

**EXPLORING HOW READING APPROACHES FOSTER
CHILDREN'S COMPREHENSION AND LANGUAGE LEARNING
IN AN EFL CLASS**

Proposal for improvement

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5th grade – Final Dissertation II

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Vic, May 2020

EXPLORING HOW READING APPROACHES FOSTER CHILDREN'S COMPREHENSION AND LANGUAGE LEARNING IN AN EFL CLASS.

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Abstract

Reading is considered one of the most important skills in the process of learning a second language because it exposes students to a wide range of vocabulary and grammar. This study aims at exploring how reading approaches promote the improvement of students' understanding and learning in EFL classrooms. To do so, a theoretical research was done in order to know the main characteristics of five reading approaches: Extensive Reading, Intensive Reading, Reading While Listening, Repeated Reading and Narrow Reading. Additionally, four graded readers from Young Eli Readers publisher were analysed with the purpose of knowing how the activities proposed at the end of the book encourage reading among young learners. The results showed that most of the activities are focused on EFL and do not require reading the book to be solved. For this reason, some alternative activities were proposed in order to promote reading.

Key words: EFL learners, Reading approaches, Graded Readers, Reading.

Resum

La lectura es considera una de les habilitats més importants en el procés d'aprenentatge d'una segona llengua perquè exposa als estudiants a un ampli ventall de vocabulari i gramàtica. Aquest estudi té com a objectiu explorar com els enfocaments de lectura afavoreixen la millora de la comprensió i l'aprenentatge dels estudiants a les aules d'aprenents d'anglès com a llengua estrangera. Per fer-ho, es va fer una recerca teòrica per conèixer les principals característiques de cinc enfocaments de lectura: *Extensive Reading*, *Intensive Reading*, *Reading While Listening*, *Repeated Reading* i *Narrow Reading*. A més, es van analitzar quatre *Graded Readers* de l'editorial Young Eli Readers amb l'objectiu de conèixer com les activitats proposades al final del llibre fomenten la lectura entre els joves estudiants. Els resultats van mostrar que la majoria de les activitats estan enfocades a l'EFL i no requereixen la lectura del llibre per resoldre-les. Per aquest motiu, es van proposar algunes activitats alternatives per fomentar la lectura.

Paraules clau: Aprenents d'anglès com a llengua estrangera, enfocaments de lectura, *Graded Readers*, lectura.

Resumen

La lectura se considera una de las habilidades más importantes en el proceso de aprendizaje de un segundo idioma porque expone a los estudiantes a una amplia gama de vocabulario y gramática. Este estudio tiene como objetivo explorar cómo los enfoques de lectura promueven la mejora de la comprensión y el aprendizaje de los estudiantes en las aulas de estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera. Para hacerlo, se realizó una investigación teórica para conocer las características principales de cinco enfoques de lectura: *Extensive Reading*, *Intensive Reading*, *Reading While Listening*, *Repeated Reading* y *Narrow Reading*. Además, cuatro *Graded Readers* de la editorial Young Eli Readers fueron analizados con el propósito de saber cómo las actividades propuestas al final del libro fomentan la lectura entre los jóvenes estudiantes. Los resultados mostraron que la mayoría de las actividades se centran en *EFL* y no requieren leer el libro para ser resueltas. Por esta razón, se propusieron algunas actividades alternativas para promover la lectura.

Palabras clave: Estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera, enfoques de lectura, *Graded Readers*, lectura.

1. Introduction

In recent years, English has become a global language of communication and people need to learn how to use this language. As English is considered an indispensable tool, families have tried to involve children in an early start in their process of language learning. Therefore, children are expected to be competent in the four skills of the language: listening, reading, speaking and writing. Reading is considered one of the most important skills in the process of learning a second language because it offers high amounts of input including a wide range of vocabulary and grammar. Through reading, learners are encouraged to make sense of the world and at the same time, they are exposed to large amounts of language which benefits their process of language learning.

This research project has as its main objective to analyse four graded readers from the same publisher (Young ELI Readers). The main objective was to critically analyse the activities included in each of the graded readers and make different proposals in order to follow the main characteristics of different reading approaches. Firstly, five approaches of reading are explained in order to know how they enhance reading and reading comprehension. The four graded readers have been analysed focussing on the structure of the books and the types of exercises proposed at the end of each book. Finally, six samples of alternative activities, one or two per reading approach, are proposed in order to motivate children reading the books.

Two research questions were posed at the beginning of the project: 1) What are the main characteristics of the activities presented by graded readers? 2) How can these activities be improved according to the characteristics of different reading approaches?

2. Theoretical Framework

Reading has a potential big influence in the process of the learning a second language because it offers students a wide range of vocabulary and grammar and it essentially supports and feeds the brain with the correct language structures. Learning an L2 requires three main pillars: input, output and interaction. Input refers to the language that a learner is exposed to. It is an essential component for learning from which learners can form

linguistic hypothesis and because without it, there can be no output. This means that if students do not hear or see the language, then students cannot learn the language. Output is the language that the learner produces. Output promotes fluency and automaticity; it allows learners to notice gaps in their knowledge and to experiment with the language to see what works and what does not; it affords feedback on their language and communication skills; it also helps them drive L2 development, syntax and morphology. The third pillar is the interaction which refers to the exchanges that learners participate in. Interactions are important because it is in this context that learners receive information about the correctness and the incorrectness of their utterances. When foreign language learners are frequently exposed to a large amount of language input, their vocabulary increases, their word recognition skills improve, their fluency improves, and their overall proficiency also rises (Gass and Mackey, 2007). According to Renandya and Jacobs (2016) an excellent way of providing language input is through reading. However, this skill as we will see is very complex as there are many types of reading: Extensive Reading, Intensive Reading, Reading While Listening, Narrow Reading and Repeated Reading.

2.1 Extensive Reading

Extensive Reading (ER) has been defined in many different ways. According to Carrell and Carson (1997) it is a form of reading “which generally involves rapid reading of large quantities of material or longer reading (e.g., whole books) for general understanding, with the focus generally on the meaning of what is being read than on the language” (pp. 49-50). Other authors such as Grabe and Stoller (2011) argued that “extensive reading is an approach to the teaching and learning of reading in which learners read large amounts of material that are within their linguistic competence” (p. 328). There are three important elements for ER that it should be crucial to take into account for discussing about the concept: amount of reading, a reasonable speed for general understanding and focus on the meaning rather than form and faster reading rate. These three elements have been widely used when defining this type of reading (Renandya and Jacobs, 2016).

Most of the benefits of ER emerge when students have read in this way for an extended period of time. As claimed by Renandya and Jacobs (2016) motivation becomes a key factor in this approach and to increase it, the students should read interesting and

enjoyable materials that can satisfy their motivational needs in order to avoid getting bored and stop reading. Moreover, when students read for a long time, their reading fluency improves and their ability to comprehend texts also increases. According to these authors, ER research has shown several benefits: 1) it enhances vocabulary development and deeper understanding, 2) it contributes to gain a better grasp of the grammar of the target language, 3) it improves reading at a faster rate and fluency, 4) it promotes knowledgeable about many different topics, 5) it develops higher confidence and motivation, 6) it develops more positive attitudes towards reading so that readers become more confident listeners, speakers and writers. Thus, with time, students can develop a healthy reading habit. In addition, as Day and Bamford (2002) claimed ten principles should guide the teaching of extensive reading in the school as Table 1 shows.

Ten Principles (Day and Bamford, 2002)	
1. The reading material is easy	6. Reading is its own reward
2. A variety of reading material on a wide range of topics must be available	7. Reading speech is usually faster rather than slower
3. Learners choose what they want to read	8. Reading is individual and silent
4. Learners read as much as possible	9. Teachers orient and guide their students
5. The purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information and general understanding	10. The teacher is a role model of a reader

Table 1. Ten principles for teaching Extensive Reading

ER has demonstrated a positive influence on student's general background knowledge, because there is a positive influence on reading comprehension, as well as on other language skills (Carrell and Carson, 1997). However, Renandya and Jacobs (2016) claimed that there are some problems: some schools often have limited resources to implement ER and the approach has not always received the kind of support that it deserves. Moreover, teachers often implement ER as an out-of-class or extracurricular activity which promotes less motivation, and they use curriculum time to provide students with opportunities to do silent reading. However, ER benefits can only be assessed after a rather lengthy period of time.

2.2 Intensive Reading

Another approach to reading is Intensive Reading (IR) which refers to the way of reading from beginning to end thoroughly and deeply. IR involves approaching the text under the close guidance of the teacher or a task which forces the student to pay attention to the text. The objective of IR is to achieve a profound and detailed understanding of the text not only of what it means, but also of how the meaning is produced. The ‘how’ is as essential as the ‘what’, for the IR lesson is planned primarily to prepare students in reading strategies (Carrell and Carson, 1997). In other words, IR is reading for accuracy which is essential to the students’ comprehension. In addition, IR involves tasks such as a take a text, referring at every moment to the dictionary, skimming a text for specific information, scanning texts, building mind maps, summarizing, and others (Sevilla-Morales, 2017). Both intensive and extensive reading are fundamental to prepare learners for the task of reading. IR with a focus on skills and strategies instruction has been proven to provide the positive effects on second language reading. In the words of Cárdenas (2020) the role of the teachers is fundamental to reach the positive effects: “The teachers should use this approach to maximize students’ learning process going through the three phases of the reading process: pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading” (p. 71-72). However, at the same time, students also need extensive reading in order to arrange, coordinate and apply intensively acquired skills/strategies over the multiple reading sources that are required in all academic course work. In other words, intensive and extensive reading can help EFL learners in improving vocabulary.

This approach has some benefits which are important to take into account. For low level readers, IR is possibly the most effective approach to learn vocabulary (Park, Isaacs and Woodfield, 2018). However, the same author claimed that students tend to benefit more from the ER approach, but when they can work in an autonomous way. Additionally, reading difficult texts forces a learner to develop strategies for understanding the texts that are too hard to read comfortably. IR fosters the comprehension of difficult complex vocabulary in some students. According to the study of Cárdenas (2020) the results indicate that the application of IR in an EFL classroom increases the motivation and the interest of the students regarding reading. He also affirmed that English teachers should implement different reading strategies with students because then they will start using them and be able to comprehend and analyse a text better. Along the same lines, Khazaal

(2019) reinforces the same ideas and adds that IR enhances cooperation among students, it improves the power of expression, it helps the student in making inferences and understanding sentence structure.

Intensive reading of two or three books a term could be boring, breaks up the continuity of the story, decreases reading speed and places emphasis on response to the immediate text. (Morris, 1972). Moreover, if the teacher asks the wrong types of questions, if they talk too much, they use this type of method for a vocabulary lesson, the boredom can set in. In addition, Kazhaal (2019) claimed that EFL learners often are unable to read the text at their level because everyone in the class is reading the same material; and the texts mostly are chosen by the teacher.

Some of the types of questions that can be usefully asked in intensive reading lessons could be (Morris, 1972):

- **Application** (i.e. What is the book really about? A group of characters only, or does it tell us something about life today?)
- **Before and after reading** (i.e. What was he like before? What is he like now?)
- **Characters** (i.e. What type of person is she? Which character is most like you? Why?)
- **Feelings of the characters** (i.e. What does she feel now?)
- **Guess what comes next** (i.e. Can you guess what is going to happen?)
- **Judgement** (i.e. Do you agree or not?)
- **Motives of the characters** (i.e. Why did he do it? Why did she say it?)
- **Relationships of thought** (i.e. What is the relationship between this word and its neighbours?)
- **Self-involvement** (i.e. What would you do if you were in this situation?)
- **Scene** (i.e. Why does the novelist describe this scene?)
- **Visualize** (i.e. Can you see this in your mind?).

2.3 Reading While Listening

Reading While Listening (RWL) is another approach to reading based on two skills, reading and listening. RWL refers to “simultaneously reading and listening to a text; it has been shown to be an efficient procedure for foreign language learning. It has also

been considered a way of increasing the quality and quantity of L2 inputs as well as a form of engaging readers in the process of reading” (Tragant and Vallbona, 2018, p. 395). Moreover, RWL is also understood as a “method of scaffolding reading instruction that has been used in various environments and has demonstrated some success for struggling readers” (Verlaan and Orlic, 2012, p. 31).

This approach produces a facilitating effect on L2 listeners, not only on comprehension of the text, but also on linguistic gains (Chang, 2009, p. 653). Researchers such as Chang and Millet (2014) assumed that simultaneous reading and listening have many advantages in children’s learning process. As reinforced by Chang and Millet (2017), RWL helps learners to match the written and spoken form in the same way that Tragant and Vallbona (2019) argued in their article. According to these authors, RWL is effective because it helps students to build stronger connections between form and meaning and to acquire a greater sense of the rhythm of the language. They also reinforced the idea that RWL might also help the learner to detect auditory discrimination skills regarding a word. So, lower-level students of English recognize the word or the text segmentation with their proper pronunciation and sound better. Moreover, Vandergrift (2007) found that RWL is valuable to low-proficiency groups for developing listening discrimination skills, and to high-proficiency groups for refined word recognition. For this reason, this approach is more effective for them.

RWL increases overall language proficiency, it fosters better listening comprehension, as well as the ability to acquire an accurate sense of rhythm of the language (Day and Bamford, 1998 cited in Brown, Waring and Donkaewbua, 2008). Furthermore, children also develop reading fluency using this strategy.

RWL has not received much attention up to the present. Some authors said that there are many schools that do not have enough resources to obtain the required material for all children.

According to Chang (2011), one of the major factors difficult to develop for learners is the lack of constant exposure to reading. Teachers should choose correctly the book with the level appropriate for the age of the children and a good quality audio which is no longer than 15 minutes.

2.4 Repeated Reading

Repeated Reading (RR) is, according to Gorsuch and Taguchi (2008), a rather new approach for a foreign language learner. RR refers to an approach to reading through which readers read easy texts repeatedly in order to increase the recognition of words and phrases as a fluency, accuracy and reading comprehension. Thus, repetition or rereading the same text several times is a major unique component of the RR method.

Nonetheless, there have not been many studies on RR, but Gorsuch and Taguchi (2008) explained some advantages of this method: RR develops reading fluency and comprehension on monolingual readers of English. Moreover, this approach has a positive effect on readers' vocabulary development and improved readers' ability to read books of increasing difficulty fluently and accurately, and readers' motivation to read. By practicing RR, foreign learners learn to read faster (speed), increasing the number of words read correctly (accuracy), and reading for a better understanding of the text (comprehension) (Cohen, 2011). However, most of the advantages are for L1 learners and RR has not received the same recognition in L2 classrooms.

2.5 Narrow Reading

Narrow Reading (NR) is a method which refers to readers focusing on reading books of a single author or one topic over the course. As Chang and Millet (2017) said that "the texts in narrow reading are related to each other, which means that learners do not have to switch from one topic to another or call on completely new background knowledge to comprehend different texts" (p. 1). Many researchers said that L1 English readers tend to read books from the same topic or author. For this reason, they thought that it could be useful for foreign language learners to use this approach too.

One advantage of using texts by the same author or topic is that learners can quickly become familiar with the background knowledge and linguistic elements necessary for the next reading of other related texts. Another advantage is that it increases the chances of vocabulary acquisition (Shaffer, 2005). Many advantages have been claimed by Chang and Millet (2017) when using narrow reading:

- 1) Narrow Reading might provide better background knowledge and repetition of key lexical items.
- 2) Using similar texts is more effective because it recycles vocabulary than randomly reading unrelated texts. Moreover, it enables L2 learners to read faster and comprehend better.
- 3) L2 learners enjoy reading more with related texts.
- 4) Narrow Reading fosters students go ahead faster from a lower level to a higher level.

However, some problems and concerns about this approach have also been observed. While L1 readers must process reading fluently and all these components automatically, second language (L2) learners may find difficulties to do the same, especially low-level ones (Grabe, 2009). As argued by Gardner (2008) some books that are written by different authors, usually used more similar vocabulary than narrative books that are written by the same author.

In this section, several approaches to reading, its advantages and disadvantages have been reviewed in order to promote children different ways to read in EFL classes. Hence, to know what, how and why use an approach or other.

3. The study

The present study aimed at analysing four graded readers from the same publisher (Young ELI Readers). The main objective was to critically analyse the activities included in each of the graded readers and make different proposals in order to follow the main characteristics of different reading approaches. In order to do so, the following research questions were posed:

- 1) What are the main characteristics of the activities presented by graded readers?
- 2) How can these activities be improved according to the characteristics of different reading approaches?

3.1 Data collection and instruments

In order to carry out the research it was essential to know in detail, the type of books we wanted to analyse. The study was divided into 4 main parts: 1) What graded readers are; 2) The analysis of the 4 reading books; 3) the analysis of the types of exercises; 4) and a proposal for working these books at school.

3.1.1 Graded Readers

Graded readers are books adapted to a variety of levels. Each reader is adapted to the child's age and knowledge of the topic and language level. According to Nation and Wang Ming-Tzu (1999) graded readers are specially adapted or written in a simple way for EFL learners. This involves adjusting the vocabulary that appears in the book, supervising the grammatical structures, and matching the length of text to the grammar and vocabulary controls. This affirmation means that in each book, all these aspects that the authors mentioned are carefully treated with the aim of facilitating the success in reading comprehension.

Graded readers usually provide information about the level of reading and using this method in second language acquisition, students read at their own level, understand, and enjoy a particular text (Rodrigo, 2016). To divide each level, the European publishers follow the criteria of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) guidelines (2017)¹, which distinguished three main proficiency levels and two sublevels per level: Basic Learner (Level A1 and Level A2), Independent learner (Level B1 and Level B2), and Proficient learner (Level C1 and Level C2) as Table 2 shows. Usually, teachers recommend children to start at level 1 and then, go further. This method helps children establish a base and a level up with no complications (see Table 2 below).

¹ Extracted from <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/table-1-cefr-3.3-common-reference-levels-global-scale>

CEFR		Characteristics
Competent Learner	C2–Proficient	Learners can easily understand mainly all written input.
	C1-Advanced	Learners are able to understand a vast variety of difficult texts and recognize implicit meaning.
Independent Learner	B2–Upper Intermediate	Learners are able to understand the main ideas of complex texts dealing with concrete and abstract topics; they will even understand technical texts of their specialization.
	B1-Intermediate	Learners are able to understand the main points of the texts, written with standard language and dealing with familiar topics.
Basic learner	A2–Elementary	Learners are able to understand sentences and expressions of frequent use, related with topics relevant to the reader (family, shopping, work, etc.)
	A1 - Beginner	Learners are able to understand frequent everyday expressions and simple sentences.

Table 2. Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR): Levels of reading proficiency (Rodrigo, 2016)

3.1.2 Analysis of the books

Four A1 level graded readers from Young ELI Readers were studied. According to Rodrigo (2016) ELI is an Italian publisher, which writes books for Young ELI Readers, mostly for Teen ELI Readers and Young Adults ELI Readers. Most of the books of this Italian publisher are adaptations of classics. The profile of the four books used in this dissertation is shown in Table 3.

Book title	Audio duration	Length (headwords)	No. of exercises
PB3 and the Vegetables	9 minutes	200	9
PB3 and the Helping Hands	8 minutes	200	9
PB3 and Coco the Clown	10 minutes	200	8
PB3 Recycles	10 minutes	200	7

Table 3. Details of the graded readers

Each book has approximately 200 headwords because they are short stories for young readers. The average audio duration of each graded reader is 10 minutes and the recordings are slow and clear, using different voices for each character or narrator. There are five pages approximately of nine exercises for revision at the end of each book. On the inside of the cover there is an illustrated dictionary with the most relevant words and also some grammatical structures. These books are A1 level (Starters/Movers) suitable

for children aged from 8 to 10. These four graded readers have the same characters in each story, an alien (PB3) and his robot friend, Robin. In each book these characters are involved in adventure in which they have to solve some problems. There is an educational idea behind each book, such as knowing how healthy vegetables are; know how to recycle properly and know the different colours of each container; know how to help friends in difficult situations and defend them from bullying situations. All these topics are adequate for this age because the vocabulary is easy and related to themes that children learn in this stage. Moreover, in the story the author introduces different resources such as poems and songs related to the story. The illustrations by Gustavo Mazali show clear images, using appropriate colours that help the reader to understand the story. In addition, in the back cover, the teacher can find a syllabus with the vocabulary, grammar and structures that the children should learn.

Each book comes with an audio CD. Three different types of audio files were found: the first one contains the audio track to listen to the story while you read the book; in the second type, there are three subgroups: 1) video cartoons to listen to the dialogues; 2) the audio track divided into different parts; and 3) the activities of the book. In some of the CDs there are extra activities. The publisher offers the possibility to read an interactive book with a laptop or tablet where students can only read the book, because there is no audio or use the cartoon's option to watch a video with illustrations and voice, without dialogue. Moreover, students can do the same exercises in the book, play a memory game or listen to some sentences of the book and repeat them by recording their voices.

3.1.3 Analysis of the exercises

At the end of these graded readers, there are between seven and nine activities. These activities are focused on the story of the book and they are very visual for the reader because the book has drawings to help them. To carry out this study, these activities were analysed to find out the type of activities and their main aims. Each book was studied separately, focusing on the type of activity and its main objective, and whether it is necessary to read the book to answer the activities or not (see Appendix 1).

4. Results of the analysis of the exercises

The total number of activities adding the four books analysed is 33. There are three main types of activities proposed in these books: 1) vocabulary activities, which the reader should fill gap a sentence related to the story of the book with the correct word; 2) grammar activities, learners should write the sentences in the correct order; and 3) other activities, which children may look for the page where the sentences have been said, or feedback exercises where students should say their personal opinion regarding to the story. More than half of the activities are vocabulary activities. Only 15% of the activities are grammar activities, and 27% of the exercises are other activities. Thus, activities with the aim of working on grammar are the least common in these books and most of the activities are focused on vocabulary. The detailed analysis of each of the activities indicates that there are very few exercises which require the reader to read the book in order to answer them. Only 10 out of 33 exercises require a second reading of the book. The reason is because many exercises can be answered with the help of a dictionary. In addition, as these activities do not promote reading, they could be pre-reading activities so that the reader begins to know the characters and the theme of the book. Moreover, after analysing the exercises on the audio CD, it turned out that most of the activities were the same as in the book. Most of the activities focus on the language rather than on comprehension. Hence, as the objective of the activities of a book should be to promote reading, some alternative activities were proposed.

5. Proposal of activities

This section was built up with the objective to provide one activity for each approach of reading mentioned in this paper, considering the main characteristics of each one (see Appendix 2). In order to make this section manageable, each exercise was based on one graded reader in order to have a proposal to put into practice in the future. There are six proposals in total, the aim of which is to answer questions and prompts to make reading the main objective of the book.

Taking the idea of Nation and Wang Ming-Tzu (1999) a starting point, graded readers are specially adapted or written in a simple way for EFL learners. This involves adjusting the

vocabulary, supporting the grammatical structures and the length of the text. The four grades readers studied were adapted to the level A1 in order to 200 headwords in the text, properly grammatical structures and a good vocabulary for children of 8-10 years old. The length of the audio is important in these books because it helps the understanding of the reading for the readers. Neville and Pugh (1978) affirmed that the approximate duration of the slowed recordings ranged from 10 to 13 minutes. The PB3 books have a good audio duration since they are between 8-10 minutes.

According to Renandya and Jacobs (2016), Extensive Reading is an approach which enhances vocabulary development and deeper understanding, improves their fluency, develops higher confidence and motivation and it develops more positive attitudes towards reading. The activity proposed for this approach is formed by a text in which the first and the last sentence of each page in the book *PB3 and the Vegetables* are written. Therefore, the text does not have all the information that the book has. Children should read the text and make a summary about what they understand. The summary has the beginning of the sentences in order to help children write (see a sample in Appendix 3). Hence, the activity promotes a rapid reading of a large amount of pages (the book *PB3 and the Vegetables*) and focuses on the meaning of what is being read rather than specific points of the language, because the reader should do a summary of the text.

Intensive Reading consists of reading from beginning to the end thoroughly and deeply. So, the proposal of this approach is focused on a True or False activity, which requires deep narrow reading to answer it. This activity is intended as an alternative activity for the book *PB3 and the Helping Hands*, where children should answer this exercise easily (see a sample in Appendix 3). A main characteristic of the exercises in this approach is that the post-reading activities should be easy to answer after having done deep reading.

The third approach, Reading While Listening, is defined as a simultaneous reading and listening to a text. For this reason, the activities should include a listening part in order to carry on the exercise. RWL is effective because it helps students to build stronger connections between form and meaning and to acquire a greater sense of the rhythm of the language (Tragant and Vallbona, 2019). Two alternative activities were proposed for this approach in which the reader should listen carefully to some sentences from the book *PB3 and Coco the Clown* and match them with the page of the book or with the character said that (see Appendix 3).

The usefulness of Repeated Reading is that the foreign learners learn to read faster (speed), increasing the number of words read correctly (accuracy), and reading for a better understanding of the text (comprehension) (Cohen, 2011). Thus, a good proposal could be one that promotes the repetition. The alternative activity proposed for that approach is that the reader should read some parts of the text and look for a page where they were said (see a sample in Appendix 3). This activity is focused on the story from the book *PB3 Recycles*.

The last approach, Narrow Reading, was the most complex when trying to include an activity at the end of a grade reader because it is characterized by reading several books with a common thread. Thus, the proposal is designed for a child who has finished reading the four books listed in this paper and the reader should answer some feedback or opinion questions (see Appendix 3). It was an activity different from the others, but in order to work all the approaches, it could be a good proposal.

All the approaches presented before have many benefits for the students in EFL lessons. All of them encourage reading fluency and motivation regarding to reading. Therefore, the adaptation of the activities with the characteristic of each approach improved the aim of the activity, because all of them promote reading. However, all this is based on hypotheses according to the theory because these activities were not put into real practice.

6. Conclusions

Reading is an important skill for EFL classrooms because children learn vocabulary and grammar structures. EFL learners tend to read texts in a foreign language and do language exercises related to them. So, to avoid that, it is important to keep in mind that the teaching and learning process of reading must be of high quality and that it is important to make children aware that by reading large amounts of books they can also improve their target language.

This current study has found that it is crucial to take into account the different reading approaches to enhance the motivation and the learning process of children. The five approaches mentioned in this paper, Extensive Reading, Intensive Reading, Reading

While Listening, Repeated Reading and Narrow Reading, should be essential in EFL classrooms because all of them enhance motivation, fluency and the learning of vocabulary and grammatical structures. Each approach has its own characteristics that are useful for different objectives. Extensive Reading is one of the most important approaches in reading, because it consists on rapidly reading and fluency. As the same way, Intensive Reading is also very important for the learning process of a child, because it focuses on deep reading. Moreover, Reading While Listening has a lot of advantages for EFL learners, because they learn the connection between the word and their pronunciation. Repeated Reading and Narrow Reading also enhances the reading fluency of a child and through them the children learn plenty of vocabulary.

The study has explored the main characteristics of four Graded Readers, which are books adapted to the child's age and knowledge of the topic and language level. After analysing them, the results reinforced that the activities are focused on EFL, because most of the exercises are vocabulary activities. Furthermore, the majority of the activities do not require the necessity to read the book. Thus, a proper activity in a Graded Reader should also promote reading. For this reason, six alternative activities following the main characteristics of reading approaches, were proposed in this paper in order to promote reading.

Doing this research, the importance of reading in EFL classrooms appears as the most important point in order to promote a suitable learning process. All the approaches are crucial to use them with children, but above all, the teacher has to teach how to use them. So, the advantages and disadvantages of each reading approach should be a guide for the teacher, to know what type of approach and how they should use them in a suitable moment. Reading is a difficult skill; many children feel bored doing it and demotivated. Thus, the role of the teacher is very important in this situation, because they should motivate children to read. Applying different approaches of reading help to foster children's comprehension, fluency and language learning in an EFL classroom. Moreover, the activities related to a text or a book which children should read, may encourage EFL learners to read the books. Accordingly, here, the role of the teacher is once again crucial in promoting reading.

7. Further Research

As lines of future research, the study could be expanded by analysing other Graded Readers from other publishers to compare the variety of activities and vocabulary. It would be interesting to carry out these four Graded Readers and the alternative activities in an EFL classroom to observe students' learning, since this study is hypothetical, and it would be appealing observe if they work in a classroom. Furthermore, it would be interesting to know the students' perceptions regarding the reading of these books using the different reading approaches mentioned in the paper in order to achieve some real results about the improvement in the child's learning process.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Analysis of the activities:

1. PB3 and the Vegetables

All the activities can be done without having read the book. There are some that you would need to return to the book, for example the exercise 3 you have to look for the sentences in the page where they appear, but it does not require you to reading the book before, only scanning the text you can find the answer.

Type of Activity	Objective	Do you need to read the book?
1. Write the correct word. Match with a picture. Write the number.	Vocabulary	No
2. Finish the words. Fill the gaps in the song.	Vocabulary	No
3. Look for the page.	Sentences that you have to follow in the book	Yes, but not required to read it.
4. Write. Find the secret word. Colour.	Vocabulary	No
5. Find the words. Write. Draw.	Vocabulary	No
6. Match.	Sentences	No
7. Write she or he.	Grammar	Yes, because if you do not know who does the things you cannot do the exercise
8. Invent some slime for Robin. Write the colours	Vocabulary	No
9. Do you like the story? Draw your face.	Feedback (personal opinion)	

In the audio CD there are mostly the same activities as in the book. For example, in the activity 2 there is the track of the song, so children can do the exercise while listening and filling gaps. Moreover, when you finish the activity you can know if it is right (colour green) or wrong (colour red).

2. PB3 and the Helping Hands

Type of Activity	Objective	Do you need to read the book?
1. Write the sentences in the correct order, then match them to the pictures.	Grammar (order of the sentences)	No
2. Find the letter to finish the words in the poem.	Vocabulary	No
3. Look for the page.	Sentences that you have to follow in the book.	Yes, but not required to read it.
4. Draw a triangle around the jobs, a rectangle around what you find in a house and circle the words to do with sport.	Vocabulary	No
5. Write the words from activity 4 in the correct place.	Vocabulary	No. It is repeated because the objective is to copy the answers from the previous exercise.
6. Cross out the 3 rd letter in every box. Write.	-	
7. Write he or she. He is filled in on the first leader line as an example.	Grammar	Yes, because if you do not know who does the things you cannot do the exercise.
8. Draw your favourite scene from the story. Write what is happening.	Vocabulary + grammar + personal opinion	Yes, good activity. With this activity you can receive an output from the student and knowing if he/she understands the story.
9. Did you like the story? Draw your face.	Personal opinion	

In the audio CD, most of the activities are the same. Some activities that are different are for example the exercise 3 which instead of looking for the pages where the sentences are said, the aim is to put them in the right order. In addition, some activities in the audio CD have the same aim as in the book, but the form of the activity is different.

3. PB3 and Coco the Clown

Type of Activity	Objective	Do you need to read the book?
1. Put the sentences in order. Number the pictures.	Grammar (Order of the sentences)	No
2. Find the words. Fill the gaps in the song.	Vocabulary	No
3. Match.	Sentence that you have to looking for in the book	Yes, but only scanning the text you can achieve the activity.
4. Colour. Find the extra words. Make a sentence.	Vocabulary	No
5. Write the words to make a secret code.	Vocabulary	No, in the picture dictionary there are some of the words.
6. Use the secret code from activity 5 to finish the picture of Coco.	Vocabulary	No, when you do the previous exercise.
7. Decorate a circus motorhome for PB3 and Robin. Write a description.	Vocabulary + grammar	No, invent things.
8. Do you like the story? Draw your face?	Personal opinion	

In the audio CD there are the same activities as in the book. However, these activities can be used to check or review the answers because says if it is correct or not.

4. PB3 Recycles

Type of Activity	Objective	Do you need to read the book?
1. Match to find the names.	Vocabulary	Yes
2. Write the names under the pictures.	Vocabulary	Yes, scanning
3. Choose the words to finish the poem.	Vocabulary	Yes, scanning and copy
4. Correct the mistakes.	Vocabulary	Yes
5. Act out the following play with your friends.	Drama	No, but it could be a good activity using Repeated Reading because children should read several times the dialogue.
6. Draw something made from recycled objects or materials. Describe it.	Vocabulary + Grammar	No
7. Do you like the story? Draw your face.	Personal opinion	

No activities in the audio CD, only in the book.

Appendix 2. The main characteristics of each approach

Type of Reading	Characteristics
Extensive Reading (ER)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rapid reading of large quantities of material (general understanding). - Focus on the meaning of what is being read than on the language. - To read interesting and enjoyable materials. - Learners choose what they want to read. - Students they do not need reading strategies to deal with the text. - Activity after reading is more complex. - Discourage overuse of a dictionary.
Intensive Reading (IR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading from beginning to the end thoroughly and deeply. - Teacher choose that the children should read. - To achieve a profound and detailed understanding of the text not only of what it means, but also of how the meaning is produced and grammar. - “How” is as essential as the “what”. - This approach involves reading strategies: dictionary, skimming, scanning, comparing, analysing, translating, and retaining every expression that it contains. - Pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading. - Activity after reading is easy than extensive reading. - Students find difficult words in the text.
Reading While Listening (RWL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simultaneously reading and listening to the text. - Comprehension of the text but also linguistic gains. - Build connections between form and meaning and to acquire a greater sense of the rhythm of the language. - To detect auditory discrimination skills regarding a word (recognize the word or the text segmentation with their proper pronunciation and sound).
Repeated Reading (RR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To read easy texts repeatedly in order to increase the recognition of words and phrases as a fluency, accuracy and comprehensive way. - RR develops reading fluency and comprehension on monolingual readers of English. - This approach has a positive effect on readers’ vocabulary development and improved readers’ ability to read books of increasing difficulty fluently and accurately, and readers’ motivation to read.
Narrow Reading (NR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To read books with a single author or one topic. - Learners can quickly become familiar with the background knowledge and linguistic elements necessary for the next reading of other related texts. - Increases the chances of vocabulary acquisition.

Appendix 3. Sample of activities

Proposal for Extensive Reading

Aim: To focus on the meaning of what is being read and have a general understanding having done a rapid reading.

Activity: This exercise is a Pre-Reading activity.

Read this text which has only the first and the last sentence of each paragraph of the story *PB3 and the Vegetables*.

Fred is in his bedroom. He has coming down the stairs of the spaceship!
Fred opens talks to Fred.
- Hello! (...) robot Robin. -said the robot Robin.
- Hello! My name (...) Fred. -said Fred.
PB3 sees an apple on Fred's desk. It's a red
On Planet P3 the only colours are black, grey, green and white.
They go to the kitchen. Fred shows PB3 and
PB3 and Robin are very happy!
PB3 and Robin go with Fred to the village to buy
PB3 and Robin are happy. Fred is happy too.
Now they're in the village.
Fred helps them.
Fred buys the fruit and vegetables. He buys surprised and very happy.
Fred is giving the woman some money
Oh no!
Two men are putting the box into a lorry.
PB3 and Robin are in the box. The box is in the lorry.
behind the lorry. He's tired!
The lorry stops outside a house. It's a new house.
He's always very unkind to Fred.
Fred goes to the door.
to help PB3 and Robin.
Fred goes into Tony's room. Tony is on the bed.
But Tony doesn't want to give them to Fred!
Tony is holding onto PB3's neck with one hand
out comes a lot of horrible green slime!
Fred pick up PB3 and Robin
mother and runs out of the door.
Now PB3 is trying the vegetables. He doesn't
and vegetables. Why is she doing that?
Oh look! Robin is using the colours to make new
yellow and red and orange too!

When you have finished, write out a summary of the story.

Fred meet two ...

The new friends don't know ...

They go to ..., but two men ...

The lorry stops in

Finally, Fred pick up ...

They try ...

Proposal for Intensive Reading

Aim: To achieve a profound and detailed comprehension of the text, reading it in a deep way from the beginning to the end.

Activity: This exercise is a Post-Reading activity.

Say if these statements of the book *PB3 and the Helping Hands* are True (T) or False (F).

Correct the false sentences:

- | | T | F |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1) The OOs chase PB3 and Robin. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2) Yuto fixes Robin's control panel. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3) Hana phones the journalists. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4) Robin is the only who is awake in the night. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5) The journalists catch the arms of the OOs' spaceship. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6) PB3 and Robin cannot return to P3 planet. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Proposal for Reading While Listening

Aim: To detect auditory discrimination skills regarding a word or statement. (The listening has to encourage the children to look an answer in the book).

Activity: These exercises are Post-Reading activities.

 Listen carefully to these sentences from the *PB3 and Coco the Clown* and find the page where they were said. Then, read the sentences aloud.

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1) Robin thinks the elephants are houses. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2) They help Coco get dressed for the show. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3) Katy falls into the balloons. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4) They go to the circus school. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5) They have a cup of tea. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

 Who said that? Listen and put the name of the character. Then, read the sentences aloud.

Sally Coco the Clown Katya PB3 Robin

- 1) Beautiful balls! Orange and blue and yellow and red and purple!
- 2) These are my new friends PB3 and Robin.
- 3) Welcome to the circus!
- 4) It's a beautiful nose!
- 5) Thank you PB3 and Robin!

Proposal for Repeated Reading

Aim: To read repeatedly the text to increase the recognition of words and phrases in a fluent, accurate and comprehensive way.

Activity: This exercise is Post-Reading activity.

Put these parts of the text in order according to how the story goes (*PB3 Recycles*). Then, read all the paragraphs aloud.

The children look and look and look. They are happy to help! PB3 looks too and ... slowly Adi begins to look too!	<input type="checkbox"/>
PB3 says hello. He tells Adi about Robin. He wants Adi to help him to find a needle made of wood.	<input type="checkbox"/>
— Well done! What are you going to do with the prize money? — We're going to go to school!	<input type="checkbox"/>
PB3 calls the doctor. The doctor gives Robin an injection and she stops going round and round.	1
They also see some children on a rubbish tip. They don't go to school. They collect things to sell. PB3 want to talk to the children. But Adi doesn't want to talk to them.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Robin wants to thank the children. She makes some coloured slime for them to play with. They are happy! Adi is talking to the older children.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Proposal for Narrow Reading

Aim: To become familiar with the background of the books and to read books with the same character and author.

Activity: This exercise is a Post-Reading activity. After Reading the four books.

Answer these questions about the four books that you have already read.

- 1) Which book do you like the most?
 - a. PB3 and the Vegetables
 - b. PB3 and the Helping Hands
 - c. PB3 and Coco the Clown
 - d. PB3 Recycles

- 2) What is your favourite character?
 - a. PB3
 - b. Robin
 - c. Fred
 - d. Yuto, Akemi and Hana
 - e. Sally and Coco the Clown
 - f. Adi

- 3) What words did you learn?

- 4) Invent some slime for Robin. Write the colours.


