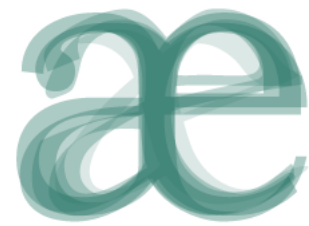


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<http://idw-online.de/de/news774081>Wettbewerbe / Auszeichnungen, Wissenschaftliche Publikationen  
Psychologie, Sprache / Literatur  
überregional**The Joy of Reading: Award Given to Paper on Reading and Flow**

Especially these days, during summer vacation, people love to read: lose yourself in a gripping novel and time just flies. This inability to put a book down was the subject of a recent study conducted by a research team of the Max Planck Institute for Empirical Aesthetics in Frankfurt/Main. The results of their study were published in the journal "Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts (PACA)" and have just been awarded the Outstanding Student Paper Award of the International Society for the Empirical Study of Literature.

Reading pleasure is a multidimensional experience. It arises from the interplay of different states that manifest themselves to a greater or lesser degree depending on the text being read and the person reading it. In their study, the scientists investigated what role the state of flow plays in the reading experience. "Flow" is a term from psychology that refers to what people experience when they are completely absorbed in an activity.

By means of an online questionnaire, the researchers recorded the impressions of 373 study participants who had just read a chapter of Homer's "Odyssey" and evaluated the responses with regard to the state of flow specific to reading. They found that flow plays a key role not only in terms of reading pleasure and text comprehension, but also with regard to how other reading states, such as suspense or identification with central characters, come about.

"Before now, the different dimensions of the reading experience were usually observed independently of each other, but the results of our study show that flow acts as a catalyst for other reading states. These states ideally then converge in the experience of reading pleasure," explains lead author Birte Thissen.

The scientists' study provides the first empirical evidence for the centrality of flow in the emergence of multidimensional positive reading experiences. So far, the concept of flow has played only a supporting role in reading research. This paper suggests that it should be more intensively involved in future studies. Inasmuch as states of flow can be predicted relatively accurately, integrating the concept of flow into current reading research could contribute significantly to the understanding of reading enjoyment.

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A team from the MPI for Empirical Aesthetics found that flow plays a central role in the enjoyment of reading.  
(Picture: MPI for Empirical Aesthetics)