

## Chapter 4

# Desirability of Multimedia Hyperlinks in Fiction to Foster Pupil Reading Motivation and Immersion: Reading Tools for MALL

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Reading from digital screens has become increasingly common practice in educational and recreational reading. The response to this digital shift has been twofold. Some suspect it will harm children's ability to perform deep reading; others highlight its potential to support reading among different groups. Digital reading tools, such as fiction with multimedia hyperlinks, could engage particularly reluctant readers or children from low-literate families. This chapter presents the results of an experimental, mixed-method study that identifies hyperlink type and frequency desirability in literary texts. A comparative analysis of respondent perspectives revealed that teachers mark on average more explanatory and enriching hyperlinks than pupils. Pupil and teacher hyperlink type desirability are significantly influenced by respectively literary genre and reading motivation, and importance of pupil reading motivation and media use. Pupil and teacher explanatory hyperlink frequency are significantly influenced by respectively literary genre, and importance of pupil reading motivation.*

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## INTRODUCTION

As society moves from a print-based to a digital culture, reading inevitably evolves too (Wolf & Barzillai, 2009). In addition to reading on paper, reading on digital screens such as computers, e-readers, tablets and smartphones has become increasingly common in both educational and recreational reading (Hyman, Moser, & Segala, 2014; Barzillai & Thomson, 2018). The response to this shift has been two-fold. On the one hand, it has caused concern about the potential harm to pupils' ability to perform deep reading (Carr, 2011; Baron, 2015; Wolf, 2016). On the other hand, this digital evolution has equally elicited optimism thanks to the potential of technology to support reading among different groups, such as reluctant readers or children from low-literate families (Maynard, 2010; Miranda et al., 2011; Picton, 2014), especially within the current trend towards more autonomous learning (Warschauer & Liaw, 2011). When it comes to literary reading, hypermedia fiction allows learners to read digital texts enriched with multimedia hyperlinks that lead them to supportive or comprehensive information. This chapter reports on an experimental study that was carried out to assess pupils' and teachers' perspectives on the desirability of such multimedia hyperlinks in literary texts in terms of type and frequency.

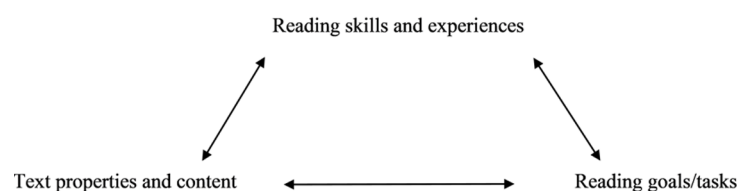
## BACKGROUND

There is a growing body of literature that recognises the importance of both print and digital environments for children's reading development. Barzillai et al. (2018) propose a model of reading displaying the mutual influence of the characteristics of the reader, the text, and the reading goals/tasks (Figure 1).

The model shows that **reading goals/tasks** in digital environments greatly influence children's reading behaviour. For instance, skimming short, online texts invokes shallower reading behaviour than reading a captivating story posted by a loved one (Fitzsimmons, 2016). The way in which schools introduce digital texts, design assignments, and model digital reading behaviour can also influence children's reading goals (Mifsud & Petrová, 2018). However, Barzillai et al. (2018) underline that there is still a gap between children's reading in school, where they mostly read linear texts on paper, and outside school, where they read more typically digital non-linear text formats, often on digital reading devices.

As far as **text properties and content** are concerned, comprehension is influenced by the digital text format which includes text window sizes on different reading devices, text that flows to fit the parameters of devices, and flipping pages versus scrolling. The mere structure of the text and the presence or absence of hyperlinks also play a role. Literary digital texts can for instance be structured as non-linear hypertexts in which readers navigate from the original text to other documents. Traditional hyperfiction is the term used for non-sequential digital novels, solely composed of written words (Landow, 1997) where

*Figure 1. A triangle model of research on the development of digital reading*



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