



## THE READING AT HIGH-SCHOOL IN E-BOOK TIME

### A LEITURA NA ESCOLA EM TEMPO DE E-BOOK

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**ABSTRACT**

This article has the intention of identifying the forms and the reading supports, as well as to verify the reader's practices at school day by day in the context of mediatization inside interface between communication and education; it points out the relation with the knowledge coming from the characters who act in the educational environment and their experiences of readers helped by printed and digital materials. We resort to the bibliographical research for carrying out of a study of case at federal public school of Belém-Pa, with students from fundamental in the months of October and November of 2016, applying participant observation and interviews with a form. We resorted also to the theoretical supports which are about the communication, mediatization, printed media, reading and education as Lévy (1993; 1999); Braga (2006); Chartier (1994; 1998), Todorov (2009), Charlot (2013) and Sacristán (2005). With base in these articulations, we did a parallel around the question from practices of reading, which were mediated by distinct supports: the printed book and digital/electronics book. So, we have as reference the place of formal learning: The School. We noticed which the young readers researched experience reading practices mediated by printed and digital materials, being them more recurrent the use of printed media, mainly the book. It was verified, also, that a large proportion of the students considerate themselves as readers from digital support, whose interests and motivations are various.

**KEYWORDS**

Reading. Mediatization. Printed media. School. *E-book*

**RESUMO**

Este artigo objetiva identificar as formas e os suportes de leitura, assim como verificar as práticas de leitor no cotidiano escolar, no contexto da midiatização. Na interface comunicação e educação, destaca-se a relação com o saber dos sujeitos que atuam no espaço pedagógico, considerando suas experiências de leitores mediadas por materiais impressos e digitais. Procedeu-se à pesquisa bibliográfica e a um estudo de caso realizado numa escola pública federal de Belém, envolvendo alunos do ensino fundamental, no período de outubro a novembro de 2016, aplicando-se a observação participante e entrevista com formulário. Recorreu-se aos aportes teóricos que tratam do debate sobre comunicação, midiatização, mídia impressa, leitura e educação, como Lévy (1993; 1999); Braga (2006), Chartier (1994; 1998), Todorov (2009), Charlot (2013) e Sacristán (2005). Fez-se um cotejo em torno da questão da prática da leitura mediada por suportes distintos: o livro impresso e o livro eletrônico ou digital, tendo-se como referência o lugar da aprendizagem formal, a escola. Constatou-se que os jovens leitores pesquisados vivenciam práticas de leituras mediadas por materiais impressos e digitais, sendo-lhes mais recorrente o uso da mídia impressa, principalmente o livro. Verificou-se, também, que grande parte dos alunos se reconhece como leitores de suporte digital, cujos interesses e motivações são diversos.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE**

Leitura. Midiatização. Escola. Mídia impressa. *E-book*

## Introduction

The experience in the school routine builds a universe of knowledge and knowledge for both students and teachers. To some extent, some episodes in the educational context stand out more than the others and affect the subjects of the pedagogical relation in a singular way.

The contemporary school is responsible for promoting reading and writing not only on a traditional alphabetical basis, but also on the basis of digital and images. There is no denying that, according to social class, there are distinctions regarding the availability, possession and use of new communication technologies, that children / adolescents / students act as media players (computer, smartphone, tablet etc.) in e-book format or e-readers, or simply browse the screens for information, entertainment, and interactions or online relationships.

When it comes specifically to reading, one can say that its new modes of presentation, its supports and contents are notably observable in the school space, evidencing other forms of learning and interaction. From this perception come these questions: after all, what forms and supports of reading are present in the daily life of the school? Do students read more print media or digital displays? It is from this question that this study aims to identify the forms and the supports of reading, as well as to verify the practices of the reader-student in the context of mediatization. The interlocution of the fields Communication and Education makes it possible to critically understand the sociocultural experience of the subjects / students who work in the pedagogical space, evidencing their identifications and relations with the reading artifacts that are available to them.

For this, this research finds support in the studies developed by Pierre Lévy (1993; 1999), regarding aspects of reading in the context of cyberculture, and by José Luiz Braga (2006), regarding mediatization as an international reference process. Braga (2006, p. 11) points out that this process functions as the main driver “in the construction of social reality”, and that it is constantly advancing, not restricted only to the scenario of media communication, but to all segments of society. It can be said, therefore, that the school figures as an important space in this socio communicative dynamic.

For the sociocultural perspective of education, the researches of Bernard Charlot (2013) and José Gimeno Sacristán (2005) were taken. In the debate on reading, we used Roger Chartier's (1994; 1998) studies on the historical-cultural trajectory of the book and on reading practices, especially as an activity or ability that from the eighteenth century, when the image of the child also disengaged from that of the adult.

In the book “Education in the 21st Century: cognition, technologies and learning”, Ralph Bannel et al. (2016, p. 104) point out that the presence or use of technological means

and supports does not substitute for the potentialities of the subjects, since “information is in the personal domain of the user”, being responsible for re-elaborating meanings and changing their attitudes, their behavior. With this, the relation between knowledge and technologies (digital, inclusive) demands to be understood beyond the utilitarian or functional perspective.

The French researcher Bernard Charlot emphasizes that in this new pedagogical configuration, the teacher must play a fundamental role, acting as a critic in relation to the new ways of learning, even if the neurotic discourses on computer science circulate socially, affirming that today the presence of the teacher is expendable in the construction of knowledge. For the author, the activities developed in the school should make sense to the student, they should clarify the life and its world. He points out that “a ‘teacher of knowledge’ has never been so necessary, that is, a teacher who teaches how to search, evaluate, and gather information to understand the world and solve problems” (CHARLOT, 2013, p. 19).

Charlot (2013, p. 20) points out that the teacher has to be "less information teacher and more teacher of knowledge [...] not all students have a computer at home, not everyone is an internet expert and they do not always enter on the internet to learn. " With this, the teacher would act critically in relation to the different uses, potentialities and senses of the technological resources for the student / child / adolescent, making it possible to make more sense to the school, when learning.

According to French historian Philippe Ariés (2006, p. Xv), between the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the school emerged as a substitute for the learning that was being developed during this period among adults. Considering this aspect of formalization of learning, when the school is born to meet the demands of industrial capitalist society, it can be said that today this institution needs to adapt to the contingencies of society in mediatization, since the essence of the modern school is the transformation (SACRISTÁN, 2005), corresponding to a movement formed by the socio-cultural practices that are aligned for the construction of social reality.

In the context of digital reading, some academic productions, such as that of Edvaldo Moretti (2010) entitled "The era of digital books", and that of Anália Oliveira (2013), which presents a case study on "E-books and reading digital "with visiting university students from a library in Rio Grande do Sul, corroborate the idea that electronic media used for reading activity tend to grow in people's daily lives as a resource for study, work and entertainment.

Also noteworthy is the doctoral study by Marcelo Spalding (2012) entitled "Alice from the book printed to the e-book: adaptation of Alice in Wonderland and Through the Mirror to iPad", which discusses in what way own tools of the new technologies are used for the creation of literary texts different from the printed text, in the movement of the so-called digital

literature. Thus, the relationship between reading media and the movement of digital literature crosses the present work, whose developments may be better verified in a future study.

The research data used in this study comes from the professional performance of one of the researchers as a Portuguese Language teacher in a federal public elementary and high school, located in the capital city of Belém. Based on investigative procedures on printed and digital reading practices of 7th grade students, a total of 34 (thirty-four) boys and girls aged 11 and 12 years, a comprehensive of digital culture in the daily lives of children and adolescents that make up part of the social fabric of the capital of Pará.

## 1 Education in the Context of Mediatization

“The reading of the world precedes the reading of the word”, declares Paulo Freire (1989, s/p). This statement, repeatedly used by pedagogues and teachers in order to say that one must teach from the reality of the student, is here taken as the major premise that reading is a cultural practice that constitutes the subject and the world, dynamically.

The interest in the communication / education interface is based on several segments and agents of society, mainly involving the family and the school. These two institutions are channels for reflection, dialogue and postures in this society, which, as Jesús Martín-Barbero (2001, p. 13) states, elaborates projects and motivates practices for different subjects / segments participating in the "complex network of mediations which the communication / culture / political relationship articulates". In this way, the association between school and communication technologies is pertinent and requires a better understanding on the part of society.

The practice of reading in hypertext or electronic text is already part of the daily life of the most varied social classes and is carried out with the most different objectives. It is noteworthy that the importance of search engines, or search, such as Google, Yahoo etc. is well-known in the most diverse fields, especially in the educational field. Thus, numerous forms of reading are invented and developed continuously by the users themselves/internauts/interactors.

Access to a webpage takes the user / reader not only to the links available in it, but also allows you to create new links outside your space, according to your interest. Lévy (1999, p. 57) points out that “there are systems that are equally capable of recording the pathways and reinforcing them (making them more visible, for example) or weakening the links according to the form through which they are navigated by the community of navigators”. These systems referred to by the author are cookies, or tools that record the "accesses" made on a particular

computer, serving as guidelines or traits to browsers. These tools characterize reading in cyberspace or mediated virtual space.

As this study turned to the educational field, it was verified the importance of a qualitative research methodology (ANDRÉ, 1995), through which it was possible to construct a case study, based on the observation and listening of subjects in depth, the which allowed the researcher a valuable interaction with them at the research site. A necessary and fruitful relationship was thus woven into study. In this way, the school is understood as a space of coexistence, as a “learning community” (BANNEL ET AL., 2016, p. 116), in which all its members can teach and learn with one another, mediated by traditional technologies or digital, for a transformation process.

The importance of reflection on the new forms of sociability and knowledge construction is also demonstrated in studies by Lucia Santaella (2013), according to which cultural transformations are connected to new mental habits that configure new ways of acting. Within this framework, education systems need to focus on the unprecedented needs of the learning process.

In the study “Mediatization as an Interaction Process of Reference”, Braga (2006) argues that mediatization belongs to society itself. In order to demonstrate this proposition, it articulates two basic aspects: the “logics of transition” (with characteristics of mediation with interactional process) and “the thesis that such a process should be perceived as not completely established” (BRAGA, 2006, p. 14). From this perspective, the author argues that, just as oral and written at a given moment in history, they began to organize all social life, being, therefore, processes of reference of interaction, without an annulling or erasing the other, to mediated culture of technology is also accelerating, covering all social spheres, subjects, their relations and subjectivities.

Braga (2006, p. 17) points out that aspects that are not simply “ways of organizing and transmitting messages and of producing / transporting meanings, but also, and above all, modes according to which society is constructed, are established in the contemporary world”. The author emphasizes that in the current stage of mediatization of society, there are perceived characteristics as derivations of previous logics of interaction (voice, writing) and others as development of own logics (digital image, electronic).

The studies of the Spanish researcher Sacristán (2005), especially the work “The pupil as invention”, offer subsidies that point to the need to evaluate the way the school and the family relate to or see the student (child or adolescent). The author stresses that these cultural patterns underlying adult forms of perception result from evolutionary stages that intersect in the history of society and culture (SACRISTÁN, 2005). In this line of thought, the condition

of student is based on the cultural elaborations built around the child and adolescent who live and reflect society on a daily basis.

## 2 New Supports and Readings

The Internet and the computer are instruments, just as the body, voice, drawings, writing, poetry were - and are - means, supports or languages of expression and constitution of the human condition. In this way, the practice of reading in contemporary school emerges as a relevant aspect for the understanding not only of the student-reader or the student-reader, but, above all, of the child / adolescent who experiences and experiences in his daily life the devices of written culture traditional and mediated culture.

Chartier (1998, p. 93) points out that, “at the beginning of the Christian era, codex readers had to detach themselves from the tradition of the scroll book. The transition was equally difficult everywhere in eighteenth-century Europe”, at which point the need arose for adaptation to the printing, which circulated with great effervescence. Nowadays, adapting to hypertext, digital texts also requires new ways of reading.

Lévy (1993) emphasizes that the collective experience in cyberspace allows the construction of new learning models, by the activation of new forms of reading, by access to web tools, with speed and various pathways of meaning construction. On websites, a click on highlighted color words, or buttons, sends the command a command to display another page or text. “This becomes the norm, a new system of writing, a metamorphosis of reading, baptized by navigation” (LÉVY, 1993, p. 37).

For Marcuschi (1999), hypertext is, as a rule, not new in conception, since it has always existed as an idea in the Western tradition; Thus, for the author, the novelty lies in the technology that allows a new form of textuality, of construction of meanings. As a result, the debate on new reading media requires that some distinctions be made between e-readers, reading applications and e-books. Marcelo Spalding develops this theme by pointing out that the confusion between these categories arises from the fact that the printed book is “both the reader and the book itself, without the need for an application. The printed book, after all, is material, physical, atom”. In this way, the relationship between support and the reading process allows the appearance of different ways of reading, which demand a more accurate and contextual analysis.

Spalding clarifies that the digital book is a digital file, bits, a set of zeros and ones, there being several formats of digital book files, such as PDF, EPUB and AZW, and that, to provide textual materiality, programs or applications specific to certain media. The author points out that “just as the iPad formed the market for tablets, it was the Kindle that became the first

popular e-reader and started this revolution in the publishing market” (SPALDING, 2012, p. 77).

In the school environment, these new forms and reading supports are present. It is not uncommon for the printed textbook to indicate as a pedagogical supplement sources in digital media (e-books, movies, videos, etc.), just as it is common for teachers to use multimedia resources connected to the computer network and to handle textual genres and other materials for the production of lessons. In the midst of these innovations in daily school life, print media (textbooks, extra-class books, single texts, handouts, etc.) are still very recurrent.

Thus, it is necessary that in the school space, children and adolescents be seen as possible readers of different media, print and digital; not being able to despise one support to the detriment of the other, nor to privilege one of them. Sacristán (2005) refers to the fact that, from modern society, the category “student” began to refer directly to the child or adolescent and that the status of being a child or adolescent inevitably underlies the idea of student:

Similarly, any culture that defines the status, meaning, and fate of childhood is projected onto the schooling child. The pedagogical discourse [...] will fuse in some way into a common discourse on children and adolescents. Once they are in school, we cannot fail to perceive them, to act before them and to value them only from their role as students (SACRISTAN, 2005, p. 196).

Thus, subjects at school - who are part of a family entity or relate to adults - have already experienced (or experience) reading experiences with varied media and technical devices, from print to online. It can be inferred that the contact with the media resources is prior to the school, and this, in turn, must accompany this process.

Sacristan (2005, p. 197) also adds that “any kind of relationship between children or adolescents and adults is a nursery of anthropological experiences in which both participate in a hybridization”. This reinforces the importance of the school space and the procedures adopted by teachers for the process of constitution of the subjects / children / adolescents / students. Electronic reading allows for differentiated experiences and as complex as reading through print; both forms of reading reveal themselves as singularized experiences, constitutive of the subject.

Chartier (1998, p. 77) points out that “Reading is always appropriation, invention, production of meanings”, regardless of the medium. Still according to the author, the reading process is performed when the individual is able to assimilate the conventions of signs and symbols, decodes the code and restains it based on his experience or expectations. In this movement of perception and cognition, reading allows an entrance into a different and exciting world, characterized by the distinction of the medium or medium.

In the context of the debate on reading, the Bulgarian philosopher Tzvetan Todorov, in his book “Literature in Danger” demonstrates the importance of literature for the process of constitution of the subject. For the author, literature is the medium of “thought and knowledge of the psychic and social world in which we live” and constitutes the possibility of “transforming each of us from within” (TODOROV, 2009, p. 76-77). In this way, literary writing is not a technique for caring for the “soul,” but rather a possibility of, through individualized reading, to promote a revelation of the world to the reader and a discovery of it in and to the world.

When it comes to encouraging the various forms of reading, Todorov argues that

[...] That is why **we should encourage reading by all means** - including the books that the professional critic considers patronizing, if not scornfully, from the 'Three Musketeers' to 'Harry Potter': not just those popular novels have led the reading habit of millions of adolescents, but above all, they have enabled them to construct a first coherent image of the world, which we can assure them, later readings will be made more complex and nuanced (TODOROV, 2009, p. 82, emphasis added).

As mentioned by the author, the encouragement of reading and literature must occur in a variety of ways, since the variety of genres and textual themes will consolidate reader practice. Correspondingly, it can be said that the diversity of reading media is important for this process. Therefore, it is understood that in the school context, the use of printed and digital media corresponds to reading practices that characterize the contemporary reader, and it is not appropriate for adults (family and teachers) to discourage or ignore this cultural practice so important for development human, to favor the formation of the subject's consciousness about himself and the world.

Once schooling, literacy and mediatization make up contemporary society, it is understood to be valid to investigate the new ways of reading, learning and sociability in the pedagogical space and in dialogue with the experiences of the family environment. Reading, whether informative or fictional, in printed or digital material, allows each reader to express his or her own characteristics, for he constitutes as “a unique being, but resembles the people of his community” (CHARTIER, 1998, p. 22), reflecting a cultural practice of his time.

### 3 Reading in the Daily School: A Sociocultural Experience

Bannel et al. (2016, p. 115, emphasis added) emphasize that school is “mainly *the place of reading and writing*”, even though it is still common that teachers do not read digital media. This observation allows us to infer that, in the didactic-pedagogical reality, the separation between classroom and printed materials from other social environments and digital reading resources is established, as if reading practices for learning were possible only in the classroom

environment. classroom, or as if the school were reduced to formal education and dispensed with everyday forms of sociability.

Thus, a case study about reading was carried out at a federal public school in Belém, with 7th grade students from elementary school II. In a class of 34 (thirty-four) boys and girls, in the age group of 11 and 12, the following steps were taken during the months of October and November 2016: A) Participant observation in the Portuguese Language classes, in order to identify reading forms and media; B) Application of interview with written form with questions about the practice of reading in its different supports and means (printed and digital), in order to verify the self-recognition of the students in relation to their condition of reader of the printed culture and the digital culture and the possible motivations for this self-identification; C) Socialization and discussion in the classroom about the extraclass reading (printed book) previously requested, so that the students could express their opinions and perceptions about the work that thematized the reading itself, giving them a metalinguistic reflection.

In the first stage, the researcher / teacher conducted the Portuguese Language classes (ninety minutes uninterrupted), recording written observations and perceptions regarding the referral of reading activities and the reception by the students. They then received in print the short story “The ants” by Lígia Fagundes Telles (2004), followed by three discursive questions of textual analysis, referring respectively to the theme, the narrative genre and the fantastic element characteristic of the story. At the end of the class, the students handed the material to the teacher.

In the next stage, students were interviewed, with a form composed of objective and semi-open questions regarding the frequency of reader activity, the types of access, the media and reading media, both in the school and in the family. The students handed the completed forms to the teacher.

In the last stage (two weeks later), as agreed, the socialization of the paradidical reading of the child and youth work “The club of forgotten books”, by Fábio Monteiro, published in 2015, by Editora do Brasil, was carried out. Initially, the teacher made a brief contextualization of the work and the author, referring to the theme of the book, which corresponds to the issue of reading itself in the children's universe (Flora, the protagonist of the narrative, is an 11-year-old girl who lives a strong and important relationship with printed books).

the students demonstrated a positive reception of the work, stating that the story was engaging and with an amazing end. Some of the students expressed that reading is an important activity in their lives, even if it is not as frequent as in the daily life of the protagonist.

Described briefly the three steps, it is now worth highlighting some observations and reflective notes. As for the procedures related to the first stage - reading the story “The ants” - it is noteworthy that the students, even in silence, expressed a positive reception of the text. It was possible to see that when faced with a dense text, in which the unusual, the fantastic is so close to the characters - two university cousins housed in a mysterious pension, surrounded by a dwarf skeleton that, for several consecutive nights, being ridden by mysterious ants - also felt involved by / in the plot. Some students, however, have shown difficulties in the beginning, especially in terms of vocabulary.

A brief analysis of the answers given to the three questions of comprehension, referring respectively to the theme, the narrative genre and the fantastic element, demonstrates that the group has a medium level in textual comprehension, especially when dealing with literary narrative genre; there was an interest in the fantastic component of the tale: ants that gradually mounted night after night the skeleton of a dwarf kept in an old box.

From the procedures of the second stage, regarding the application of the interview with form about the practice of reading in its different media and media (printed and digital), it was possible to formulate the following tables concerning self-identification of the student as a print media reader and / or digital and as to the motivations for such classification, respectively:

**Table 1.** Readers self-identification

Type of reader	Nr of Students	%
Printed Midia	16	47
Digital Midia	14	41
Both	04	11
Total	34	100,0

Source: Vanda Amin, field research 2016

As regards the first aspect, table 01 indicates that the majority of the students (47%) identified themselves as a print media reader (book, magazines, etc.), 41% as a digital reader (e-book, online etc.) and 11% as readers of both media. These quantitative data reflect that the use of media products (printed and digital) progressively takes place in society.

**Table 2.** Motivations for reading

Motivations	Nr of students	%
Printed preferences	16	47
Digital preferences	11	32
Inaccess to printed	03	9
Inaccess to digital	04	11
Total	34	100,0

Source: Vanda Amin, field research 2016

As for the constant aspect in table 02, it can be said that, because it is of a more qualitative nature, it reveals information that justifies or clarifies what is shown in table 01. It is thus verified that the taste for the printed matter (book, magazines) corresponds to a higher preference for students (47%) and that the taste for digital (e-book, online pages) is also a significant mark (32%). In this way, it is concluded that, among the motives that trigger both readings, the largest is a subjective component (the taste).

In the discussion about the paridia work read, the students were asked about the practice of reading in digital support (e-book), since in the narrative "The club of forgotten books" the focus is the printed book. Most of the students demonstrated that their reading in print takes place especially when the work is fictional, since in this type of text they feel the need of the physical contact with the book object. In this, they can make written records, markings of passages, until they save something related to their daily life (bonbon paper, photography, stickers, flowers, notebooks, etc.).

As for digital reading, the majority of students demonstrated greater access to reading, informative, journalistic, scientific or social communication, in which reading practices become recurrent. According to Todorov (2009, p. 77), this relation between reading and everyday life, with the reader's expectations, means that "the ordinary reader, who continues to look for works that read what can make sense of his life" living what is within itself, built in the relationship with the other, the book, which, nowadays, can be printed or digital.

This understanding also goes back to Chartier (1998), for whom reading is an instrument of learning, of constitution of the subject; it anticipates, creates possibilities of understanding. The reader will always be exercising his capacity for creation and re-elaboration of himself and of the world.

From this perspective, we return to the discussion proposed by Charlot (2013, p. 21), according to which reading "is important to understand the world, life, others and oneself. Once again, the central issue is that of meaning". Therefore, when someone participates in an event through reading, at that moment subjective, cultural and social senses are triggered, thus evidencing learning, regardless of space, medium or support.

#### **4 Final Considerations**

Through the research carried out with 7th grade students, it was possible to identify some forms and reading supports present in the daily life of children and adolescents aged 11 and 12 from a school in the capital of Pará.

In the context of digital or mediated culture, it was found that the young readers surveyed experience practices of reading mediated by printed and digital materials (smartphones, tablets and computers), with a greater recurrence of the printed media, especially the book, which more frequent in the student reading experience (47%). However, it was also observed that a large part of this student (41%) is recognized as a reader of digital support, with varied interests and in diverse social environments.

In articulation with the theoretical foundation on communication, education and reading, an important comparison was made on the issue of the practice of reading mediated by different media: print media (especially the book) and digital media (e-book, pages on - line), focusing on the dialogue between practices and reading experiences in the family and school spaces. It should be noted that one of the results of this research points to the fact that most students associate fictional reading with printed text, and informative reading with digital text. This finding opens up possibilities for future research, as well as the results regarding students' motivations for the option of reading in printed or digital media.

The students' access to the digital reading resources and their frequency in the familiar routine signals the progress of the process of mediatization in progress in contemporary society, without necessarily extinguishing the printed media, as the lessons of Braga (2006) assert. The students' oral reports point to the need for children and adolescents to live the experience of literary reading, which is no longer simply a practice of reading but of being a subject as a subject, re-signified by language, on paper or digital screen, in a formal or informal learning and interaction.

The information passed on by the students and their form of expression and interaction during the realization of this research, mediated by the teacher / researcher, made it possible to understand the school environment as a learning community, where teacher and student positions can be balanced in a way conscious process for the construction of knowledge. In daily education, cognition, technologies, learning and sociability are crossed by the practices and experiences of and in reading, which produce contemporary culture and rename it.

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