confirms the need for children to be afforded more time and greater exposure to the reading of digital literature.

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