

Textual Enhancement

WHAT IS TEXTUAL ENHANCEMENT?

Have you ever seen a text like the following?

Unitarianism: A Foundation for Liberal Theology

Unitarians and liberals agree on certain key points:

They do not believe that the Bible is the Word of God. Some of them say parts of it may contain the Word of God mixed in with superstition.

They not only deny that the Bible is the Word of God, but also ***deny the Christian doctrines that are derived from it.***

They do not think that God is a person. They think of Him as a Force, an Oversoul, a Prime Mover, or even as being dead!

They think of Jesus as merely a man, an exceptional man like Moses and Buddha, but not more than a man. In their view Jesus' main contribution was as a teacher.

—From "So What's the Difference," Ridenour, 1967

Did you notice the bolding and italics in the text? What do you think is the function of using these typographical cues? If you said "to remember a main concept" you are correct. Using typographical cues such as bolding and italics to draw the reader's attention to particular information in a text is known as **textual enhancement**. What you saw in the above text is an example of textual enhancement used in a first-language context. The author bolded and italicized information in the text that he wanted his readers to pay special attention to.

Textual enhancement is also used in the context of SLA but its purpose is different. In an L2 context, textual enhancement is used to draw language learners' attention to grammatical form. If, for example, learners forget to put an -s at the end of third-person singular verbs, the instructor could typographically enhance the -s on all third-person singular verbs in their reading materials.

This is essentially the idea behind textual enhancement: to render more salient particular features of written input that learners normally may not notice and make form-meaning connections for. For example, a learner may not notice a particular form because the form is not very important to the meaning of the message. Or perhaps the form is not perceptually salient, that is to say, the form is easy for the eye to miss. Textual enhancement could be used in these cases to make these forms more salient. The desired outcome is that learners will notice these enhanced forms and then make form-meaning connections from them.

Pause to consider . . .

the saliency of different forms. What are some forms in the target language you teach that are not salient? What factors do you think could affect the saliency of a form?

How Is Textual Enhancement Carried Out?

Like with all the techniques presented in this book, textual enhancement begins with meaning-bearing input. In this case, the input is written. This could be in the form of a letter, an article, a story or anything else that is written meaning-bearing input. The target item in this input is then *enhanced* by visually altering its appearance in the text. For example, the target item could be *italicized*, **bolded**, or underlined. The font and character size or style could be altered or highlighting with color could be applied. If desired, different types of typographical manipulation could also be used at the same time.

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textual enhancement with oral input. How could you enhance oral input? Do you think it makes sense to enhance oral input? Or does it not make sense to alter input this way?

If your sample of written input does not contain many exemplars of the target form, then you may find it necessary to modify the text so that you could add more exemplars to it. In this way, the procedure involved in textual enhancement is similar to the procedure for preparing written input flood. Additional exemplars of your target form need to be embedded if the original text does not contain many examples of the form. The difference is that in textual enhancement, the target form is also typographically altered to enhance its perceptual saliency. The following is an example of what an unenhanced and an enhanced text may look like. The text is taken from the French tale *Le petit prince* by Antoine de Saint Exupéry. The target forms are the indefinite articles

un and *une* in French. In French, articles must agree with the gender of the noun it modifies: *un* for masculine nouns and *une* for feminine nouns.

(Unenhanced Version)

Lorsque j'avais six ans, j'ai vu *une* fois *une* magnifique image, dans un livre sur la forêt vierge qui s'appelait «Histoires vécues». Ça représentait un serpent boa qui avalait un fauve. Voilà *une* copie du dessin.

(Once when I was six years old, I saw a wonderful picture in a book on the virgin forest entitled "Stories Lived." This picture showed a boa snake who was swallowing a wildcat. Here is a copy of the drawing.)

(Enhanced Version)

Lorsque j'avais six ans, j'ai vu **une** fois **une** magnifique image, dans un livre sur la forêt vierge qui s'appelait «Histoires vécues». Ça représentait un serpent boa qui avalait un fauve. Voilà **une** copie du dessin.

Do you see how the forms stand out so much more in the second bolded version? A different cue could also be assigned to the feminine article to bring out the difference between masculine and feminine forms such as in the following example:

Lorsque j'avais six ans, j'ai vu *une* fois *une* magnifique image, dans *un* livre sur la forêt vierge qui s'appelait «Histoires vécues». Ça représentait *un* serpent boa qui avalait *un* fauve. Voilà *une* copie du dessin.

In the above version, all the targets are italicized, underlined and in a larger character size. As you can see, the *e* of the feminine article is also bolded in order to bring out the difference between the feminine and masculine articles.

I should point out that all the input flood materials that we saw in Chapter 4 could also be used as textual enhancement materials. We would just need to typographically enhance all the target forms.

The next text is an example of how verbal morphology could be enhanced. The passage, a Spanish version of *Little Red Riding Hood* from Jourdenais, Ota, Stauffer, Boyson and Doughty (1998), was used in a study by Overstreet (1998). (Note: The original authors did not enhance them this way nor did Overstreet.) The target form is the preterit tense. For each target, the entire verb is underlined and the morphological ending is bolded to draw learners' attention to it.

Cuando Caperucita llegó, el lobo imitó la voz de la abuela. Caperucita preguntó al lobo por qué tenía esos ojos y esas orejas tan grandes. El lobo respondió que para verla y oírla mejor. En seguida, Caperucita preguntó por qué tenía la boca tan grande.

(When Little Red Riding Hood arrived, the wolf imitated Grandmother's voice. Little Red Riding Hood asked the wolf why

he had such big eyes and ears. The wolf answered that it was to see and hear her better. Then, Little Red Riding Hood asked why he had such a big mouth.)

As these examples illustrate, there are many ways to enhance a text. Whether there are better ways than others to carry out the enhancement is a question that researchers are still investigating.

Pause to consider . . .

the various ways you could typographically enhance a form. You have seen three different ways that typographical cues may be used to enhance a form. What are some other ways? Do you think there are better ways than others to enhance? What do you think is the best way?

Does Textual Enhancement Work?

Quite a few studies have been conducted to evaluate whether textual enhancement is effective in getting language learners to pay attention to target forms. I will discuss a handful of these studies in detail here. A list of textual enhancement studies is included at the end of this chapter.

One of the first studies to examine textual enhancement in an L2 context was Shook (1994). In addition to investigating whether textual enhancement was effective, Shook also wanted to see if explicitly telling learners to pay attention to the enhanced forms might make a difference. Shook used two target forms in his study: the present perfect and the relative pronouns *que* and *quien* in Spanish. The subjects for his study were Spanish learners from first- and second-year college Spanish courses. Three groups were used in this study. In the first group, the subjects read enhanced versions of the texts and were also told to pay attention to the enhanced target items. The second group also read enhanced versions of the texts but they were not told to pay attention to the enhanced items. The third group, the control group, read the same texts but these texts were not typographically enhanced and these subjects were not told to pay attention to anything in particular. The target forms in the enhanced versions of the texts were enhanced by using a larger character size, retyping the forms in upper case letters and by bolding them. A series of assessment tasks were used to measure the subjects' ability to recognize the target forms as well as to produce them. Overall, the results revealed that the two groups that read the enhanced texts performed significantly better than the control group that read the unenhanced texts on all the assessment tasks. This shows that the enhancement did make a difference. Reading the enhanced texts allowed the subjects to recognize and produce the forms better. There was no difference between those subjects who had explicit instruction to pay attention to the enhancement and those who did not get these explicit instructions.

This means that the explicit direction to pay attention did not matter. Reading the enhanced texts was enough to allow the subjects to make improvements on the assessment tasks. The type of target form, however, appeared to affect the results. Shook found that overall, scores on the present perfect tests were higher than scores on the relative pronoun tests. Shook thinks that subjects performed better on the present perfect forms because this form has a higher communicative value than relative pronouns. **Communicative value** refers to the overall importance the form plays in determining the meaning of a piece of input. When Shook said that the present perfect tense has a higher communicative value he meant that this form was more important than the relative pronoun forms to understanding the meaning of the texts. If learners skipped over relative pronouns, this would not affect the meaning of the texts very much but the same cannot be said for the present perfect tense forms. If they missed present perfect forms, they might have missed the temporal reference of the text which would interfere with their comprehension of the text. Thus, Shook believed that his subjects paid more attention to the enhanced present perfect forms because these forms were more important for understanding the overall meaning of the text.

Another study conducted on textual enhancement was Alanen (1995). In this study, Alanen wanted to see if giving learners explicit rules about the target form would make a difference. The targets of instruction were grammatical morphemes in an artificial language based on Finnish (Alanen called them semi-artificial locative suffixes and consonant gradation in Finnish). The subjects for this study were adult native speakers of English. In Group One, the subjects were first given rules explaining the use of the target forms and then they were given texts to read in which the target forms were italicized. In Group Two, subjects were given the rules only. They did not get any texts to read. In Group Three, the subjects were given the enhanced texts only. They did not receive the explicit information that Group One and Group Two got. Group Four read unenhanced versions of the text only and they were not given any rules about the forms.

As the subjects read their texts, they were all asked to think aloud and their verbalizations were tape-recorded. The think-aloud data showed that the subjects who read the texts with the target forms italicized (i.e., Group One and Group Three) made more mention of the target forms than those who read the unenhanced versions (Group Four) and those who did not have texts to read (Group Two). This shows that the enhancement was effective in helping the subjects notice the targets. However, the results of a production task revealed that while all the subjects who read the enhanced texts (Group One and Group Three) learned more than those in who read the unenhanced versions (Group Four), those who got rules in addition to the enhanced texts did better (Group One). Additionally, those who got only rules (Group Two) did better than those who just got the enhanced texts (Group Three). What these findings tell us is that while textual enhancement was effective in helping learners notice the target forms (as seen in the think-aloud data), it was not as effective in helping the subjects use the forms. When learners had to use the forms correctly in production, giving them rules appeared to be better.

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the explicit information groups in Alanen's study. In Alanen's study, the experimental groups who got rules performed better on the assessment tasks than those subjects who got enhanced texts alone without rules. Based on this finding, should researchers conclude that learners will always need explicit information in order to learn the target structures used in this study?

Overstreet (1998) wanted to see if giving learners familiar texts to read would help them pay more attention to target forms. His idea was that if the content of the texts were familiar, then learners would have an easier time with comprehension and consequently might be able to pay more attention to the enhanced forms. The subjects in Overstreet's study were third-semester university Spanish learners and the target forms were the preterit and imperfect tenses in Spanish. One group of subjects read a text that contained familiar content (*Little Red Riding Hood*) with the targets enhanced. A second group read a text that contained unfamiliar content with the targets enhanced. A third group read a text that contained the familiar content but the targets were unenhanced. A fourth group read a text that contained the unfamiliar content with the targets unenhanced. The imperfect tense forms were enhanced through underlining, bolding and using a larger character size and a font that was different from the rest of the text. The preterit forms were enhanced via underlining, shadowing and using a larger character size and different font. Overstreet did not find that textual enhancement helped the learners recognize or use the target forms correctly based on paper-and-pencil post-tests. Those who read the unenhanced texts performed just as well as those who read the enhanced texts. The familiarity of the content also did not matter. Those who read the texts with unfamiliar content performed the same as those who read the texts with the familiar content. Overstreet was also interested in whether textual enhancement might affect the learners' ability to comprehend the text so he gave all the subjects a true-false comprehension test (in Spanish) on the content of the texts. Overstreet found that textual enhancement did have an effect on comprehension. Those who read the enhanced version of the texts had lower scores on comprehension than those who read the unenhanced versions. This suggests that the enhancement might have interfered with learners' comprehension of the texts. Overstreet believes that by drawing learners' attention to the enhanced forms, the subjects were not paying as much attention to meaning as they normally would when there is no enhancement. This finding in Overstreet's study raises a potential concern regarding textual enhancement. Remember that acquisition is intricately linked to comprehension. In order for form-meaning connections to happen, learners must pay attention to both meaning and form. If comprehension does not happen, then there is a problem. It is also important to point out, however, that Overstreet's study is the only study so far that has found a negative effect for textual enhancement on comprehension. Other textual enhancement studies that have examined its effects on comprehension have not found

any effect (positive or negative) for this input enhancement technique on comprehension. Thus, it is possible that this negative effect in Overstreet's study could be due to other variables such as the assessment task he used to measure comprehension or perhaps even to the type of typographical enhancement that he used. Nevertheless, Overstreet's finding is important to discuss because it speaks to the importance of meaning and comprehension in language instruction. When we try to get learners to pay attention to form through any kind of instructional technique, we must not lose sight of the importance of focusing on meaning.

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the effect of textual enhancement on meaning. Although most studies do not show that textual enhancement negatively affects comprehension, one study (Overstreet, 1998) has. Do you think there is a potential for textual enhancement to have an effect on comprehension? Why? If it could have an effect, do you think this effect would always be negative or do you think the effect could also be positive?

A more recent study by Wong (2002b) investigated whether the level of input, that is to say, discourse level versus sentence level input, may have an impact on textual enhancement. In all the textual enhancement studies reviewed earlier, the input was discourse level input. Learners were given a text or texts to read in the form of a magazine or newspaper article or short story. Because it is generally easier for beginning learners of a new language to comprehend short sentences rather than a text, Wong hypothesized that providing textual enhancement via sentence level input might help learners notice the target features better. The target structure in Wong's study was prepositions used with geographical locations in French. In French, the preposition *à* is always used with cities to say that one is *in* a city—*à Paris, à Madrid* (in Paris, in Madrid)—and *en* is always used with countries that have a feminine gender—*en France, en Espagne* (in France, in Spain). The participants in this study were first-year university learners of French. One group of participants read a text (discourse-level input) with the target prepositions enhanced via bolding and italics. A second group of participants read the same text but the target forms were not typographically enhanced. A third group was given sentence-level input that contained visually enhanced target structures. A fourth group read the same set of sentences but these sentences were not visually enhanced. The text and input sentences were created by the researcher (see Appendix D for the text and input sentences). The results revealed that, overall, those who received textual enhancement performed better than those who did not get enhancement on a paper-and-pencil assessment task of the target structures. This means that the enhancement was successful in helping learners perform well on the assessment task regardless of whether the input was sentence level or discourse level. The results also showed that, overall, participants who

received sentence level input performed better than those who received discourse level input, regardless of whether the input was enhanced or not. Thus, the general conclusions that may be drawn from this study are that textual enhancement was successful in helping learners perform well on the assessment task and that sentence level input was easier to process than discourse level input.

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the text used in Wong's study. In earlier textual enhancement studies, the target structures were embedded in authentic texts such as magazine or newspaper articles. In Wong's study, the text that contained the target structures was a teacher-generated text. Do you think embedding target structures in a teacher-generated text versus an authentic text could have an impact on the results? How might you design an experiment to investigate this?

As the research findings reviewed above suggest, it is difficult to draw conclusions in regards to the effectiveness of textual enhancement as an input enhancement technique. It appears that textual enhancement is sometimes effective (e.g., Shook, Wong), sometimes it is only partly effective (e.g. Alanen) and at other times it is not very effective (e.g., Overstreet). What do you think is the reason for these mixed results? The answer may in part lie in the nature of the target items and the assessment tasks used to measure the effectiveness of textual enhancement. Shook found that textual enhancement was effective in helping his subjects recognize the target forms as well as to use them in production. However, he also found that the type of form also made a difference. Textual enhancement was more helpful for the present perfect forms than for the relative pronoun forms. Recall also that in Williams and Evans' study on input flood discussed in Chapter 4, these researchers also found that the type of target form made a difference in their results. It is possible then, that textual enhancement may be more helpful for certain forms than others. The type of assessment task used to measure the effectiveness of textual enhancement also seems to make a difference. In Alanen's study, the researcher included a think-aloud procedure and a production task. In the think-aloud task, the effectiveness of textual enhancement was based on how many times the subjects made a mention of the target forms as they read their texts. In the production task, the subjects were required to use the form correctly to make complete sentences. Additionally, they were asked to state the rules governing the use of the forms. As you can probably gather, simply mentioning that a target exists is very different from having to use the target correctly and knowing the rules governing the use of the target form. Based on the think-aloud data, it appears that textual enhancement is indeed effective in helping learners notice the forms because all the subjects who read the enhanced texts in Alanen's study mentioned more target forms than those who read the unenhanced versions. Other textual enhancement studies that have think-aloud data also confirm this finding (e.g., Jourdenais, Ota, Stauffer, Boyson and Doughy, 1995). However, when

learners are also required to produce or recognize the correct use of the form, the results are less conclusive. For some forms, textual enhancement can also help learners recognize and use the form (e.g., Shook and Wong). For other forms, it is not effective (e.g., Overstreet) or less effective than giving learners explicit rules about the form (e.g., Alanen). The level of input also appears to make a difference. Wong's study lends support to the idea that when comprehension is less demanding, such as in sentence level input, learners may be more likely to direct their attention to grammatical form. More research of this nature is needed to further explore this possibility.

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the mixed research findings. We just talked about how the nature of the target form and the type of assessment task used in textual enhancement studies can impact research results. What are some other possible factors?

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF TEXTUAL ENHANCEMENT IN THE L2 CLASSROOM?

One of the advantages of textual enhancement is that it draws on the provision of meaning-bearing input, a very necessary ingredient of SLA. Textual enhancement directs learners' attention to form while also encouraging them to process meaning-bearing input for meaning. Another advantage is that textual enhancement can be easily integrated into different types of instruction. Like with written input flood, textual enhancement could easily be worked into various course materials regardless of the teaching approach advocated. If course readings contain exemplars of the target form, instructors could simply enhance those forms by manipulating the typographical cues so learners' attention will be drawn to these items. As with input flood, textual enhancement is easy to use and is unobtrusive to communication and to the task at hand.

A disadvantage of textual enhancement is that we do not always know what learners are learning from the enhanced input. We saw from the research findings in the previous section that textual enhancement may be effective in helping learners notice the forms that we enhance but we cannot be sure whether they actually make form-meaning connections from that enhanced input. In the studies reviewed, when learners were asked to either recognize the form in subsequent input or asked to use the form correctly in production, sometimes they could and sometimes they could not. It appears that when understanding the function of the form is crucial, this technique is not always effective. Another disadvantage of textual enhancement is that there is a potential for this technique to detract learners' attention from meaning. As shown in Overstreet's study, when we draw learners' attention to form, there is a possibility that they will pay less attention to meaning. Thus, when we use this technique, we need to make sure that learners are also pushed to attend to meaning.

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noticing versus understanding a form. We just saw that textual enhancement is effective in helping learners notice target forms but it is not always effective in getting them to understand the function of the form or use it in production. Do you think it is necessary that learners always understand and be able to use the form the first time they notice it?

HOW DO WE IMPLEMENT TEXTUAL ENHANCEMENT IN THE L2 CLASSROOM?

Implementing textual enhancement in the classroom is very easy. If you are a language instructor, you probably already make use of typographical cues to draw your students' attention to important information when you write on the board or create homework assignments for them. If there is a particular grammatical form that you think your students need to pay more attention to, you could simply enhance that form each time it appears in the written materials you use for your class. For example, if you teach English and you notice that your students have trouble with regular simple past tense forms (e.g., talked), you could simply enhance all these forms in their reading materials. If the target form does not appear frequently in the materials, then the input in the readings could also be manipulated so that more exemplars of the enhanced forms may be embedded. Additionally, new texts could also be created to simultaneously address the course content at hand and draw learners' attention to forms that they may need to pay more attention to. Furthermore, unlike a research experiment where variables need to be isolated and highly controlled, instructors in actual classrooms may make use of different input enhancement techniques when they teach. Thus, there is no reason why textual enhancement cannot be used in conjunction with other input enhancement techniques. An instructor may choose to rely on more explicit techniques such as structured input activities (see Chapter 6) to encourage both noticing and a deeper processing of the target forms and then use textual enhancement to reinforce what was learned by giving learners texts to read with the target forms enhanced. Or, textual enhancement may be used as a priming activity to first get learners to notice the forms. Instructors could then follow up with activities that will push them to process those forms more deeply. The following are some general guidelines to consider if instructors should want to implement textual enhancement in their lesson plans.

Determine the Goal of Instruction

What role is textual enhancement expected to play in a given lesson? Is the goal merely to use textual enhancement to help learners notice the targets or is more extensive processing desired? Will textual enhancement be the only type of input enhancement used to reach the instructional goal or will other techniques also be employed?

Choose an Appropriate Form

We saw in the previous sections that the type of form we enhance may have an impact on the effectiveness of textual enhancement. Textual enhancement may be more effective for some forms than others. Imagine that you are a beginning learner of English and you come across the following passages:

1. My cousin Billy and I have a lot of pets. I have two cats. Billy has only one cat. I have only one hamster but Billy has four hamsters. Billy has a bird named Polly. I have two birds. Their names are Tweety and Chirpy. My older sister has a dog. Someday I would like to have three dogs.

2. I must get more sleep. If not, I may not wake up for work. I may have to drink lots of coffee and then I may be nervous all day. It must be close to midnight right now. I must stop staying up so late at night.

You probably noticed the enhancement in both passages but which passage might help you make better form-meaning connections from the enhanced input? If you said the first one you are right. The first passage is easier because the target forms have a **transparent form-function** (or **form-meaning**) relationship. This means that the form has a relatively distinct meaning or function that corresponds to it. The form plural *-s* in English has a distinct corresponding meaning: it expresses plurality (*cat* vs. *cats*). When we enhance forms that have a clear form-meaning or form-function relationship, the enhancement will draw learners' attention to these forms and as a result, they may see this relationship better. The second passage is more difficult because the modal auxiliaries *may* and *must* do not have a clear form-function or form-meaning relationship. The modal auxiliary *may* expresses possibility (*I may go to the back today*) but it can also express the idea of giving permission (*May I get a drink of water?*). The modal auxiliary *must* expresses necessity (*I must study more.*) but it can also express probability (*That must be our professor over there.*). Thus, even though the enhancement in this text made the target forms more salient, learners may still have a hard time seeing their form-meaning relationship.

In French, the function of the prepositions *à* and *en* to express "in" with geographical locations could also be said to be transparent. The preposition *à* is always used with cities—*à Paris, à Madrid* (in Paris, in Madrid)—and *en* is always used with countries that have a feminine gender—*en France, en Espagne* (in France, in Spain). This may also in part explain why Wong's study found favorable results for textual enhancement whereas other studies did not.

In Spanish, an example of a form that does not have a clear form-meaning relationship is the choice of the copular verbs *ser* and *estar*. Although both verbs can be mutually exclusive in a variety of contexts, they can both also co-occur with a variety of (though not all) adjectives. The distinction in meaning has to do with what linguists call perfectivity. "Perfectivity" is used to refer to states or events that imply a beginning or end, especially from a speaker's perspective. We tend to use *ser* to express ideas that do not have a definitive beginning and end (e.g., *The sun is shining*) and *estar* to express ideas that do (e.g., *John is making dinner*). However, there are contexts where the distinction is not always

clear. Take the adjective, *young*, for example. Would you use *ser* or *estar* with the adjective? If you're 25, you may think that a 69-year-old is an old person. However, to an 80-year-old, a 69-year-old is still young. Thus, the choice of *estar* and *ser* here would depend on the perspective of the person making the statement. Can you see how the relationship between these verbs and their meanings is not so obvious? When we enhance such forms, learners may have more difficulty connecting the form to its meaning or function no matter how salient the enhancement may be.

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forms that do not have a clear corresponding meaning or function. Should we bother to enhance these forms?

Choose a Text That Is Appropriate to the Level of Your Students

Remember that when your students read a text, they are supposed to read the text for comprehension. If your text is difficult, your learners will need to devote most of their attention to understanding the meaning of the text and as a result, they may not pay attention to the enhanced forms. As Wong's study using sentence level input suggests, the easier comprehension is, the more likely your learners will be able to notice the enhanced forms and make form-meaning connections from them.

Consider the Frequency of Exposure

You also need to think about how much exposure you want your learners to have to the enhanced forms. This will of course depend on the role that textual enhancement is expected to play and the time that is available for instruction. Keep in mind that learners may be exposed to one text with many exemplars or several texts with more or less exemplars. You could also give learners multiple exposures over an extended period of time.

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how you want to expose your learners to the enhancement. Do you think it's better to give learners one text to read that contains many examples of the form or several texts that contain fewer instances of the form? Why?

Consider How You Will Use the Typographical Cues

There are many different ways to enhance the forms in your text and the type of cues you use could have an impact on the effectiveness of the enhancement. A study by Simard (2001) found that different cues and different combination of cues could lead to different results. Thus, you need to think about which cues

will help you best obtain the results you want. Will you enhance the entire word or only part of the word? Will you use italics, caps, or bolding? Will you just use one cue or will you use a combination of different cues?

In the studies on enhanced verbal morphology, some have enhanced entire verbs (e.g., Overstreet, 1998) while others either enhanced only the inflectional ending or used a different type of cue to enhance the ending (e.g., Leow, 2001). The following is an example from Jourdenais, Ota, Stauffer, Boyson and Doughty (1995) that Overstreet used in his study (1998). Notice how entire verbs are enhanced here. All the targets were enlarged and underlined. Additionally, he used one type of font for the imperfect and another for the present perfect.

Había una vez una chica que **vivía** en el bosque. Caperucita roja, ese **era** su nombre porque siempre **llevaba** una capa roja, **visitaba** a su abuela los fines de semana. Un día, la madre le **dijo**: "Caperucita, anda visita a la abuela, que está enferma, y llévale esta canasta de comida."

(Once upon a time there was a girl who lived in the woods. Little Red Riding Hood, this was her name because she always wore a red hood, visited her grandmother on the weekends. One day, her mother said to her: "Little Red Riding Hood, go visit Grandmother, who is sick, and bring her this basket of food.")

Here is an alternate way of enhancing the same text.

Había una vez una chica que *vivía* en el bosque. Caperucita roja, ese *era* su nombre porque siempre *llevaba* una capa roja, *visitaba* a su abuela los fines de semana. Un día, la madre le *dijo*: "Caperucita, anda visita a la abuela, que está enferma, y llévale esta canasta de comida."

This time, the entire target verbs were all underlined, bolded and in a larger font. The verbal morphology was then bolded. Which version do you prefer? Can you think of other ways of enhancing this text?

As you can see, there are many different ways to enhance target forms in a text. You need to carefully consider what is the best way to carry out the enhancement so that the form-function-meaning relationship associated with the form is as clear and as salient as possible. You may find it necessary to experiment with different alternatives in order to arrive at the best enhancement possible for a particular form. Don't be afraid to enlist the help of colleagues and perhaps even some students to help them determine what the best type of enhancement is for a given form. Experiment with a few different versions and ask colleagues and students what they think. Never hesitate to pilot materials before using them in class.

Remember to Keep Meaning in Focus

Remember that learners need to focus on meaning when they are reading the enhanced input. In order for form-meaning connections to be possible, learners must attend to both meaning and form. Recall also that there is a potential for textual enhancement to detract learners' attention from meaning. To minimize

the chances of this happening, make sure that learners are pushed to attend to meaning. In other words, make sure learners have a reason for attending to the meaning. Ask yourself "What are learners going to do after they read the text?" Will they have to follow directions or perform some kind of action? Will they answer questions about the text? Will they take a test on the information? The point here is that we don't just enhance forms in written input and then throw it at the students. Learners need to be actively engaged in processing that input and respond to it in some way.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

As this chapter has demonstrated, textual enhancement can be a useful tool to help draw learners' attention to specific forms in written input. It is easy to implement and involves the use of meaning-bearing input, an essential ingredient to SLA. Research on textual enhancement shows that this technique may be effective in helping learners notice enhanced forms and in some cases, also make form-meaning connections from the enhanced input so that they are eventually able to use the forms in production. In the next chapter, we will talk about a type of input enhancement that is designed to make sure that the necessary form-meaning connections are actually happening. This technique is called "structured input."

ENHANCE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

L2 Textual Enhancement

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