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TRABAJO FIN DE MÁSTER

**GRADED READERS AS A TOOL FOR TEACHING EFL:  
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS ON *FRANKENSTEIN***

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Valladolid, 2019

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## ABSTRACT

Graded readers are an effective tool in EFL learning, and their use is widespread nowadays. The present dissertation aims at analysing two adaptations of Mary Shelley's 1831 version of *Frankenstein*, in order to determine whether a higher or lower degree of simplification would be more exploitable for both teachers and students. In order to do this, we have established an analysis method, which can be taken as a reference method for teachers when analysing this type of materials. Results intend to show which reader is better for an EFL student. Finally, we have created a didactic proposal to put into practice with the best reader.

**Keywords:** graded reader, EFL, reading, *Frankenstein*, simplification, method.

## RESUMEN

Las lecturas graduadas son una herramienta efectiva en la enseñanza del inglés como una lengua extranjera, cuyo uso hoy día está muy extendido. El presente Trabajo de Fin de Máster pretende analizar dos adaptaciones de la versión de 1831 de Mary Shelley de *Frankenstein*, con el propósito de determinar si el hecho de que una obra esté más o menos simplificada hace que tanto profesores y alumnos puedan sacarle un mayor partido. Para esto, hemos establecido un método de análisis, que puede servir como un método de referencia para profesores a la hora de analizar este tipo de materiales. Los resultados buscan establecer cuál de las dos lecturas graduadas es mejor para un estudiante de inglés como lengua extranjera. Finalmente, hemos creado una propuesta didáctica para aplicarla con dicha lectura.

**Palabras clave:** lectura graduada, inglés como lengua extranjera, lectura, *Frankenstein*, simplificación, método.



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Graded readers are a very common resource in EFL classes nowadays, given that they allow learners to approach longer texts, which they would not have the level or the time to read. At the same time, it is a useful way to encourage the students' interest in reading. Moreover, teachers can exploit these resources in order for students to acquire the different skills, at the same time they learn about the literature and culture of the target countries.

Nevertheless, there are mixed opinions about the use of these graded readers, since there are scholars who think using them is not beneficial for learners. On the other hand, we have many advocates of the use of these tools in the EFL classroom. However, this thesis is not going to tackle this debate, given that it has been going on for more than three decades. Assuming that graded readers are a useful tool in the teaching of second and foreign languages, we are going to conduct a quantitative and qualitative analysis on two adapted versions of one same novel, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. The purpose of this study is to establish what could be more useful in the teaching of English as Foreign Language: a reader that has undergone a very strong process of simplification, or one that is more faithful to the original, and thus is less simplified.

Even though this topic has been widely studied from a theoretical point of view, it is hard to find studies tackling the issue from a more practical perspective, especially applied to Secondary Education – many of the studies carried out deal with learners in general, not in high-schools, where the environment is conditioned to the students' diversity and needs. It is for this reason that we have decided to focus this thesis on this aspect, apart from the obvious connection to the MA and many of the subjects in it, e.g. *Lengua Inglesa I* and *Lengua Inglesa II*, *Diseño Curricular*, and *Didáctica de la Especialidad*, among others.

The materials we are going to work with are two graded readers, adapted from the 1831 version of *Frankenstein*, by Mary Shelley. These two readers belong to two different publishers: the first reader was adapted by Kate O'Brien for Burlington Books, and it was first published in 2013; on the other hand, the second one was adapted by Elizabeth Ferreti for Eli Readers, and the first edition was published in 2009.

The reasoning behind the choice of a graded readers adapted from *Frankenstein* is the following: many of the graded readers in EFL classes are adaptations of classic works of literature, ranging from Shakespeare's plays to Isaac Asimov's short stories. In

many cases, these works are chosen because they are more appealing to students. This, however, is a risk, given that not all students have the same likings, and it is virtually impossible that all of the students fully enjoy one same reader. However, here is where the teacher's job comes into play – teachers are supposed to show the students the interesting, useful or curious aspects they can find, in order to increase their interest in these readings, and thus foster their acquisition of English as a Foreign Language.

Even though the original version of *Frankenstein* was written in 1818, this novel has had a great cultural impact because of various reasons: first of all, there have been films and adaptations made from it; next, Frankenstein's monster has turned into a Halloween character, and thus is very present in our culture; and finally, it deals with one of the most important and exploited topics in the history of literature, which is the fact of humans having an immense amount of power, and the consequences that this may bring around. Also, it is probably a suitable choice for Second Year of *Bachillerato* students because it is a demanding reading, but if students work on it, it is accomplishable. Moreover, we believe the adaptations on this work will have numerous elements to study and analyse, from the point of view of linguistics, grammar and EFL learning.

In connection with the previous point, it is also necessary to clarify the overall purpose of this thesis: when teachers in Secondary Education have to pick a reader, they might be somewhat lost when having to select one edition or another, not knowing which might be more recommendable. This thesis, which will include an exhaustive quantitative analysis, may be useful for other teachers given that it is thought of as a reference work, along with a method which can be used when analysing any reader. It is true that nobody will go into much detail when having to select a reading, but this project can be used as a reference point, with a clear evaluation on two different editions, in terms of simplification.

Considering all this, the objectives of this study are the following:

- 1) To conduct a deep analysis on the different aspects that conform these readers, the differences they present with regards to one another, and the original work by Mary Shelley.
- 2) To establish whether a higher or lower degree of simplification is more recommended, based on the results that we obtain from the analysis of the readers.



- 3) To create a series of activities designed specifically for the reader that would best suit an EFL classroom, tackling all the different skills, while maintaining the students' motivation and interest.

The organisation of this project is the following: first of all, we will conduct a literature review on graded readers and their use in EFL teaching to set the grounds this study is going to be built on. Next, in the "Method" section, we will explain the procedures followed in order to carry out the analysis. Then, we will move on to the analysis of the two graded readers per se. After this analysis has been conducted, we will compare the results of both in the "Discussion" section. Once we have selected a preferred reader, we will propose a series of activities that can be applied to an EFL classroom in the "Proposal" section. Finally, we will summarise the main points and conclusions reached with this study.



## 2. GRADED READERS IN EFL TEACHING

Graded readers are widely used when teaching English as a Foreign Language in extensive reading programmes, especially in Secondary Education. However, there is an ongoing debate among scholars, some of them arguing these are to be used in the classrooms, and others rejecting them. In this section, we are going to analyse the different positions regarding graded readers, as well as some problems found in the use of these materials.

### a. Literature in EFL Teaching

A definition of extensive reading could be the one provided by Hill: he states that “by extensive reading, we mean above everything else reading in quantity”. He then moves on to explain that there are three conditions: “a good reading speed and materials that both engage the interest of the student and are written at a level that matches the student's proficiency” (Hill, 1992, p. 8). Extensive reading programmes are incorporated into EFL lessons through the use of graded readers. The purpose, he explains, of these adapted readings, is to “provide the large number of books that students need to read if they are to make real progress in their acquisition of a foreign language” (Hill, 1992, p. 55).

The use of literature as a means to teach English as a Foreign Language is an issue which has divided scholars: some think it is a useful tool, such as Paran (2008), who observes that: “literary texts are suitable because language is learned by human beings, and the interest and love of literature for its various qualities is a human characteristic, a common denominator” (p. 489). Others do not agree with this vision, and they argue that other types of lessons would be more exploitable for students: Edmonson (1997) postulates the idea that studying literature in an English as a Foreign Language class forces the students to learn the teacher's interpretation of the text, as well as saying that literature, in general, offers nothing special to language learners.

However, there is a general consensus regarding the fact that extensive reading is a useful tool for EFL students to improve in classes. The main theory backing extensive reading programmes is Krashen's Comprehensible Input Hypothesis, which states that learners of a second language (or L2) will improve significantly when exposed to a great amount of comprehensible input. Krashen formulated the  $i + 1$  concept, in which “ $i$ ” stands for the input understood by learners, and the “+1” represents an extra difficulty

presented to them, in order for them to improve using their previous knowledge. This only works if the acquisition process has been continuous, structured and following a series of logical steps. The more input they are exposed to, the more they will acquire. Moreover, another of the tenets of this theory is that “speaking fluency cannot be taught directly (...) The best way, and perhaps the only way, to teach speaking (...) is simply to provide comprehensible input” (Krashen, 1982, p. 22).

Another key theory which has been connected to the use of extensive reading programmes is Rosenblatt’s Transactional Theory of Reading, which states that readers read texts with two different purposes in mind: they either read in order to obtain information (in this case, the reading is called *efferent*); or they read for pleasure, in which case the reading is called *aesthetic* (Rosenblatt, 1994). Fernández (2006) applies this theory to the EFL teaching field by arguing that the approach that is more widespread nowadays is the efferent reading one. She argues that this should change and give way to a more aesthetic way of reading too in order for both of them to be present in the EFL classroom, since giving a special relevance to either one of them is not beneficial as they complement each other (Fernández, 2006).

Even if extensive reading programmes are regarded as a useful model for students of EFL, there are also some detractors to them. One of the most important scholars who rejects the idea of using literature in an EFL classroom is Edmondson (1997).

### **b. Graded readers**

The earliest graded readers were developed in India in the 1930s. The purpose of these readers was to make English literature more available to learners of the language. It was not until the 1960s and 1970s that another wave of readers appeared. These kept undergoing a development process throughout the 70s and 80s, focusing mainly on the appeal of these books, which were intended for a variety of audiences who were learning English as a Foreign Language (Hill, 1992).

There are two clear positions with regards to graded readers: we can first see how there is a group of scholars who argue that simplified texts help learners acquire a better understanding of the language they are studying, given that they exclude unnecessary elements that may distract the learners. On the other hand, we have the position which defends authentic texts over graded readers, explaining that there is not a particular reason to simplify authentic texts for second language learners.

There are two clear-cut types of graded readers, each with their particular set of characteristics: first, we have simplified versions of other books (for example, the readers we are going to be working with in this dissertation are adaptations of the Romantic novel by Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*). These books have undergone a complex process, involving many different aspects: the vocabulary has been simplified, sentences have been shortened, the plot usually is simplified as well, and, if there are any secondary plots which, to the eyes of the editor, do not have a special relevance, these might be eliminated in the graded reader.

On the other hand, we have original stories, created only with the intention to help students of English as a Foreign Language improve. These stories are usually quite simple, and the language used in them has been carefully picked for a particular level of learners.

Both the adaptations and the original stories have been criticised because they are written in a pre-fabricated language, and the simplification might affect the content of the story too. Moreover, graded readers are usually very superficial, and they are not demanding. This, on the long run, might turn out to be a problem because students do not know how to deal with “real” literature, and the difficulties they might encounter could lead to a loss of reading habits.

### **c. Simplified texts vs. authentic texts**

There is an ongoing debate since the 1980s with regards to this issue: should EFL lessons include simplified texts or authentic ones? Simplified texts, or graded readers, are created by adapting authentic texts so as to fit a particular level, which can be determined by the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (2001) – the vocabulary, grammatical constructions and cohesive devices are adapted and simplified so that learners can focus on a particular aspect of the language to improve. These graded readers are published by different houses. Some of the most famous ones are *Burlington Books*, *Oxford University Press*, *Young Adult Eli Readers* and *Pearson English Readers*, among others.

Some of the authors who defend the use of simplified texts are Simensen (1987), Claridge (2005), and Nation and Wang Ming-tzu (1999). We will explain their positions next.

Simensen (1987) argues that these simplified texts are written with three particular objectives: to illustrate a specific language feature (which could be useful when dealing with students who are learning different constructions), to modify the amount of lexical input introduced to learners, and to control for propositional input.

Moreover, simplified texts are often regarded as better for EFL learners because they exclude any unnecessary and distracting information, and they reflect what they already know, with the possibility of expanding that knowledge (Davies and Widdowson, 1974). This is directly connected to Krashen's Comprehensible Input hypothesis, given that simplified texts will include the information the students have already acquired in the EFL classroom, as well as a series of features which they will not have acquired yet, in order for them to do so by using their previous knowledge. In this case, this additional information included would be what Krashen calls "+1" (1982).

In order to test the effects graded readers have on learners, Nation and Wang Ming-tzu conducted a study on graded readers and vocabulary (1999), where the effects that these readers have on students was studied, focusing on the acquisition of vocabulary. These researchers argued that there should be a set number of graded readers for each level of English – low-level students of English should read less books than high-level ones, and it would be advisable to read at least one graded reader per week, in order "to meet words often enough to have an effect on their vocabulary growth" (p. 369). They also established that the average number of readers per level is five, and these readings should be supplemented with a direct study of the new vocabulary learned.

Claridge (2005) starts her study on graded readers by referring to an opinion dating from the 1970s, which "maintains that a graded reader cannot give the student an authentic reading experience" (p. 144). Her research on two texts which have been simplified led to the conclusion that if a graded reader is properly written, it could be quite useful for learners, and it could even be used as a means to prepare them for texts which have not been simplified. In her PhD dissertation (2011), Claridge tackles the same topic, concluding that there is a significant problem with regards to teachers' attitudes towards graded readers, since these tend to find useful only those texts which can be exploited for the purpose of teaching grammar and vocabulary, rather than providing an enjoyable experience for the students, where they also can learn.

There are many researchers, however, who discard the idea of using graded readers in high-schools as a means of studying a second or foreign language, arguing that

it is much more beneficial for these learners to read authentic texts. Amongst these, we find authors such as Davidson and Kantor (1982), whose readability formulas will be discussed further on, and Crossley et al. (2007).

Crossley et al. (2007) summarise the studies in favour of the use of authentic texts, mentioning that these incorporate cohesive devices, which are key for the understanding of the text. They also highlight the fact that many critics argue that using a simplified lexicon, rather than helping in the learning of a second language, might even be counterproductive. They conducted a study using the computational tool Coh-Metrix, analysing cohesion and text difficulty. The results concluded that, although simplified texts might provide learners of English as a second language with more coreferential cohesion and more common connectives, they also lack diversity in their parts of speech tags, and they demonstrated to incorporate more complex syntactic constructions than authentic texts, which might make the reading more difficult and even less useful for ESL learners. Their study, however, did not give a clear view as to whether or not simplified texts or authentic ones should be used. Nevertheless, their research did point towards authentic texts as the better option out of the two.

Moreover, Davidson and Kantor (1982) decided to focus on the process of creation of these adaptations, and they tackle the way in which graded readers are created, studying the readability formulas used in the simplification process. These two authors established that the term *readability* is a result of the combination of what the formulas measure (sentence length, vocabulary, or sentence complexity, amongst others), which are all external features. Nevertheless, they also argue that the main flaw in these formulas is the assumption that the only relevant features are sentence length and the complexity of the lexicon employed, when, in fact, there are several other aspects to consider, such as the reader's purpose, or the learner's background and motivation. These elements are not treated by the person in charge of simplifying texts and, thus, are lost in many cases when creating graded readers.

The question that needs to be studied here is whether these subtle aspects could be adapted or included in adaptations and, if so, whether this adaptation would be carried out in a successful manner. Davidson and Kantor (1982) explain that if the only relevant aspects in readability were the external ones, then the formulas could be used in order to produce adapted texts. These scholars pose the necessity of establishing what the term *readability* constitutes, adding that readability formulas do not measure it correctly,

arguing that graded readers undergo a loss of information which is detrimental for young learners.

#### **d. Extensive Reading Programmes in Spain**

Given that this dissertation is being written in the context of the teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Spain, we are going to make a brief analysis on extensive reading programmes, and how these are portrayed in the Spanish curriculum.

If we go to the curriculum for Secondary Education, we can see that including literature in the curriculum is considered to be a useful tool, and teachers are recommended to use it in their lessons. The Introduction section in the curriculum includes, amongst others, the following statement: "... the use of songs, movies, stories and tales pertaining to the cultural identity of that language will be very useful" (Real Decreto 1105/2014, 2014, p. 32233; my translation).

The same happens if we look at the curriculum for *Bachillerato* of Castile and Leon; we find that, in the "Contents" section, we have elements such as "Sociocultural and sociolinguistic aspects belonging to the community where the target language is spoken", "Traditions, values, beliefs and attitudes", "General and specific lexicon", among others (ORDEN EDU/363/2015, 2015, pp. 269-278; my translation).

Moreover, in the section for Second Year of *Bachillerato*, which is the level on which this study is focused, we can find the following evaluation criteria:

Conocer y saber aplicar las estrategias adecuadas para comprender el sentido general; la información esencial; los puntos principales; los detalles relevantes; información, ideas y opiniones tanto implícitas como explícitas del texto si están claramente señalizadas; y matices como la ironía o el humor, o el uso poético o estético de la lengua, formulados de manera clara. (ORDEN EDU/362/2015, 2015, p. 274)

All these elements can be found in graded readers, given that they provide a different set of contexts in which all of these elements can be found. At the same time, we can also find the following learning standard:

7. Comprende los aspectos principales, detalles relevantes, algunas ideas implícitas y el uso poético de la lengua en textos literarios que presenten una estructura accesible y un lenguaje no muy idiomático, y en los que el desarrollo del tema o de la historia, los personajes centrales y sus relaciones, o el motivo poético, estén claramente



From this, we understand that incorporating literature in EFL classrooms is regarded as a tool for teachers to exploit – literature contains many of these elements, apart from grammar and vocabulary aspects, amongst others. The curriculum incorporates the idea that literature, amongst other materials that will foster the learning of the target culture, is to be used in the EFL classroom. The problem we find, nevertheless, is that this is all theoretical, i.e. there are no practical guidelines explaining how this process should be carried out. This is where the teachers' training comes into practice, since they have to find the best way to incorporate these elements into their classes so that students can take advantage of them in their acquisition of the language.

The way literature is incorporated into the EFL classrooms in Spain is through the use of graded readers. There is an issue with this, however, since these graded readers are usually picked the year before by teachers who might not even be in charge of that class. This poses the following question: if a teacher selects one single graded reader, without knowing who his / her students are going to be, and thus not being able to anticipate aspects such as their level and skills, their likes and dislikes and interests, as well as the group dynamics, is just one reader enough?



### 3. METHOD

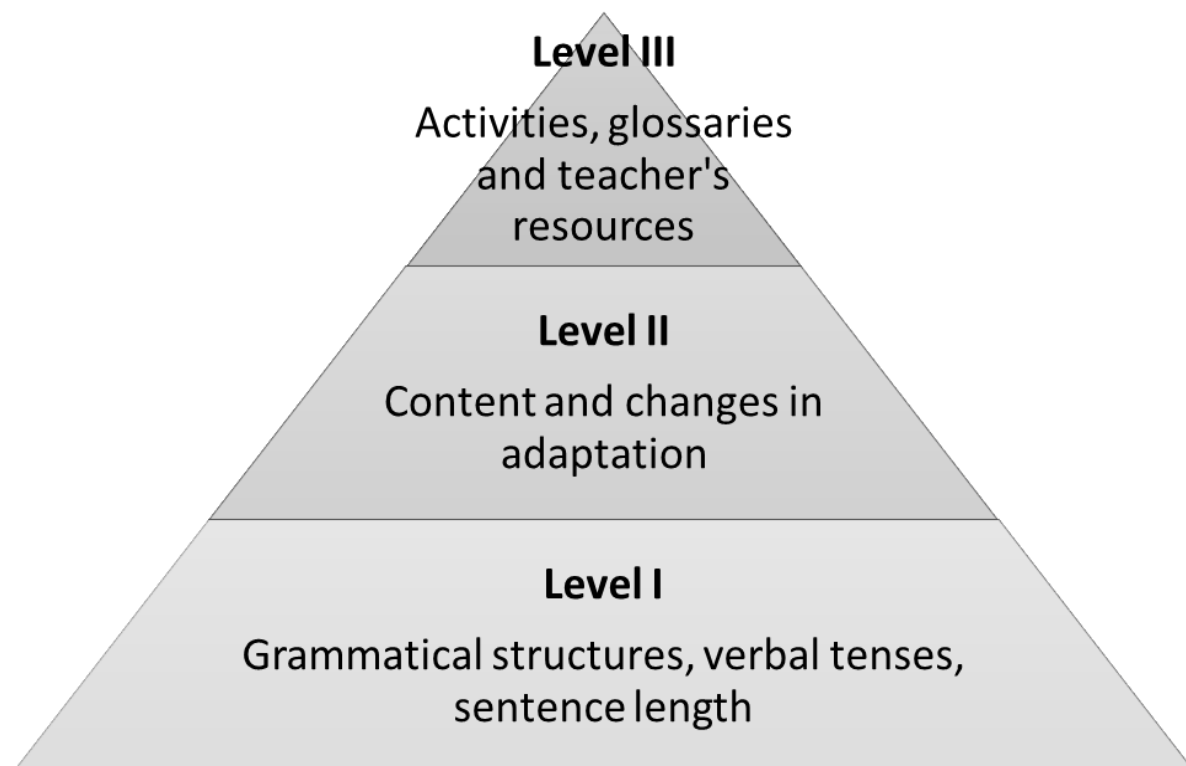
This dissertation will analyse two concrete graded readers in relation to the original text, *Frankenstein*, by Mary Shelley, and it will establish a comparison between both.

First, I read the original text by Mary Shelley, taking down notes related to content, and also annotating important aspects that should be regarded when analysing the graded readers. At the same time, I looked for two adaptations of *Frankenstein*, making sure that these were created for the same level. I also made sure the publishing houses were different, to see if there are any similarities or differences amongst both. The two adaptations I chose were for the highest level in high-school (second year of *Bachillerato*), and thus they should correspond to a B2 level, according to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*. The two publishing houses are Burlington Books, a publisher high-schools frequently work with, and Eli Readers, which is not as common. The latter edition had more pages than the one by Burlington Books, which is another element to consider, and which will be analysed further on. The reason why these two readers were picked was the difference in length, first, given that the Burlington Books version is 67 pages long, whereas the Eli Readers one is 144 pages long. Moreover, both readers belonged to the fourth stage.

After selecting the adaptations to work with, I read both of them, always having the original novel as a reference. I marked all those elements that I found worthy of analysing, and I then classified these into three different levels, which I created specifically for this MA Dissertation. The first level (Level I) includes all those elements related to sentence length, grammar structures, lexicon, register, format, and headwords. The second one (Level II), deals with the changes and adaptations in content. Finally, the third level (Level III) includes items provided by the publishers apart from the adaptations themselves, such as the activities, the definitions and all other useful elements for teachers to include in their lessons.

The idea is that the first level deals with the most apparent features of the text, such as lexicon, for example. In order to analyse the second one, it is necessary to read carefully the simplified texts, comparing them to the original novel, keeping in mind that in this particular case, the novel analysed was written at the beginning of the 19th century, and it has been adapted for young learners to read; and, to finally extract the elements

belonging to the third level, it is key to have studied the two previous levels, as well as to have a background on the teaching of English as a Foreign Language.



*Figure 1: Structure of the Analysis*

Once all the information was gathered, all these items were organised in tables, and graphs were created in order to see more clearly the different aspects. Next, both adaptations were compared. It is from this comparison that a conclusion will be extracted, justifying why one of the adaptations is more recommended for its use in EFL contexts (if there is one). Needless to say, this study is not dealing with whether or not there should be simplified texts or not. Given that the actual system of education has these graded readers included in the classroom, I have assumed as a starting point that these are actually beneficial for students learning English as a second language, and to then conduct my research. Also, this study will explore the different ways to use these readers in EFL lessons.

Next, we are going to analyse each level in more depth, explaining what was studied, the different criteria that was followed, and the purpose of the elements analysed. First of all, in Level I, we are going to analyse the different grammatical structures employed, using a chart created from the appropriate year the readers are directed for, and we will mark down if these include a relevant number of instances of every structure

that students are supposed to learn. In order to carry out this analysis, we will use the two first chapters in both readers, including the Prologue as well. Next, we will move on to the different verbal tenses employed. The same process will apply here: a chart will be created, marking down if there are sufficient instances of the verbal tenses included in the curriculum, and then a series of graphs will be presented, showing the distribution of tenses, and indicating as well if there is a prevalence of simple or complex tenses. After this, there will be a general commentary on the headwords included, and the sentence length and complexity.

Once this is analysed, we will move on to Level II, where we will study the two readers, comparing them to the 1831 version of *Frankenstein*, by Mary Shelley,<sup>1</sup> and commenting on the different content adaptations that have been carried out, and the fidelity to the original, which is also an important matter.

Finally, we will move on to Level III. Here, we will take into account the readers, but with a focus on the teaching and learning process. The exercises provided in the reader will be studied, focusing on its applicability and usefulness. The definitions provided at the bottom of the pages will also be compared between both readers, as well as any other additional materials.

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Shelley first published *Frankenstein* in 1818, but she revised her novel for the third edition of 1831. Most modern editions are based on the 1831 version.



## 4. ANALYSIS

This section will include a separate analysis on the different items we explained in the Method section, focusing on each reader at a time, so as to establish a comparison in the Discussion section. We will also follow the order established previously, analysing the verbal tenses, lexicon, and other superficial aspects included in what we call “Level I”; next we will move on to the analysis of the content (Level II), and finally we will assess the resources the teacher has at hand, as well as the different activities that are provided for students to work on the readings, in Level III.

### a. Burlington Books

The first reader we are going to analyse is the Burlington adaptation of *Frankenstein*. This book was adapted by Kate O’Brien, and it was first published in 2009. This book has 61 pages in total, and it has colourful images that illustrate whatever is being described. It is classified as a “Burlington Activity Reader”, which, as we can read on the back of the reader, is “part of a series of carefully graded readers especially designed for Spain” (O’Brien, 2013).

#### 1) Level I

Moving into Level I, we are going to analyse the grammatical structures employed, checking whether or not most of the structures considered in the curriculum for Second year of *Bachillerato* are used, and with what frequency.

As we explained above, we are going to use a chart created with the program “Excel”, looking at the different items listed in the curriculum for Second year of *Bachillerato*. The result of this analysis can be seen in Table 1, below. Items that are listed as “Irrelevant” have appeared less than five times, whereas those items that are labelled as “Relevant” have appeared five or more times, so we have considered that they can be exploited for the students’ learning of these structures.

As we can see by the results, many of the items listed by the curriculum are either not used in this reader, or they are not included a sufficient number of times. This is probably due to the simplification process undergone, in which many of the complex structures have been simplified, instead including simpler sentences. The question that arises here is the following: if we compare these results to the ones in the Eli Readers version, which is longer, will they be any different? Moreover, if we analyse the items

that do appear, we can see that most of these are structures which are quite common, and thus they are frequently used.

<b>Grammatical structure</b>	<b>Number of instances</b>
Conjunctions (neither...nor)	No instances
Disjunctions (either... or)	No instances
Opposition / Concession (only, despite/ in spite of)	Irrelevant
Cause (because (of), due to, as, since)	No instances
Purpose (so as to)	No instances
Comparison (as / not so ... as, far less ... than)	No instances
Result / Correlation (such that)	No instances
Condition (if, unless, in case, supposing)	No instances
Reported style	Relevant
Temporal relationship ((just) as; while; once)	Relevant
Affirmations (emphatic affirmative sentences, tags)	Irrelevant
Exclamations (what + noun + sentence, how + adv + adj.)	Irrelevant
Negations (never ever, you needn't have)	No instances
Interrogations (wh- questions, aux. questions, tags)	Irrelevant
Expressing existence, entity or quality	Relevant
Expressing quantities (number, quantity or degree)	Relevant
Expressing space	Relevant
Expressing time	Relevant
Expressing manner	Irrelevant

*Table 1: Burlington: grammatical structures*

If we move on to the analysis of the verbal tenses, we have used the two first chapters as a sample, as well as the Prologue. The analysis of these has been compiled into the following table, from which we have created a visual graph to illustrate the results we have obtained.

As we can see below, the tense that has been used the most is the past simple tense due to the fact that the story is told by Frankenstein himself. This was expected when carrying out the analysis, given that this also happens in the original version. The next tense that appears frequently has a much lower number of instances: from 233 instances in the case of the past simple, to 48 in the case of the verbs in their infinitive form. Finally, the third most-frequent verbal tense that appears in this reader is the gerund. This is surprising, given that this is a tense that would normally be expected to appear less frequently than “easier” ones, e.g. the present simple tense.



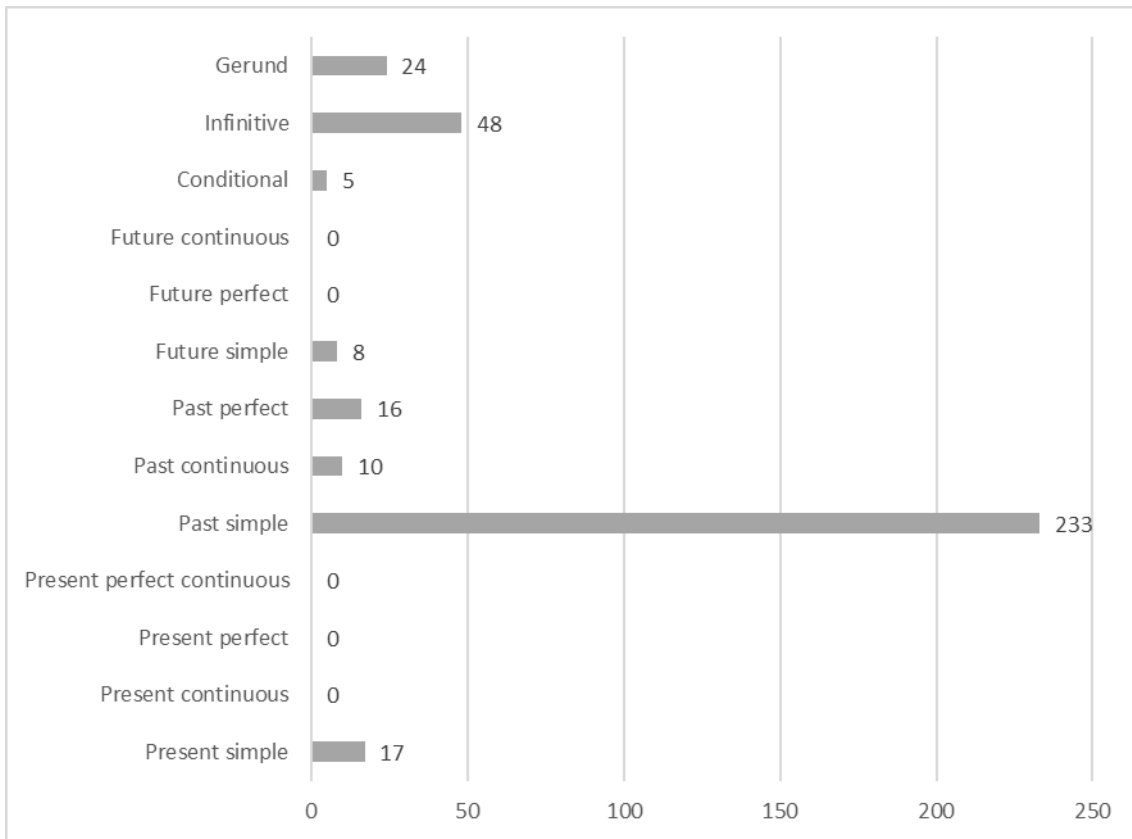


Figure 2: Burlington: verbal tenses

If we focus now on Figure 3, we can see a graph showing the aspects of these verbs. We can see how the vast majority of the verbs are simple – we expected a higher number of these verbs. However, only 10 verbs are progressive, and only 12 are perfect,

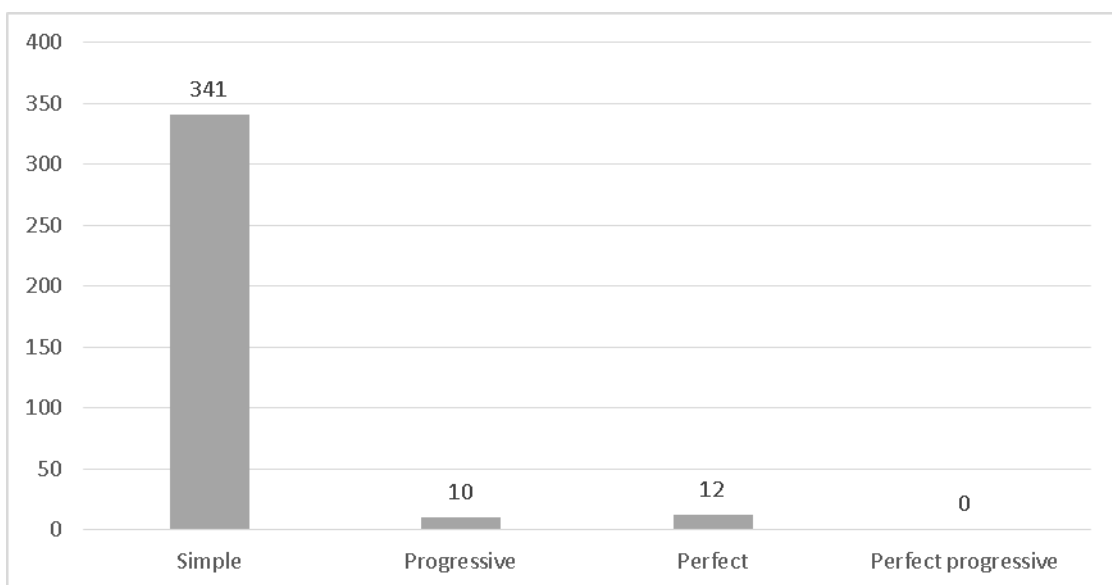


Figure 3: Burlington: verb aspects

which is a very large difference. This also portrays the simplification process, since the original *Frankenstein* is written in a complex Romantic style.

Regarding the headwords, if we go into the Burlington Books website, we can see that *Frankenstein* is listed under the *Stage 4* readers group, and it includes between 1700 and 2200 headwords, which is a rather vague and general figure. Next, if we analyse the sentence length and complexity, we can see that the sentences are quite simple, in general. Complex sentences include coordination with conjunctions such as “and”, “but”, and “so”; subordination with temporal, relative and spatial clauses (using pronouns such as “when”, “which”, and “where”, respectively), among others. In general, however, we can see how the sentences are very segmented and simple:

One day, we passed a poor farm and started to talk to the farmer and his wife. The couple had five children. One of the children looked very different from the others. She was not dark and strong like them, but fair-haired and very delicate. (O’Brien, 2013, p. 9)

This example shows how the sentences have undergone a simplification process, which in this case gives the excerpt a “poor” quality. If we go to the original version to compare, we can see that Shelley wrote the following paragraph:

She found a peasant and his wife, hard working, bent down by care and labour, distributing a scanty meal to five hungry babes. Among these there was one which attracted my mother far above all the rest. She appeared of a different stock. The four others were dark-eyed, hardy little vagrants; this child was thin and very fair. Her hair was the brightest living gold, and despite the poverty of her clothing, seemed to set a crown of distinction on her head. Her brow was clear and ample, her blue eyes cloudless, and her lips and the moulding of her face so expressive of sensibility and sweetness that none could behold her without looking on her as of a distinct species, a being heaven-sent, and bearing a celestial stamp in all her features. (Shelley, 1831, p.28)

## 2) Level II

If we continue onto Level II, we are going to establish a comparative between the 1831 version of *Frankenstein* and the graded reader, which is based on this version, rather than the original one of 1818. We are going to analyse the main events that are described, and we will highlight the main elements that have been omitted in the adaptation.

Before commenting on any specific aspects that have been adapted, we are going to see a table relating each chapter in the Burlington Books version with the chapters in the original work.

<b>Mary Shelley's <i>Frankenstein</i> (1831)</b>	<b>Burlington Books adaptation</b>
Letters I – IV	Prologue
Chapters 1 – 3	Chapter 1
Chapters 4 – 5	Chapter 2
Chapters 5 – 6	Chapter 3
Chapters 7 – 8	Chapter 4
Chapters 9 – 11	Chapter 5
Chapters 12 – 14	Chapter 6
Chapters 15 – 16	Chapter 7
Chapters 17 – 18	Chapter 8
Chapters 19 – 20	Chapter 9
Chapters 21 – 22	Chapter 10
Chapters 22 – 23	Chapter 11
Chapter 24 (including Walton's last letters)	Chapter 12

*Table 2: Burlington: correlation between chapters*

First of all, the graded reader is divided into twelve chapters. Every three chapters, there are a series of activities, which we will analyse later on. Thus, it makes sense to think that the book has been combined into twelve chapters, so that the activities appear consistently after chapters 3, 6, 9 and 12, finally. Each chapter has an added title, which describes the main event that takes place. In *Table 2*, we can see the title assigned to each chapter. These titles have been added by O'Brien, the author of this retelling.

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Title</b>
Prologue	-
1	Victor's Early Years
2	The Discovery
3	Clerval's Visit
4	Justine on Trial
5	The Monster's Story
6	The Arrival of Safie
7	Revenge!
8	The Promise
9	Creation and Destruction
10	Another Murder
11	The Honeymoon
12	Lost in the Darkness

*Table 3: Burlington: titles in each chapter*

Regarding the first pages in the reader, there is an “Introduction” section, written in Spanish, Catalan, Basque and Galician, including some bibliographical information about the author, as well as some facts about the work itself. Then, we can see how the letters that Walton writes to Mrs. Saville, his sister, in which he explains what he is doing in a ship in the North Pole, and which are a contextualisation of the work, have been concisely summarised in the adaptation into four paragraphs, which have been titled “Prologue”. The letter format used by Shelley is lost in the reader, turning it into a straight-forward narrative.

Another important adaptation we can find with regards to the content can be found in the fourth chapter of the graded reader (O’Brien, 2013). In this chapter, Justine is being tried after being accused of having killed Victor’s younger brother, William. The different pieces of evidence that are considered in order to convict her are listed, using bullet points, and thus breaking with the narrative format too. This is probably done in order to ensure that the students understand these aspects correctly, rather than explaining each one of the points as the original presents them. Nevertheless, it comes out as a rather “strange” change.

In Chapter 5, in the adaptation, we see how Victor, very much affected by the fact that Justine was hanged for a murder that she did not commit and which, in fact, was perpetrated by Frankenstein’s monster, decides to go on a trip to the mountains in Chamonix and Mont Blanc. There, he meets the creature, who starts to tell him what he experienced. In her original work, Shelley introduces a whole new chapter, in which the narrator is the monster, and the story thus has a first-person narrator. In the adaptation, there is a break in-between the chapter, and the monster begins his narration. The first-person narrator is kept here, probably because it does not difficult the reading at all – in fact, it makes the reader understand better the events that unfolded.

The following chapter, Chapter 6, contains the part where the monster sees the family in the cottage, and he wants to belong to it. Safie, the young man’s fiancée, arrives, and here, we can see a change from the original onto the adaptation. In the original, we read Safie’s story, which includes some elements related to the Islam and Turkish society, in tune with the Orientalism in vogue in Romantic Britain. Here, we see some elements that may seem shocking to a younger audience, where Safie talks about harems, and to how she defied her father’s authority to go and join Felix, whom she loves. In the graded reader, her whole story is eliminated, maybe because the person who adapted the work

thought it was best to leave it out, both because it was not too relevant for the story itself, and also to avoid the learners from getting mixed up with the different narrators.

Finally, another change we can see appears at the end of the novel, in the last chapter. Here, we see how Victor Frankenstein finishes telling his story to Walton, and he eventually dies. The point of view moves now, back to Walton, who explains, by writing letters to his sister, what happens next. In the graded reader, nevertheless, we do not get this change, but we get a third-person, external narrator.

### **3) Level III**

The last level we have is the one related to the activities, materials and resources included in the graded readers. In the case of the adaptation published by Burlington Books, we have five different elements to analyse: the visual aids and general format, the activities, the media provided, the glossary at the end, and the “Cross-Curricular Focus”.

With regards to the general format of the reader, it includes colourful images that help the learners picture the action in their heads. Before the story starts as such, we get a page where there are images of the different characters with their names, so that students become familiar with the main characters who will be appearing in the story.

Next, we have the activities, which are divided into two different groups: the pre-reading activities and post-reading activities. The pre-reading activities are notably simple: the first one deals with vocabulary that may appear further on in the text, and the second one is a sort of “opinion” exercise, where students are given a series of statements, and they have to explain what their position is. For example, the first statement they have to comment upon is the following: “Great knowledge brings great responsibility”. The vocabulary activity here is probably a way to trigger students’ previous knowledge, so that they do not have as many problems when reading as they would if they did not answer this activity. On the other hand, the second activity is more speaking-focused, and it could be exploited by the teacher in question in order to raise aspects to debate which will be key to the story.

The other set of activities included here are post-reading activities: after every three chapters, there are around four to five activities. Most of them are either focused on vocabulary, or reading comprehension. Some activities require the students to write long answers in their notebooks, so they have to practise writing as well, and there are also some activities which could be exploited for speaking, if the teacher decided to do so.

Moreover, in these sections, we find that the reader includes “fun facts”, which expand slightly the learners’ knowledge. These small texts include information about either the book, vocabulary, or other aspects related to culture.

With regards to the media provided, students have an Internet link written down in the reader, and if they look it up, it takes them to the Burlington Books website, where they can listen to the different chapters, and they can also complete some activities on the website. This is an alternative to the traditional format of graded readers, which typically included a CD at the back, for learners to play.

The glossary included at the end of the reader has the following format: it has five different columns, the first one with vocabulary words in English, and then the translations into Castilian Spanish, Catalan, Basque and Galician. Some other readers, instead of incorporating the translation, include a short definition. The glossary included here is organised in alphabetical order, and it includes words from all categories. It includes a total of 57 words, which are not marked in bold or underlined in the original text, so students do not have a way to know which words are included in the glossary, unless they check it out.

Finally, at the end of the reader, we have a section named “Cross-Curricular Focus”. This section includes some readings about “Medical Ethics” (the text here deals with grave robbing) and “Cloning”. After both texts, there are a few activities, which only work on the student’s reading comprehension. These activities are either “True or False” activities, or putting statements into the correct order. These texts, moreover, include some vocabulary that did not appear in the rest of the book itself, and there is a small glossary at the bottom of each page, with a few words that may be more difficult for learners to understand.

## **b. Eli Readers**

The second reader to be analysed is the one published by Eli Readers, which has 144 pages in total, which is more than double the pages in the Burlington adaptation. It was adapted by Elizabeth Ferretti, and the first edition of this reader was first published in 2009. This, as well as the previous reader, includes images depicting the story, as well as an audio CD at the back, which we will briefly comment upon in the Level II section. Eli Readers are described as “a beautifully illustrated series of timeless classics and specially-written stories for learners of English” (Ferreti, 2009).

## 1) Level I

In this level, just as with the previous reader, we are going to begin by analysing the grammatical structures included, comparing these with the curriculum in *Bachillerato*. As we previously explained, those items listed as “Irrelevant” have appeared less than five times, whereas if there are items that have shown up five times or more, they will be classified as “Relevant”. The results from this analysis can be seen on Table 4 below. We can appreciate how many of the structures appear a relevant number of times for students to really take advantage of them. At the same time, there is only one case where the structure does not appear at all. This means that, even though if the structures do not appear frequently enough for students to apply and learn them, the teacher could direct their attention towards these too.

Grammatical structure	Number of instances
Conjunctions (neither...nor)	No instances
Disjunctions (either... or)	Irrelevant
Opposition / Concession (only, despite/ in spite of)	Relevant
Cause (because (of), due to, as, since)	Relevant
Purpose (so as to)	Irrelevant
Comparison (as / not so ... as, far less ... than)	Relevant
Result / Correlation (such that)	Relevant
Condition (if, unless, in case, supposing)	Irrelevant
Reported style	Relevant
Temporal relationship ((just) as; while; once)	Relevant
Affirmations (emphatic affirmative sentences, tags)	Irrelevant
Exclamations (what + noun + sentence, how + adv + adj.)	Irrelevant
Negations (never ever, you needn't have)	Irrelevant
Interrogations (wh- questions, aux. questions, tags)	Relevant
Expressing existence, entity or quality	Relevant
Expressing quantities (number, quantity or degree)	Relevant
Expressing space	Relevant
Expressing time	Relevant
Expressing manner	Relevant

Table 4: *Eli Readers: grammatical structures*

Moving on to the analysis of the verbal tenses, we can first see that there are many more verbs than in the Burlington reader, which is due to the fact that it has fewer pages. In Figure 4, we can see how, just as in the previous reader, most of the verbs are in the past simple, because almost the entirety of the story is told by Victor Frankenstein. Nevertheless, we can also appreciate more variety, since we also have other tenses, e.g.

gerund, infinitive, past perfect, past continuous or present simple. This can give way to the teacher to ask students to focus more on these tenses in particular. Other tenses, such as the conditional, do not appear so frequently. This is expected, given that the conditional tense is less used than other ones.

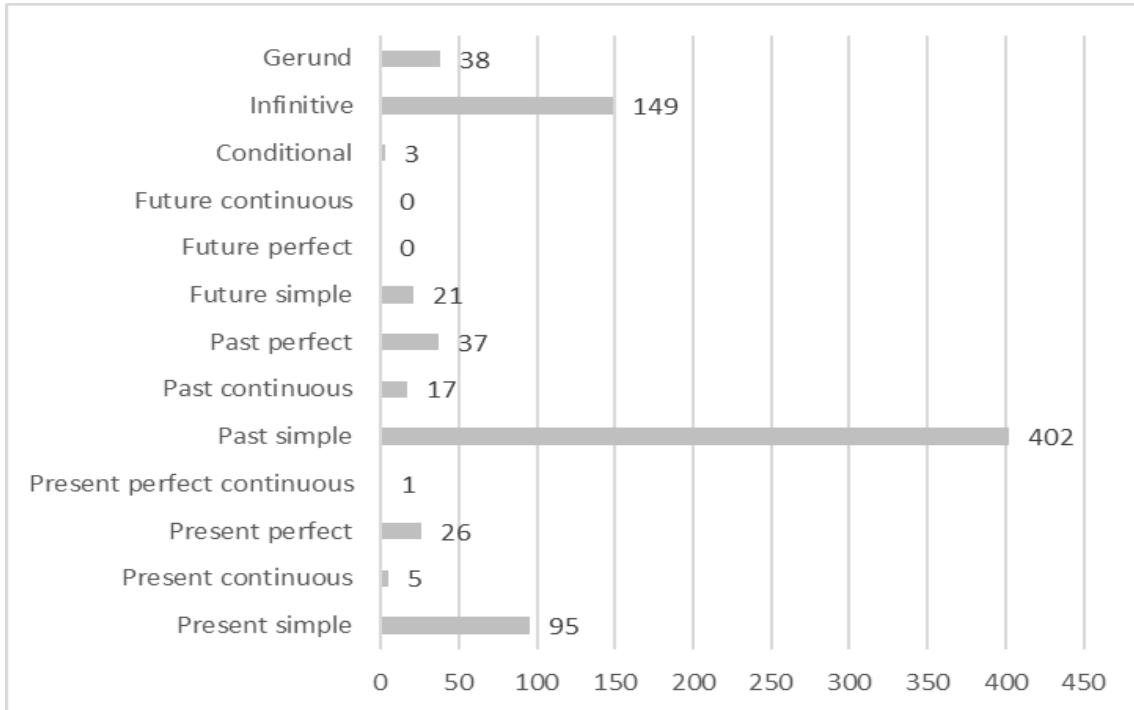


Figure 4: *Eli Readers: verb tenses*

Finally, we are also going to analyse the aspect of these verbs, just as we did with the Burlington version. Figure 5 below shows that, just as in the previous reader, most of

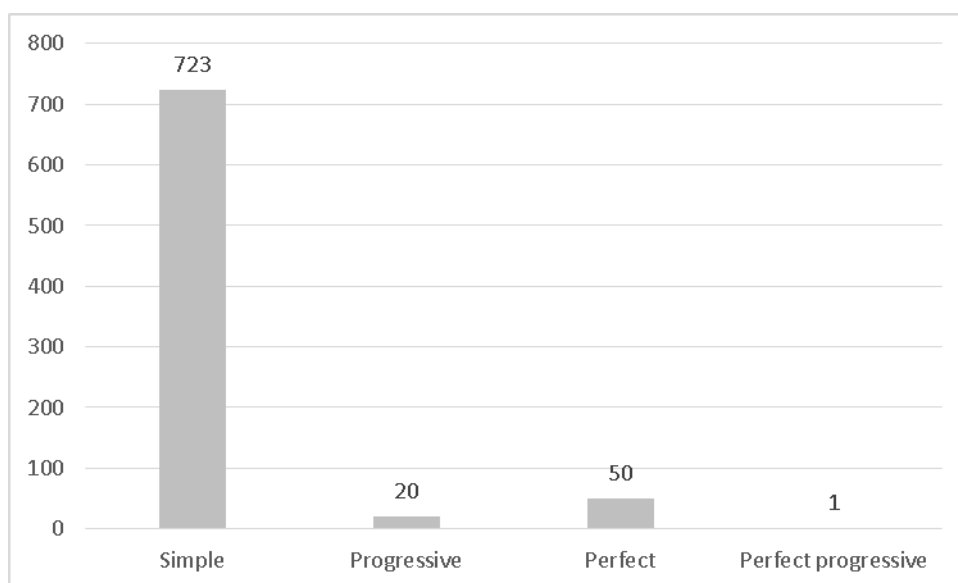


Figure 5: *Eli Readers: verb aspect*



the verbs are simple, and there are very few progressive and perfect verbs. With regards to this aspect, the reader would lack some variety, as we will analyse in the Discussion section.

The next element to be analysed are the headwords, as well as the sentence length and complexity. With regards to the headwords, this graded reader is classified under the label “Stage 4”, which corresponds to the B2 Level established by the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, and is thus classified as having 1800 headwords. The sentences in this reader are simpler than the original, as was expected. However, they do have a certain degree of complexity. If we use the passage we saw in the Burlington edition, we can see how the sentences are longer and more complex:

My mother liked to help poor families and would visit them when we travelled, to give them money. It was on one of these visits that she found a child who had the most beautiful blond hair. Indeed, her hair was of the brightest gold. She looked so adorable and sweet (Ferreti, 2009, p. 15).

As we can see, the simplification process in this reader is less noticeable when regarding sentence structure. Nevertheless, there has been a significant simplification with regards to the content, given that this edition omits the fact that Elizabeth was one of five siblings. This will be studied later on, in the next level.

In order to see how the simplification process has maintained some of the elements in the original work, we have also included the first paragraph of the letter Frankenstein receives, announcing that his brother William has been murdered:

“My dear Victor,  
Your brother William is dead! William has been murdered!  
I must tell you how it happened. Elizabeth and your two brothers were walking one evening when they decided to play a game of hide and seek. William ran off to hide, but did not return. We spent the night looking for him. At about five in the morning I discovered the lifeless body of my lovely boy. He had been strangled. (...)” (Ferreti, 2009 p. 32)

In this letter, we can clearly see that there is a reminiscence of the style employed by Shelley in her original work. The sentence “William ran off to hide, but did not return” (Ferreti, 2009, p. 32) includes a phrasal verb, and both sentences are linked with the

conjunction “but”. In the second sentence, in fact, the subject is omitted, given that it is “William”. This particular paragraph in the original version is longer and has more description in it, apart from there being some changes in the content. Nevertheless, the style in this reader, as we said above, is not as simple as expected.

## 2) Level II

Moving on to Level II, we are going to analyse the major differences in content. First of all, as we did with the Burlington reader, we are going to see a comparative table where we see how the chapters have been organised in the reader. If we analyse Table 5, which shows the correlation between the chapters in the original version of *Frankenstein* and the ones in the Eli Readers edition, we can see that there is an uneven grouping of the chapters, i.e., some of the chapters in the graded reader include three different chapters (e.g. Chapter 2), whereas others only include just one (e.g. Chapter 6). It is true that there are chapters that might be longer, which may have prompted the editor to group the chapters in this way. Moreover, the reason these chapters have been grouped in this way is probably a content-related one: the graded readers is organised according to the events that take place, as we will see next.

Mary Shelley’s <i>Frankenstein</i> (1831)	Eli Readers adaptation
Letters I – IV, Chapters 1 – 3	Chapter 1
Chapters 4 – 6	Chapter 2
Chapters 7 – 10	Chapter 3
Chapters 10 – 16	Chapter 4
Chapters 16 – 20	Chapter 5
Chapters 21	Chapter 6
Chapters 22 – 23	Chapter 7
Chapters 23 – 24	Chapter 8
Walton, in Continuation	Chapter 9

Table 5: *Eli Readers: correlation between chapters*

In this graded reader, we can find the same characteristic as in the one by Burlington: each chapter has a sort of subtitle, describing the main event that takes place in that chapter. This is probably done as an aid for students who might not be familiar with the story. We can see in Table 6 the titles each chapter has been assigned by the editor.

Chapter	Title
1	A Mysterious Visitor
2	Where Does Life Come From?
3	The Most Unhappy of All Men
4	I Was Cold, Alone and Afraid
5	Hatred Filled My Heart
6	The Storm at Sea
7	The Wedding
8	Journey to the North
9	Journey's End

Table 6: *Eli Readers: subtitles in each chapter*

As we can see in the table above, the titles either add some intrigue to the chapter, or they describe the main events that take place. Learners might feel the need to discover what these refer to, and thus read each chapter with more interest. This would be related to one of Lazar's approaches (1993), where she understands literature as a means for personal enrichment.

Analysing the way in which the graded reader might incorporate adaptations from the original version, we can first see that the first couple of pages in the reader are some drawings of the main characters. This has probably been included in order for students to start getting acquainted with the different characters. Next, we can see how, in Chapter 1, the letter format Shelley uses in order to introduce the setting is maintained in the adaptation. The letters Walton writes, which are addressed to his sister, are summarised, but are faithful to the original version.

Once the letters end, we get a change in the narrative frame, which switches onto Frankenstein's story. In the graded reader, it includes a short title: "Victor's Story". Here, we can find a difference between the original work and the adaptation, which we commented upon in the previous section: when Frankenstein's parents decide to adopt Elizabeth Lavenza, in the original work she is described as one of five siblings, who stands out because she is adopted. In the *Eli Readers* version, Elizabeth is presented as an adopted child who has no siblings. It is also worth commenting the fact that, as with the Burlington edition, this version of the reader is based on the 1831 version of *Frankenstein*, since Elizabeth is adopted, and not Frankenstein's cousin.

At the end of the second chapter in the reader, Elizabeth sends Frankenstein a letter, explaining to him how everyone in the family is doing – he has been studying at

Ingolstadt for over two years. The letter, which in the original version is quite complete, is summarised here, by using the reported speech structure.

In Chapter 3, Justine's trial is narrated. In the original version of *Frankenstein*, after she has been wrongfully charged for the murder of Victor's younger brother, William, Frankenstein and Elizabeth visit her in her cell, given that she used to work for the family, and they believe she is innocent (in fact, Frankenstein is quite sure it was his monster that murdered William). This visit is omitted in the Eli Readers version, probably due to the fact that it is quite long, and it does not really affect the course of the story much.

In Chapter 4, in which Frankenstein's encounter with the monster is narrated, we can see another clear change in the narrative frame – the monster tells his story to Frankenstein from the moment he was created. In here, we can also find an interesting change: Safie's story, which is quite detailed in the original version, is omitted in this one as well. There could be two reasons for this change: first of all, just as it happened with the Burlington edition, it could just have been a matter of space and relevance, given that it is not even a secondary story, but a tertiary one (it is a story inside the monster's story, which is at the same time inside Frankenstein's story). However, Safie's story includes topics which may be controversial, such as slavery and the treatment to women in some specific countries. This could have been a strategy to avoid students from focusing on this topic, or to even get the wrong idea about them.

Continuing with Chapter 4, we can see that, when the monster narrates his encounter with William, the adaptation is almost as violent as the original work, and there has been no change here either. Nevertheless, it is necessary to keep in mind the fact that the adaptations we are analysing are written for Second Year of *Bachillerato* students, who are almost adults. If the adaptation were written for younger students, there might have been less violence.

The next remarkable aspect in the adaptation occurs in Chapter 6, where Victor narrates his journey to England and Scotland, and the murder of his best friend, Clerval. In the original work, Frankenstein stops telling his story to Walton, because he needs to take a break, as he is very much affected by Clerval's death, and he needs to rest before he can tell him about this tragedy. In the Eli Readers version, we find that this break is also included. Given that it does not really add essential information, it is interesting from

a formal point of view: learners could see how the style changes, and they might also be reminded that what they are reading is what Frankenstein is telling Walton, so it is a way to bring the action back to the beginning.

Finally, in the ninth chapter, we can see how the graded reader re-incorporates the letter format we found at the beginning, thus keeping the same generic conventions that Shelley used for this last section of her work.

### **3) Level III**

The last level we are going to analyse is Level III, where we will study the general format of the book, along with its visual aids. We will also analyse different additional resources presented in the graded reader, including the glossary, the activities, the media provided, any extra-readings that are included at the end, and the last section of the book, called “Syllabus”.

First, with regards to the general format of the reader, we can see it includes colourful images that might help the students when reading by helping them imagine what is going on. At the same time, it is necessary to say that these images are quite dark, and they could even be linked to a Romantic aesthetics, given that there are many depictions of nature, cold and foreign locations, as well as dark places. As we mentioned before, the first two pages include drawings of the different characters and their names.

With regards to the glossary, there is not a compendium of vocabulary words at the end of the reader as such – instead, there is a small section at the end of every page, where difficult words are defined. It is curious, given that they are not translated into Spanish, but rather they include a definition in English or a synonym. This is useful, as it allows students to learn twice as much: they can learn the meaning of the word included in this section, and they can also learn what other words they can use as synonyms.

Moving on to the activities presented in this reader, there are (just as with the Burlington reader) “Before reading” activities, “After reading” activities each chapter, and also some final activities, which we will discuss later on, because they are related to the additional readings provided.

It is quite noteworthy to see the way the activities are presented, since every activity is labelled under one skill (e.g. “speaking”, or “writing”). There are around eight

activities per chapter, which is a high number. Also, not all the activities are the same: there are “classic” matching activities or fill-in the blanks activities, for example, but there are also more “non-conventional” activities, such as a word search, or writing exercises in which the students have to fit some contents presented in the story into text messages, with a word limit. The activities are very well-explained, and they are also quite useful for the teacher to direct the class (especially the “speaking” activities, which give room for discussion).

Analysing the last pages of the reader, we can see that there are eight pages including additional readings. The texts included deal with Mary Shelley and her life, but there are also more texts dealing with the origin of her work, the major themes that this work explores, and the way in which *Frankenstein* has influenced popular culture as well as history. This is very interesting, given that it provides students with some knowledge about the original work, thus expanding their view on literature, and also fostering their interest in reading and classic books.

With regards to the media provided, this graded reader includes a CD at the back, with recorded extracts from the reader. This CD is also useful for the listening activities, and students can download the full text in MP3 format if they head over to the official Eli Readers website.

Finally, the last section of the book is titled “Syllabus”, and it contains a list of all the grammatical aspects included in the reader, which is also useful when deciding whether to use it or not for a certain purpose: the teacher can see clearly if this book is exploitable in order to teach a particular element.

## 5. DISCUSSION

In this section, we are going to compare the results of the analysis of both readers so as to establish which one would be the best one to use in an EFL classroom. The comparison is going to follow the same structure we have used in the analysis: both readers are going to be compared according to each level, establishing the strong and weak points of each one of them.

### a. Level I

First, we are going to see the results from the analysis of Level I. In the case of the Burlington edition, we can first see that the reader itself is shorter than the one by Eli Readers. If we focus on the grammatical structures employed successfully, we can see

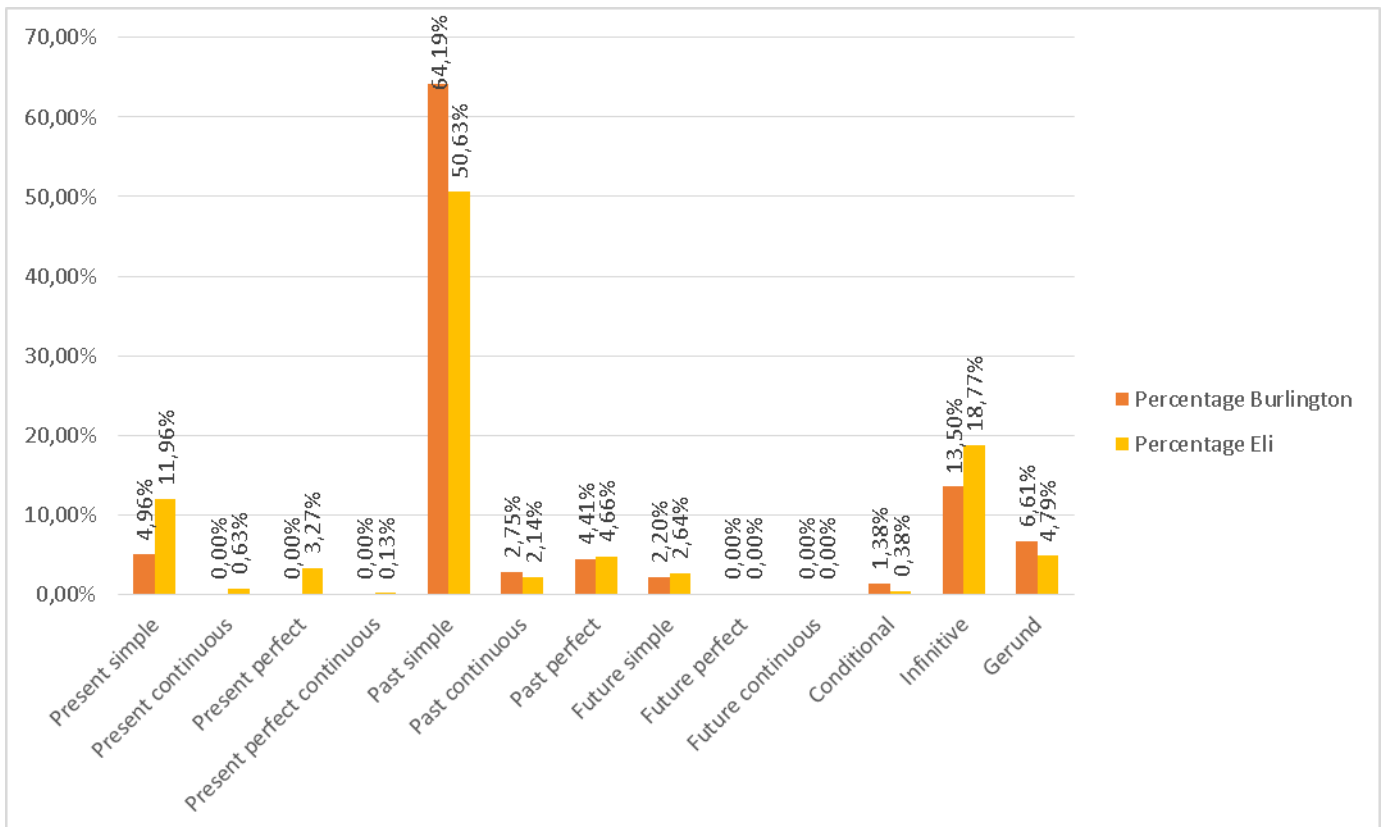


Figure 6: Comparison of the tenses

that the Burlington edition uses less grammatical structures included in the curriculum for Second Year of *Bachillerato*, whereas the Eli Readers one does include many more instances of these structures.

In the case of the verbs included, due to the length of both books, the Eli Readers edition includes more verbs than the Burlington one. In order to compare them, we are going to include the percentages of each tense in a graph (Figure 6).

As we can see, the percentage of verbal tenses is more or less similar; however, we can see how the Eli Readers edition (in yellow) has more different tenses than the Burlington one (in orange). In fact, the former has 11 different tenses, whereas the latter only includes 8. In both readers, the past simple tense is the most used one, and the infinitive is the second most used. The past tense is widely used, as we explained above, because Frankenstein tells his story to Walton, and so he has to use the past tense. The infinitive is widely used as well because there are many sentences which have these verbs as subjects – this, in fact, is a rather complex construction.

With regards to the sentence length and complexity, the Burlington edition has been simplified to a degree where the reading is somehow hindered by all the constant stops. Students of Second Year of *Bachillerato* should have the enough proficiency to read more complex sentences, such as the ones presented in the Eli Readers adaptation. Moreover, and in connection to the grammatical structures, this latter edition includes structures that are useful for the students, even though they may seem to be more complex at first. This is very significant when considering the Input Hypothesis formulated by Krashen (1982). Students will be more likely to acquire these structures, which they have been learning throughout their education.

Finally, the letter format in the original work by Shelley has not been kept in the Burlington edition, which somehow is a loss for the learners, since they could study that particular genre and style. In the Eli Readers adaptation, however, we do find this format, both at the beginning and at the end of the book.

If we were to pick one of the readers, we can see how, in terms of the variety in the grammatical structures, as well as the verbal tenses and the sentence length and complexity, the most recommendable reader to use would be the Eli Readers edition. Looking at Krashen's Comprehensible Input Hypothesis, it can be argued that having more variety and more complex sentences would ensure that students acquired that "+1" Krashen describes, which would be what they acquired by using their previous knowledge. The Burlington edition does not include that element that students would



acquire by putting into practice what they know, given that the text has been overly simplified (Krashen, 1982).

### **b. Level II**

Tackling now the second level, we are going to make a comparative analysis in which we are going to see if one of the two readers has been more faithful to the original in terms of content.

In the case of the Burlington Reader, as we saw above, an evident simplification process can be observed, given that elements such as Safie's story, as well as the letters written from Walton to his sister, have been omitted. Furthermore, the biggest simplification in content we can see is probably the one that appears in Chapter 4, where Justine's trial takes place. The adaptation breaks the conventional narrative style to incorporate a series of bullet points with the apparent intention of facilitating the readers' comprehension of these. However, if we focus on the style used, the result is quite the opposite, given that the reading lacks quality.

In the case of the Eli Readers adaptation, we can see that the letter format is maintained, and Justine's trial is not summarised into a series of bullet points. Nevertheless, Safie's backstory disappears as well, probably due to its lack of relevance as well as to the possible controversy that this would create amongst students.

A point we found both readers have in common is the fact that they include a title under each chapter number, probably to catch students' attention, or to help them understand the general idea of the chapter they are going to read. This, as we explained above, can be linked to Lazar's approach, which is using literature as a means of personal enrichment (1993): students will probably be curious about the titles which have been suggested, and thus read with a little bit more interest, thus improving their acquisition of the language structures slightly.

The only aspects that create a significant difference between both readers are Walton's letters, which only appear in the Eli Readers edition, as well as Justine's trial, which can be found in Chapter 4 in the Burlington edition, and in Chapter 3 in the Eli Readers one. Apart from this, both adaptations have undergone a similar process of content adaptation.

### c. Level III

This level is quite important for this discussion given that we are dealing with EFL materials, and thus we must see whether or not these readers are fit to be used in an EFL classroom.

Both readers include pictures that depict the action described, and may be used by the students as an easier way to follow the reading. At the same time, both of them include a first page where the characters' names appear, as well as a drawing, which can also avoid readers from getting confused.

However, when regarding the activities included after each chapter, we can see how the Burlington edition lacks variety and originality when designing activities, as well as quantity. It is true that having more activities does not mean that the reader is better, but including an average of four activities every three chapters might not be profitable for the students' needs. Also, these activities follow a very traditional structure, which does not ensure that the students learn the contents, or even enjoy completing them.

On the other hand, we have the activities created for the Eli Readers version, which include all sorts of tasks, from the more traditional ones to more innovative activities. Moreover, these activities are labelled in order for the teacher and the student to know what they are practising when carrying out those activities. This graded reader in particular includes a great number of activities which put into practise all the different skills needed in English, combined with a non-traditional format, and more appealing tasks. Also, these activities clearly favour the "literature as a means for personal enrichment" approach – thus increasing the students' interest and possibilities of acquiring skills, vocabulary and grammatical structures (Lazar, 1993).

Regarding the glossaries, it is probably more convenient for students to have a glossary with definitions, rather than one with translations given that, as we mentioned above, it would be more profitable for these students if they learned more words in English, rather than just reading the translation in Spanish. For this reason, we believe the glossary provided in the Eli Readers adaptation of *Frankenstein* is better designed than the one in the Burlington one.

As a conclusion to this section, we believe the activities and the glossary presented in the Eli Readers edition are much better-designed and more profitable than the ones

presented in the Burlington edition. Nevertheless, it is up to the teachers to exploit these resources to the best of their capacities, in order to make sure students get the best from them.

#### **d. Final remarks**

The reasoning behind this exhaustive quantitative and qualitative analysis, as we mentioned in the Introduction section, was to create a sort of reference for other teachers of English as a Foreign Language. With that in mind, and after having carried out this minute analysis, we can conclude that the most useful graded reader to be used in a classroom would be the one published by Eli Readers, which has undergone a lesser simplification process, since, in this case, the acquisition process would be better and more complete. At the same time, teachers should probably opt for using the Eli Readers edition since it gives much more room for the teacher to include additional activities based on the materials provided in this edition.

Now, this is simply a sample of all the graded readers that are adapted for learners of a Foreign Language. Nevertheless, it provides us with a general overview of the simplification process carried out nowadays. There are two tendencies, which can be easily identified: a heavy simplification process, where the text loses much of its original richness and linguistic value; and a lighter one, in which the final product maintains some of the features that can be appreciated in the original text.

The question that arises is: which one is better? From the point of view of this study, we would be more inclined to say that texts which have undergone a lighter simplification process are more recommendable, inasmuch as they follow Krashen's Comprehensible Input Hypothesis, by providing learners with some features of the language they will be able to acquire if they apply their previous knowledge to it (Krashen, 1982).

Finally, it is also important to highlight the fact that the Eli Readers edition has been written for learners of all countries, whereas the Burlington Books one has been written specifically for a Spanish audience. Creating a more "international" graded reader has the advantage of putting all learners, from all different cultures and countries, at the

same level: they are learning about a new culture, and they have to compare it with their own, but they can also compare it to cultures that may be foreign to them.

## 6. DIDACTIC PROPOSAL

For the purpose of this study, we are going to present a series of activities that could be put into practise when working with the Eli Readers adaptation of *Frankenstein*, as it is the one which seems to be (from the analysis we have carried out) the most exploitable and beneficial one for learners. Furthermore, we are going to propose a final project the students will have to work on, which we will explain below.

The activities we are going to present are going to be divided as follows: pre-reading activities, activities to be completed while-reading, and post-reading activities or tasks. These are supposed to be carried out along a period of time, which will last around six weeks.

During these six weeks, students would read an average of three chapters per week, and the fourth week would be dedicated to the post-reading activities. The students would be supposed to do the reading at home as we are dealing with Second Year of *Bachillerato* students, and thus they cannot spend a whole month reading in class. The teacher's task here is to make sure that he or she awakens the students' curiosity and interest, so that they themselves decide to read the book, for their own personal reasons.

These activities would be better presented one day every week, for students to organise themselves, so that they go to class with the chapters read. Also, these activities are meant to be carried out in one session every week, so that the rest of the sessions the teacher can continue with the "regular" lessons.

Finally, after this first month, and once the reading is completed, the students will have two more weeks to work on their final project. First, students will have the fifth session to prepare the project (which we will explain further on) in groups and, on the last session, they will carry out an oral presentation, explaining what they have been working on.

### a. Pre-reading activities

For the pre-reading activities, the teacher would begin by asking the students a series of questions, such as the ones included in Table 7. These are intended for the students to become interested in the topic, and to show their knowledge on it, as well as other aspects they may want to point out that are somehow related. This activity is a way

to trigger the students' previous knowledge, as well as to include some discussion in the classroom, monitored by the teacher. Also, by using culture as a means to introduce a literary work, the learners will see the huge impact literature has on culture, and vice versa.

Question for the students	Teacher's notes
What does the name "Frankenstein" mean to you?	Nowadays, "Frankenstein" is the name given to the monster itself, and it is a very important figure in the horror community. Many kids decide to dress as this for Hallowe'en.
How is Frankenstein represented today in popular culture?	Green, screws in its forehead, big, ragged clothing, grunting
When do you think this novel was written?	Students can more or less guess when it was written, or the teacher could give clues related to the historical period.
What does the cover of the reader suggest to you?	Darkness, nature, they can see a dark figure in the background.
What does "Romantic literature" mean?	Rather than literature where there are couples and "love" is the main theme, Romanticism was an artistic movement that was crucial in Europe during the eighteenth century.
When was this movement important across Europe?	Late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.
Did this movement take place in Spain as well?	Yes, but it arrived later than in the rest of Europe. Students should have studied this movement in Spanish literature, which is a way to connect both subjects.
What were some of the characteristics of this movement?	Importance of nature, dark landscapes, exoticism, dark topics and themes (try to use the ones included in <i>Frankenstein</i> as well, for students to later on identify them).

Table 7: Pre-reading Q&A

Next, the teacher will ask students to read out loud four texts included in the last pages of the graded reader, particularly, in pages 134 to 137, which include a short biography on Mary Shelley, as well as some relevant information about her work. This section is particularly interesting due to the fact that it includes the story of how Shelley came up with the concept for *Frankenstein*, but without giving away the plot or any important information. This will probably increase the students' interest, considering the fact that Shelley's life was very interesting, especially if we are talking about a woman in the nineteenth century – women were not highly regarded at this period, which can also

lead to an interesting discussion, which the teacher can take advantage of, in order to discreetly stress on the values of feminism.

The next activity to be carried out can be organised as a simple guessing game: the teacher can show a series of topics, themes, and plotlines on the screen, and students have to decide which of those are going to be present in the book, giving valid arguments in order to back up their decisions. If the students have very contrary opinions, the class could even be quickly organised into two groups, and the teacher could pick one or two students to moderate a simple debate, where students explain why their picks are better than those of their “adversaries”, at the same time as they explain why they think their classmates’ choices are unlikely to appear in the reader.

Finally, the teacher would select the trailer of one of the many adaptations of *Frankenstein* onto cinema, for the students to watch and comment upon. This way, students would practise their listening skills, and they would have a basic idea about the plot, which would also help them when reading the book. The trailer we have selected is the one belonging to the 1831 adaptation of the novel, which lasts one minute and forty seconds, and it is in black and white. The reasoning behind this choice is simple: it is probably the most important movie adaptation of this novel.

### **b. While-reading activities**

Once the students have started to read the book, the teacher should ask the students to comment on their impressions so far. The students then have some room to discuss what they think will happen next, and they should also give their opinion on the story so far, whether they think the different characters have acted appropriately or not.

Then, the students should complete the sets of activities for each chapter, and after this, they would correct them out loud. This should be enough, because the students are supposed to be reading the book at the same time.

### **c. Post-reading activities**

Once the students have read the whole book, the fourth session would be dedicated to reading the texts presented in pages 138 to 141, which includes a literary analysis on the work, as well as a text dealing with *Frankenstein* in popular culture, and another one

in which the relevance of this work is explained. Once these texts have been read, the students should then complete the activities on page 142, which cover the whole book.

Then, the teacher would conduct another round of questions, asking students about their honest opinion about the book. If students have not enjoyed the reading, the teacher should take notes on why not, always looking for a way to improve the classes and the materials the students are working with.

Finally, as a sort of complementary activities, the teacher could ask the students to pick between representing fragments of the book, as if it was a theatre play, which would improve their speaking and listening skills; or he / she could encourage the students to write a story with the same prompt *Frankenstein* was written: in couples, students should create the scariest story. Then, the students would read each other's stories anonymously, and there would be a vote, to see which was "the new *Frankenstein*".

#### **d. Final project**

The final project we have designed for the students would consist on a written project, as well as an oral presentation, which the students would have to prepare in groups of four or five students. Once they have finished the reading, they would have to look for a movie which includes a theme similar to the ones discussed in the reader: life and death, the limits of science, or injustice, for example.

After picking a movie, they would have to explain to the teacher the reason for their choice, and then they would have to write an essay, and create an oral presentation. In the written essay, students will have to compare the movie to the book, focusing on one aspect; whereas in the oral presentation, they will show clips of the movie they have selected, explaining where viewers can see this theme portrayed.

For this project, students will also be able to ask the teacher for information, guidance, or references. The students will have time to prepare this project in the fifth session dedicated for this didactic proposal, and they will be able to make their oral presentations (which should not last more than ten minutes) during the last session. The teacher will evaluate both the written project and the oral presentation, and will add this mark to the one created from the evaluation of the rest of the activities.



This would allow students to study and use materials that they are interested in, thus increasing their interest in the activity. At the same time, being able to see how *Frankenstein* might have influenced other forms of modern-day culture will give them a wider perspective on the influence of classical literature. Finally, students will develop a sense of critical thinking, by having to compare the graded reader they have been working on with a new expression of culture.

Moreover, we are trying to move away from the traditional “reading exam”, as this is a very common practice in high-schools, and it does not foster students’ interest in reading, nor does it prove that students have actually read the book, given that they can find summaries on the Internet.



## 7. CONCLUSIONS

After carrying out the analysis, comparing the results, and proposing a series of activities in order to use this reader in an EFL classroom, the first thing we can notice is the surprising scarce amount of scholarly research on graded readers, considering how extended their use is. This can be linked to one of the main purposes of this dissertation, which is to establish a method useful for teachers when considering the materials they are going to use in their EFL classes.

Another noticeable aspect is the fact that an exhaustive analysis on two similar readers adapted from a novel can show obvious differences between them, in terms of the more formal aspects (Grammar, sentence length and complexity, or vocabulary), but also in terms of the adaptation of content, as well as the activities that have been included as resources for both the students and the teachers.

Secondly, we can see how, from this analysis, we can decide on whether one of the readers is more adequate or advisable to use than the other, especially taking the curriculum for EFL teaching as a reference. Moreover, through our analysis, we saw how a reader which has undergone a lighter simplification process is more exploitable and useful for learners, whereas one which has undergone more changes is probably less recommended due to its simplicity and lack of variety. This decision was linked to Krashen's Comprehensible Input Hypothesis, given that, if students were given a text that was too simple, they would not be able to acquire anything new, and thus the teaching and learning process would be unfruitful (Krashen, 1982).

Finally, we were able to design a set of activities which would use the reader as a base resource, but including topics from the target language culture; at the same time, we ensured that these activities would keep the students' interest and motivation, which is a very important issue when dealing with teaching in general.

As a concluding remark, we can highlight the fact that more research on graded readers is needed, to analyse the simplification process that takes place, as well as to see their effect in EFL learning. Moreover, if we were to pose a possible research topic for further research in this field, we could focus on the criteria that publishing houses use when adapting works, and study whether these criteria are met. If these criteria were to exist, how much would it coincide with what is specified in the curriculum for each level, and how much of it is respected?



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## 9. ANNEXES

In this section, we are going to include a sample of the tables we have created to analyse the different verb tenses. We have included different aspects, such as the tense itself, the aspect, the voice, the chapter this verb can be found in, as well as the page where it appears.

### a. Burlington Verb Analysis Table

Verbal tenses	Tense	Aspect	Voice	Chapter	Page
Lived	Past simple (regular)	Simple	Active	Prologue	8
Had	Past simple (irregular)	Simple	Active	Prologue	8
To sail	Infinitive	Simple	Active	Prologue	8
To discover	Infinitive	Simple	Active	Prologue	8
Travelled	Past simple (regular)	Simple	Active	Prologue	8
Bought	Past simple (irregular)	Simple	Active	Prologue	8
Chose	Past simple (irregular)	Simple	Active	Prologue	8
Left	Past simple (irregular)	Simple	Active	Prologue	8
Were sailing	Past continuous	Progressive	Active	Prologue	8
Saw	Past simple (irregular)	Simple	Active	Prologue	8
Pulled	Past simple (regular)	Simple	Active	Prologue	8
Was travelling	Past continuous	Progressive	Active	Prologue	8
Was sitting	Past continuous	Progressive	Active	Prologue	8
Guiding	Gerund	Simple	Active	Prologue	8
Watched	Past simple (regular)	Simple	Active	Prologue	8
Was	Past simple (irregular)	Simple	Active	Prologue	8
Saw	Past simple (irregular)	Simple	Active	Prologue	8
Floating	Gerund	Simple	Active	Prologue	8
Was	Past simple (irregular)	Simple	Active	Prologue	8

**b. Eli Readers Verb Analysis Table**

<b>Verb</b>	<b>Tense</b>	<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Voice</b>	<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Page</b>
Will be	Future simple	Simple	Active	1	10
To learn	Infinitive	Simple	-	1	10
Arrived	Past simple (regular)	Simple	Active	1	10
Do (not) need	Present simple	Simple	Active	1	10
To worry	Infinitive	Simple	-	1	10
Am	Present simple	Simple	Active	1	10
Will be	Future simple	Simple	Active	1	10
Feel	Present simple	Simple	Active	1	10
Increases	Present simple	Simple	Active	1	10
Am going	Present continuous	Progressive	Active	1	10
Does (not) set	Present simple	Simple	Active	1	10
Will discover	Future simple	Simple	Active	1	10
Can	Present simple	Simple	Active	1	10
Carry	Infinitive (bare)	Simple	-	1	10
To find (out)	Infinitive	Simple	-	1	10
Work	Present simple	Simple	Active	1	10
Is	Present simple	Simple	Active	1	10
Feel	Present simple	Simple	Active	1	10
Setting (off)	Gerund	Simple	-	1	10
Will be	Future simple	Simple	Active	1	10
Am	Present simple	Simple	Active	1	10
Is	Present simple	Simple	Active	1	11
Have hired	Present perfect (regular)	Perfect	Active	1	11
Have	Present simple	Simple	Active	1	11
Improves	Present simple	Simple	Active	1	11
Will set (off)	Future simple	Simple	Active	1	11
Is	Present simple	Simple	Active	1	11
Missing	Gerund	Simple	-	1	11
Makes	Present simple	Simple	Active	1	11
Suffer	Infinitive (bare)	Simple	Active	1	11
Do (not) have	Present simple	Simple	Active	1	11
To share	Infinitive	Simple	-	1	11
Am	Present simple	Simple	Active	1	11
Ask	Present simple	Simple	Active	1	11
To remember	Infinitive	Simple	-	1	11
Hear	Present simple	Simple	Active	1	11
Has happened	Present perfect (regular)	Perfect	Active	1	11



