

The Multimodality Approach in the Planning of Mediation Situations for Digital Literary Works: A Case Study at GRETEL / *A abordagem da multimodalidade no planejamento de situações de mediação de obras literárias digitais: um estudo de caso no GRETEL*

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the strategies employed by eleven teachers participating in a research project on literature didactics in Barcelona, Spain, focusing on multimodality in digital fiction works. Using a qualitative approach, it investigates the discourse of the subjects concerning the process of meaning-making and identifies interpretive challenges encountered in reading these works while developing didactic materials for classroom use. The analysis draws upon research on multimodality, intermediality, and digital fiction, utilizing video recordings of teachers' meetings dedicated to discussing the reading of these works. The findings reveal strategies that emphasize the necessity of meticulous reading to discern the interplay between semiotic modes and analyze their functions within the works, as well as comparisons with other cultural systems. Additionally, the study uncovers challenges associated with the novel storytelling formats offered by the digital environment in the reading experience.

KEYWORDS: Multimodality; Digital fiction; Literary reading; Teacher reflection

RESUMO

Neste artigo, discutem-se as estratégias utilizadas por onze docentes, participantes de um projeto de pesquisa em didática da literatura, desenvolvido em Barcelona, Espanha, o qual aborda a multimodalidade em obras de ficção digital. São examinadas, a partir de uma perspectiva qualitativa, falas dos sujeitos sobre o processo de produção de sentidos, bem como identificados os desafios interpretativos que emergem na leitura dessas obras durante a elaboração de dispositivos didáticos para uso em sala de aula. A análise se fundamenta em estudos sobre multimodalidade, intermedialidade e ficção digital, aplicados para examinar gravações em vídeo das reuniões de socialização dos docentes sobre a leitura das obras. Como resultados, foram identificadas estratégias relacionadas à necessidade de uma leitura detalhada para observação das relações entre os modos semióticos, à análise de seu papel na obra e ao cotejo com outros sistemas culturais. Também foi verificada, na experiência de leitura, a existência de desafios relacionados às novas formas de narrar proporcionadas pelo ambiente digital.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Multimodalidade; Ficção digital; Leitura literária; Reflexão docente

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Introduction

The production of meaning when interacting with multimodal texts, a crucial aspect in shaping contemporary readers, poses a considerable challenge, particularly in the realm of digital media. The wide array of multimedia resources offered by digital artistic productions allows for diverse combinations of signs, thereby opening up unprecedented avenues for creativity and innovation in art and communication at large. This configuration not only influences communicative and pragmatic processes but also impacts subjective and aesthetic dimensions. Specifically, it shapes how readers sensibly perceive the world through mental states, attitudes, and emotions that emerge in their interactions with technology (Santaella, 2011).

The imperative to enhance children and young people's ability to read, comprehend, and appreciate the aesthetic dimensions introduced by digital texts within the contemporary literary landscape necessitates educators to cultivate a more intimate engagement with literature crafted for and within the digital realm. Such engagement entails actively interacting with the text to uncover both the delights and complexities inherent in these novel textual and artistic forms. It is only through this immersive reading experience and subsequent reflection that educators can formulate pedagogical strategies and devise effective methods to tackle digital literary consumption within educational settings.

Taking into consideration these elements, this article delves into the processes of reading, appreciation, and analysis of multimodality in digital literary works for children and young adults. These processes are explored through the experiences of educators and researchers involved in the project titled *Training 21st Century Readers: Digital Literature and New Devices for Expanding the Reading Response in the school context*,¹ led by the Research and Study Group in Children's and Young Adult Literature and Literary Education (GRETEL) at the *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona* [Autonomous University of Barcelona] (UAB). The primary objective is to identify and categorize the strategies employed by educators in reading and analyzing multimodal features in digital

¹ The project is originally titled: *Formando a los lectores del S. XXI: literatura digital y nuevos dispositivos didácticos para ampliar la respuesta lectora en contexto escolar* (PID2019-109799RB-100).

works, while also examining the challenges they encounter in the interpretation and aesthetic appreciation of these works.

This research constitutes a case study of the discussions among researchers engaged in the aforementioned project during meetings conducted in 2021. Alongside GRETEL members who served as mentors or observers, the study incorporates the participation of novice secondary education teachers from Barcelona who are graduates of the Master's Degree in Secondary Education at UAB. The analysis includes three video recordings captured during virtual meetings wherein participants focused on the examination and discussion of the research corpus, comprising multimodal fiction works intended for children and young adults, encompassing both print and digital formats.

The scope outlined here stems from the postdoctoral research of one of the authors, conducted from 2021 to 2022. This research delved into the practices of the Catalan research group, exploring how multimodality was approached in discussions surrounding digital literature for children and young adults.

1 Teaching and Mediating Digital Children's and Young Adult Literature

Currently, there exists a consensus regarding the notable rise of multimodality in communicative processes. It is recognized that this is an intrinsic feature of language and literary practices, as verbal communication has historically been complemented by significant elements such as gestures, images, spatial text distribution, and typographical aspects. However, a pivotal moment in the evolution of multimodality in communication undoubtedly emerged with the onset of digital technologies and their multifaceted capabilities, prompting a growing interest among researchers in this domain.

The term multimodality originates from research in social semiotics and refers to language that integrates two or more modes of meaning, such as writing, speech, colors, sound, images, and other culturally and socially shaped resources to convey meaning (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996, 1998; Kress, 2010; Unsworth & Mills, 2017). Studies on multimodality are characterized by their examination of semiotic modes of expression, which are articulated across various spheres of human communication. Multimodality in children's literature, particularly the interplay between image and text, has been a focal point of inquiry since picture books emerged as a significant genre for children. However,

the emergence of new forms of digital fiction has expanded interest in these studies, as digital technologies have introduced novel ways of integrating diverse semiotic modes through the incorporation of music, animation, movement, and interactivity, among other features.

We approach multimodality through the perspective of social semiotics, which underscores the social dimension of the communicative process and emphasizes that the interactions “makes social into the source, the origin and generator of meaning” (Kress, 2010, p. 54). According to this theoretical framework, the assignment of meaning to semiotic modes unfolds in accordance with the particularities and negotiations of meaning inherent in each cultural context, amid tensions stemming from processes of social change and local and global cultural influences. Consequently, due to these contextualized intentions and unique uses, meanings remain fluid, albeit maintaining a relative consistency, shaped and reshaped by the social dynamics of each context. Thus, the interpretive effects resulting from the intermodal relationships of a text encompass both individual and social experiences of meaning attribution.

We define digital children’s and young adult literature as literary works intended for these age groups that, unlike digitized texts, necessitate reader engagement and employ the multimedia and interactive capabilities of digital devices both in their creation and consumption (Turrión, 2014; Ramada-Prieto, 2017). Within this genre, multimodality becomes apparent, inheriting certain modes of expression from picture books,² where written text yields space to images and other semiotic modes. Beyond introducing novel modes of signification to the literary encounter, such as music, sound effects, gestures, and animated images, the digital realm enables their interactive integration within the text, allowing readers to activate, manipulate, or discontinue their presentation within the works.³

The convergence of picture books and digital literature for children exemplifies the inherent hybridity of digital fiction tailored for young audiences, characterized by the

² We refer to a specific type of children’s book in which meaning is derived from the significant interplay between image, text, and materiality.

³ According to Junko Yokota (2014), the origin of digital children’s literature arises from a process of transmediation (Ryan, 2006), characterized by the transition from one medium to another, originating from picture books and progressing to digital media. This process begins with the scanning of printed books as digitized literature and is subsequently enhanced by the introduction of animation, interactivity, and small games that extend the experience beyond the narrative, leading to the emergence of native digital works—that is, those produced exclusively for reading on multimedia devices.

utilization of resources commonly employed by various semiotic and cultural frameworks. This hybridity is substantially informed by the concept of intermediality (Wolf, 2022), which delineates the interplay and mutual influence among diverse media and cultural systems. Intermediality manifests through the integration of multiple media within a single artistic work, as well as the assimilation of elements from other artistic domains such as film, gaming, and comics. Consequently, this process engenders a fusion of semiotic systems that shape the reception and interpretation of the work, as different media, languages, and semiotic modalities intersect and amalgamate to engender new layers of meaning and provide fresh perceptual encounters for audiences.

One outcome of the amalgamation of semiotic and mediatic elements is the obscuration of the traditional boundaries defining literature, as well as the conventional expectations associated with the literary reading experience. This phenomenon encompasses additional narrative forms, including games, picture books, and interactive audiovisual works. Consequently, an analysis of the experiences rendered by digital literature for children and young adults necessitates the acknowledgment of novel forms of intersemiotic articulation that arise within these cultural practices. Furthermore, it is essential to recognize that these modalities impact readers in manners not yet thoroughly investigated within the domains of reader and literary education.

This insight has propelled scholarly inquiry into the literary experience within digital contexts to embrace a refreshed perspective regarding the breadth of the artistic system in question. Accordingly, to dissect the novel methods of meaning production engendered by these emergent experiences, it has become imperative to broaden the definition of literary reading. This expansion includes the consideration of its interplay with innovative forms of narrative that hold potential for literary engagement. Consequently, we have adopted the concept of digital fiction (Aarseth, 2011; Ramada-Prieto, 2017),⁴ as a lens through which to view the corpus of texts assembled by the GRETEL project.

⁴ Since the studies on ergodic literature (Aarseth, 2011), which highlight the close relationship between video games and literature, the term *digital literature* has been deemed insufficient to encompass the literary phenomenon in the digital medium. Subsequently, Lucas Ramada Prieto (2017) argued that many games offer an undeniable literary experience, and readers can benefit from mediation aimed at deepening the reading experience provided by the game. Given that the reading itinerary proposed by the GRETEL research project includes a video game, we have decided to use the term *digital fiction* henceforth, as it is more apt to describe the analyzed corpus.

For us, the most important aspect is to recognize that the distinctive attributes of digital fiction, as we describe, influence the process of meaning-making and introduce unique interpretative challenges inherent to the digital medium. This necessitates that readers engage in a transaction (Rosenblatt, 2014) with novel signs and new modes of meaning and aesthetic perception. Addressing these challenges also demands an understanding that different signs do not uniformly convey identical content. Marie-Laure Ryan (2006, p. 4) cautions that “we no longer believe that all media offer the same narrative resources and that all stories can be represented in media as different as literature, ballet, painting, and music.” This underscores the need for a nuanced approach in evaluating the capabilities and limitations of various media in narrative representation.

This distinction positions digital literature – and, more broadly, digital fiction – as catalysts for a novel experience that generates new meanings within the act of reading. Given the cognitive and aesthetic implications of this semiotic environment, it can be asserted that the multimodal and intermedial characteristics of digital fiction, and its integration of diverse expressive resources into the artistic creation of narratives and poetic language, necessitate the cultivation of new capabilities aimed at its aesthetic appreciation. This requires the development of innovative reading mediation strategies and an updated education in sensory perception and poetic sensibility. Such an approach requires consideration of the interplay among semiotic modes within the context of the media employed (Ramada-Prieto; Fittipaldi; Manresa, 2021).

Since the 1996 publication of *A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures* by the New London Group, an assembly of researchers dedicated to social semiotics, there has been ongoing interest in the implications of social, technological, and semiotic transformations on reading practices. The manifesto advanced by experts in multiliteracies at that time calls upon educational stakeholders, both within schools and in the broader community, to adopt a pedagogical approach that acknowledges an interconnected, linguistically diverse, and culturally rich society. This approach must also recognize the circulation of a multitude of text types, incorporating a wide array of forms and genres facilitated by multimedia digital technologies (Cazden et al., 2021).⁵

⁵ CAZDEN, Courtney; COPE, Bill; FAIRCLOUGH, Norman; GEE, Jim; KALANTZIS, Mary; KRESS, Gunther; LUKE, Allan. LUKE, Carmen; MICHAELS, Sarah. NAKATA, Martin. *A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures*. *Harvard Educational Review*. Cambridge, 66, 1, pp. 60-92, Spring, 1996.

An innovative, pluralistic, and creative approach to pedagogy is essential. The authors of the New London Group caution that the goal of pedagogy should be true emancipation, rather than merely instrumental preparation for engaging with new texts that serve capitalist agendas. For these scholars, the concept of multiliteracies should transcend professional boundaries to include participation in citizenship and the private realms of reading and text production. Therefore, an emancipatory educational vision that encompasses the learning of digital fiction reading aims to assist students in making sense of their cultural offerings and negotiating these meanings with others through a practice of reading that is rooted in the private sphere. This process must also critically address the power dynamics that influence these interactions.

From this perspective, teaching plays a crucial but not exclusive role in transforming this reality, warranting particular attention as a means of fostering various reading-related capacities that could engender new practices and generate new knowledge. As noted by Felipe Munita (2018), in the domain of literary reading, teaching mediation often aligns with a discourse that prioritizes printed books and expresses dismay over the lack of widespread reading habits within society. The engagement with digital texts often requires educators to adopt a somewhat rebellious stance, challenging prevailing discourses that view screen reading as an inferior option, particularly in the context of literary pursuits. This discrepancy in the valuation of print versus digital mediums leads to a recognition that reading on digital devices is not widely seen as an activity that schools should promote, given the prevailing discourse on excessive screen usage and concerns about its potential detrimental effects (Wolf, 2018).⁶

Undoubtedly, reading on digital screens has transcended being merely a daily activity, given the pervasive connectivity through mobile devices and the internet, facilitating communication via text, speech, image, and sound. In light of this modern context, the mediation of digital literature serves a distinct purpose beyond simply cultivating a habit; it aims to enhance the quality of digital interactions. This is achieved through fostering experiences that introduce new meanings and forms of enjoyment derived from hypertextuality, interactivity, and multimodality. Additionally, this mediation contributes to developing a more complex, multifaceted, and critical literacy,

⁶ WOLF, Maryanne. *Reader, Come Home: The Reading Brain in a Digital World*. New York: Harper Collins, 2018.

recognized as a pressing need in contemporary education. Thus, the role of mediation in selecting quality digital fiction is crucial, as it involves the selection of works that encourage more than uncritical consumption, thereby assigning the mediator a significant and impactful role.

2 The Perspective of the Didactic Reader Subject as a Methodology for Approaching Multimodality in Digital Literary Reading

The investigation of reading from a qualitative perspective presents numerous challenges, despite its critical role in elucidating the process of meaning-making. This complexity stems from the inherent difficulty of describing the reading process from an external vantage point, as it deeply intertwines with the individual experiences of each reader. In our study, the primary aim is to comprehend the strategies teachers employ to manage multimodality in digital reading. This understanding is attainable primarily through the educators' reflections on their own experiences, which are articulated as they socialize these experiences. Therefore, our analysis focuses on the teachers' discourse within a context of exchanging ideas, where they are required to explain and negotiate meanings concerning the literary works, approached through the lens of *didactic reading subjects* (Delbrayelle; Duszynski, 2007; Munita, 2018).

In relation to this concept, Munita (2018) posits that teachers who are proficient readers themselves are likely to be more effective mediators in teaching literary reading to children and adolescents. This assertion is grounded in contemporary didactic theories, which argue that educators who cherish and actively engage in reading in their personal lives, and who share this enthusiasm with their students, serve as exemplary role models in a pedagogical context. Several studies (Baker; Dreher; Guthier, 2000; Delbrayelle; Duszynski, 2007; Munita, 2018) support the perception that a teacher's personal reading habits significantly influence their students. Specifically, a teacher's own reading identity is identified as a crucial factor in successful pedagogical mediation. It is argued that educators who are not only committed to their own reading but also strategically and socially interactive about their reading experiences, can effectively engage and inspire their students.

Given these characteristics, the concept of the *didactic reading subject* proves particularly valuable. This term describes individuals who occupy a dual role: they are

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both readers in their own right and educators tasked with fostering reading experiences. As all the participants in this research are active educators in the field of language, they embody this profile. Their strategies offer insights that are instrumental in considering the reading development of students, serving as benchmarks for literary reading behavior and engagement with digital fiction. While some participants may be less immersed in digital literary reading, all are acquainted with it and familiar with multimodal works, including picture books.

In the specific context of this study, where teachers also function as researchers, a third role emerges—that of knowledge producers concerning the mediation of *reading literature and digital fiction*. This dual capacity likely fosters a heightened commitment to articulating opinions, impressions, and inquiries regarding the texts, viewing reading as a collective object of study rather than merely a teaching tool. This deeper engagement is rooted in the ethical principles of research, which stipulate a personal responsibility on the part of the researcher. The integrity and validity of the knowledge produced within the research context are contingent upon this responsibility (Souza; Carvalho, 2016).

This dual perspective of an individual as both a reader and a didactic researcher, who interacts with the text and the context of its socialization, underpins our confidence in the quality of data derived from teachers' experiences with digital fiction reading. These participants are committed readers who actively engage with digital reading and reflect on it. Their reflections come from their previous experiences with literary reading and other cultural practices, as well as by the challenges presented by teaching mediation.

It is important to acknowledge that, while we are confident this study will make significant contributions to discussions on the approach to multimodality in literature and digital fiction among educators, we recognize that the didactic focus itself necessitates further discussions and the development of methodologies that are beyond the scope of this work.

2.1 The GRETEL Research and Methodological Framework

Over the course of its over twenty-year history, GRETEL has distinguished itself in research dedicated to the development of literary readers from an early age, positioning its efforts within the field of didactics of children's literature. This focus is aligned with

studies that explore the psychosocial dimensions of teaching and learning in language and literature (Margallo, 2013). From this educational perspective and by adopting a theoretical orientation in reading that emphasizes the reader's role in the construction of meaning – drawing from reception theories of reading – GRETEL has created mediation projects and guided reading frameworks to engage with students' reader responses across various educational phases (Margallo, 2013; Corroero; Real, 2019; Fittipaldi; Corroero, 2023). Since 2012, GRETEL has also embarked on research into digital literature for children and young adults, with the goals of defining the existing body of work and identifying patterns of use in educational and familial settings (Aliagas; Margallo, 2017; Manresa; Real, 2015; Ramada-Prieto, 2017).

The current research undertaken by the group was initiated in response to a 2019 initiative by the Spanish government that sought to fund studies addressing the new reading challenges of the 21st century. This project, which concentrates on mediating digital literature for children and young adults in secondary education, employs a methodology that integrates teacher training models linking higher education with primary and secondary education. It also involves activities in the field of literature didactics that serve a dual purpose: both educational and research-oriented. Within this framework, the research aimed to involve educators who were in the initial four years of their professional teaching careers in the investigative process.

While the research project conducted by GRETEL initially involved a larger number of participants, the present study focuses on the analysis of video-recorded meetings featuring eleven participants. Consistent with research ethics principles, specific names are not disclosed. This group includes a tenured professor from the Department of Didactics of Language and Literature, designated as the lead researcher (DA), along with two temporary faculty members from the same department (DB and DE), an international collaborator from higher education (DC), and seven secondary education teachers (D1 to D7).

Among the seven secondary education teachers involved in the study, five are female and two are male, with ages ranging from 26 to 43 years old. Each has fewer than 10 years of teaching experience following their graduation from the Master's program in Secondary Education at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), and all are currently teaching in the Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Spain. In terms of their

academic specializations, five of the teachers instruct in Catalan Language and Literature,⁷ while the remaining two teach Spanish Language and Literature. The teachers' familiarity and engagement with digital fiction varied significantly: three were largely self-taught and enthusiastic about integrating digital fiction into their teaching, whereas the other four were less acquainted with digital texts and their potential applications in educational settings.

To analyze the meeting videos, we employed the heuristic function of content analysis as outlined by Laurence Bardin (2011). This approach facilitated a deeper exploration into the educators' strategies and their engagement with the challenges and meanings associated with multimodality in the digital fiction works studied in the GRETEL research project. Our analysis focused on segments of speech from the participants—consisting of comments, questions, and brief descriptions of the works analyzed—as the primary units of analysis. These segments were scrutinized to extract content related to the multimodal aspects of each work. Next, we categorized the speech based on the nature of the interaction with the reading material—whether it involved attributing meaning to its elements or identifying obstacles to its comprehension and interpretation. These categories were then organized into two groups: one pertaining to reading strategies and the other to interpretive challenges.

The interpretative challenges we examine are associated to the additional layers of meaning and complexity that multimodality, coupled with the capabilities of the digital medium, introduces to the reading experience. These challenges involve understanding and recognizing the role of various semiotic modes within the texts, their integration, and their collective impact on the work. We aimed to pinpoint the difficulties inherent in navigating the multiplicity of meanings and interpretive layers that a multimodal and intermedial work can present. This includes considering the effects of interactivity, which positions the reader at the forefront of the narrative and introduces elements of unpredictability and uncertainty into the meaning-making process.

In this study, we anticipated that the participants would elucidate potential challenges for readers generally and delineate strategies to overcome these challenges through their analyses of the works from diverse perspectives. It is important to note that

⁷ Although Catalonia is multilingual, with three official languages (Catalan, Spanish, and Aranese), Catalan is the primary language of instruction used in the educational system of this community.

the participants possess a scholarly background in literary education. The issues they raised, which formed the basis for developing the analysis categories, are entrenched within their didactic and theoretical-methodological frameworks. Additionally, these discussions reflect a deliberate and critical approach to understanding the nature of fictional reading.

In our use of the term *strategies*, we differentiate but do not conflate it with a purely cognitivist perspective on the process. According to the methodology we employed, it is feasible to identify metacognitive strategic procedures, as delineated by Carlos Ruiz Bolívar (2002) and Arthur Shimamura (2000). These procedures encompass efforts at planning, controlling, and regulating reading activities at an individual level. However, in the context of this study, strategies for engaging with multimodality in digital texts are primarily viewed as elements of social processes. These strategies involve negotiating meanings that are dialectically developed through interactive processes, as described by Kress (2010).

2.2 Analyzed Works

In the video analysis, three digital fiction works were discussed: *Spot* by David Wiesner (2015), *Boum!* by H el ene Cixous, Jean-Jacques Birg e, and Nicolas Franck (2015), and *The Empty Kingdom* by Daniel Merlin Goodbrey (2014). The first two works, *Spot* and *Boum!*, are available as apps downloadable from virtual stores and are designed to run on iOS operating systems. The third work, *The Empty Kingdom*, is a web-based narrative accessible via desktop and executed online.

In David Wiesner's *Spot* app (2015), verbal language is notably absent, replaced by visual, auditory, and interactive elements that draw the reader into a series of fantastical realms populated by diverse creatures. The narrative begins with a ladybug meandering across a white screen, eventually forming the letter *o* in the title. This ladybug acts as the conduit for the reader's vertical exploration, beginning at a drawing board cluttered with ordinary objects such as a pencil, a biscuit, moldy bread, a newspaper, and a postcard. These objects recur across the various worlds within the narrative, functioning as gateways that enable the reader to traverse these interconnected spaces.

The immersive quality of each fictional space is enhanced by different soundscapes, composed of music and sound effects, and visual elements characterized by colorful, static images interspersed with subtle, interactive animations. These animations facilitate movement across the screen, creating effects such as zooming and sequence shots, enriching the reader's experience of journeying through multiple universes. The thematic focus of the app is a journey across various universes where the reader encounters adventures among fantastical beings such as anthropomorphic animals, robots, and aliens. The inclusion of indistinct vocal sounds adds a layer of humanity to these characters, enhancing the visual representations of their social interactions.

The structure of *Spot* is network-like, offering no definitive conclusion or singular interpretation, yet it continuously unfolds new narratives and meanings as the reader navigates this unique universe. As the reader progresses through the various interconnected spaces, the narrative encourages reflection on the architecture of the story itself—a journey with multiple pathways, where the primary objective extends beyond reaching a particular endpoint to reveling in the discovery and exploration of the spaces and characters within each world.

The Empty Kingdom (TEK), created by Daniel Merlin Goodbrey in 2014, exhibits characteristics akin to an electronic game, marked by a silent and enigmatic ambiance created through visual and auditory elements. This atmosphere guides users through the desolate spaces of an unusual kingdom, prompting a seemingly aimless exploration. The narrative follows a king, the sole figure in the story, who interacts with various elements within the environment to accomplish tasks such as crossing a river or lighting an abandoned cave. The ambient sound effects underscore the absence of human life, accentuating the natural sounds of this solitary setting.

The visual presentation of this environment employs pastel-colored landscapes and panel frames, embodying an aesthetic typical of the hypercomic genre. These panels serve multiple narrative purposes, delineating the spatial and temporal dimensions through sequences that vary in openness and confinement, characteristic of this literary form.

The narrative of TEK provokes contemplation with questions about its core storyline – what is a king doing in an empty world? – and the structure of its plot – does it follow a discernible storyline? –. The culmination of the story and the revelation of the

king's purpose represent the reader's reward, achieved through skilled interaction with the narrative elements, reminiscent of traditional electronic games.

However, unlike conventional games, *The Empty Kingdom* offers a more contemplative engagement. It invites readers to appreciate the narrative at a slower, more reflective pace, contrasting with the often-frantic progression typical of other video game experiences. This work encourages thoughtful engagement rather than rapid, unthinking action.

3 Strategies to Approach the Multimodality of Literary Works

The dialogue among educators facilitates the exchange of reading experiences and the meanings that emerge during their engagement with the works, while also uncovering aspects of this interaction that extend beyond our immediate perception, thereby broadening the possibilities of reading. Throughout discussions on the multimodality of the works and the development of pedagogical strategies, certain approaches utilized by educators during the reading process became apparent in their discourse. These observations led to the formulation of the analytical categories outlined below. This framework was developed through an iterative analysis of the video recordings, necessitating second and third reviews to pinpoint significant statements and validate these categories, which were refined over the course of the study.

3.1 Observing in Detail the Different Semiotic Resources to Define Their Relevance

The analysis of the data from the three videos demonstrated that a primary concern among teachers, when describing their reading processes and exploring potential meanings within the works, was to meticulously observe the elements composing the texts. They focused on the diverse semiotic resources employed in the narrative and poetic constructions. This requirement became evident in their remarks about their initial interactions with the digital works and when they discussed the development of didactic strategies. These discussions revealed their diligent efforts to pinpoint visual and auditory

elements that might otherwise be overlooked. Below, we examine a few comments⁸ regarding *The Empty Kingdom* (TEK):

Do you hear the music? (DB)

[...] the music is another element of meaning. (DB)

Here's a clue. We enter the house and it's full of papers saying I miss you. It's like when we read a text, it's like a *clue* that doesn't say things directly. (DB)

If we look at the objects: the sword, the umbrella, the horn, the lantern... And there's an empty square; it could be a *clue* for us to ask ourselves questions. (DA)

Does it start with those two objects? (d1)⁹

In these remarks, the demands of multimodality in the digital environment on the reader's perceptual abilities become apparent. Engaging with such texts requires heightened sensory awareness and a continual probing into the possible meanings of the elements within the work. Nonetheless, the constraints of immediate perception, particularly during an initial encounter with the work, are significant. This is illustrated in a comment from educator d2, who noted upon reexamining an image from *Boum!*: "It was a smile with teeth. That was a detail I hadn't noticed before."¹⁰ This observation underscores the challenges and nuances involved in fully grasping multimodal texts upon first viewing.

3.2 Rereading Again and Again

During the discussions, the educators leading the research emphasized the importance of revisiting the text with greater attention. This point was highlighted by DB's comment regarding *The Empty Kingdom*: "We did a reading, a journey through

⁸ The blocks of speech presented do not constitute a conversation in themselves; they are fragments of statements from different individuals, excerpted from various moments of the discussion and compiled for addressing the same content.

⁹ In Catalan: "Sents la música?" (DB) / "[...] la música és un element més de significat." (DB) / "Aquí hi ha una pista. Entrem a la casa i està plena de papers i diu "et trobo a faltar." És com quan llegim un text, és com una pista que no diu les coses directament." (DB) / "Si mirem els objectes: l'espasa, el paraigua, la banya, el llum... I hi ha un quadrat buit; podria ser una pista per fer-nos preguntes." (DA) / "Ja comença amb aquests dos objectes?" (d1).

¹⁰ In Catalan: "Era un somriure amb dents. Era un detall que no m'havia adonat abans" (d2).

Empty Kingdom, we can look at it again.”¹¹ Building on this, d2 underscored the value of rereading the text during his explanation of his reading process: “As we read again and again, we see things that we didn’t see the first time.”¹² Echoing this sentiment, d1 suggested a method for classroom application, particularly with *The Empty Kingdom*, recommending a slower and more meticulous rereading approach: “[...] a second reading, maybe more [...] more slowly, and they might notice the details.”¹³ This advice points to the benefits of deeper engagement with the text to uncover nuances and details initially overlooked.

We noticed, in this process, that observing so many details, demands a lot from the reader’s working memory. This observation underscores the necessity of rereading the work to recall, articulate, and organize the information acquired in each interaction, facilitating the construction of more precise and nuanced interpretations. Throughout the discussion, the importance of returning to the text was frequently emphasized. Occasionally, participants appealed to the collective memory of the group to validate hypotheses concerning specific elements of the text. An example of this can be seen in d1’s query regarding *Spot*: “The pictures of the alien with the cap, in which worlds does it appear?”¹⁴ This inquiry highlights the collaborative effort to piece together and verify details across the narrative.

The danger of a single or inattentive reading is the potential to overlook significant elements that could shed light on deeper meanings within the text. Such omissions can hinder the comprehensive understanding and interpretation that enrich the reading experience.

Constantly, when you are navigating, you are observing, which means you are always asking yourself: What am I leaving behind? Or: What am I discarding? Right? What am I not understanding and pulling aside? (d2 on *Spot*).¹⁵

¹¹ In Catalan: “Vam fer una lectura, un recorregut per *Empty Kingdom*, podem mirar una altra vegada.”

¹² In Catalan: “A mesura que llegim una i una altra vegada, veiem coses que no vam veure la primera vegada.”

¹³ In Catalan: “[...] segona lectura, potser [...] més a poc a poc i n’entenen els detalls.”

¹⁴ In Catalan: “Les fotografies de l’extraterrestre amb la gorra, en quins mons apareix?”

¹⁵ In Catalan: “Constantment quan vas navegant vas veient, o sigui, sempre t’estàs preguntant: I què deixo enrere? O què estic descartant, oi? Què no estic entenent i vaig tirar cap a l’altra banda?” (d2 on *Spot*).

Noticing a recurring image or a sound that correlates with environmental changes, or that persists despite these changes, are examples of details that become apparent through the rereading process. These observations may facilitate the recognition of a narrative pattern that necessitates careful attention and prompts further questioning. This approach was articulated by DA during a discussion on *Spot*, where they suggested, “[...] a second moment to search for these patterns, right? What do the cats mean, and what about this one they are looking for and not finding?”¹⁶ This underscores the importance of a deliberate and investigative approach to reading that seeks to uncover deeper layers and meanings within the narrative.

3.3 Identifying Patterns and Narrative Schemes

Reading frequently resembles assembling a puzzle, where the reader is tasked with piecing together, organizing, and discerning similarities and differences, as well as repetitions and variations within language, events, characters, symbols, and motifs (Chambers, 2011). The pursuit of patterns and narrative structures is integral to both comprehension and aesthetic amusement, as it involves connecting information about disparate elements in a text to create a coherent and meaningful story. Thus, simply recognizing a sign is insufficient; it must be integrated with the entirety of the work to discern poetic and narrative patterns that steer us toward a particular interpretation.

During the discussion among the educators, there were frequent comments and inquiries aimed at reconstructing the narrative from its dispersed elements and examining how semiotic resources are employed to discern patterns that might suggest an interpretation, given the challenges encountered. For instance, teacher d4 posed a question about *Spot*: “But isn’t the guy they’re looking for wearing some kind of black cap? Isn’t that the one that appears in the... - what’s it called? - in the procession, that is, I don’t know, in the parade they make?”¹⁷ In another instance, d1 attempted to elucidate the connections between the fictional environments within the same work: “Perhaps it is

¹⁶ In Catalan: “[...] un segon moment per anar a buscar aquests patrons, oi? Què volen dir els gats i què busquen i què no troben?”

¹⁷ In Catalan: “Però el noi que busquen no porta una mena de gorra negra? No és la que apareix a... – com es diu? – a la processó que és, no ho sé, a la cercavila que fan?”

at this moment that one can better interpret the relationship between these three worlds.”¹⁸ They also noted repetitions that indicate patterns: “Of course he appears here, in this type of parade, and also under the armchair in the dining room.”¹⁹

In analyzing *The Empty Kingdom*, d4 sought to identify moments of change to deepen understanding: “The sound environment changes when approaching the river; this helped me to better understand the story.”²⁰ These observed changes assist in segmenting the narrative and breaking it into smaller, manageable units, as d2 describes regarding the *Boum!* app: “When I was thinking about the sequence, what I tried to do was to divide the text into chapters or scenes.”²¹

Changes, continuities, repetitions, and frequent relationships among sounds, shapes, movements, colors, and spatial usage, among other characteristics, help readers in navigating a work through guided interpretative hypotheses and in discarding certain interpretations. This process, informed by accumulated narrative experience, proves invaluable not only in recognizing deviations from expected patterns but also in identifying moments of estrangement and disconcertment. Such moments challenge readers and foster reflection on new aesthetic experiences, enriching their engagement with the text.

3.4 Sharing Disconcertments and Concerns

In any process of negotiation and meaning-making among readers, it is common—and crucial—to share the challenges, uncertainties, and confusions that unsettle the reader when they encounter elements that are unexpected, undesirable, or not immediately comprehensible within their interaction with a text (Chambers, 2011). Often, aspects of a work that displease the reader are associated to elements that disturb them or challenge their preconceived expectations. These expectations are shaped by prior experiences and the interpretative processes engaged during reading, yet they can be reshaped through dialogue with other readers. The significance of a text is subject to

¹⁸ In Catalan: “Potser és en aquest moment quan podem interpretar millor la relació que tenen aquests tres mons.”

¹⁹ In Catalan: “És clar que apareix aquí, en aquest tipus de cercaviles, i també sota la butaca del menjador.”

²⁰ In Catalan: “L’entorn sonor canvia quan t’acostes al riu; va facilitar entendre millor la història.”

²¹ In Catalan: “Quan estava pensant en la seqüència, el que vaig intentar va ser dividir l’obra en capítols o escenes.”

change depending on the context and the perspectives of the readers, who might highlight different aspects of the work.

In the case under analysis, the readers' limited familiarity with digital fiction confronted them with the limits of their own horizons of expectation (Jauss, 1994), which are influenced by traditional narrative models and reading approaches. This situation led to admissions of the difficulties encountered. Let us consider some of the comments made about the *Spot* app:

I feel it's more disconcerting... Because there isn't an object, or a challenge... Just small clues... (d4)

The question we usually ask: What is the appeal of this work? I find it hard to answer here... What is the appeal of this work? (DC)

I didn't understand the relationship between one world and the others... And also, how they are connected. Because, if it is inside these cookies, it is in the same interior that the photograph appears at the kiosk... There's the parade of cats... I was very disconcerted. (d4)

This one was more disconcerting, more unsettling... Because, in *The Empty Kingdom*, yes, there is an end to the story, and it has classic video game elements... This one is purely... immersive. (DA)²²

This feeling was also explicitly expressed in the reading of TEK:

I'm also quite lost... I liked the experience a bit, the drawings, the effects... But I don't know how... What I would do in the classroom. (d1)

I feel like I'm in a state of disconcertment, as a reader... Disconcerted because I don't know why that character is wandering, I don't really understand their motivation. It's hard for me to construct a narrative thread. (DC)²³

²² In Catalan: "Em sembla més confús... Perquè no hi ha cap objecte, ni un repte... Petites pistes..." (d4) / "La pregunta que acostumem a fer: quina gràcia té aquesta obra? Em costa donar una resposta aquí... Què gràcia té aquesta obra?" (DC) / No entenia la relació que hi ha entre un món i els altres... I també com estan connectats. Perquè, si és dins d'aquelles galetes, és al mateix interior on apareix la fotografia al quiosc... Hi ha la desfilada dels gats... Em vaig quedar molt desconcertada." (d4) / Aquest va ser més desconcertant, descolocava més... Perquè, a *The Empty Kingdom*, sí, hi ha un final a la història i té recursos clàssics del videojoc... Aquest és pura... immersió" (DA).

²³ In Catalan: "També estic molt perduda... M'ha agradat una mica l'experiència, els dibuixos, els efectes... Però no sé com... Què faria a l'aula." (d1) / "Em sento confús, com a lector... Desconcertat perquè no sé per què aquell personatge està passejant, no sé ben bé quina motivació té. Em costa construir un fil narratiu" (DC).

Discussions regarding the works, particularly *The Empty Kingdom* (TEK), not only uncovered different concerns but frequently shifted toward comparisons with other artistic settings, notably electronic games. This observation highlights the importance of comparing cultural experiences in understanding the reading of these works, a topic we will delve into further in the following analysis.

3.5 Relating to Other Cultural and Artistic Systems

As Santaella (2011) observes, the media interfaces enabling digital fiction to offer an aesthetic experience to users are rooted in the diverse ecology of contemporary cultural practices, where “all arts fraternize and converge towards each other” (p. 36).²⁴ This concept of hybridity and intermediality, evident in the works discussed, encouraged the educators to leverage their prior cultural experiences for a richer engagement with the texts and their interpretation. This approach was particularly prevalent in the analysis of *The Empty Kingdom* (TEK), where the evident connections to comics, audiovisual media, and electronic games required a deep negotiation of meanings. Here, the teachers explored how expressive resources from various artistic systems could enhance understanding of both the dynamics of navigation and the potential interpretations of the work:

It reminded me of illustrations, cinema; it also brought to mind comic books. (d5)

What you mentioned about cinema, the structure of vignettes, there’s a moment that highlights the legs, zooms in on a part of the body and focuses on a part of the landscape. (d2)

We’re relating all the elements that appear, aren’t we? To other artistic manifestations. It’s interesting. (DB)

As we aim to teach reading, what are the challenges for reading? Training to read these types of video games? I’m not sure... (d1 on TEK)

It really reminds me of video games. (d2)²⁵

²⁴ In Portuguese: “todas as artes confraternizam e confluem umas para as outras.”

²⁵ In Catalan: “Em va recordar les il·lustracions, el cinema; també em van recordar a HQ.” (d5) / “El que deies del cinema, l’estructura de les vinyetes, hi ha un moment que ressalta les cames, fa zoom en alguna part del cos i destaca alguna part del paisatge.” (d2) / “Estem relacionant tots els elements que apareixen, oi? A altres manifestacions artístiques. És interessant.” (DB) / “Com volem ensenyar a llegir, quins són els

Comparisons with *Spot* also occurred:

My first encounter with *Spot* immediately reminded me of the tv show *Black Mirror*. (d2)

And I was thinking about this picture book. Do you remember the picture book *Zoom* by Istvan Banyai? It could be an interesting starting point, right? (DC on *Spot*)²⁶

3.6 Identifying Symbolism, Polysemy, and Other Functions of Semiotic Resources in the Work

Beyond merely identifying details and noting the expressive utilization of signs from various semiotic domains, the discussions among the educators frequently focused on trying to understand the functions of the semiotic resources employed, their potential meanings, and their symbolic significance. As previously mentioned, these negotiations did not always lead to a consensus or a singular interpretation. However, they underscored the critical strategy of questioning why certain elements appear as they do within the work. This approach was particularly pertinent in the reading and analysis of *Boum!*:

I think this is evidently related to the character's development. It's that shift from black and white, and then you end up seeing other shades. (d2)

But, at this moment, in this act that I am focusing on, there is a smile with teeth on it. So, it is important because it's more than just a simple smile. (d2)

And this little dot, again, here is his eye. What I mean is that geometric shapes have a correlation, one, with the interpretation of the work, and two, with the emotions and the vital process that the character experiences. (d1)

It isn't until a point that he loses that hat. I interpret it as if he's stepping out of his comfort zone, as if he wants to experiment or as if he wants to test himself. (d2)

So this banana, in the end, can be many things. It could be the character's soul, it could be the love he kept because he didn't give it

reptes de la lectura? Entrenar per llegir aquest tipus de videojocs? No ho sé..." (d1 a TEK) / "Em recorda molts videojocs" (d2).

²⁶ In Catalan: "El primer contacte amb *Spot* em va arribar immediatament a través de la sèrie *Black Mirror*." (d2) / "I estava pensant en aquest àlbum. Recordes l'àlbum *Zoom* d'Istvan Banyai? Podria ser interessant com a punt de partida, oi?" (DC sobre *Spot*).

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to the butterfly. And interestingly, the shape of the banana is the same as the smile and the same as the moon. (d2)

Not only do the music and the colors give us clues for interpretation, but the shape of symbolic objects also provides these clues, which represent the end, happiness... (d2)²⁷

4 Challenges in Reading and Interpreting Multimodality in the Digital Medium

4.1 New Poetics and Narrative Architectures

The boundless narrative possibilities afforded by hyperlinks have undoubtedly transformed the experience of reading stories. In traditional print texts, the final page of a book definitively signals the conclusion of the narrative, providing the reader with a clear endpoint and a sense of how much reading time remains. However, the interactive features of digital fiction challenge the reader's ability to determine precisely when a story ends, complicating the decision to disengage from the text. In conventional literature, narratives typically follow a single dominant plot with a clear temporal progression where time often takes precedence over space in storytelling. In contrast, digital technologies have greatly expanded the potential for presenting multiple narratives simultaneously, moving away from strict temporal linearity. This shift allows for the exploration of fictional worlds using sophisticated visual and auditory resources, with the extent and duration of exploration left to the reader's discretion, enabled by interactivity (Bellei, 2006).

The work *Spot* exemplifies a visual narrative that adopts a rhizomatic structure, where there is no central axis. This structure necessitates that readers navigate through various fictional spaces and form connections among them without the constraints of

²⁷ In Catalan: "Crec que això, òbviament, està relacionat amb l'evolució del personatge. És blanc i negre i després acabes veient altres tonalitats." (d2) / "Però, en aquest moment, en aquest acte pel qual aposto, hi ha un somriure amb dents. Per tant, és significatiu perquè és més que un somriure." (d2) / "I aquest puntet, de nou, aquí tens el seu ull. El que vull dir és que les formes geomètriques tenen una correlació, una, amb la interpretació de l'obra, i dues, amb les sensacions i el procés vital que experimenta el personatge." (d1) / "No és fins a un punt que perd aquest barret. Jo ho interpreto com si sortís de la seva zona de confort, com si volgués experimentar o com si volgués provar-se." (d2) / "Així que aquest plàtan, al final, podria ser moltes coses. Podria ser l'ànima del personatge, podria ser l'amor que va guardar perquè no el va donar a la papallona. I la forma del plàtan, que és el més curiós, és la mateixa que la del somriure i la mateixa que la de la lluna." (d2) / "No només la música i els colors ens donen pistes per a la interpretació, sinó que la forma dels objectes simbòlics també ens dona aquestes pistes, que és el final, la felicitat..." (d2).

predefined temporality or a linear narrative thread. In discussions among educators, this narrative architecture posed significant challenges for sense-making. Particularly, the absence of a clear narrative thread emerged as one of the most disconcerting elements for the participants, a point which we will explore further in the subsequent discussion.

Is there a sense of story? Does it have a narrative thread? Does it fit somehow into a narrative scheme, or does the narrative dissolve itself?
(DA)

Yes, I did try to see what the story was trying to tell. (d5)

Is there any reason for this journey? Is there a narrative thread, or not?
(DB)

The first challenge with *Spot* might be the feeling of being lost; as you said, because it has a non-narrative, it's a bit like: "What am I doing here? Where do I take this and why?" (d1)

You face the challenge of dealing with a work where you don't know how many stories are inside. (d3)

But I think one difference, compared to choose-your-own-adventure books, is that here it might not be that you choose a path and that's it, because this path is like a branching... No, not branching, right? It's continually dialoguing with the other paths, isn't it? (DC).²⁸

4.2 Discovering the Essence of the Story and Enjoying New Aesthetic Experiences

The challenge that newcomers to digital fiction often face is discerning the core meaning of the work and understanding how to interact with and aesthetically appreciate the experience. This difficulty stems from the genre's distinctive digital aesthetics, characterized by hybridization, connectivity, hypertextuality, multimodality, simulation, mobility, and participatory interactivity, which blur the boundaries between the body and technology. These features foster a unique sensoriality, shaped by the impact of technologies on the body and the interpretation of these effects. According to Domingues (2008), the relationship between the subject and the artistic work is both performative and

²⁸ In Catalan: "Hi ha sentit de la història? Que té un fil narratiu? Encaixa d'alguna manera en un esquema narratiu o es dilueix la narrativa?" (DA) / "Vaig intentar veure què volia explicar la història." (d5) / "Hi ha algun motiu per a aquest passeig? Té un fil narratiu o no?" (DB) / "El primer repte amb *Spot* potser sigui el fet de sentir-se perdut; com dius, perquè no té una narració; és una mica: 'Què hi faig aquí? On tiro i per què?'" (d1) / "Tens el repte d'enfrontar-te a una obra que no saps ben bé quantes històries hi ha dins." (d3) / "Però crec que una diferència, en relació als llibres d'Escull la teva pròpia aventura, és que aquí potser no es tria un camí i ja està, perquè aquest camí és com una ramificació... No, una ramificació, no, oi? Està dialogant contínuament amb altres camins, oi?"(DC).

interfaced, relying on the externality of actions—that is, interaction with the work through various interfaces rather than solely internal contemplation. Consequently, readers must become attuned to these alternative ways of metaphorizing the world and learn to derive pleasure from their relationship with the technological object, which demands new modes of engagement and seduction.

The interpretive challenge, which involves discerning the artistic-literary intent of the work and its potential meanings, was highlighted by one of the teachers during the discussion on *Spot*, when they inquired, “What is the essence of this story?” (DC).²⁹ Frequently, other educators connected the innovative employment of multimodal resources integrated with interactivity in the narrative to novel and challenging reading approaches:

But I would say that it is what you’re talking about, it’s a kind of reading experience for a reader [...]. A patient reader, a curious reader, but one who accepts that things may not happen, has no control over it, does not command... (DA on *Spot*)

I think that, as a reading experience, it is very intense because [...]. That is, they have to assume a role, even for us, I mean, because I am not used to reading anything like this. (D3 on *Spot*)

I like the sensations it provoked in me, regardless of whether it has a narrative or not [...]. But I didn’t just interpret it; I let myself wander through that world, that sound, I enjoyed the feeling. (d6 on *Spot*)

It can be a training in patience just like when [...]. For example, one of the complaints from my students is when there are pages with a lot of stillness or a lot of description on it. (d6 on *Spot*)

Because here there is an aesthetic experience using game elements, on one hand, and also an experience that has an intentionality which is to make one perceive sensations not through words. (DB on *Spot*)

I believe that this is precisely where the appeal of this reading lies, which is very contrary to what would be expected; therefore, it produces disconcertment. (DA on TEK)³⁰

²⁹ In Catalan: “Quina és la gràcia d’aquesta història?” (DC).

³⁰ In Catalan: “Però diria que això és el que dius, és una mena d’experiència lectora per a un lector [...]. Un lector pacient, un lector curiós, però que accepta que això no passa, que no té control, que no mana... (DA on *Spot*).” / “Crec que, com a experiència lectora, és molt brutal perquè [...]. És a dir, han d’assumir un paper, fins i tot nosaltres, és a dir, perquè no estic acostumat a llegir res d’això.” (D3 on *Spot*) / “M’agraden les sensacions que em van provocar, més enllà de si hi havia una narració o no [...]. Però no em vaig limitar simplement a fer una interpretació: em vaig deixar vagar per aquell món, per aquell so, m’agradava la sensació.” (d6 on *Spot*) / “Pot ser un entrenament de paciència com quan [...]. Per exemple, una de les queixes dels meus alumnes és quan hi ha pàgines massa silencioses o massa descriptives.” (d6 on *Spot*) / “Perquè aquí té l’experiència estètica utilitzant aquests elements de joc, d’una banda, i també una experiència que té una intenció que és fer percebre sensacions que no són mitjançant les paraules.” (DB on

Final Considerations

The process of socializing the reading of digital literary works, as described in this article, unveils strategies and challenges that a specific group of specialists, at varying levels of training, developed and faced during their interactions with the works. This group, unified by similar theoretical and methodological perspectives, intuitively or reflectively established common practices for engaging with the works and sharing experiences. Through the verbal contributions of the lead researcher, DA, and the teacher DB, one of the oldest in the research group, it became evident that the guidance provided by experienced researchers not only offered models for addressing multimodality but also stimulated discussions on important aspects for the exploration and analysis of each work. Furthermore, their questions prompted deeper reflections. This underscores the crucial role that experienced researchers play in mediating the process, essential for shaping interpretive strategies.

In each of the strategies and challenges identified, we see reflections of the theoretical propositions that underpin the research project undertaken by the group, which centers on literary reading through the lens of reader-work interaction. Moreover, the actual occurrence of oral exchanges among the educators reinforces the notion that dialogue among readers is crucial for enhancing interpretative competencies, irrespective of the medium or material form.

We can conclude that, despite the unique characteristics of the group—and indeed because of these traits, which include individuals committed to sharing their experiences and interpretations—we can expect various ways to engage with multimodality in digital fiction works across diverse educational contexts. While this article only offers a specific excerpt from the ongoing research conducted by GRETEL, we anticipate that future findings will provide more systematic insights and contributions mediated by teachers to enhance classroom practices.

Spot) / “Crec que precisament aquí rau la gràcia d’aquesta lectura, que és molt contrària al que tothom esperaria; per això, provoca desconcert” (DA onTEK).

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Statement of Author’s Contribution

We declare that both authors, Giselly Lima de Moraes and Martina Fittipaldi, made substantial contributions to the conceptualization, analysis, and interpretation of the data for this project. The first author took on the primary role of writing, while the second author was actively involved in critically revising the manuscript, making significant alterations to its intellectual content, and in the review and final approval of the version published here. Consequently, both authors assume full responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the work.

Research Data and Other Materials Availability

The contents underlying the research text are included in the manuscript.

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Reviews

Due to the commitment assumed by *Bakhtiniana. Revista de Estudos do Discurso* [*Bakhtiniana. Journal of Discourse Studies*] to Open Science, this journal only publishes reviews that have been authorized by all involved

Review I

The text provides an overview of a segment from an international research network project, focusing on a timely and significant topic. It is well-written, grounded in other relevant and contemporary studies, and includes a concise analysis aligned with its theoretical framework. Undoubtedly, this is an important publication that reports findings from a significant project concerning the reading of digital books for children. Recommendations for improvement:

1. A thorough review of the text to correct minor typographical errors.
2. A revision of the abstract for increased clarity and precision. It is quite vague.
3. An additional paragraph that better identifies the participating educators and under what circumstances they teach, as the current description focuses more on the books than on the teachers themselves. It is important that they are better described.

I endorse the publication of this article after these adjustments. APPROVED

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