

The Content and Form of School Reading as a Factor Influencing Text Comprehension in Society 4.0

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Abstract: The content and form of School reading lists significantly impact pupils' understanding of various types of texts, including artistic, non-artistic, and electronic. To this end, a research study explores whether recommended School reading lists at secondary technical schools in the Moravian-Silesian and Zlín regions of the Czech Republic are available electronically on school websites. Additionally, the study aims to determine whether they include everyday life texts that reflect the current characteristics of Society 4.0, influenced by digitisation, automation, and electronicisation. The study examined factors influencing readers' comprehension of printed and electronic digital texts through a questionnaire-based survey of 439 pupils from four Czech secondary technical schools and two vocational schools. It also explored how the content and form of secondary school reading impact the comprehension of various types of traditional and non-traditional texts. The research findings indicated that Czech secondary school students tend to engage with texts from everyday life on social networks and electronic texts in their free time. However, they frequently struggle to understand journalistic texts such as reviews and do not frequently engage with everyday life texts in their schoolwork. These results provide valuable insights into the concept of traditional and non-traditional readers, along with current typologies of texting. Moreover, they highlight factors influencing functional literacy and reading comprehension, viewed through the lens of secondary school students in Society 4.0. It is worth noting that international research by PISA (2018, 2021) has drawn attention to the average to below-average reading and digital literacy levels among Czechs, particularly 15-year-old boys.

Keywords: Text typology, Analysis of lists of reading, Text comprehension, Students of secondary and vocational schools, Digital/reading Society 4.0

1. Introduction

The current 4.0 society in the 21st century is closely linked with the fourth industrial revolution (4.0), which involves digitisation, automation, and robotisation. These changes also impact education as new technologies and techniques are being developed. The evolving social needs in the 21st century are reflected in the Czech school curriculum reforms and updates to the Framework Education Plans (FEP) for primary and secondary schools. The demand for lifelong education across all age groups, focusing on functional literacy and problem-solving skills, increases. In the Czech education system, there is a growing emphasis on encouraging interest in reading various types of texts and a new concept for the school leaving examination in secondary schools. Based on the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport's recommendations, students are given a school-specific list of recommended readings for the Maturita exam (CERMAT, 2020).

2. Society 4.0 and Readership

The effects of digitisation processes on the education system have been brought to the forefront not just by the COVID-19 pandemic (2019-2020) but also by global-scale manifestations of energy and political crises. These crises have accelerated changes in texting, such as the use of spoken communication expressions in written text, the loosening of language and expression norms, and the acceptance of Anglicisms into everyday speech. There is a growing demand for higher communication and digital competencies in work communication. The curricula of primary and secondary education are revising the framework programs to achieve a higher level of functional literacy among educated communities of pupils. Formal/informal lifelong learning is also transforming and developing new technologies. "Language competencies represent the cultural capital of each person and influence their educational opportunities, employment opportunities, and social status" (Janus-Sitarz and Nowak, 2014, p. 9).

Enhancing language awareness in educational practice was underscored by Štěpáník (2019, p. 13), who asserts that "the only person who is truly communicatively competent is the one who can choose the language means that best suits the communication situation and the fulfilment of his communication intention— who has an informed language awareness." Linguistic and reading awareness development is intricately linked with the need to grow communication and cultural capital in the digital information age.

3. Typology of Texts and Teaching Text

Various scientifically oriented typologies can perceive the problem of the text in multiple ways: linguistically, stylistically, sociologically, psychologically, pedagogically, historically, geographically, etc. According to Höflerová (2011, p. 6), a text can be defined from a semiotic perspective as "a structure that is composed of signs and is intended for communication between people. A sign is an entity that relates with varying degrees of similarity, relationship, vividness, and relevance to the phenomena of reality, both concrete (persons, objects, parts of nature...) and abstract (thoughts, voluntary activity, events, states ...)."

In everyday communication situations and educational practice, we encounter different types of communication situations in which various forms of formal and informal communication acts and expressions in written and spoken communication form and style dominate. The communication situation contains communication factors, objective and subjective stylistic factors, including all communicators and code (Prošek, 2013) in Beneš-Schneidrová, Uličný (2013, p. 143). From the stylistic point of view, texts can be viewed according to their targeted functions and functional styles. Through the lens of SERR (2002, p. 122), it can be understood as a broad concept encompassing the stylistic layers of language characteristic of different contexts". Modern stylistics follows the development of changes concerning communication norms. "Every contemporary stylistics must address the relationship between style and communication and the theory of communication" (Čechová, 2016, p. 10). In the typology of texts, the functions of communication, functional styles, and stylistic aspects (e.g. stylistic agents) are emphasised. The functions of texts (e.g. informative, educational, aesthetic, critical, etc.) are essential in helping to understand the content and form of communication based on various communication situations. The research on functional styles is carried out by Hoffmannová (1997). Čechová, Krčmová and Minářová (2008, p. 98) classify functional styles into six categories: 1. simply communicative, 2. journalistic, 3. professional, 4. administrative, 5. artistic, 6. rhetorical.

Educational texts come in both printed and electronic forms. According to Höflerová (2011, p. 27), educational text is a professional communication tool derived in function and style from a professional text. Printed and electronic, or hybrid, texts are part of everyday life, fulfilling many different functions in social life, resulting in corresponding differences in form and content. Different media are used for different purposes, and these differences in medium, purpose, and function lead to corresponding differences in the context of messages and their organisation and presentation. Therefore, texts can be classified into different genres. Reading various types of texts helps us understand specific communication situations and use appropriate language (SERR 2002, p. 95).

The artistic text primarily serves an aesthetic function, which we encounter in literary forms such as poetry, prose, and drama. Vařejková (1998, p. 13) argues that "a work of art is the subject of work in literary education. Therefore, it is a dominant component in the teaching process, determining the goal of the activity, its content, and methodological procedures." The communication situation and cooperation play an essential role in the communication acts of the artistic text, reflecting the perspectives of the author and recipient.

In the 21st century, the approach to teaching literature has shifted from a purely factual orientation to actively engaging with artistic texts and developing reading skills for everyday life, including non-artistic texts.

4. School Reading as a Factor in the Development of Reading Literacy and Readership

The demand for functionally literate individuals is increasing due to the abundance of information, not only in cyberspace. According to Štěpáník (2019, p. 6), "In connection with the information explosion and today's constant life in cyberspace, understanding various types of communication becomes a means of self-preservation for a person." Trávníček (2008, p. 34) defines reading as "planned and targeted development of reading, especially with the help of schools, libraries, and other educational institutions; development, which is frequently accompanied by institutionally organised campaigns and support actions." schools need to support the education of readers and encourage an active interest in reading. Lederbuchová (2004, p. 21) describes reading interest as "a form of spontaneous affection, which is not always conscious. The need for reading also changes, and the child's attitude towards reading develops." Trávníček (2008) categorised readers into four groups based on the number of books read per year and reading frequency: 1. non-reader (0 books read per year), 2. sporadic reader (1-6 books read per year), 3. regular reader (7-12 books read per year), and 4. frequent reader (13 or more books read per year).

The latest annual report (2022/23, p. 121) from ČŠI indicates insufficient use of teaching methods that promote active student engagement, independence, critical thinking, and shared responsibility for learning outcomes in

secondary schools. It also points out that Czech students are not adequately learning various reading techniques involving digital skills, and there is a lack of active engagement with different types of texts and strategies for reading texts from different perspectives or challenging the opinions presented in the text (VZ ČŠI, 2023, p. 97).

The current concept of school Maturita reading in the Czech Republic

The school reading list can be described as a canonical document. In 2007, Markiewicz defined "canon" as "a rule, norm, and also a pattern or set of such rules, norms, or patterns" (p. 63). The author also identified five critical functions of the literary canon: formative, artistic, competence, identification, and integration.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic has changed the curriculum model for the Maturita examination in the Czech language and literature (ČJL) since 2022. The common part of the examination now only consists of a didactic test prepared by the CERMAT company. In previous years (2011 – 2020), the common part of the examination included a written essay, an oral exam, and a didactic test. The Maturita Catalogue was a critical document for the exam concept during that period. The written secondary school thesis and the oral examination are now the only profile parts of the secondary Maturita examination from the Czech language, and the responsibility for their content and organisation lies with the school head teacher, without the mandatory acceptance of the previously binding curriculum catalogue. However, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic recommends that secondary schools work with the school reading lists. Currently (2024), most secondary schools still accept the information contained in the so-called Catalogue of Examination Requirements of the Common Part of the Maturita examination (CERMAT, 2019/2020) and the recommended rules for compiling school reading lists and student reading lists.

In the Czech Republic, every secondary school that administers the Maturita examination (2024) informs students at the beginning of their studies about the school's approach to reading, including the school's reading guidelines and the requirements for compiling mandatory reading lists for students. The mandatory secondary school reading mainly consists of literary works. An emerging trend in secondary school education is the emphasis on improving students' reading skills for non-literary texts. However, the lists of non-literary texts for secondary school reading are not part of the official Czech language and literature Maturita examination curriculum. Each secondary school that administers the Maturita exam is responsible for determining the recommended reading list, both literary and non-literary. Králíková (2020, p. 5) states, "the school environment tends to focus on specific authors rather than specific works."

Critical curricular rules for creating a school reading list (valid until 2019/2020, according to the Catalogue):

- The minimum total number of literary works offered is 60. The upper limit is not set.
- A comprehensive work, not a part of it, is considered a literary work.
- The edition is specified for a literary work from world literature.
- The student submits a list of 20 literary works compiled based on the criteria for selecting graduation assignments for the oral exam to the head teacher" (Catalogue, 2019/2020).

Critical curricular rules for creating a school reading list (valid until 2019/2020, according to the Catalogue):

- Prose, poetry, and drama must be represented in the list by at least two literary works.
- The list can contain a maximum of two works by one author" (Catalogue, 2019/2020)."

Our research plan and selection of research tools for content analysis of reading lists at selected secondary technical schools in the Czech Republic are based on a mixed research design (Vicherková, Paličková, and Davidová, 2020).

5. Research Methodology 1

In the first phase of the research, we dealt with the problem of the school reading list as a factor affecting the understanding of the content of artistic texts in printed and electronic form. The research goal was to analyse the content of four secondary school reading lists (focused on education) completed with the Maturita examination.

5.1 Content Analysis of School Reading Lists (Artistic Literature)

5.1.1 Objectives of content analysis and research questions

The research objective is to analyse the content of the school reading lists of secondary technical schools completed with the Maturita examination.

Partial objectives:

- To determine how much contemporary Czech literature of the 21st century (published since 2000) is represented in selected school reading lists.
- To determine how many works of contemporary world literature of the 21st century (published since 2000) are represented in selected school reading lists.
- To determine how many works of world and Czech literature up to the end of the 18th century are represented in selected school reading lists.
- To determine how many works of world and Czech literature from up to the end of the 19th century are represented in selected school reading lists.
- To determine whether there is a difference in the number of books in individual selected school reading lists.
- To determine how many printed publications are represented in selected school reading lists.
- To determine how many electronic publications are represented in selected school reading lists.

Research questions related to sub-objectives 1-5:

- Are works of world and Czech literature up to the end of the 18th century represented in the selected school reading lists in a minimum number of 2 literary works (according to the requirements set out in the Catalogue of Examination Requirements for the Common Part of the Maturita examination (CERMAT, 2019/2020)?
- Are works of world and Czech literature up to the end of the 19th century represented in the selected school reading lists in a minimum of 3 literary works (according to the requirements set out in the Catalogue (CERMAT, 2019/2020)?
- Are works of world literature of the 20th and 21st centuries represented in the selected school reading lists in a minimum of 4 literary works (according to the requirements set by the Catalogue (CERMAT, 2019/2020)?
- Are works of Czech literature of the 20th and 21st centuries represented in the selected school reading lists in a minimum of 5 literary works (according to the requirements set out in the Catalogue (CERMAT, 2019/2020)?

Research questions related to sub-objective 5:

- Do the selected school reading lists contain a higher number of works than the specified minimum number according to the Catalogue, 2019/2020 (60 works)?
- How many works match in the selected school reading lists?
- Do the selected school reading lists contain fewer works than the specified minimum number according to the Catalogue, 2019/2020 (60 works)?

Research questions related to sub-objectives 6 and 7:

- Are printed texts represented in selected school reading lists?
- Are electronic texts represented in selected school reading lists?

5.1.2 Research sample

School reading lists of four secondary vocational schools with a pedagogical focus in the Moravian-Silesian and Zlín regions in the Czech Republic (Ostrava, Havířov – Suchá, Vizovice, Kroměříž)

5.1.3 Variables

Variable 1 - works of world and Czech literature up to the end of the 18th century

Variable 2 - works of world and Czech literature up to the end of the 19th century

Variable 3 - works of world literature of the 20th and 21st centuries

Variable 4 - works of Czech literature of the 20th and 21st centuries

Variable 5 – minimum number of cannons (60 cannons)

Variable 6 – printed publications

Variable 7 – electronic publications

We researched using content analysis of the school reading lists from four secondary vocational schools in the Moravian-Silesian and Zlín regions.

The school reading lists from the four examined schools included the following variables:

- P2: Works of world and Czech literature up to the end of the 19th century (minimum of 3 literary works)
- P3: Works of world literature of the 20th and 21st centuries (minimum of 4 literary works)
- P4: Works of Czech literature of the 20th and 21st centuries (minimum of 5 literary works)
- P5: Minimum of 60 offered works
- P6: Printed works

Item P1 (works of world and Czech literature up to the end of the 18th century in a minimum number of 2 literary works), which was included in the school reading lists of the three examined schools, resulted in the most differences in the number of publications. The school reading lists varied in comprehensiveness among the examined schools; the lowest number of texts recommended for school reading was 61, and the most extensive list contained 110 items. Variable P7 indicates that there are no works in electronic form (e.g. in the form of a link) in any of the examined school reading lists. Additionally, the school reading lists do not contain texts reflecting the characteristics of everyday life in the current 4.0 society and texts of a non-artistic nature.

Table 1: Number of occurrences of variables (Column 1 means - contains, column 2 means - does not contain)

List →	S1		S2		S3		S4	
	1 (contains)	2 (doesn't contain)	1 (contains)	2 (doesn't contain)	1 (contains)	2 (doesn't contain)	1 (contains)	2 (doesn't contain)
P1	X		X			X	X	
P2	X		X		X		X	
P3	X		X		X		X	
P4	X		X		X		X	
P5	X		X		X		X	
P6	X		X		X		X	
P7		X		X		X		X

6. Research Methodology 2

In our quantitative questionnaire research, we concentrated on four secondary vocational schools and two higher vocational schools in two Moravian regions of the Czech Republic. The research took place from November 2023 to February 2024, and we collected data from 439 respondents. The semi-structured questionnaire included 24 semi-open items categorised as A to E.

- Non-artistic text and reader interest (5 items)
- Artistic text and reader interest (5 items)
- Reading strategies (4 items)
- Comprehension and reflection of the read information (5 items)
- School reading (6 items)

Research objectives

The research aimed to determine what factors influence the reader's understanding of printed, electronic, and digital texts. The research problem was decomposed into the following research questions:

- Is there a connection between the search for professional non-fiction texts for personal reading interest and the interest in the formal organisation of the text (the structure of the text)? A1/A5
- Is there a connection between regular reading of printed books and the perception of hybrid texting as an innovative strategy? E1/E3

Results

The research objectives and questions led to the formulation of two hypotheses. In the next chapter, these hypotheses are presented along with the verification results.

Descriptive research data

Descriptive data more closely characterises the factors influencing the reader's comprehension of the individuals of the research group in terms of content, form, and type of texts. Research into the expression of preference for the type of non-artistic text showed that the greater half of 240 respondents (54.67%) prefer to read scientific professional texts, and 199 respondents (45.33%) read historical documents with preference. 208 respondents (47.38%) commented on the point of view of readers' popularity of the form of non-artistic texts, respectively, that they like to read scientific articles. Furthermore, 115 respondents (26.20%) answered that they consider textbooks their favourite reading, and 116 respondents (26.42%) prefer popular science books.

Relational research results

Two hypotheses were tested Using Pearson's Chi-square for the contingency table. The following two tables present the source data and corresponding statistical results.

In the questionnaire, the students answered questions A1 (whether they search for professional non-artistic texts based on personal interest) and A5 (whether they are interested in the structure of the text/graphics and references when reading a non-artistic text).

Table 2: Detected and expected frequencies to H1

Pearson's chi-square = 14,467513 degree of freedom = 1 significance $p=0,0001426$			
Q A1	Q A5 - yes	Q A5 - no	Line totals
yes	138 (118,24)	73 (92,76)	211
no	108 (127,76)	120 (100,24)	228
Column totals	246	193	439

Hypothesis 1 stating that students who search for professional non-fiction texts based on their interest are more frequently interested in the formal organisation of the text (text structure) when reading a non-fiction text than students who do not search for professional non-fiction texts based on their interest, **was confirmed** (Table 2). There is a statistically significant relationship between the answers to both questions (searching for professional non-fiction texts based on personal interest and interest in text structure when reading non-fiction texts).

In the questionnaire, the students answered questions E1 (attitude towards electronic books, e-books) and E3 (opinion about hybrid texts).

Table 3: Detected and expected frequencies to H2

Pearson's chi-square = 0,052519 degree of freedom = 1 significance $p=0,818736$			
Q E1	Q E3 - I find them innovative	Q E3 - I find them less understandable	Line totals
I read them regularly, and I prefer them to printed texts	83 (82,00)	37 (38,00)	120
I like printed texts	217 (218,00)	102 (101,00)	319
Column totals	300	139	439

Hypothesis 2, suggesting that students who prefer reading electronic texts would consider hybrid texts more innovative than students who prefer printed books, **was not confirmed** (Table 3). There is no statistically significant relationship between the attitudes towards electronic books (e-books) and opinions towards hybrid texts.

A survey conducted with 439 Czech secondary school students found that factors influencing the understanding of texts in Society 4.0 include comprehensible and well-structured content and format of school reading, reading experience, and the need for daily reading of non-artistic texts in electronic or printed form. In Czech secondary schools completed with the Maturita examination, more than 240 (54.67%) respondents read scientific professional articles in printed or electronic text form, and 199 (45.33%) preferred reading historical documents

in printed or electronic text form. In Czech secondary schools completed with the Maturita examination, more than 240 (54.67%) respondents read scientific professional articles in printed/electronic text form, and 199 (45.33%) preferred reading historical documents in printed/electronic text form. According to the thematic preference of reading, 101 respondents (23.01%) prefer reading science fiction and fantasy literature, and 50 respondents (11.39%) prefer reading artistic texts. Secondary school students are most interested in reading texts of an everyday nature with a focus on current events, as stated by 156 (35.54%) respondents. The majority, 333 respondents (75%), prefer a printed book to a printed magazine (preferred by 31 respondents, 7.06%) or to a printed newspaper (31, 7.06%). Less than one-third of respondents (120, 27.33%) prefer reading electronic texts to reading printed texts, and 319 respondents (72.67%) prefer reading printed texts. More than two-thirds of respondents (300, 68.4%) consider hybrid texts innovative, while only 139 respondents (31.66%) think they are too complex. Pupils read non-artistic texts more often while studying, as stated by 283 respondents (64.46%), and only 156 respondents (35.54%) answered that they mostly read non-artistic texts in their free time. Of the non-artistic texts, secondary school pupils most frequently read professional texts as part of their education, as stated by 89 respondents (20.28%). Respondents (207, 47.15%) also mentioned simply informative texts as frequently read non-artistic texts, while administrative texts were read the least frequently (according to 143 respondents, 32.57%). More than half of respondents (240, 54.67%) consider school reading important for developing intellect; 197 respondents (44.87%) consider school reading as a waste of time. More than half of 242 (55.13%) respondents consider school reading an essential activity.

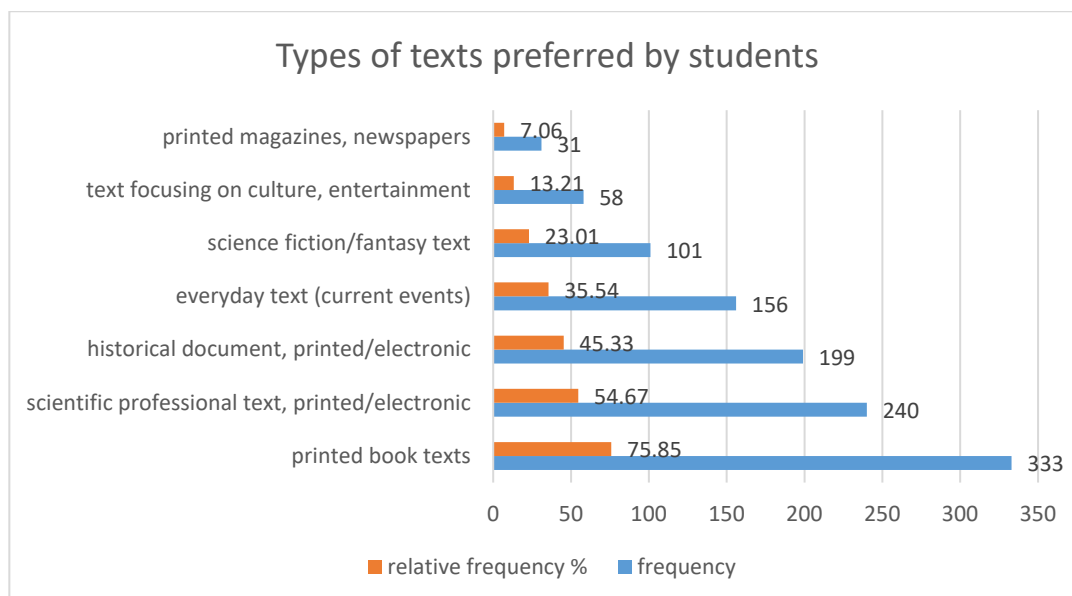


Figure 1: Types of texts preferred by students

7. Discussion and Conclusion

The initial phase of the research involved using content analysis to examine the "School reading list" document, which included artistic and non-artistic texts from four vocational secondary schools in the Czech Republic. The results indicate that while schools list literary works in printed format, they provide e-links to literary and non-literary publications on their websites. The analysis reveals that the number of recommended literary works for secondary school art reading ranges from 61 to 110, focusing on contemporary Czech literature. Notably, the school reading lists do not include texts that reflect the characteristics of life in the current 4.0 society.

The results from the second phase of quantitatively oriented questionnaire research indicated that text content (what the text tells about) and text form (how the text is organised, what parts the text consists of, and what form it is written in) influence reader comprehension. Factors influencing reading comprehension include lists of school reading and criteria for compiling school reading, such as comprehensibility, clarity, logic, quality, and quantity of information. This also encompasses publishing information on recommended school/daily reading by the school institution, electronic/digital links to resources, and a repository of electronic and hybrid texts (artistic and non-artistic). An important aspect is the placement of information on recommended/leisure reading of artistic/non-artistic texts in an electronic/digital environment, for example, on the websites of secondary schools, as well as understandable, clear digital access to information for pupils/their parents, teachers/school staff, the educational public, and the general public. The research results indicated that hybrid texts are

innovative in Society 4.0 and that school reading is discussed in Czech secondary education. The research data present the relationship of pedagogically oriented Czech high school students to various types of texts, the popularity of reading artistic/non-artistic texts, the understanding of read information in terms of content and form of texting, and the importance of reading different types of texts in printed and electronic formats.

The quantitative research results confirmed Hypothesis 1, indicating a statistically significant relationship between students' attitudes towards electronic books and their reading interest in the formal organisation of the text. However, the research did not confirm Hypothesis 2, which suggested a statistically significant relationship between students' attitudes towards e-books and their attitudes towards hybrid texts. An interesting finding is that the majority (88.15%) of respondents consider it necessary to read texts daily to develop knowledge.

The role of informal learning in adult education was examined in a recent study by Sulkunen, Nissinen, and Malin (2021). This research sought to analyse the impact of informal education compared to formal and informal learning on adult literacy in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden among individuals aged 35-65. The study utilized a subset of respondents from the Nordic countries sourced from the PIAAC dataset from 2011-2012 and employed regression analysis to examine the influences above. The study's findings indicate that non-work-related reading significantly influences educational ambition and the potential for literacy development among adults with lower levels of education or those who are unemployed. Research conducted by Akimova in 2019 delved into the issue of understanding Internet texts. The study's primary objective was to investigate the impact of user experience with Internet texts on the process of interpreting them. This was achieved through a semantic and receptive experiment and methods such as semantic and pragmatic interpretation, content analysis, and subjective scaling on a sample of 716 respondents. The research results revealed that over half of the users underestimate the complexity of Internet texts. Furthermore, it was found that experience with Internet texts enhances the accuracy of understanding by 15%, and users evaluate it more consistently, even as their awareness of their attitude towards it grows. It was also evident that experienced users correctly interpreted only a quarter of the texts, while random users interpreted only a sixth. Additionally, Brožová and Brož (2006), Hník (2016), and Horáková (2021) researched Maturita examination reading in the Czech context. Curkovič and Krpanec (2023) explored the relationship between the amount of school reading experience and attitudes towards reading. Lastly, Tegmark, Alatalo, Vinterek, and Winberg (2022) focused on students' motivation to read at school in terms of reading strategies (pp. 986 – 1004).

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