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Thesis Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
M.A. in English Language Teaching

Title:
The Effect of Input Enhancement on Grammatical Accuracy

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Abstract: The issue of how learners interact with input has been examined by researchers in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) through conducting research measuring particular kinds of instructional interventions including input-oriented and meaning-based instructions. These interventions include such things as input flood, textual enhancement and processing instruction. Textual input enhancement is a term that entered the field of SLA in the past two decades by Sharwood Smith (1998) which claims that enhancing the input increases its saliency and noticing chance. Input enhancement takes its color from Schmidt’s (1990) noticing hypothesis which emphasizes the role of conscious awareness in learning. Since then researchers have tried to investigate its effectiveness in language instruction but they couldn’t achieve a conclusive finding.

This study investigated the impact of textual input enhancement on grammatical accuracy of Iranian EFL learners. In order to do the present study 60 EFL second grade female learners of Sareyn Fazilat high school were divided into an experimental and a control group. The experimental group received the passages of their textbook with input enhancement (the English definite article "the" was written in bold), while the control group read their passages without input enhancement. The test-retest method was used as the measurement tool. After 18 sessions of treatment the results obtained from both pre- and post-test were analyzed. Since the normality of the scores distribution was not improved instead of independent sample T-test, the nonparametric equivalent of T-test called Mann-Whitney U was used to compare the means of two tests. The obtained results revealed the inefficiency of the used input enhancement technique in acquiring the grammatical form. The finding of this study has some implications for pedagogical purposes.

Key terms: Textual input enhancement, grammatical accuracy, EFL learners, grammatical form
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<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EFL</td>
<td>English as Foreign Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELT</td>
<td>English Language Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as Second Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFI</td>
<td>Form-Focused Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP</td>
<td>Input Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td>Second Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAD</td>
<td>Language Acquisition Devise</td>
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<tr>
<td>R-W-L</td>
<td>Reading-While-Listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLA</td>
<td>Second Language Acquisition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TE</td>
<td>Textual Enhancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TI</td>
<td>Traditional Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZPD</td>
<td>Zone of Proximal Development</td>
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</table>
Chapter One

Introduction
Chapter One

Introduction

1.1. Background

Input is a term that is taken from information processing. It is used in language acquisition as a language that the learner is exposed to. In Sharwood Smith’s (1993) term the learner’s experience of the target language in all its manifestations is the input. He specifically refers to this kind of input as the language bath that needs to be studied and analyzed.

When the learner is exposed to the language input, he may not hear some fragments of that input, or he may encode some parts of it as unknown or interpret some fragments by doing guesswork on them. However, some fragments may have been recognized and processed by the learner’s memory system by chance or by design. That part of the input that is recognized and processed by the learner and changed into some kind of knowledge is called intake (Sharwood Smith, 1993).

In order to recognize, interpret, and produce linguistic data, the learner resorts to some nonlinguistic input that the immediate environment provides for him. In other words the knowledge of the world comes to the aid of the learner to make sense of all the signals coming from outside (Sharwood Smith, 1993). In this regard contextual cues can be useful to enrich the linguistic input.

In the instructional settings like classrooms, teachers and textbook writers are after to enrich the input and engage the learner’s attention in particular direction using different techniques. For example, the teacher may simply provide an example and discuss the relevant structural point explicitly. For instance, he may provide the "buses" example explaining its plural making end "es". This kind of activity that is used to draw the learner’s attention is called consciousness-raising in Sharwood Smith’s (1981) term.
Sharwood Smith in 1993 switched to the term input enhancement which was different from his earlier work. In his paper he argued that consciousness-raising means that the learner’s mental state is altered by the input; hence, all input is turned into intake. Input enhancement implies only that we can manipulate aspects of the input but make no further assumptions about the consequences of that input on the learner (Sharwood Smith, 1993). There, he continued that there are several ways of making input salient for learners. He also introduced different ways through which this salience may impact the learner’s knowledge and performance in the second language (Sharwood Smith, 1993).

As Sharwood Smith (1993) put it, input enhancement can be defined in the framework of the modular approach in which language system is called to be a battery of quite different systems each obeying different principles. For example, making sense of a complex syntactic structure is done by one particular system, while matching words from available resources to particular structure is done by another independent system. However, all these independent systems are in touch to produce single outcome. This definition of language system has its root in Chomsky's (1980) language acquisition device (LAD) which implies that human being is equipped with a God-given mechanism in his mind that enables him to interpret and learn a language unconsciously.

The implication of LAD to our discussion is its modular consideration in that the LAD is specialized only for learning the language and the other skills are derived from other specialized devices. Furthermore the LAD emphasizes the unconscious and unintentional control of the aspects of the learning. It means that, learning happens without conscious planning or instruction. The LAD in itself is modular, however. That is, it requires the input to be split up and processed by separate modular systems. For example, syntax is analyzed by the structural system, morphology by the morphological system, and
so on. This modular consideration of the LAD helps to the area of input enhancement by insisting on engaging all different processing mechanisms to the particular direction.

As mentioned above the notion of input enhancement was first introduced by Sharwood Smith (1981) to the field of SLA in the past two decades. The aim of input enhancement is to make the input more salient and perceptible to L2 learners. In order to enhance the input different typographical techniques can be used ranging from underlining, boldfacing, italicization, capitalization, color-coding, different font sizes or types.

Texts using input enhancement strategies make the target form perceptually salient for L2 learners in order to facilitate the form processing (Lee & Huang, 2008). The supporting hypothesis beneath this method is Schmidt’s (2001) noticing hypothesis. According to his hypothesis the input must first be noticed in order to be acquired by L2 learners. The enhancement techniques raise the noticing chance of the enhanced part of the text and leave a trace in the long-term memory (Lee & Huang, 2008).

The effect of textual input enhancement on grammatical accuracy has been studied by several researchers from different perspectives. Jourdenais (1998) and Leow (2001) investigated textual input enhancement as the main independent variable. Doughty (1991) and Robinson (1997) treated it as one of several strategies to focus on form. Other researchers added some moderating variables. For example, Shook (1994, 1999) added the explicit instruction to his investigation. Alanen (1995) and Kubota (2000) employed the explicit rule instruction before the exposure to the enhanced input. Leow (1997) examined the text length of the text as the comparing variable. Izumi (2002) and Russel (2014) mixed the input enhancement with output production. Overstreet (2002) studied the relative communicative value of form in parallel to input enhancement.
1.2. **Statement of the Problem**

One of the controversial issues in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) has always been the nature of linguistic input in L2 acquisition. The controversy over either direct or indirect instruction of language forms has always been challenged over the past decades. The role of grammar instruction has undergone lots of changes both in theory and practice. Learning a language was first considered as learning grammar systems through rote learning, a method of rote memorization of sets of prescribed rules and repetitive drills for each targeted rule. This method of learning a language can be traced back to the 16th century in which people learned Latin through reading classical Latin literature. Those days one concern was how to translate Latin texts into other languages and vice versa. However, the traditional grammar-driven teaching approaches which involved various pedagogical manifestations like audio-lingual method and total physical response in the mid-twentieth century came under attack with the advent of communicative approach in the 1980s. Critics of grammar-driven approaches argued that language learners taught with these methods as less competent when they are faced with real time communication in the target languages. As a result of these problems classroom activities were designed in a way to achieve communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980), and grammar instruction was not thought effective and was sometimes considered harmful.

The idea of placing importance on the role of meaning was inspired by Krashen’s (1981) input hypotheses which claimed that language learning occurs by the comprehensible input. As the result of this theory, lots of meaning-focused pedagogical choices like communicative language teaching, immersion programs, the natural approach, and content based instruction emerged. However, case studies showed less than satisfactory learning outcomes by individuals who exposed to natural learning environments. In a study Simard and Wong (2004) found that a pure focus on meaning in
L2 learning does not lead to high levels of linguistic accuracy. Trevise (1993) claimed that the removal of grammatical and pedagogical metalanguage from the communicative classroom can result in lots of linguistic deficiencies. Due to the inadequacy of the approaches favoring either form or meaning with the exclusion of one or the other, the 1990s witnessed approaches pursuing the combination of the two learning targets of form and meaning, including Long’s (1991, 1998) focus on form, Schmidt’s (1993, 2001) noticing hypothesis, Sharwood Smith’s (1993) input enhancement, and VanPatten’s (1994, 2004) processing instruction.

During the last two decades or so, visual input enhancement studies have been conducted to achieve the goal of teaching grammatical elements implicitly, mostly through reading activities (e.g., Alanen, 1995; Combs, 2008; Doughty, 1991; Izumi, 2002; Kelly, 2008; Lee, 2007; Lee & Huang, 2008; Leow, 2001; Overstreet, 1998; Simard, 2009; White, 1998; Wong, 2003) and the method has been described as the least explicit and the least instructive method of focus on form.

Izumi (2002), for example, in his study investigated the effect of output production and textual input enhancement both in isolation and combination for learning relativization among university English learners. Through this study he demonstrated the efficiency of output production. The students that were in output groups enjoyed greater learning but their attention to the target grammatical form was not satisfying. On the other hand, the textually enhanced groups demonstrated more noticing than the output production groups. Surprisingly, the increased noticing in textually enhanced groups was not proved to be beneficial for learning the grammatical form. Further, the expectation was that the combination of two techniques would produce more additive effects than the production of output per se. But the study failed to show such superiority. Thus, Izumi concluded that students may have not been able to draw a relation between the grammatical form and its
intended meaning and this may lead to the failure of attempts to change the input to intake. According to Izumi, the superiority of the output groups may have been due to the "integrative processing of the target structure".

Russell (2014) replicated Izumiš (2002) study by replacing the relativization in English with the Spanish future tense among first-semester students of Spanish. Her study was consistent with Izumiš research where both of them demonstrated the outperformance of the output production groups over the non-output production ones. In addition both of the studies came to the same conclusion in reporting the inefficiency of textual input enhancement in facilitating the learning of the targeted grammatical form whether it being simple and perceptually salient as in Russell’s (2014) or complex and late-required as in Izumiš (2002) study.

Conversely, Russell’s (2014) finding runs counter to Izumiš (2002) finding in determining the effective role of output production in promoting the noticing function. Russell (2014) demonstrated that pushed output led to greater noticing of the grammatical forms over time in the absence of textual input enhancement.

Existing literature on the effect of textual input enhancement has shown a small-size positive effect. However, different researchers have come to different conclusions on the efficiency of such an implicit type of focus on form technique. However, a limited number of studies (e.g., Shook, 1994; Nahavandi & Mukundan, 2012) attempted to look at the effect of textual input enhancement on grammar learning from the explicit side of the coin. They reported the positive effect of textual input enhancement on form learning.

According to the extensive discrepancies in methodological features, reliable comparison across studies has been an extremely difficult task. Many other factors may affect or qualify the effect of textual input enhancement on L2 grammar learning. These factors range from learner related variables like proficiency level to prior knowledge of the
target language, the developmental stage of learners and the degree of readiness of the learner. Hence, due to the contradictory findings of the studies (e.g., Lee, 2007; Lee & Huang, 2008; Leow, 2001; Overstreet, 1998; Simard, 2009), it seems necessary to do more research in this area especially EFL context.

The present study is another challenge on the effect of textual input enhancement in a different situation that utilizes a more salient and simple form of English, the use of article "the" in different contexts which is somehow problematic for Iranian EFL learners. The English textbook that was used for the present study didn’t enjoy any enhancement techniques and the effect of textual input enhancement on grammar learning seems necessary to be investigated about this book. This study by utilizing only one type of enhancement technique was after to find out whether using enhancement technique catches the learners’ attention or not. The present study also wanted to see whether textual input enhancement adds to the learnability of the targeted structure or not.

Furthermore the existing literature showed that the period of exposure to the enhanced input is short. So, the present study removed this deficiency of previous studies (e.g., Jourdenais, 1998; Leow, 1997; Lee & Benati, 2009) by administering the treatment for 18 sessions.

1.3. Significance of the study

As mentioned earlier the aim of textual input enhancement is to make the input more salient and perceptible to L2 learners (Sharwood Smith, 1981). According to Sharwood Smith different typographical features such as underlining, italicizing, capitalizing, color-coding, and using different font sizes can be used to enhance the input. Textual input enhancement takes its color from Schmidt’s (2001) noticing hypothesis which claims that the input must first be noticed in order to be acquired by L2 learners.
According to this hypothesis, textual input enhancement increases the noticing chance of the enhanced input (Lee & Huang, 2008).

Iranian English textbooks, especially those for high school learners lack such enhancement features. It is unclear for teachers whether employing enhancement techniques helps the learners to increase their gains of structural points or not. The learners, also, don’t know how to benefit from these techniques.

The present study attempted to make both the teachers and the learners familiar with the potential effects of textual input enhancement on grammar learning. The finding of the present study might remove some questions of the teachers and the learners about the efficiency of textual input enhancement on form learning. I am also hopeful to tap the curiosity of the teachers and provide the required stimulus for them to investigate the role of textual input enhancement in grammar learning in their classes.

The other addressees of this study are syllabus designers who decide on language teaching issues in an immense level. The finding of this study might include a recommendation for them to consider all effective factors, specifically textual input enhancement, in their decisions about syllabus design.

1.4. Purpose of the study

Whether employing an enhancing technique has positive or negative effect is not clear as mentioned above. So, achieving a comprehensive conclusion needs more investigation. The importance of this study is to shed some more light on the issue of efficiency of textual input enhancement for Iranian EFL learners.

Also the previous studies (e.g., Alanen, 1995; Combs, 2008; Doughty, 1991; Izumi, 2002; Kelly, 2008; Lee, 2007; Lee & Huang, 2008; Leow, 2001; Overstreet, 1998; Simard, 2009; White, 1998; Wong, 2003) mainly employed the implicit approach to study the
effect of the textual input enhancement on the grammar accuracy. This study resorted to explicit approach to see whether it does add to the enhancement efficiency.

The other aim of this research is to determine the efficiency of textual input enhancement for pedagogical purposes. So we want to find out whether utilizing input enhancement techniques does add to the learning chance of the enhanced input in Iranian English textbooks. Or whether adding some typographical spices to the future textbooks will be recommended according to the finding of this research.

The other aim is to deepen the understanding about the possible effects of textual input enhancement. Because the number of researches about textual input enhancement is limited, our purpose is to broaden the scope of the literature by studying a different grammatical form other than the previous researches (e.g., Alanen, 1995; Combs, 2008; Doughty, 1991; Izumi, 2002; Kelly, 2008; Lee, 2007; Lee & Huang, 2008; Leow, 2001; Overstreet, 1998; Simard, 2009; White, 1998; Wong, 2003) and among a different sample groups.

1.5. Research Question and Hypothesis

Regarding the gaps introduced in the statement of the problem section, this study is after to answer this question:

Does textual input enhancement affect learning English definite article "the" of Iranian EFL learners?

Accordingly the related hypothesis is as follows:

Textual input enhancement does not affect learning English definite article "the" of Iranian EFL learners.

1.6. Definition of Key Terms

**Focus on form**: " Long (1991) claims that grammar instruction can be of two types: "focus on form" (FonF) and "focus on forms" (FonFs). FonF refers to drawing learners’ attention
نام: اوجایقی

عنوان پایان نامه: تأثیر تقویت برونداد بر دقت گرامری

اساتد راهنما: دکتر رضا عیدی

استاد مشاور: دکتر افسانه سعید اختر

مقطع تحصیلی: کارشناسی ارشد

گرایش: آموزش زبان انگلیسی

دانشگاه: ادیبیات و علوم انسانی

تعداد صفحات: 6

تاریخ دفاع: 07/11/1395

چکیده: مسئله نحوه تعلیم فراگیران با برونداد توسط محققان رشتی فراگیری زبان دوم از طریق اجرای آزمایشگاهی که

مداخلات زبانی شامل روشهای برونداد-محور و معنی-محور و اندازه‌گیری میکیندن مورد بررسی قرار گرفته است. این نوع

مداخلات شامل پیش بروندادی، تقویت متنی برونداد و آموزش برداشته میباشد. تقویت متنی برونداد در دو دهه گذشته

توسط شارودور اسمیت (1998) وارد رشتی فراگیری زبان دوم شده است که ادعای میکیندن تقویت کردن برونداد بر جستجو و

شناخت مورد توجه قرار گرفته. این پیشنهاد می‌باشد. تقویت متنی برونداد شناختی قرار گرفته زبان از فرضیه توجه امیدیت (1990) می‌باشد که بر نقش مواجهگر آگاهانه در یادگیری تأکید کند. از این زمان به بعد محققین معتقدند که این آزمایش

زبان بررسی کننده اما به یک نتیجه قاطع نرسیده است. پژوهش حاصل تأثیر تقویت برونداد بر دقت گرامری را میان زبان آوران

آموزش و تربیت برای افراد به تازه بسته‌ای نرسیده است. برای انجام این پژوهش ۶۰ نفر از زبان آموزان مقطع دوم دبیرستان مدرسه فضیلت

شورسنج سرعین به گروه‌های آموزشی و گروه‌های آموزشی دو گروه آموزشی جزوه ای از متن کتاب درسی خود را که در آن

حرف معین انگلیسی بصورت پنج تایب تابی شده بودوا دریافت کرده و در حالیکه گروه کنترل کتیزی مجموعی خود بدون تقویت

برونداد را مطالعه کرده. روش آزمون‌های آزمون بعنوان ابزار سنجش مورد استفاده قرار گرفت. بعد از ورود آزمون جلسه اجرای آزمایش

نتایج هر دو آزمون مورد ارزیابی قرار گرفت. از نظری که به‌هنجاری توزیع نمرات به ابزار نرسیده بود جای روش نمونه مستقل

تی-مست معادلی آن نموده مانند یاب می‌باشد. در دو گروه مورد استفاده قرار گرفت. نتایج بدست آمده

نقد و بررسی ها: تقویت متنی برونداد، دقت گرامری، زبان آموزان، شکل گرامری
دانشکده ادبیات و علوم انسانی
گروه آموزش زبان انگلیسی

پایان نامه برای دریافت درجه ی کارشناسی ارشد در رشته ی زبان انگلیسی گرامش آموزش زبان انگلیسی

عنوان:
تأثیر تقویت برونداد بر دقت گرامری

استاد راهنما:
دکتر رضا عبدهی

استاد مشاور:
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