Restoring Literary Style in Adaptations for EFL Learners

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CONTENT

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MOTIVATION

- Benefits in mapping readers with content of appropriate complexity
- Graded Readers reflect CEFR (or similar) levels
- "Something is lost" in adaptation (Hutcheon, 2006; Thiel, 2013)
- => **mitigate accessibility and authenticity trade-off**

PRELIMINARY WORK

- corpus of 100 famous literary works in English
- 274 measured quantitative characteristics
- **a work's style:** deviations from corpus in these characteristics

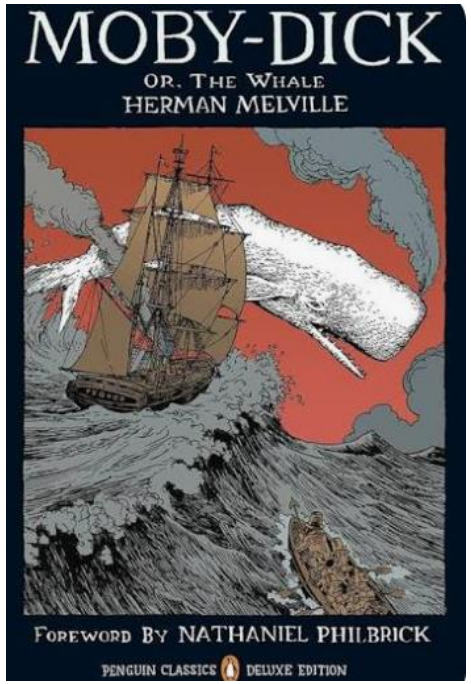
1	Ulysses	James Joyce	1922	English	–
2	In Search of Lost Time	Marcel Proust	1913	French	Charles Kenneth Scott-Moncrieff
3	The Great Gatsby	F. Scott Fitzgerald	1925	English	–
4	The Catcher in the Rye	J. D. Salinger	1951	English	–
5	One Hundred Years of Solitude	Gabriel García Márquez	1967	Spanish	Gregory Rabassa
6	Nineteen Eighty Four	George Orwell	1949	English	–
7	Moby Dick	Herman Melville	1851	English	–
8	Don Quixote	Miguel de Cervantes	1605	Spanish	John Ormsby
9	The Sound and the Fury	William Faulkner	1929	English	–
10	Anna Karenina	Leo Tolstoy	1877	Russian	Constance Garnett
11	Crime and Punishment	Fyodor Dostoevsky	1866	Russian	Constance Garnett
12	Pride and Prejudice	Jane Austen	1813	English	–
13	Lolita	Vladimir Nabokov	1955	English	–
14	War and Peace	Leo Tolstoy	1869	Russian	Aylmer & Louise Maude
15	Wuthering Heights	Emily Brontë	1847	English	–
16	To Kill a Mockingbird	Harper Lee	1960	English	–
17	The Lord Of The Rings	J. R. R. Tolkien	1959	English	–
18	The Brothers Karamazov	Fyodor Dostoevsky	1880	Russian	Constance Garnett
19	The Trial	Franz Kafka	1925	Czech	David Wyllie
20	The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn	Mark Twain	1884	English	–
21	Madame Bovary	Gustave Flaubert	1857	French	Eleanor Marx Aveling
22	The Stranger	Albert Camus	1942	French	Stuart Gilbert
23	The Odyssey	Homer	~ -700	Ancient Greek	Samuel Butler
24	The Grapes of Wrath	John Steinbeck	1939	English	–
25	The Divine Comedy	Dante Alighieri	1308	Italian	Henry Francis Cary

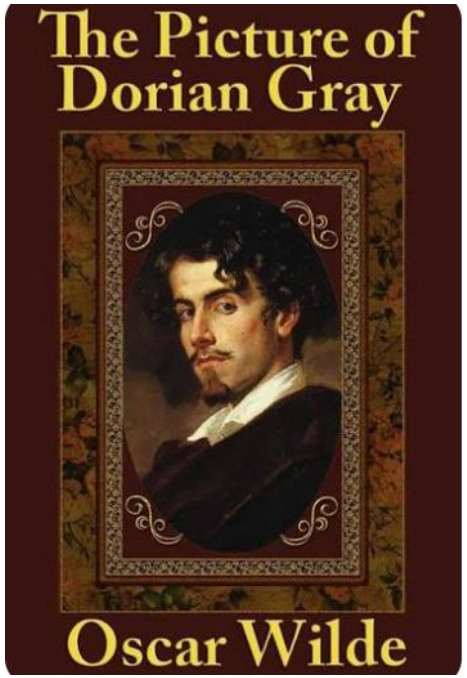
CURRENT STEP

- Re-introduce distinguishing features in adaptations for EFL learners (henceforth, "**enrichment**")
- Conduct **a survey** to measure the intervention's effect on reader **comprehension** and **appreciation**

WORKS IN FOCUS: ORIGINALS

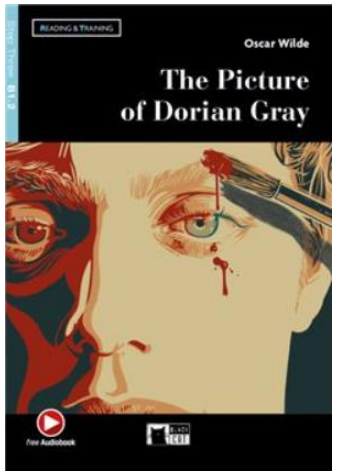
- 2 famous novels
- canonical for adaptations/graded readers

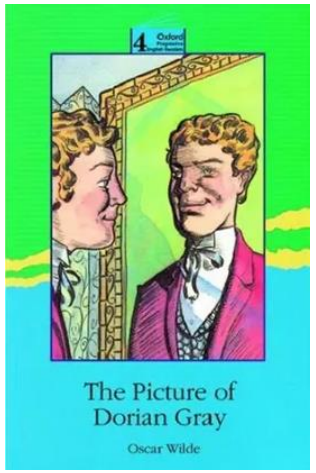


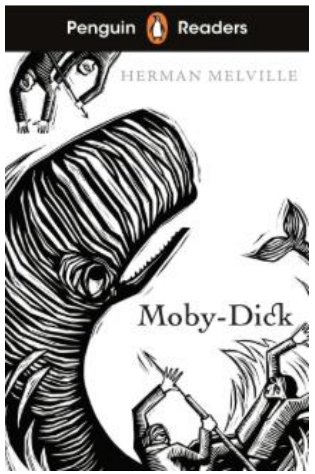


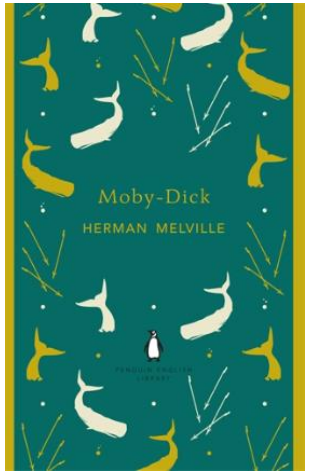
WORKS IN FOCUS: ADAPTATIONS

- Extracts (500-650 words) from:
  - *The Picture of Dorian Gray* **B1** (Black Cat)
  - *The Picture of Dorian Gray* **B2** (Oxford Progressive English Readers)
  - *Moby-Dick* **A1** (Penguin Readers)
  - *Moby-Dick* **B2** (Penguin Readers)









ENRICHMENT

8

RESTRICTIONS

- Not change the CEFR level (monitored with model CEFR-SP)
- Not force unnatural changes

STEPS

1. Increase **prominent characteristics**
2. Increase overrepresented **vocabulary**
3. Introduce **original sentences**

1. INCREASE PROMINENT CHARACTERISTICS

- Proportion-based
- Use of clusters

Work	Prominent characteristics
The Picture of Dorian Gray	demonstrative pronouns (SD); past tense (SD); predictive modals (max); copular constructions (max); present tense (SD)
Moby-Dick	seem/appear (max); demonstrative determiners (avg); by-passives (max); attributive adjectives (avg); non-finite fragments (max)

Examples:

Feature	Baseline	Enriched
by-passives	He put out the lamp.	The lamp **was put down by him**.
demonstrative determiners	He put the statue...	He put **that** statue...

2. INCREASE OVERREPRESENTED VOCABULARY

- Proportion-based
- Replacement: It was dreadful. → It was **hideous.**
- Addition: You **coloured** reality.
- Related word: I have a friend.→I have a **mate.**

Work	Most overrepresented lexical items
Moby-Dick	whale; aye; mast; sir; mates; rigging; carpenter; jaw; aloft; aft
The Picture of Dorian Gray	duchess; sir; painter; portrait; coloured; gilt; studio; hideous; monstrous; valet

3. INTRODUCE ORIGINAL SENTENCES

- (high/**low**) surprisal as proxy of salient sentences?
- higher values correspond to less **predictable** language (Hale, 2001)

Sentence from the original	Use in enriched adaptation
"The voice was exquisite, but from the point of view of tone it was absolutely false."	replaced the sentence "Her voice was beautiful, but it was false"
"His lips trembled, and rushing to the back of the box, he leaned up against the wall, hiding his face in his hands."	inserted before the existing explanation of Dorian's reaction
"You have spoiled the romance of my life."	inserted after "You have killed my love"

ALTERNATIVE VERSION:
AUTOMATIC STYLE TRANSFER

- Model: TinyStyler-Sim (Horvitz et al., 2024)
- Style strength: 0.25
- Sentences must be:
  - different from baseline
  - not too short or too long
  - cosine similarity over 0.88 with baseline
  - style closer to original work than baseline

baseline sentence	transferred sentence	similarity
You came—oh, my beautiful love!—and you freed my soul from prison.	You came—oh, my beautiful love! And you freed my soul from prison.	0.978
Dorian Gray became pale as he watched her.	Dorian Gray paled as he watched her.	0.945
What could they know of love such as ours?	What could they know of such love?	0.896

READER EXPERIENCE SURVEY

TEXTUAL VERSIONS

Original work	Level	Adaptation
Moby-Dick	A2	baseline enriched style transfer
	B2	baseline enriched style transfer
The Picture of Dorian Gray	B1	baseline enriched style transfer
	B2	baseline enriched style transfer

LEVEL ASSIGNMENT

What is your approximate level of English?

The CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) describes language ability on a scale from A1 (beginner) to C2 (proficient). If you know your official or course level, please select it. Otherwise, choose the description that best matches your ability:

A2 (elementary): I can understand short, simple texts and common everyday language.

B1 (intermediate): I can understand the main points of clear texts about familiar topics and follow a straightforward story.

B2 (upper-intermediate): I can understand the main ideas and important details of more complex texts and follow an extended story or argument.

○ A2 ○ B1 ○ B2

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

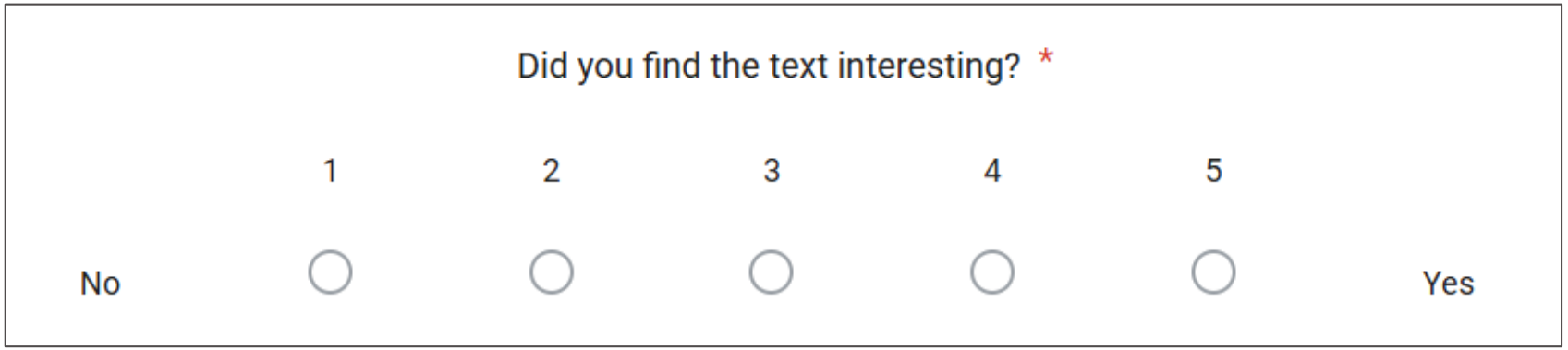
Why does Starbuck tell the narrator what happened to Captain Ahab? *

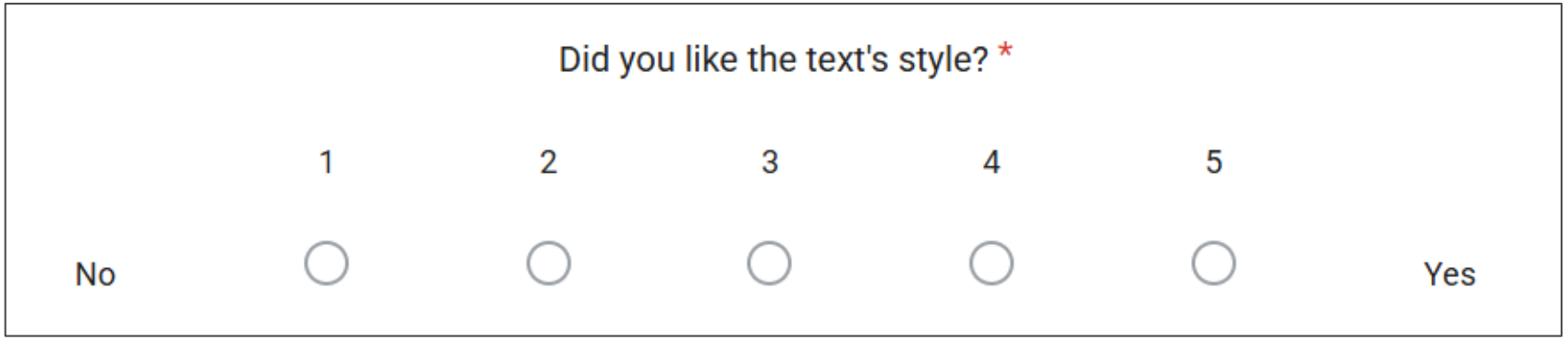
- ○ To explain why Ahab is resting
- ○ To show that Ahab is a poor captain
- ○ To warn him about the dangers of whaling
- ○ To compare Ahab to a pirate

What does Queequeg do? *

- ○ He kills a bird.
- ○ He demonstrates that he is a good whaler.
- ○ He warns the narrator that Ahab is bad.
- ○ He tells the narrator to go home.

APPRECIATION QUESTIONS





ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Do you know which book the text is from? *

- Yes
- No
- It sounds familiar, but I am not sure.

If you answered "Yes", what is the name of the book?

Short answer text

What do you think will happen next? *

Long answer text

RESULTS

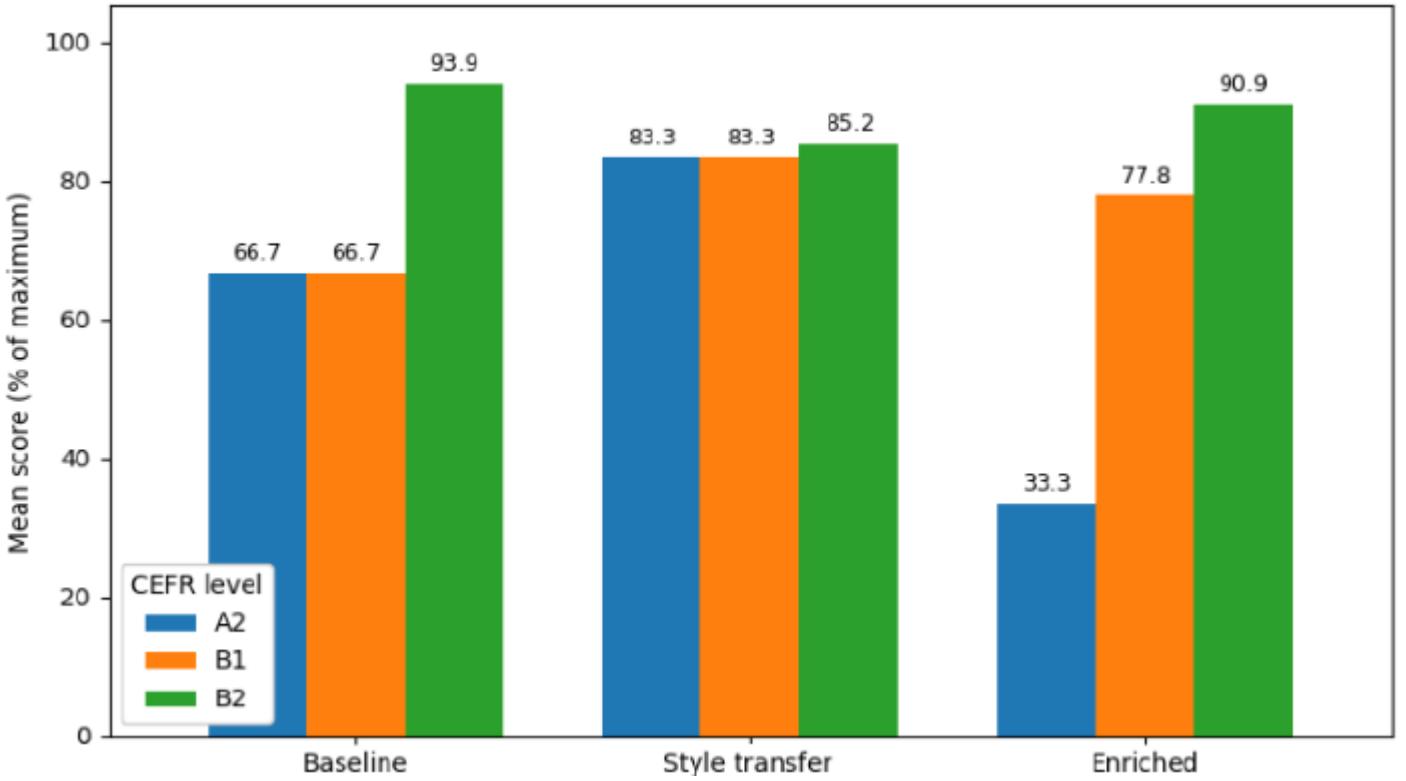
Book	Level	Adaptation type	N
Moby-Dick	A2	baseline	1
	A2	enriched	1
	A2	style transfer	4
	B2	baseline	5
	B2	enriched	5
	B2	style transfer	5
The Picture of Dorian Gray	B1	baseline	3
	B1	enriched	3
	B1	style transfer	2
	B2	baseline	6
	B2	enriched	6
	B2	style transfer	4
		Total	**45**

RESULTS

Adaptation	N	Compr.	Appr.
baseline	15	86.7	73.3
enriched	15	84.4	64.0
style transfer	15	84.4	81.3

RESULTS

Comprehension scores by adaptation method and CEFR level:



ASSOCIATIONS

- **Adaptation type and appreciation** ($\eta = .372$)
- **CEFR level** and **comprehension** ($\rho = .365$)
  - least strong in the case of **style transfer**

"WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?"

- Average answer length (words):
  - **style transfer** -17.7
  - enriched - 12.3
  - baseline - 11.1
- 5 **non-meaningful** answers
- **far-fetched/humorous:** "may be they are all going to eat a dish with some human meat ? [sic]"
- **prior knowledge:** "I think the narrator and Queequeg will become friends and may have more adventures together, possibly involving a whaling voyage."
- **feeling:** "sad ending (the death of sybil) i hope not... [sic]" **(enriched)**

CONCLUSIONS

- **Enriched** adaptations: may impede reader appreciation
- **Style transfer**: promising
  - high appreciation
  - stable comprehension
  - easy to produce
- Manual editing necessary
- **Interface** to aid professionals?

Thank you for your kind attention!

Do you have questions?



