InTRACt · Interplay of Text, Reader And Context

The language on the screen: children's reading in a multilingual story app

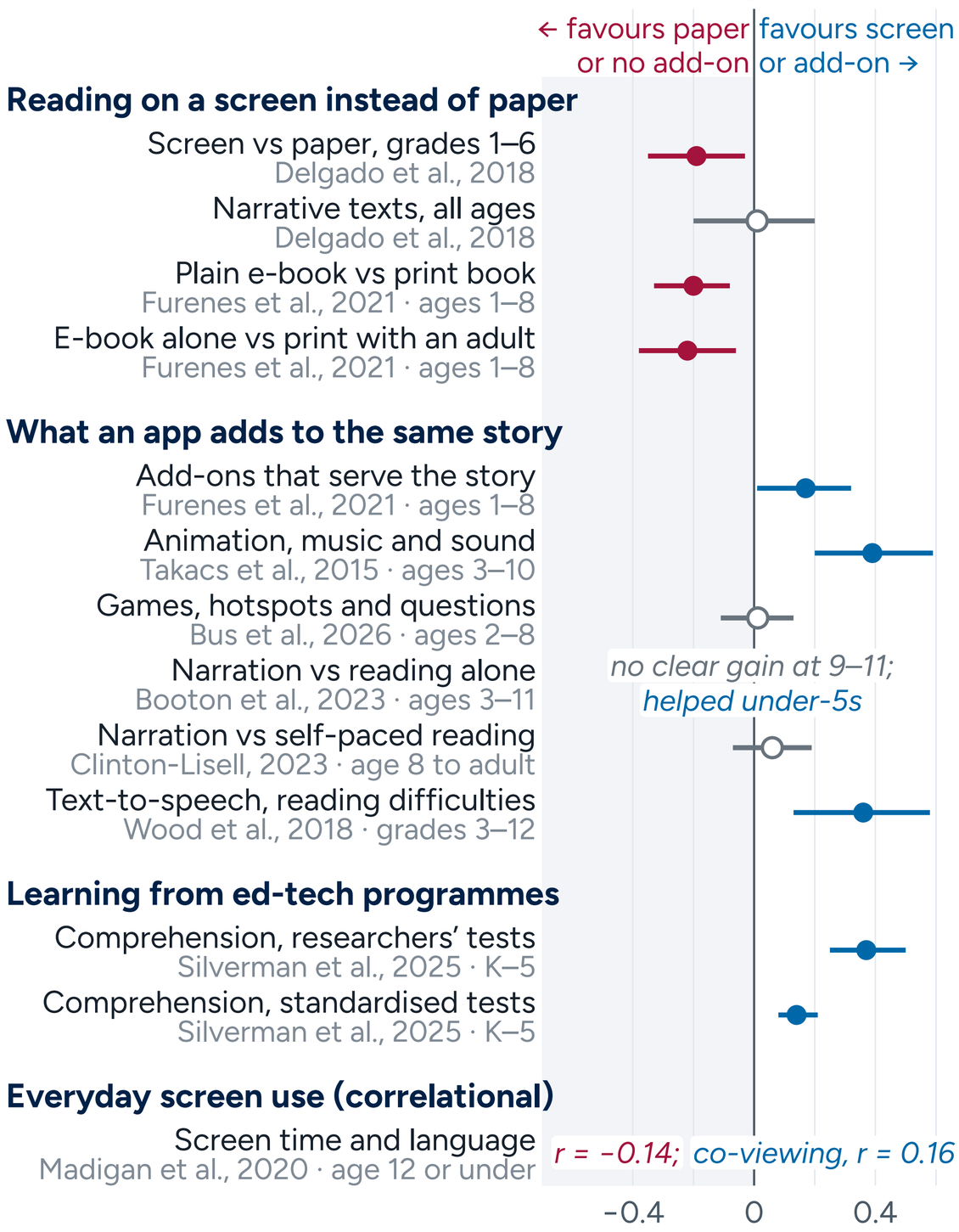
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Research has asked whether screens help or hurt children's reading. We ask how the language of on-screen stories shapes reading too.

WHAT WE KNOW

Screens, apps and children's reading

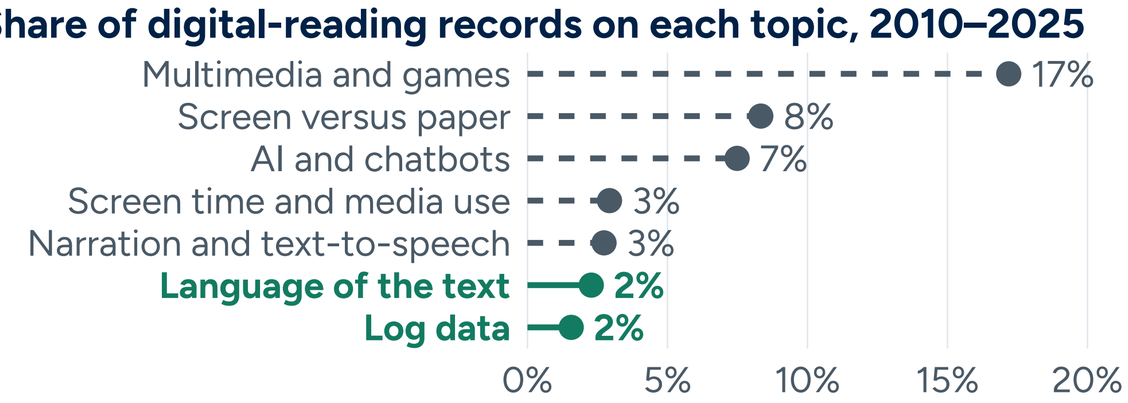


Italic rows give findings that cannot be placed on this scale.

Plain screens cost about 0.2 SD of comprehension, with no clear cost for narratives. Add-ons help when they serve the story, and ed-tech gains shrink on standardised tests.

Where the research has looked

Studies of children's digital reading rarely look at the language of the text or at log data.



Scopus counts made with scopusflow (Bernabeu, 2026b). None of the 1,536 records fell under both green topics, and we found no meta-analysis of generative AI and children's reading.

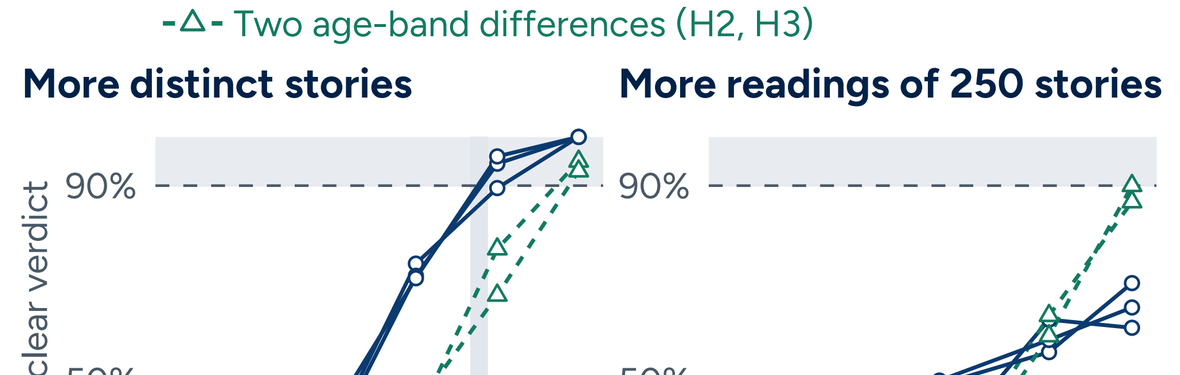
WHAT WE WILL TEST

Using *Let's Story* reading logs in 18 languages, we test whether text features that slow or speed reading in the laboratory do the same in everyday app use.

Let's Story: AI stories, logged at scale

In this app feature, a child picks a hero, companion, setting, plot and theme. A generative model then writes the story (Ratner et al., 2025). In its first month, *Let's Story* logged 419,700 sessions (Ratner & Murphy, 2026).

Six registered hypotheses



H2	**Grammatical** effect, by age band	▲▼ either way
H3	**Continuity** effect, by age band	▲▼ either way
H4	Narration shrinks the **lexical** effect more than the **continuity** effect	
H5	Children rate a story harder when its features slow reading	
H6	More stories read so far	▲ faster

Precision comes from stories, not sessions

Simulated for a small effect (0.10 SD) with the pilotr package (Bernabeu, 2026a). A main effect needs 630–740 distinct stories.

Effects that hold could guide how AI stories are pitched to each age band, though speed is not comprehension.

A Registered Report

Stage 1 in preparation

1. Peer review before any outcome is seen
2. Logs released only after acceptance
3. Text measures fixed blind to outcomes
4. Decision rules set in advance

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References, protocol and code: tinyurl.com/intract-poster