



COST E-READ: Evolution of Reading in the Age of Digitization

Newsletter No.2, December 2015

1) Szeged meeting, October 14-16

The third MC meeting of the E-READ COST Action was held on 14-16 October 2015 at the Szeged Regional Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and was hosted by Dr. Orsi Papp-Zipernovszky, Department of Psychology, University of Szeged, HU. The 58 participants represented 23 countries.



Meeting venue: Szeged Regional Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences



MC meeting, Szeged

Over the course of the three days, scholars and scientists engaged in discussions, planning and decisions at Management Committee (MC), Core Group (CG), and Working Group (WG) meetings.

Below are short reports on the Working Groups' activities, prepared by the WG leaders:

WG 1, SKILLED (PISA-AGE) READING

Coordinators: Nuria Castells (ES), Thierry Baccino (FR), Rakefet Ackerman (IL)

In WG1 there are three different projects going on since the meeting in Szeged. One of them aims at developing a database with emotional texts created by people from different countries. Another project aims at conducting a meta-analysis of existing studies that have compared performance on paper to performance on screen. The third project is to develop a survey on digital reading practices.

WG 2, DEVELOPMENTAL ASPECTS OF READING

Coordinators: Jenny M. Thomson (UK), Mirit Barzillai (IL), Paul van den Broek (NL), Sascha Schroeder (DE)

WG2 used the latest meeting in Szeged to plan concrete ways in which group members could work together and develop collaborative relationships. Out of this arose a book project, whereby the WG members will contribute to chapters on different perspectives of literacy acquisition in a digital age. The aim of the book is both to provide a “state-of-the-art” overview of the research field, as well as catalyze new working relationships between participants across the COST network. An initial proposal has been sent out to a publisher for feedback and a writing workshop for contributors is being planned for March 2016, in Berlin.

WG 3, EMOTIONAL ASPECTS OF READING

Coordinators: Anezka Kuzmicova (SE), Art Jacobs (DE), Gitte Balling (DK)

During the Szeged WG meeting, parallel discussions took place in the two subgroups established at the previous meeting. The first (“aesthetic”) subgroup continued planning a cross-national experimental study exploring the effects of genre (e.g. poetry vs. prose) and device (print vs. screen) on reading in the psychology lab. Meanwhile, discussions in the second subgroup resulted in a redefinition of its distinctive scope from “social” to “non-

laboratory” with studies of reading in natural (survey of reading behavior) and naturalistic (experiment manipulating environmental variables) settings as the main long-term objectives.



Discussions in WG 3

WG 4, ERGONOMIC ASPECTS OF READING

Coordinators: Matt S. Hayler (UK), Theresa Schilhab (DK), Jean-Luc Velay (FR)

WG4 has historically been split into three groups: 1 (publishers) focused on collecting statistical data on publishing, marketing and selling e-books in the European Union; 2 (designers) focused on finding a way of making the best e-books; and 3 (embodiment) focused on trying to know if and how reading is an embodied practice. Following the meeting in Szeged, group 1 and 2 merged, leaving us with a group that is taking two distinct approaches to the ways in which readers read: one focused on practical ergonomics and marketing; the other on specifics of the reception of texts. Both sub-groups are committed to exploring reading as multimodal and the specificities of print and digital mediums. With the sub-groups now aware of their common and divergent goals, the facilitation of specific research within these areas is the next priority with several leads being followed after the Szeged meeting.

The programme of the Szeged event also included the Early Researchers Forum, aimed at sharing advice on international applications, and a number of social events. The event concluded with a public lecture on E-READ by the Action Chair, Anne Mangen (NO).



Local host, Orsi Papp-Zipernovszky (HU) and Massimo Salgaro (IT) at the meeting dinner

2) Other E-READ events 2015

- Training School, Dahlem Institute for Neuroimaging of Emotion (DINE), Berlin

In September, Art Jacobs (Freie Universität, Berlin) hosted a three-day Training School at the Dahlem Institute for Neuroimaging of Emotion (DINE). The objective of the TS was an introduction to some of the methodologies and technologies available at the DINE: peripheral physiological measures (EMG, EDA, HR) and eye tracking, and how to use such measures when



studying reading. The sessions were organized as a combination of (a) general introduction to theory and relevant models, (b) hands-on sessions with the equipment, and (c) introduction to data analyses. Participants were also given a tour of the lab facilities, which includes advanced technologies such as EEG, fNIRS, TMS, and fMRI facilities.

- WG 4 Workshop *Reading to do*, University of Reading, 29th and 30th October, 2015



The workshop was organized by Alison Black (Typography and Graphic Communication, University of Reading, UK). The theme of the workshop was how reading in order to complete tasks, from first aid to filling out forms for passport applications, is supported by the design of printed and electronic media; and the different affordances of printed and electronic documents used in such contexts.

The workshop participants carried out a pre-workshop exercise, tracing their user journeys through printed and electronic documents while carrying out tasks. These formed the basis for the first workshop session and were complemented by a more structured analysis process using the techniques of Personal Construct Theory to elicit the qualities of documents that are salient for their users. An invited 'twilight talk' was given by Emeritus Professor Michael Twyman on the evolution of the design of printed texts intended as a support for completing tasks. Future activities resulting from the workshop include a conference/publication on the communication and perception of authority in reading to do. Another possibility discussed is an anthology of examples of printed and digital texts for Reading to do, ranging from historical to current examples. Possible future actions also include a publication on the

theoretical underpinnings of Reading to do and a ‘methods’ paper bringing together the different research techniques to elicit experience of documents and to compare their output.

- WG3 Workshop *Design genre X device*, University of Catania, Italy, 5th and 6th November, 2015

The workshop *Design genre X device* took place on the 5th and 6th of November 2015 at the University Catania, (Italy) and was hosted by Professor Renata Gambino of the Humanities Department, together with the no-profit organization INGRESSO LIBERO. The meeting was aimed at enabling some members of E-READ WG3, to share and set up the methods and materials to be applied during an experimental study about reading and e-reading. The group intends to test text processing of prose and poetry fostering the possible interferences between genre and medium in emotional response. An important goal of the meeting was also sharing a common methodological and material framework. The participants had the opportunity to visit the laboratory (<http://perceive.dieei.unict.it/>) of the research group of Professor Daniela Giordano. This laboratory hosts the research facilities associated to the courses "Cognitive Systems and Human Computer Interaction" and "Artificial Intelligence". The lab facilities will be used for the data collection and analysis activities envisaged in WG3.

- WG3 workshop “Gaming and Reading: compare, contrast and complement,” Université du Maine, Le Mans, France, 12th and 13th November, 2015

The workshop was organized by Brigitte Ouvry-Vial, Université du Maine, Le Mans, France and Adam Sofronijevic, University of Belgrade, University library, Serbia. The goal was to facilitate exchanges with two other research networks, namely The French National Research Agency (ANR Reading in Europe) and EnJeux,



an interdisciplinary Pays-de-la-Loire Regional Program, devoted to childhood and youth. The participants discussed possible further research and co-author publishing in the area of comparative studies of gaming and reading. The most concrete plan has been made for writing co-authored chapters by members of WG3 in a book project contracted by a US publisher. In line with the discussion concerning authoring joint chapters, possibilities for joint research projects were considered. It was concluded that a potential Horizon 2020 application by WG 3 members might be the best option. Investigation of next steps in line with this initiative is one of the results of the workshop. In order to foster collaboration among the WG 3 members and provide a framework for activities and co-authored chapters, a writing workshop is planned for Amsterdam in spring or fall 2016. A website related to the workshop is available at

<https://gamingandreading.wordpress.com/> and it will be used in the future to share materials related the topic of comparative studies of reading and gaming.

- WG4 workshop “Reading and publishing research methodology,” University of Zadar, Croatia, November 21th, 2015

The workshop was organized by Miha Kovač (University of Ljubljana, SI), Adriaan van der Weel (University of Leiden, NL), Zoran Velagić (University of Osijek, HR), and Franjo Pehar (University of Zadar, HR). The participants discussed comparison, development and testing of methodological tools that will facilitate understanding relations among recent trends in publishing markets, changes in book formats, and changes in reading practices. A set of publishing data that are useful as indicators of changes in book reading habits are identified. Such data sets are juxtaposed and compared to reading surveys. The discussions showed that around Europe and in the USA, data on book production and reading habits were compiled by using different methodologies and are available in a variety of languages. Thus, future joint research projects should be aimed at extracting useful and comparable information out of available data and, most important, at the development of cross-national research methodology that could be applied at different markets to obtain a broader comparative picture of publishing/reading interrelations and their developments in Europe. A tool for achieving such goals should be a new web subpage used for the dissemination of findings, data, and research results both to members of other WGs and to broader audiences interested on role of books and reading in contemporary societies. A new site will be hosted at University of Osijek, Croatia. Several participants of the meeting agreed to launch an application for Erasmus+ K2 programme under the working title “The status and future of reading.” A new workshop is planned for summer 2016.

3) Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs)

Until now 4 calls for STSMs (11 travel grants) were announced. The next call (for 4 STSMs) will be sent out in January 2016. Below are some brief personal accounts from some STSM grantees in 2015:



Arūnas Gudiničius (Institute of Book Science and Documentation, Faculty of Communication, Vilnius University, LT) thus comments on his STSM visit to the University of Borås (SE):

"As I am an 'Early-Stage Researcher', the STSM was very useful as it enabled me to learn new methods and techniques of researching big media and constructing opinion surveys. My STSM was a good opportunity to get access (scholars from the University of Borås, SOM, Nordicom) to specific expertise, Instruments, and methods which are not available in my own institution."

Marja Oudega (Leiden University, NL) has had an equally enriching STSM experience, visiting Turku University (FI):

“My STSM made it possible for me to work together with researchers of Turku University in Finland who have great expertise in reading research and eye tracking methodology. At the moment we are cooperating on two separate projects with which we aim to extend our knowledge of text processing in general and, more specifically, of the effect that the medium has on text processing and comprehension.”



Tomáš Bouda (Human-computer interaction at Division of Information and Library Studies, Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University, CZ) thus commented on his STSM to University of Birmingham (UK):

“My STSM has been a great experience. I spent three weeks at University of Birmingham discussing phenomenological background of reading with Matt Hayler. During my visit, I pushed my dissertation theses forward and prepared specific research framework of Interpretative phenomenological analysis. My dissertation is almost done. I finished interviews and now I dive deep into records in order to describe and interpret readers` experience while using a tablet for reading an expository text.”

Newsletter editors: Justyna Deszcz-Tryhubczak (PL) and Skans Kersti Nilsson (SE)



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