Fragmented reading: a strategy learning in digital era

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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on the reading influence on the learning process of students from the Teaching IT department of UNAN-Managua. This investigation comes from the fact that the students barely read books, whether digital or hard copy. Likewise, it was noticeable that reading is poor in the Teaching IT major's students. Therefore, it was decided to research with the Teaching IT department. The population included staff and students around 170 individuals. To do it, a theoretical frame was built which covers the different types of reading and the reading habits that lead analysis and discussion. The research is descriptive with a qualitative approach, although quantitative instruments are used, a detailed and in-depth analysis is made to make the phenomenon clearer. From the analysis process, it was obtained that students make a superficial reading and fragmented as a learning

strategy; besides, they do not invest in buying books, they mostly go downloading them from the Internet. In their spare time, they prefer to spend time with their friends or sleep instead of reading, even though teachers propose strategies for reading compression and encourage reading, students do fragmented readings, not deep, focused more on the steps, however, they have developed the ability to extract main ideas and build knowledge from different sources, and also can discriminate information in short periods.

INTRODUCTION

It is not strange that nowadays there is little reading habit among children, young people, and even adults. They do not include reading among their hobbies and this can be due to several factors: they do not find reading useful or it has no relation to their daily life. Observing children, it is evident that they do not like reading and prefer a television program, an online tablet, or anything else that is at leisure and gives them pleasure. On the other hand, young people are more tempted by social networks and being always in touch with social groups, watching the -memes-, and every activity posted by their friends. This does not vary in adults because many of them after finishing their studies or courses, do not continue with the exercise of reading, but go to it only when necessary and most of them are issues related to their work environment. In general, reading is seen as an obligation with their professional or academic duties.

However, in the educational environment where reading is fundamental for the acquisition of knowledge, most students prefer a summary of a book or readings -super short ones- that do not exceed five pages; others prefer to see illustrations, graphics, and verbal explanations. The students are staying only with what the teacher provides, for example, there are video tutorials, so used in virtual and face-to-face educational environments, since they prefer to see and hear than to read.

Therefore, reading has gone from being something indispensable in the learning process to being seen as a condemnation among students and this is because reading has been reduced to the exercise of knowing letters (symbols), forming words (set of symbols), and reading sentences (translating symbols). However, it remains superficial; reading leads to interpretation, imagination, critical thinking, and other aspects that are hidden in this process.

After having exposed the problem, it is necessary to make an investigation to know the opinion of young university students regarding their reading habits, to know the relationship that reading has with their learning processes, to identify what teachers are doing to promote reading, to know to what extent reading is related to their daily lives and if in any way they read, to determine what kind of reading they are doing, as well as how technology influences the development of this competence.

Reading

Talking about reading requires thinking about its meaning or reason for being, some authors consider that reading is the ability to see, interpret and understand the content of sentences, however, blind people, use the braille method to read, this leaves evidence that reading involves other aspects (Goodman, 2019.) which will be addressed below.

To better understand, it is necessary to be clear about what to read is, and what reading is, taking the Dictionary of the Real Academia Española as a reference, reading is defined as the action of *"Looking through the written or printed material to understand the meaning of the characters used"* (Real Academia Española, n.d., definition 1). In this same sense, there is another definition that seems to be more comprehensive, which is "*Understanding the meaning of any type of graphic representation*" (Real Academia Española, n.d., definition 2). With all this and the above, it is conceived that reading is the capacity to understand the symbols used to transmit something, for example, when seeing a stop sign on the road transmits a message or when seeing a change of light at a traffic light you can also read something, this is because it is possible to understand the symbolism and through it the message you want to transmit. So, what is reading?

It is convenient to distinguish the concept of reading, taking again the Dictionary of the Real Academia Española, reading is defined as the *"interpretation of the meaning of a text"* (Real Academia Española, n.d., definition 3). From the above, it can be said that reading is the capacity to internalize the semantics of symbolic representation, giving personal and independent meaning to the message. It is worth mentioning that reading is not limited to texts, according to Ramírez (2009) *"[...] incorporating not only the textual sphere based on alphabets but also other language systems such as the corporal, musical and iconic"*, that is, all kinds of symbols that allow the interpretation of the message it transmits.

In summary, to read and reading cannot be separated, although it has been made clear that they have different levels of depth in meta-cognition, reading involves psychological processes that are rarely addressed in studies, but that is inherent as Freire (1996) states that reading is the way to obtain freedom and thus be able to "read the world" which leads to the development of criticism, reflection. Nevertheless, reading is not limited to the action of reading, to that, we must add what we read, for that it is necessary to take a tour of the types of readings.

Types of reading

There are different types of reading and this is due to two aspects: the first one has to do with the context, in other words, the environment where the reading takes place, it is not the same to read a book in a library as to read the prices of products in a supermarket, and the second one has to do with the content of what is read, depending on how significant the text is, it is read differently. In summary, the text and the context are the factors that influence the

type of reading, it should be clarified, that all types of reading lead to the same end which is to understand what is read.

Tovar (2009) states, the types of reading refer to the types of readers and their reading habits, where he makes a classification among various social and professional groups. He then groups them into three types: technical, informational, and constructional, each using different types of reading. Below are some types of reading, their concept, and characteristics.

Oral reading

According to Wright (2005), learning to read aloud helps develop phonics, and oral reading is based on the correct pronunciation of words. According to Galera (1998), *"[...] reading aloud becomes, therefore, a magnificent exercise in oral communication"* (p. 114), that is, it serves as a practice of oral expression, it allows the development of the ability to speak in public, therefore, oral reading involves three actors; reader, the author and the receiver (Galera, 1998). Besides, oral reading helps develop the ability to speak in public and the student learns to be self-confident. Among the characteristics of oral reading is volume, which has to do with the strength with which words are pronounced, intonation, which focuses on the highs and lows, in the modulation of the voice, fluency, which refers to the ability to pronounce the words without making so many pauses and punctuation, it consists of respecting the semicolons at the moment of reading, thus avoiding a straight reading.

Silent reading

Using the words of Pérez (1997), silent reading is the communion between a text, whether printed or digital and the reader. Therefore, it is a mental and individual process, where each reader processes and internalizes the message transmitted in a personal way, creating an environment of relation between the writer and the reader. Among the characteristics of the silent reading we have, it creates its points of view, it questions itself, it criticizes the author, and it silently confronts the author, (Pérez, 1997).

For the historians Rodríguez and Gutiérrez (2011), silent reading arises in christian communities, called convents or monasteries, where long readings of the sacred scriptures were assigned, to create *"a spiritual connection with God"*; likewise, memorization was involved, as the main objective, it was very important to memorize the passages of the sacred scriptures. According to the authors, silent reading allows the reader to isolate himself from the world around him, to create a personal environment by admitting a communication between what he reads and what he understands by applying cognitive learning techniques.

Superficial reading (fast)

This type of reading is about extracting the main message from the text, making a quick read by taking a look or browsing through it: For Carr (2011), the superficial or fast reading is due to the digital environment in which we live, social networks, access to the immeasurable amount of information that exists, this makes our subconscious use the technique of superficial reading to absorb large amounts of information, since it is necessary to decode the messages very quickly and thus classify the information that is needed and discarding what is not necessary, to this must be added that those same social networks also serve as distractors, therefore, the brain must be able to do several processes in an instant of time.

Involuntary reading

This happens unconsciously, the reader has no intention of reading or getting informed about something, it happens throughout the day, this is remarkable in the world of advertising, marketing, and advertising specialists are dedicated to creating the best posters, ads, such is the case of the advertising signs that are seen on the streets, as well as in supermarkets, which aim is to capture attention.

Informative reading

This type of reading is related to superficial reading, it is about informing about current issues that allow the reader to know about trends and social topics around the world such as; technology, sports, science, fashion, among others. This reading is noticed in newspapers, magazines, and social networks. Currently, this kind of reading is very common thanks to the amount of information that exists on the Internet about what is happening in the world, therefore, the reading is fast (Villalba, 2000). Also, the reader determines that he or she wants to read, for example, a current topic is the "coronavirus", where readers look for specific information on the subject, discarding other topics that are not of interest.

Selective reading (fragmented)

Here is a type of reading that has much to do with the digital age, one could say that the use of search engines to read about some topic is already part of our daily lives. These types of tools (search engines) have come to facilitate and speed up access to information, and parallel to this, they have revolutionized the forms of reading, as Melo (2017) mentions that *"Data mining and content analysis impose challenges on the way we read"*. In the digital era, it is no longer the user who has control over what is read and searched on the web, but the Internet that suggests you can read based on the words or phrases used in the search and makes a comparison with the most demanded. Here it is convenient to stop and make it clear that search engines present a list of suggested Web sites for the reader regarding the topic being researched, and this is because the information in the digital era is found in "chunks" scattered throughout the network, therefore,

reading becomes fragmented because the same information is also fragmented. Levratto, (2017), explains that one characteristic of digital reading is precisely fragmentation, and this is since reading is not linear, but disintegrated, that is, within digital content, it is possible to go from one site to another, this is called hypertext. This facilitates the selection of content that brings us closer to the objective to be achieved so that the digital reader must develop other skills to select and classify useful information.

Comprehensive reading

This kind of reading is one of the most important on an educational level, the reader does not stay at the level of perceiving what the message means, but rather goes deeper. It is taking the reading process to a learning space, giving it a meaning, internalizing, and modifying or creating mental schemes. Hence, the reader becomes an active agent through analysis, criticism, synthesis, and discrimination, all of them to generate his points of view, in the same way, it entails the development of emancipation in learning. For Achaerandio (2009), understanding is the capacity to give meaning to what is read and to appropriate this new knowledge, as well as being able to adapt and apply it to their context.

Recreational Reading

According to Dezcallar, Clariana, Cladellas, Badia, and Gotzens (2014), recreational reading is *"[…] that which is done on the fringe of academic activities and by one's own decision and freedom of choice of subject"* (p. 108). In other words, it is not compulsory, but a decision made by the reader himself. Now, in the educational field, recreational reading has to do with two elements, the type of literary work and the reader, the first focused on the content and the second related to the characteristics of the reader, referring to age, interests, maturity, among others (de Zúñiga, N., 1979).

In short, recreational reading is that which is given of one's own free will and which is always related to a type of interest on the part of the reader. This type of reading carries with it a personal motivation, finding pleasure in reading.

In orther words, there are other types of reading, such as music reading, which is the ability to interpret musical notations, represented by symbols, and that the reader or interpreter concretizes it in a sound (Galera-Núñez y Tejada-Giménez, 2012). Another reading system is Braille, which consists of forming letters, accents, punctuation marks, and mathematical signs using only six points. These dots have a relief that through the touch with the fingertips it is possible to identify the letters and form words. For the researchers Simón, Ochaíta, and Huertas (1995), the Braille system is created to be explored using the fingers inside grids formed by six points. On the other hand, the authors argue that reading is given through the sense of touch,

using patterns of movement with the hands which makes your brain translate what it touches, to give it an interpretation and then meaning. In short, your hands become your eyes in the reading. And finally, pictographic reading, according to Baque (2016) *"Pictograms have been used to visualize stories or describe situations with the help of images"*, that is, the illustration is the medium used to convey an idea or message, it is a visual resource used to communicate and the reader must use the sense of sight and imagination to give it a meaning.

Therefore, we have exposed different types of reading. From the above, we can notice three common factors in all types of reading, which are: the context, content, and reader, in other words, the type of reading will depend on the level of interest or need to know about a topic; this determines the depth at the level of metacognition about the meaning of the content. However, there is a fourth factor; reading habits.

Reading Habits

To talk about reading habits, it is necessary to remember the definition. Hence, habit is determined as the *"Special way of proceeding or behaving acquired by repetition of the same or similar acts, or originated by instinctive tendencies"*. (Real Academia Española, n.d., definition 1) In fact, it is the ability to do something repeatedly, until a point is reached where it is done subconsciously and becomes part of our daily routines.

Based on the above, it can be said that the habit of reading is the ability to enjoy a book, its subject matter, characters, and arguments (Larrañaga, Yubero and Cerrillo 2008), that is not the number of books, but the quality of reading, the habit of reading is directly proportional to the pleasure of reading, without thinking about an evaluation or competition with peers and friends. According to the authors Larrañaga et al. (2008), reading should not only be about devouring a book, but also about commenting, criticizing, and giving opinions with your peers in such a way that reading becomes a social learning experience.

If we take as a starting point the above mentioned, the habit of reading is not something that magically arises, but it entails a process of daily exercise that should be a joint work between the educational system and the family nucleus and here is the importance of involving parents or guardians. It is worth mentioning that this responsibility falls more heavily on the educational system with students who have grown up in contexts where the intellectual and cultural capital is low or non-existent (Márquez, 2017). In this sense, it is necessary that this habit is developed jointly in the first years of schooling and that they discover that reading is useful throughout their lives.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

Because it is a research focused on reading in college students, it was necessary to determine a population that is under study. To do this, we took as a population the students of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua, Managua and as a study population the students of the Educational Technology Department, of the Faculty of Education and Languages, being the requirement to be students enrolled in any of the three majors: Educational Computing, Graphic Design, and Multimedia and Innovation and Entrepreneurship. In the same logic, the teachers of the DTE were selected. This is a descriptive research because one of its objectives is to make known the type of reading that students do and to explain the reasons why students do this type of reading (phenomenon under study), also, to analyze the strategies that teachers use to promote reading. In this same sense, the methodology used is mixed with an emphasis on the qualitative because a quantitative technique will be used (the survey), however, open questions are included to make in-depth analysis (qualitative). All of this is done to have a better appreciation of the findings and to have a better perception of the phenomenon.

Students and teachers will be selected at random from a sample of one hundred (100) individuals divided among the three majors. The data collection was done through a survey that is structured in three sections, the first one focused on reading habits, the second one, related to the reading frequencies, and finally, the reading strategies used by the students. Concerning teachers, it is divided into reading frequencies, reading strategies they encourage, resources they provide to students, and the opinion they have about the importance of reading from the subjects they teach.

The analysis of the information was carried out through groupings generating behavior patterns of the variables under study, such as the subject of interest for reading, devices used for reading, number of books read, number of hours dedicated to reading, and the relationship between Internet use and reading, and reading strategies. It is worth mentioning that the participants will be anonymous in the study.

RESULTS

This section shows the results obtained through the instruments applied to the sources (students and teachers). Next, the results classified by the different study variables are presented.

Regarding the topics of interest among the students, they are technology, health, and education. Another of the findings was that students in their free time prefer to meet with their friends, sleep, play sports, and read.

It is also evident that the students have few printed books and digital books are mostly downloaded from the Internet. It was also striking to see that the cell phone is preferred by the

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students to read more than the computer, be it a desktop or laptop. Continuing with the reading habits, it was noticeable that students prefer the bedroom as a reading space and it is almost contradictory to say that most students prefer to read in printed material when they have access to so much information in digital.

In terms of time spent reading, it was evident that students read twice a week and it is worth noting that they do not have a favorite or exclusive day to read and leave about an hour in the evening. Regarding the number of books read in a year by the students, an average of four books was obtained and most of them are focused on topics related to their professional profile.

Continuing with the presentation of results, when asked about the type of text the students like to read it was reflected that they prefer quick and easy readings with pictures. Regarding the reading strategies, most of the students look for the information they need on the Internet, it is necessary to warn that, the information is obtained from Web sites, such as blog, Wikis, etc., and very little from indexed magazines or scientific databases and generally these sites are in the Spanish language. On the other hand, students use different strategies to check the validity of the information among which are: checking the author's data, determining if the web page is known, and the relationship with their previous knowledge. And once they find the data useful, students copy the information they need.

Also, in the work of obtaining a greater understanding of the phenomenon under study, teachers were consulted who claim to apply strategies that lead students to achieve it, and to achieve it they agree to use graphic schemes and questionnaires. On the other hand, the information provided by the teacher comes from two sources, recommended books and documents elaborated by the teacher himself. In its totality, they agree that the materials provided are in digital format. However, teachers claim to verify reading comprehension through presentations and discussions or by asking questions. On the other hand, we consulted how teachers motivate students to read, and at this point, two aspects emerged: establishing a relationship between what is known and what is read, and visualizing or constructing images from what is read.

Nevertheless, when consulting the teacher about the type of readers that the students are, they made it clear that they are few for reading and another percentage considers that they are readers by obligation. In this same order, it was possible to evidence that teachers consider that students are capable of following instructions or sequences of steps through reading.

When asked about the importance of reading in their subjects, many of them have mentioned that it serves as a scientific basis as mentioned by Doc1 *"It is the scientific basis of the activities that are carried out in the subject"* others have similar opinions as is the case of Doc3 and Doc5 that they consider that it serves for the understanding of *"concepts and analysis of*

information" and others consider that it serves for the development of *"critical thinking and emitting judgments or opinions".*

Also the opinions were similar concerning reading and the learning process, many teachers agree that they are the basis for learning, as stated in Doc1 which serves for *"knowledge acquisition"* in a similar way Doc2, Doc3. Also, other teachers such as Doc4, Doc5, Doc7 consider that it helps *"reading comprehension" "to make judgments", "internalize, think and propose".*

To better understand the subject of reading, teachers were consulted as to what is the cause of the problem of reading comprehension, and the majority agreed that students do not like to read. However, teachers are clear and similarly believe that reading is the strategy to develop skills in communication or transmission of ideas, as noted in Doc1 which states that it serves for *"development"*, Doc2 reading allows the acquisition of *"vocabulary and [develop] broad conversations"* and similarly Doc3 expresses that it allows the *"analysis of what is transmitted verbally"*. Also, Doc4, Doc5, and others agree that it allows the development of *"communication".*

DISCUSSION

In this section, we intend to deepen the analysis of the results obtained previously.

Regarding the topics of interest for reading, it has been evidenced that the students focus on topics related to their academic formation areas such as technology and education, but it is clear that one topic that stands out is health and this is due to what is happening worldwide with the COVID-19 topic. In Villalba's opinion (2000), the readers look for information on a specific topic of personal interest, and the reading is informative.

Similarly, it was noted that students prefer to interact in social circles or sleep, that is to say, their reading habit is almost non-existent and they do not have that culture of reading since it is ingrained in them from an early age and this coincides with what was proposed by Márquez (2017), that the habit of reading should be developed in the first years of schooling and make them aware of its usefulness for life.

Always about the reading habits, we find that students are few to collect books whether printed or digital and most are acquired through free downloads on the Internet and that should be added that most are related to their university studies for academic development as already discussed in the introduction to this article, the readings are made by a need rather than a pleasure.

Continuing with the reading habits and their relationship with technology, the students expressed the habitual use of the cell phone for reading and this is since most of them have a smartphone and Internet connection most of the time which facilitates the access to information,

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in this same sense they express that the night is the time of the day that they prefer to read and this is related to the intimate space to do it as it is the bedroom. However, they have shown that if they can choose, they prefer to read in print and not in digital form.

Students read a few books in a year, approximately four books, and this is because they spend a few days and hours a week. It should be noted that they are always books focused on their professional profile, be it technology, graphic design, and innovation, therefore, they are technical readings (Tovar, 2009) for future professionals.

From the above, it can be deduced that reading for pleasure is given very little, and this is since there is no motivation or personal interest in a subject. According to Dezcallar, et al (2014), recreational reading carries with it an internal need to know about a subject that is not related to the academic or professional.

Taking as a starting point that students prefer quick, easy, and imaginative readings, it is shown that they prefer that for the speed of detecting what they are looking for, discarding details and extra information.

For Melo (2017) this is due to the digital era and it should be added that access to large amounts of information makes students develop the ability to locate more quickly what they investigate, so digital reading is to read in a fragmented way from different sources to form or build what is being searched for (Levratto, 2017), and as mentioned before, the Internet now facilitates the search for information through the suggestion issued by search engines. It is also considered that time and being in different activities have caused students to opt for this type of reading.

However, the combination of academic tasks and access to a large amount of electronic information through digital devices has generated in students the implementation of a fragmented reading, where the veracity of what is read is not carefully and consciously reviewed, therefore, superficial reading comes into play that focuses directly on the main ideas in the face of an immeasurable amount of information and discards what is not considered necessary (Carr, 2011).

Here it is important to mention that the vast majority of information they have access to is in Spanish, which is a limitation; since not being able to master another language makes their world of knowledge reduced to their native language. And, finally, the consequences, once students get or consider that the information is correct, they do not make an analysis and interpretation and limit themselves to copy and paste, and this is a problem in the learning process that teachers expose at the time.

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Within this framework, the opinion of the teachers who have a comprehensive vision has to be considered. The following is an analysis of the opinions expressed by the teachers within the study.

Teachers claim to use graphic schemes and questionnaires as strategies to promote reading comprehension, although it is true that this works, it cannot be said that it always does, since many of the students specifically look for the answers to what is being asked and to a certain extent what the students do are fragmented readings focused on answering or solving specific activities.

Something positive that was seen is that the teachers elaborate their content, therefore, the student has access to specific information that he or she needs to solve activities that carry procedures or sequences of steps, therefore, in this type of resources, the students do not do in-depth reading comprehension, but the objective is to solve something through a series of steps already dictated.

Now, teachers consider that the motivation for reading is given by the fact of solving activities in the classroom, that is, students must prepare themselves for a possible exhibition or debates, once again it is made clear that reading is not out of habit or pleasure, but out of obligation or necessity always focused on their educational task, therefore, the student could then see reading as a means to solve something or get a score. Hence, most teachers consider that students are few for reading or readers by obligation and not willingly.

Here it is necessary to stop for a moment because teachers are clear that reading is how a scientific base is reached and knowledge is generated based, also, it serves for the development of critical thinking, however, they say that students do not like to read. Here is more or less how it was thought that the lack of varied reading, causes them not to develop a good written language and a low lexicon in oral expression, by not having enough vocabulary and this is of great importance since they are future teachers who will have to prepare others and verbal and written communication and are fundamental in the educational world.

In short, it has been seen that the reading in students is low and they are inclined to a superficial and fragmented reading with little analysis and this is caused by the digitized world in which we live, and to this must be added that the forms of communication have changed so that oral expression has been lost in some way, and there is a weak vocabulary management and a low understanding of what is read, the effect that can be noticed is that students get carried away by the basics that they read. But not everything is negative this type of reading (fragmented) on the other hand has developed the ability to extract main ideas, build knowledge from different sources and be able to detect keywords in short periods.

CONCLUSIONS

- Students read specific topics related to their profession.

- Students read current topics such as "health" related to the theme of COVID-19. Therefore, they are informative readings.

- They do not see reading as a hobby, they prefer other types of recreational activities.

- Most of the books students acquire are related to their academic area and downloaded from the Internet.

- Students use cell phones for reading and prefer to read indoors and privately. They do silent reading.

- The students are readers by obligation since they do not have a self-motivation for it.

- Students do fragmented and superficial readings, so they do not spend much time in that type of activity.

- Fragmented reading is the result of access to large amounts of information, so the student does not do a thorough analysis and interpretation.

- Students can discriminate information from different sources.

- Students use fragmented reading as a learning strategy to extract specific data and build knowledge from main ideas and all this in short periods.

- Teachers make use of questionnaires and discussions to encourage analytical reading

- Teachers provide self-made resources and students simply solve activities based on those materials.

- Teachers state that most readings are focused on following sequences of steps to solve an activity, due to the nature of their academic area.

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