

Dr. Helena Halmari Presents:

The Monster's Language Acquisition in Mary Shelley's

FRANKENSTEIN:

How Far Is Fiction from Fact?



September 11th at 4:00 p.m.
Evans Building, Room 105



College of Humanities & Social Sciences
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

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The Arctic Ocean. Photo courtesy [worldwildlife.org](https://www.worldwildlife.org).

Imitation "Theory"

YES:

- Language is not "inherited"
- A child must be exposed to language

BUT CHILDREN...

- make errors they have not heard:
tooths, geoses, foots
goed, eated, swimmmed
- seem to have their own internal grammar
- cannot imitate all words or sentences
- produce utterances they have not heard before

Reinforcement Theory

- Roots in behaviorism, positivism, empiricism
- B. F. Skinner
- Language is just another 'habit'
- Language acquisition happens through positive and negative reinforcement

Active Construction of a Grammar Theory

- Language is innate in humans.
- Language input functions as a trigger for the acquisition process to start.
- Children invent the rules of grammar themselves.

Connectionist Theories

Language learning is building neural connections.

Social Interaction Theory

People learn language(s) by interacting with other humans.



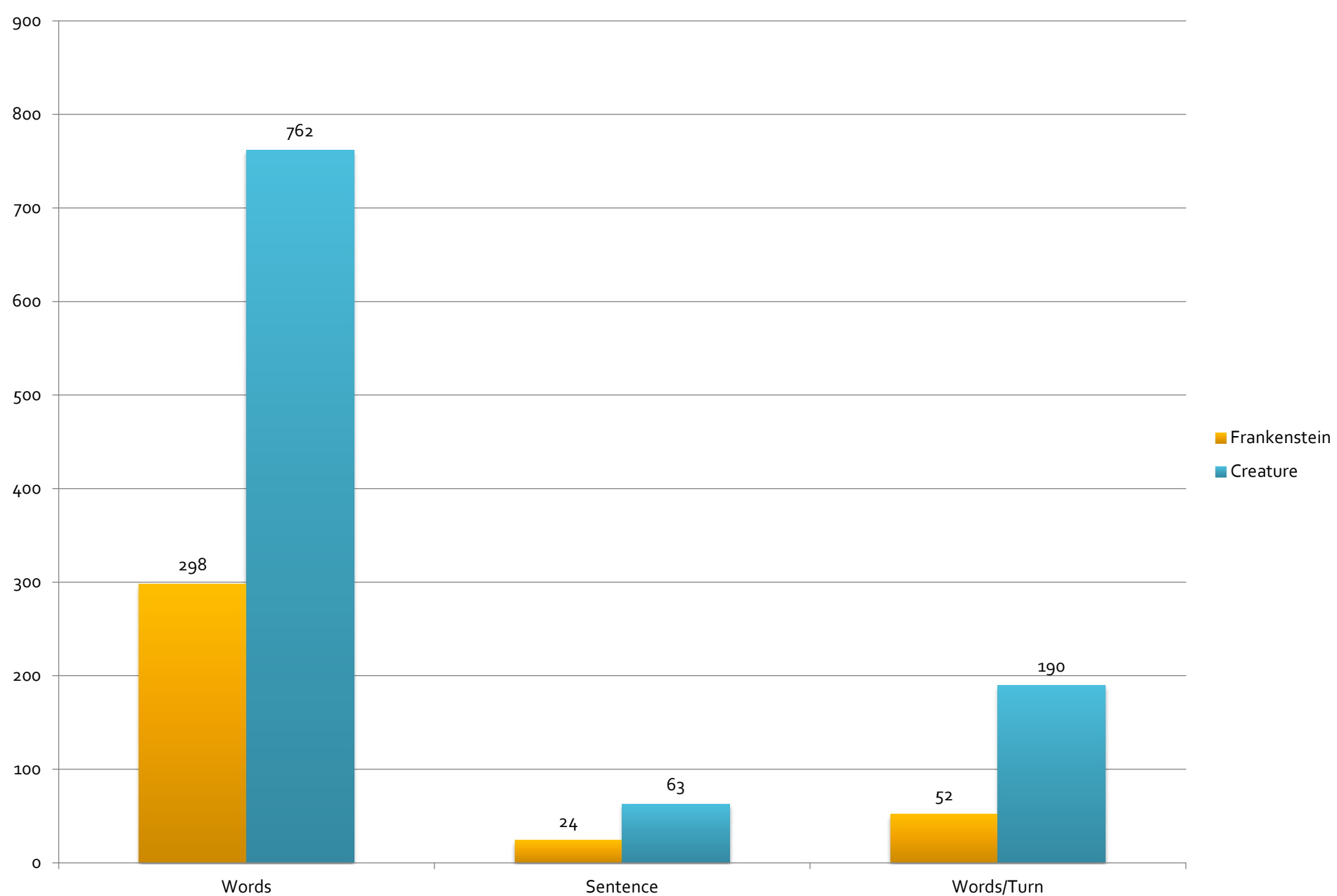


Figure 1. Distribution of talk during the first verbal encounter between Frankenstein and Creature.

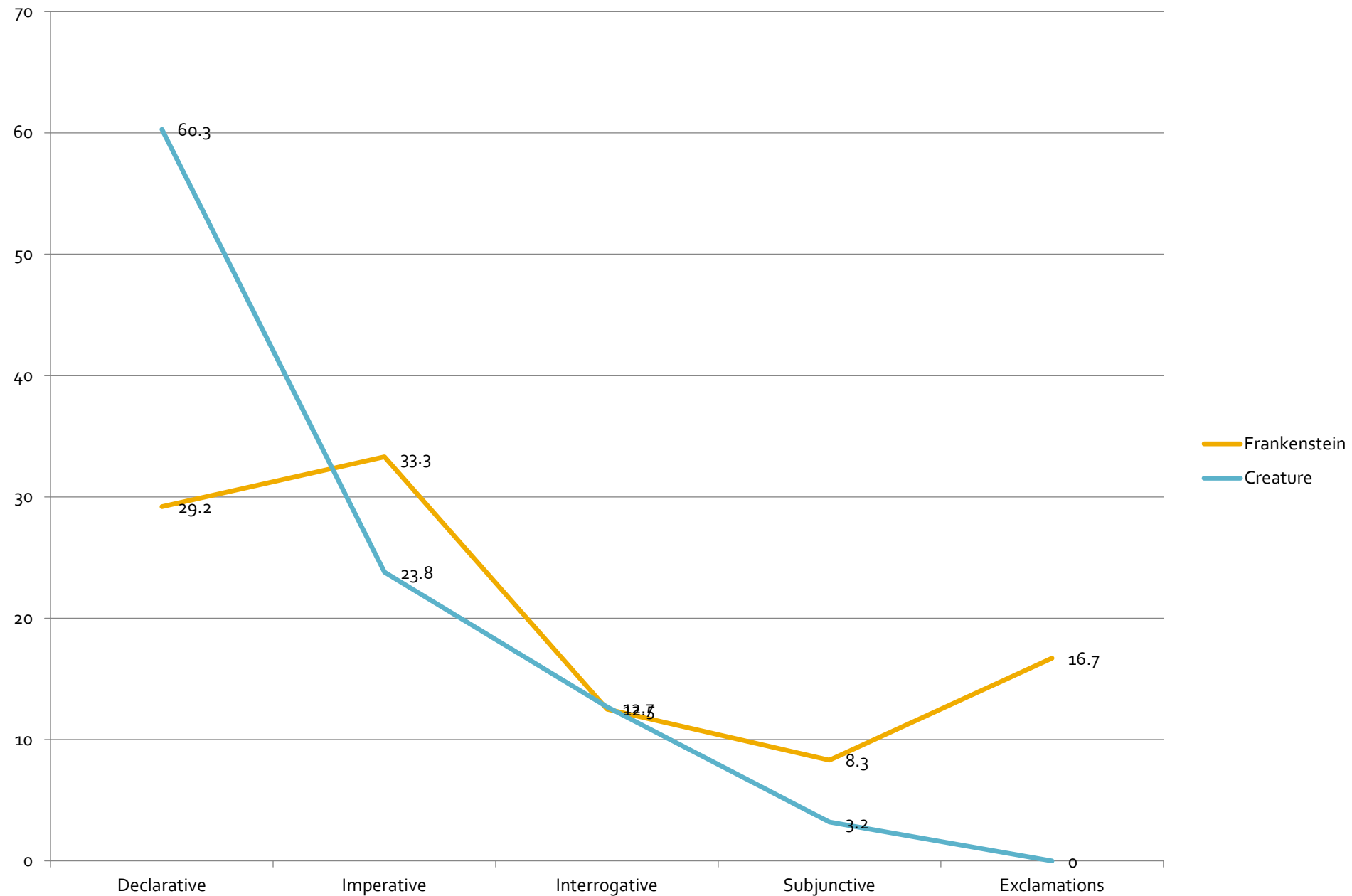


Figure 2. Distribution of sentence types. Frankenstein (n=23); Creature (n=63).