

**HOW FORM IS ENHANCED IN THE INPUT
OF INTRODUCTORY SPANISH TEXTBOOKS:
THE CASES OF *SER* AND *ESTAR***

by

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B.A. (Hons), University of Alberta, 1998

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS**

in

**THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(Hispanic Studies)**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
(Vancouver)**

April 2009

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ABSTRACT

The present study considers the application of two input enhancement methods, *textual enhancement* (i.e., boldface type, color, underlining) and *input flooding* (i.e., frequency of examples) to the presentation and exemplification of the verbs *ser* ‘to be’ and *estar* ‘to be’ in first-year Spanish textbooks.

Textbooks often determine the input (i.e., oral or written samples of the second language) provided in a language course. Textbooks are teaching tools providing written second language (L2) input to learners; however, they are also individual study tools used by learners outside the classroom.

There is ongoing debate about the role of *attention* in SLA, partly fueled by the controversial *noticing hypothesis*: the argument that selective attention to linguistic forms (i.e., morpho-syntactic features) is a prerequisite for processing input as intake (i.e., incorporated into a learner’s language system, or *interlanguage*). This debate has triggered research to determine how to draw learners’ attention to specific L2 features. Studies have examined *input enhancement* methods (i.e., how some forms are made salient), to foster *focus on form*, or attention to grammatical forms in a communicative context.

In the study, a corpus of ten textbooks intended for North American English-speaking university audiences was analyzed. The study examines how these textbooks incorporate both input enhancement methods to draw learners’ attention to these target verbal forms.

Results showed an overall tendency to enhance both target verbal forms using textual enhancement and input flooding. However, these methods were not always applied in a balanced or consistent fashion. For example, all textbooks applied bolding to the target forms, to the detriment of other techniques; there was little restriction of bolding to the target forms, resulting in competing salience in the input; and few instances of combined textual enhancement techniques were observed. Furthermore, while input flooding of the target forms was observed, it was applied with inconsistent size and variety; for example, the third person singular conjugations were favored, to the exclusion of other forms. Results are discussed in terms of the effect that the application of these enhancement methods may have in terms of drawing learners’ attention to the target forms while studying individually.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to gratefully acknowledge the tireless efforts of my supervisor, Dr. Samuel Navarro Ortega, who provided not only the original inspiration for this project, but also the constant guidance, support and encouragement necessary to bring it to fruition. It has been a privilege to work with him, and his professionalism and dedication are truly an inspiration.

I am very grateful to the Committee Members, Dr. Derek Carr, Dr. María Soledad Fernández Utrera and Dr. William Winder, for their insightful comments, suggestions and critiques. Their contributions greatly improved this project.

Many thanks to Stephanie Spacciante for her generous assistance in obtaining the textbooks included in this study, and to Mike Danilov of the UBC Department of Statistics for his input regarding the statistical analysis.

I would like to express my gratitude to the faculty, staff and students of the Department of French, Hispanic and Italian Studies at UBC. It has been a sincere pleasure to learn with, and from, them. I would especially like to thank Dr. María Soledad Fernández Utrera for her guidance and Dr. Jon Beasley-Murray for his mentorship.

Finally, I would like to thank Lindsay Sutton, Geny Sutton, Joseph Sutton and Javier Baliosian for their unconditional love and belief in me.

DEDICATION

To the memory of my father, Louis Bernard (Sandy) Sutton.

INTRODUCTION

The textbook, understood as an organized and pre-packaged set of teaching and learning materials (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994), is often the centerpiece of instruction in second language acquisition (SLA). Indeed, textbooks and other teaching materials often determine which written and visual input is provided in a course, and the sequence in which that input appears. Textbooks represent a major influence on how the second language (L2) is learned (Kitao, 1997).

Perhaps one of the most important issues to consider when discussing textbooks is their inherent double function. On one hand, textbooks are teaching tools that provide written and visual L2 input (i.e., oral or written samples of the second language) to learners. On the other hand, they are also individual study tools that learners can use outside the classroom, without direct teacher intervention. Indeed, Cunningsworth (1995) notes that textbooks are not only a reference source for learners, but also an effective tool for self-directed learning. Due to this second function of the textbook, as a tool for individual study outside the classroom, attention should be given to the ways in which L2 input is presented therein. Specifically, what do textbook designers do to present input in a way that will help facilitate learning when the instructor is not present?

There has been an ongoing debate in the instructed SLA literature about the importance of focusing learners' attention on the formal (i.e., morpho-syntactic) aspects of the L2. Fueling this discussion has been the controversial *noticing hypothesis* (Schmidt, 1990): the argument that selective attention to a linguistic form in the L2 is a prerequisite for its processing as intake. Although the noticing hypothesis has drawn criticism and debate, and has undergone several reformulations, it has been a central notion influencing the SLA literature. For example, the concept of noticing has led to a proliferation of research attempting to determine how best to draw learners' attention to specific linguistic forms, in order to promote noticing. Efforts have often focused especially on the different techniques that may be used to enhance the L2 input so as to draw learners' attention to certain target forms.

It has been suggested that, when processing second-language input, language learners tend to focus on meaning first, to the detriment of the linguistic form (VanPatten, 1996, 2004). It is likely, then, that learners at higher levels of proficiency

would find the processing of form less challenging than learners who are at the beginning stages.

There is the idea that, when receiving input that has been manipulated to make certain features more salient, learners are more likely to pay attention to these features. This is, however, largely dependent on level of prior knowledge, individual aptitude, stage of learning, and whether the learner is “ready” to have his or her attention drawn to a specific aspect of the input.

In light of ongoing debates regarding attention in instructed SLA, and mindful of the double function of textbooks, it is relevant to consider whether L2 textbooks, in their design, have attempted to draw learners’ attention to target forms via the visual enhancement of written input, thus working against their natural tendency to focus on semantics over morphology (Han, Park, & Combs, 2008). Given that textbooks are providers of written L2 input for study both inside and outside the classroom, it is pertinent to examine how they guide learners to focus their attention on target forms.

Motivation of the present study

This study is a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the ways in which introductory Spanish L2 textbooks expose learners to the present tense of the verbs *ser* ‘to be’ and *estar* ‘to be’. Specifically, it examines the use of input enhancement by these textbooks. Input enhancement is understood as the external manipulation of input to render certain features more salient, in order to facilitate acquisition. Two specific techniques – *textual enhancement* (i.e., boldface type, color, underlining) and *input flooding* (i.e., frequency of examples) – are considered.

When language learning takes place in the classroom, it is a common pedagogical practice for teachers to put oral or written emphasis on certain aspects of the L2. But when learners are studying individually outside class time, their attention must also be guided to particular aspects of the input. For example, the use of different colors or fonts could facilitate a learner’s understanding of the way a verb changes morphologically for conjugation. In addition, higher frequencies and varieties of examples could affect the way a learner maps form to meaning.

In instructed L2 learning, input is provided by different sources, including instructors, students, multimedia resources, and textbooks. As mentioned earlier, textbooks represent a source of written input that can be used both in the classroom and for independent self-study. Despite the ever-increasing importance of new technologies for second language learning (such as CDs, software and websites), the traditional paper textbook remains the central tool used in university second language instruction, both for the classroom (as the basis for course progression, lesson plans and testing) and for students' self-study. Therefore textbooks play a dual role, and must function as L2 learning devices both inside and outside the classroom, and both with and without instructor intervention.

This study is based on two assumptions. First, it is assumed that the goal of SLA research is to achieve progress in understanding how second languages are acquired. Second, it is assumed that the goal of textbooks – and, indeed, all educational materials – is to facilitate this acquisition. Thus, it is valid to ask whether they apply techniques intended to capture learners' attention – not only providing external instruments for raising consciousness but also stimulating learners' internal mechanisms.

It is important to understand how techniques developed by SLA researchers may be applied in real instructed learning situations, such as in the development of course materials. To paraphrase Sharwood Smith (1991), textbooks should speak to “many minds.” That means, on one hand, that they must reach out to learners who are inherently different from one another in terms of cognitive abilities, aptitude, proficiency, motivation, and prior knowledge. But on the other hand, it also means that textbooks must also take into account changes that can occur in the cognitive capabilities of a single learner at different stages of proficiency. In the specific case of beginner learners, it is interesting to ask how textbooks can draw the attention of learners who have little to no prior knowledge on which they can rely, and thus whose cognitive resources would tend to be directed to semantics rather than formal (morpho-syntactic) features.

CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL FOUNDATIONS

1.1 Attention and SLA: theoretical perspectives

In the recent instructed SLA literature, there has been a great deal of emphasis on awareness and attention in instructed language learning (Doughty, 2004). Specifically, research has focused on determining the process by which input (i.e., oral or written samples of the second language) is processed by learners and converted into intake (i.e., incorporated into a learner's language system, or *interlanguage*). The present study centers on the application, in course textbooks, of two techniques aimed at facilitating the conversion of specific forms in the input into intake. These techniques are *textual enhancement* (i.e., boldface type, color, underlining) and *input flooding* (i.e., frequency of examples). The following pages offer an overview of the theoretical perspectives related to these input enhancement techniques, including the *input hypothesis*, the *noticing hypothesis*, and the concepts of *focus on form* and *input processing*.

The input hypothesis

Prior to the emergence of the noticing hypothesis, prevailing theories in the SLA literature of the 1970s and '80s suggested that true acquisition of a second language was an unconscious process. Krashen (1982) established a distinction between a conscious process called *learning* and an unconscious process called *acquisition*. Consciously learned knowledge, Krashen argued, represents only a small portion of overall L2 knowledge, and is useful largely for monitoring learners' production in the second language, which results from their unconscious acquisition process.

Conversely, Krashen maintained that the only necessary condition for language learning to take place is for learners to be exposed to *comprehensible input*: input that is understandable to learners. Based on this distinction between regular input and comprehensible input, Krashen established his *input hypothesis* (Krashen, 1982, 1985,

1994). The input hypothesis argues that acquisition of a second language is an unconscious process. Progress in acquisition takes place when learners are exposed to input that is slightly more advanced than their current levels of proficiency, but not so advanced that it is not comprehensible (Krashen, 1982). This notion is formulated as “ $i + 1$ ”, or input plus one level of proficiency (Krashen, 1982). According to the input hypothesis, learners acquire the L2 by understanding the input to which they are exposed, and not through an explicit presentation of the rules governing the language (Krashen, 1985). The assumption is that, if learners understand the input they are receiving, then they will naturally acquire the necessary grammar as well, without the need for a specific focus on rules.

Krashen’s input hypothesis – the notion that providing comprehensible input is the only necessary condition for language acquisition to take place – had a significant impact on the field of SLA. These ideas have been the topic of much debate in the literature (Gregg, 1984; Faerch & Kasper, 1986; White, 1987; McLaughlin, 1987; Skehan, 1998), including various critiques. Some critics of the input hypothesis have questioned the definition of a learner’s current knowledge level, as Krashen did not clarify how a learner’s level is determined (Mitchell & Myles 2004, 165). Other points of critique have included how to determine what input can be defined as “comprehensible,” and the precise amount of input that should be provided to learners. Most importantly, the input hypothesis has led researchers to question whether second language acquisition is a wholly unconscious process, as Krashen suggested. Could acquisition be assisted by drawing learners’ attention and guiding it to specific aspects of the second language?

The noticing hypothesis

One of the most influential challenges to Krashen’s input hypothesis was made by Schmidt (1990), whose ideas about attention and awareness in instructed SLA developed into what is known as *the noticing hypothesis*. The noticing hypothesis proposes that L2 acquisition is not unconscious, and that selective attention to a linguistic form in the second language is a prerequisite for its intake. Schmidt’s notion of selective attention contradicted Krashen’s (1982) hypothesis that language learning is

unconscious, and was the result of Schmidt's own experience as a second language learner.

While learning Portuguese in Brazil, Schmidt kept a journal of his progress, and came to realize that the L2 grammatical forms which he had acquired successfully tended to be the ones that he had somehow become aware of and noted in his journal (Schmidt & Frota, 1986). This led Schmidt to hypothesize that those learners who become more aware of L2 forms – who “notice” more – are able to learn more (Schmidt & Frota, 1986).

In his development of this hypothesis, Schmidt concluded that subliminal language acquisition is not possible. Rather, the only input that is converted to intake (i.e., incorporated into the learner's interlanguage) is that which has been incorporated into the learner's conscious awareness (Schmidt, 1990). Thus his noticing hypothesis states that noticing is the necessary and sufficient condition for the conversion of input to intake. In other words, noticing – conscious attention – is a prerequisite for processing of L2 forms as intake. Therefore, if learners fail to notice a certain language form, it is likely that they will not be able to incorporate that form into their interlanguage (Schmidt, 1990).

Over the years Schmidt has redefined the noticing hypothesis in response to criticisms regarding suggestions that have been regarded as extreme and lacking clarity. The strongest version of the hypothesis states that noticing is a necessary and sufficient condition for L2 learning to take place (Schmidt, 1990, 1993a, 1994, 1995b). Schmidt (1990) stated that noticing is analogous to what had also been termed “focal awareness” (Atkinson & Schiffrin, 1968), “episodic awareness” (Allport, 1979) and “apperceived input” (Gass, 1988, 1997) in that it represents conscious attention to grammatical features in the input.

However, Schmidt also acknowledged that noticing may be partially unconscious, in the sense of unintentional noticing or noticing without understanding (1990, 1993a, 1995b; Schmidt & Frota, 1986). Here, noticing would be necessary for learning, but understanding would not. Indeed, while there may be subliminal perception, there can be no subliminal learning (Schmidt, 1994). Nonetheless, he maintained that what learners notice in input is what becomes intake for learning (Schmidt, 1995). He further asserted the importance of demonstrating that learning is enhanced by attention, rather than demonstrating that learning cannot take place without it (Schmidt, 1995).

In his most recent proposal, Schmidt has sought to separate noticing from metalinguistic awareness; that is, knowledge of rules governing the L2 grammar (Schmidt, 2001). Here, Schmidt argues that noticing does not pertain to knowledge of abstract rules, but rather to the surface structures found in the L2 input (Schmidt, 2001). Schmidt acknowledges that attention can be inadvertently attracted to forms in the input, and has proposed the term *registration* to identify the instances in which learners detect a form without awareness.

In sum, Schmidt's noticing hypothesis maintains that some level of noticing of the L2 form is required for acquisition to take place. Although not in itself a guarantee of acquisition, a certain amount of noticing at some level of consciousness, is essential for the L2 forms to be learned. Noticing is the first step in language building, not the end of the process (Schmidt 2001, p. 31).

Interpretations of the noticing hypothesis

Debates regarding Schmidt's noticing hypothesis are still ongoing, and have inspired numerous theoretical and empirical studies on the role of attention and awareness in SLA (e.g. Alanen, 1995; Leow, 1997b; Rosa & O'Neill, 1999; Leow, 2000; Izumi, 2002; Leow, 2002; Swain & Lapkin, 2002; Adams, 2003; Gass, Svetics, & Lemelin, 2003). Nonetheless, there has also been widespread criticism of the empirical validity and cognitive foundations of the concept, and several different interpretations of noticing.

Alternative viewpoints of noticing have included Tomlin and Villa's (1994) attempt to dissociate attention from awareness in learning. Their proposal has been termed a fine-grained analysis of attention for SLA (Leow, 2002). According to Tomlin and Villa, there are three separate functions involved in attention: *alertness*, *orientation*, and *detection*. Tomlin and Villa (p. 190) define these terms as follows: alertness is an overall state of being prepared to deal with incoming data; orientation is the act of directing attention to a certain type of data; and detection is the cognitive registration of the data. Tomlin and Villa (1994) suggested that detection (even without selective attention) is the minimum level of consciousness necessary for processing input as intake (p. 192). According to this argument, detection is necessary for conversion of

input to intake, but does not necessarily result in awareness. Tomlin and Villa also criticized diary studies (such as Schmidt & Frota, 1986) because of the length of time that passes between the noticing event and its recording in the diary, requiring researchers to rely on memory.

In Robinson's (1995) interpretation, Tomlin and Villa's position can be reconciled with Schmidt's if noticing is defined as "detection plus rehearsal in short-term memory, prior to encoding in long-term memory" (Robinson 1995, p. 296). In other words, according to Robinson, what is *noticed* is what is detected and then further activated, following the allocation of attentional resources from a central executive (1995).

In his analysis of the noticing hypothesis, Truscott (1998) criticized Schmidt's argument for its vagueness in the definition of attention and consciousness, as well as its theoretical and empirical bases. However, he did recognize its usefulness, particularly in facilitating learners' development of metalinguistic knowledge (i.e., knowledge about a language, such as grammatical rules). Truscott suggested a revised noticing hypothesis based on the idea that the acquisition of metalinguistic knowledge is tied to conscious noticing while the development of competence is not. For Truscott, the development of metalinguistic knowledge is interesting in itself, because it is likely a facilitator of acquisition, in the sense that it could make up for shortcomings in competence. In other words, according to Truscott (1998, p. 125), as metalinguistic knowledge becomes automatized, learners could come to use it fluently, possibly making up for weaknesses in competence. Here, competence is understood as the language user's underlying knowledge of the language, drawn on in performance (Ellis, 2006). It is interesting to mention, though, that the development of metalinguistic knowledge is outside the scope of Schmidt's noticing hypothesis (2001). In other words, noticing is concerned with morpho-syntactic structure, not the rules governing it. Indeed, according to Schmidt, "the objects of attention and noticing are elements of the surface structure of utterances in the input – instances of language, rather than any abstract rules or principles of which such instances may be exemplars" (2001, p. 5). However, there still appears to be some vagueness regarding what elements could and could not be considered part of the "surface structure."

In terms of the presentation and exemplification of grammatical structures, course textbooks seem to respond to the expectations of a weaker version of the noticing hypothesis (i.e., the argument that noticing is helpful for acquisition but might

not be totally necessary). The layout of grammatical presentations in textbooks seems to echo – at least in principle – Schmidt’s (2001) suggestion that students are expected to “register” the surface structure of grammatical forms. For example, presentation charts aim to show learners the morpho-syntactic variations of target verbs. This visually-driven presentation of a verb seems to serve no other purpose but evidence the various ways in which the verb is conjugated.

In the following pages, the concepts of consciousness-raising and input enhancement are developed. Emphasis is given to the fact that both consciousness-raising and input enhancement are intended to elicit noticing in learners.

Consciousness-raising and input enhancement

The concepts of *consciousness-raising* and *input enhancement* are closely related to the noticing hypothesis. While the noticing hypothesis posits that a learner must notice a form in order to be able to process it as intake, or that noticing at least facilitates this process, consciousness-raising and input enhancement focus on how to encourage the phenomenon of noticing to occur.

Consciousness-raising is the deliberate attempt to draw a learner’s conscious attention to specific formal properties of the L2 (Rutherford & Sharwood Smith, 1985). Consciousness-raising is considered a potential facilitator of the acquisition of linguistic knowledge, and is not directly related to communicative objectives or the achievement of fluency (Rutherford & Sharwood Smith 1985, p. 280). Here, fluency is understood as the ability to produce second language speech that is produced automatically and without noticeable hesitation (O’Grady & Archibald, 2000). Sharwood Smith (1981) proposed a continuum of consciousness-raising techniques, ranging from the extremely overt metalinguistic explanations found in traditional grammar instruction, to indirect clues by which learners can discover regularities in the L2 structures on their own. Sharwood Smith (1991) describes two key factors governing consciousness-raising.

The first factor is *elaboration*: the amount of time learners are exposed to consciousness-raising techniques (such as one-time consciousness-raising or the recurring appearance of consciousness-raising techniques). The second factor is *explicitness*: this is the degree of overtness of the act of consciousness-raising (ranging,

for example, from adding color to certain words without comment, to providing an explicit rule presentation). Different techniques used to draw learners' attention to formal structures exist along this continuum of elaboration and explicitness. Additionally, Sharwood Smith (1991) acknowledges that consciousness-raising can be carried out by instructors, textbooks or classroom materials, and even learners themselves.

Ellis (1994) suggested that consciousness-raising can be used as a pedagogical device. For him, consciousness-raising is any attempt to focus learners' attention on specific target structures; in other words, a synonym for formal instruction (Ellis, 1994). Once their consciousness of a form has been raised through instruction, learners will be able to notice it in future input, which is necessary for its processing as intake and incorporation into the learner language system (i.e., interlanguage). However, consciousness-raising does not require learners to produce L2 output; it requires only that they understand the target form. Fotos (1993) suggested that grammatical task performance is nearly as effective as formal instruction in the promotion of noticing. She further noted that consciousness-raising in the sense of developing knowledge of grammatical features of a language is in fact a traditional learning tool going back to the study of Latin grammar a thousand years ago (Fotos, 1993; Rutherford, 1988).

Further reflection on these ideas led Sharwood Smith to reconsider the term *consciousness-raising*, which he concluded is a convenient but misleading term (Sharwood Smith, 1991). This reconsideration resulted from the complexities of the concept of consciousness and the fact that any concept based on an assumption that a learner's consciousness can be manipulated at all, much less led directly to focus on a grammatical form, is inherently problematic. Sharwood Smith suggested instead the concept of *input enhancement*, associated with a specific grammatical construction under study. The term communicates the fact that any attempt to raise a learner's consciousness about a linguistic structure is restricted to being merely external and exclusive to the input provided to the learner (Sharwood Smith, 1991, 1993). In this way, the somewhat intangible possibility of manipulating or remotely attempting to control a learner's internal cognitive and mental processing is eliminated. Interest now centers on shaping the input to which the learner is exposed.

The concept of input enhancement emphasizes the operation that is carried out on the linguistic material. Recognizing that what is made salient by an instructor or textbook may not be perceived as salient by the learner, input enhancement is concerned

with the methods that can be used to attract the learner's attention. These methods may include typographical modifications (e.g., boldface, underlining, colors, and font sizes). In addition, as mentioned earlier, together with the visual display of grammatical structures, there is also an embedding of certain rules within metalinguistic explanations. Both the visual presentations and the written explanations constitute attempts to "flag" the input in order to draw learners' attention to properties of the input and prompt them to develop their own mental flags (Sharwood Smith, 1991, 1993). But what aspects of a language are usually targeted by input enhancement? Put differently, what aspects of the language are enhanced in order to draw learners' attention to them?

Focus on form

For the past twenty years, there has been a series of attempts in the field of second language teaching to reinstate grammar into the study of the target language. This interest has arisen to compensate for the almost total abandonment of formal aspects of the second language triggered by the communicative approach. Focus on form (FonF) is a method of instruction that aims to draw learners' attention to formal elements in the L2 within a meaningful communicative context. In his proposal of this method, Long (1988, 1991) suggests that the effort to prompt learners to focus on form should be made during lessons but only as they arise incidentally in a context whose focus is on meaning and communication.

The FonF approach arose from the detection of an important gap in the communicative approach, between learners' ability to communicate fluently in the L2 and their ability to produce grammatically correct output. Although exposure to comprehensible input may lead to communicative competence (Krashen, 1982, 1985), it has proven insufficient to ensure acquisition of grammar. As a result, learners have been left producing many untarget-like forms, even after many years of instruction in the second language. In this sense, FonF aims to compensate for this gap by focusing learners' attention on grammatical features within a meaning-focused communicative context. A basic tenet of this approach is that the input must be understood before attention can be drawn to the form.

It is important to mention that FonF also positions itself in opposition to the traditional approach to the teaching of grammar, which has been termed Focus on FormS (FonFS) (Long 1988, 1991). According to traditional FonFS, teaching grammar is equivalent to presenting discrete points of grammar that are usually decontextualized. Instead, FonF views grammar in the context of communication, and therefore a learner can perceive both aspects of a grammatical presentation: the formal morpho-syntactic functioning as well as its use in context. There are varying interpretations of the FonF approach: some proponents advocate drawing learners' attention to form in a way that is as unobtrusive as possible so as to avoid impeding communication, such as using only corrective feedback (Doughty & Varela, 1998), while others suggest paying attention to grammar separately, and then integrating this knowledge into communicative activities (DeKeyser, 1998).

One of the theoretical rationales of FonF is the notion that L2 learning requires noticing of what is to be learned. In line with the distinction between consciousness-raising and input enhancement discussed above, the FonF approach is based on the notion that the learner must be the one to focus on the form; instructors, materials designers and researchers can only create the conditions for this focus (Jourdenais, Ota, Stauffer, Boyson, & Doughty, 1995).

DeKeyser (1998), while recognizing that the relevance of FonF is widely agreed upon, asserts that this consensus is limited to the idea that some kind of focus on form is useful, to some extent, for some forms, for some students, and at some point in the learning process. His own position advocates separate attention to grammar and subsequent integration of this knowledge into increasingly communicative activities. Sheen (2003) criticizes Long's argument that FonF is best provided during communicative activity and justified only by difficulties in communication. Sheen advocates that form-focused instruction should be presented in separate lessons (along the lines of the traditional FonFS) and characterizes Long's distinction between FonF and FonFS as a dichotomy that is merely theoretical. These debates evidence a process of negotiation aimed at striking a balance between the grammar-oriented FonFS and the meaning-oriented communicative approach. Regardless of this theoretical debate between Focus on form and Focus on FormS, what seems to be clear is that some degree of salience in the input is necessary for learners to focus their attention on the form.

More often than not, instructors bring the linguistic structure to the learners' attention during class time. When speaking, instructors often switch between different intonation contours and vary the volume of their voice when presenting examples. For example, they often speak more loudly and slowly when saying a word or phrase that they wish to make aurally salient. Similarly, when writing on the board, they often switch between block, cursive and uppercase letters, apply different colors, underline certain words or phrases, or use graphic displays (i.e., arrows, diagrams, tables) to make certain elements of the input more visually salient. During class time, instructors can combine several of these aural and visual enhancement techniques to draw the learners' attention, relying more heavily on those techniques found to be most effective for each group of learners.

Norris & Ortega (2000) and Doughty (2004) cite as many as eight methods used to draw learners' attention to form. These include: input flooding; textual enhancement; verbal recasts; consciousness-raising; input processing; compound focus on form; metalinguistic task-essentialness; and rule-oriented focus on form. These methods are also known as input enhancement, as proposed by Sharwood Smith (1991). Among these methods, there are two key techniques that have been the object of much study in the literature: textual enhancement and input flooding.

Textual enhancement

Textual enhancement is the typographical manipulation of specific features of the written input. Some of the techniques employed include boldface type, italics, underlining, different font types, colors or sizes. The aim of textual enhancement is to make the language forms more salient and likely to be noticed by a reader (Sharwood Smith, 1991, 1993; Skehan, 1998). It is expected that, the more prominent a language form is in the input, the more possibilities there will be for it to be noticed (Skehan, 1998). Conversely, it is also assumed that, the less salient a form is in the input, the less likely it is to be noticed by learners (Slobin, 1985).

Input flooding

Input flooding refers to the artificially increased frequency of certain target forms in the input. With this technique, the target form is made salient by its frequent recurrence in context (Han *et al.*, 2008). The underlying assumption is that, when an item appears more frequently in the input, the likelihood that it will be noticed and integrated into the interlanguage system is increased (Schmidt, 1990). Although it is difficult to determine whether learners will notice forms in the input flood (Wong, 2005), empirical evidence suggests that input flooding may potentially be even more effective in drawing learners' attention than textual enhancement (Han *et al.*, 2008).

Input processing and processing instruction

A common thread linking the noticing hypothesis, input enhancement and focus on form is the fact that they share a concern for learners' cognitive processing of input and the conversion of that input into intake. Despite varying approaches and methods, the common objective is to understand how learners process input and what can be done to facilitate this processing for acquisition. This focus on processing leads researchers to several questions. If noticing is a prerequisite for conversion of input to intake, what exactly is the process by which learners process that input? Does the type of language form the learner receives affect the way in which she processes input? Does proficiency in the second language have an effect on the way input processing takes place?

It has been argued that attention is a limited resource, and therefore its use must be selective (McLaughlin, Rossman & McLeod, 1983). In other words, since there is a finite amount of attentional resources, choices must be made regarding the use of these resources, to allocate them strategically. In light of these claims regarding attention, it has been suggested that, in second language learning, there is a limit on learners' ability to process L2 input (VanPatten, 1985, 1989, 1990, 1996, 2002, 2007; VanPatten & Cadierno, 1993a, 1993b; VanPatten & Sanz, 1995). VanPatten (1996, 2004) suggests that, because they are limited in their ability to process L2 input, learners have a tendency to attend to the semantic aspects of the input to the exclusion of other aspects

such as morpho-syntax. Therefore, when learners are required to pay attention to form while also processing input for meaning, this has negative effects on their comprehension of the input (VanPatten, 1985). In short, learners cannot successfully process the form and meaning of the input simultaneously.

As a result, it is important to determine how to make the most of learners' processing resources for language learning. VanPatten argues that the simultaneous processing of meaning and form can only be successful if comprehension of meaning is automatized (VanPatten, 1985, 1989). In other words, processing meaning at the same time as a form that is not meaning-related (e.g., the concordance of verbs) can only occur if comprehension is automatized, thus releasing attention for focus on form (VanPatten, 1989). However, he also asserts that certain features that carry significant information (such as lexical items and certain types of verb morphology) can be consciously processed by learners at all levels (VanPatten, 1985). Overall, however, sequential processing (processing of meaning and form separately) appears more likely to be effective than simultaneous processing of meaning and form (Han *et al.*, 2008). Indeed, learners' attention might be directed first to understanding meaning, and then to grammatical form, rather than both together (Han *et al.*, 2008).

For VanPatten (2007), input processing means making real connections between meaning and form, as opposed to simple noticing of the form. As an area of inquiry, input processing considers how learners establish form-meaning connections; that is, how they encode semantic notions into grammatical forms (VanPatten, 2007).

Andersen's (1988) notion of *formal determinism* suggested that, when the relationship between form and meaning is clear in the input, learners are able to become aware of the form at an earlier stage. This awareness of the form would make it more likely for the form to be incorporated into the learner's interlanguage. Drawing on this notion, VanPatten has proposed a pedagogical approach called *processing instruction*: a type of grammar instruction or focus on form derived from the insights of input processing (VanPatten, 2002). Using this method, instructors identify a potentially problematic processing strategy and then provide activities that draw learners away from that strategy. The purpose of this approach is to work against learners' tendency to focus on meaning over form (Han *et al.*, 2008), attempting to make the most of learners' processing resources.

Ellis (1994), however, has suggested that, in the L2 classroom, such a strategy may not be necessary, as the classroom's role as a learning environment may cause

learners to be predisposed to attend to form. Indeed, he affirms that, in instructed SLA, learners derive conscious rules about forms in the L2, regardless of the method of instruction. Nonetheless, evidence from Williams (1999) suggests that learners at low levels of proficiency do not spontaneously attend to language form. Further, findings by Gass, Mackey, Alvarez-Torres, & Fernández-García (1999) support the notion that learners do not focus on form spontaneously. They suggest that lightening learners' cognitive burden of focusing on form and meaning at the same time does allow them greater opportunity to focus on the form.

In his summary of the various debates outlined above, Robinson (2003) observes that noticing, while perhaps not necessary, does appear to contribute to learning and retention. Therefore, he argues that consciousness-raising, input enhancement, processing instruction, and focus on form, which aim to induce noticing in learners, are likely to be beneficial. Although theoretical debates on these notions continue to develop, it is equally important to explore what empirical studies have been carried out in these areas of inquiry, and what evidence they have obtained.

1.2 Noticing and SLA: empirical studies

Empirical studies have contributed valuable knowledge regarding the possible effectiveness of input enhancement (i.e., the specific techniques aimed at drawing learners' attention to target forms) in eliciting noticing in learners. Between 1991 and 2007, more than 20 studies have been carried out to explore the effects that external manipulation of input can have on noticing of the grammatical form. The results, whose major trends are outlined below, have been varied and largely inconclusive (for a comprehensive overview of the empirical literature on input enhancement, see Han *et al.*, 2008).

Visual enhancement of input demonstrated no significant benefits in eight studies (Leow, 1997b; Overstreet, 1998; Leow, 2001a; Izumi, 2002; Bowles, 2003; Francis, 2003; Wong, 2003; Kim, 2006). One study by Overstreet (1998) attempted to test the effectiveness of a combination of textual enhancement techniques in the acquisition of the Spanish preterit and imperfect. Fifty adult Anglophone learners of Spanish participated in the study. The additional variable of content familiarity was also

added: two of the test groups were familiar with the input while the two others were not. The enhancement techniques used were underlining, bolding, shadowing, and a different font. Results suggested that the textual enhancement assisted the participants in attending to formal aspects of the L2. It was also found, however, that these students' attentional resources might have been depleted from having to decode the enhanced parts, resulting in a poorer understanding of the meaning of the texts. Results showed that enhancement actually had negative effects on comprehension of meaning while having no effect on acquisition of form. These findings led to the conclusion that textual enhancement might hinder learners' comprehension.

Visual enhancement of written input was found to be partially beneficial in six studies (Leow, 1997b; White, 1998; Izumi, 2002; Barcroft, 2003; Leow, Egi, Nuevo, & Tsai, 2003; Lee, 2007). Leow (1997b) sought to investigate the effects of textual enhancement in combination with the variable of text length. Eighty-four adult Anglophone learners of Spanish in their second semester of study were exposed to four different texts: one short, enhanced text; one short, unenhanced text; one long, enhanced text; and one long, unenhanced text. The texts were enhanced using a combination of underlining and boldface type, and the target forms were the impersonal imperative forms of Spanish verbs. Testing methods included a short-answer comprehension task and a multiple-choice recognition task. Exposing students to short authentic reading materials facilitated reading comprehension but not intake. Input enhancement had no effect on comprehension or intake. However, a minor tendency in the data showed that, while enhancement did not have a demonstrated effect on intake, it did have a somewhat positive effect on participants' comprehension.

The visual enhancement of written input was found to be beneficial to some degree in nine empirical studies (Alanen, 1995; Berent, Kelly, Aldersley, Schmitz, Khalsa, & Panara, 2007; Doughty, 1991; Jourdenais *et al.*, 1995; Park, 2004; Robinson, 1997; Shook, 1994, 1999; Williams, 1999). In three of the studies, Alanen (1995), Jourdenais *et al.* (1995) and Berent *et al.* (2007), positive results were demonstrated in terms of participants' recall and production of target forms. By contrast, the results obtained by Doughty (1991) showed benefits only for participants who comprehended the input. Thus, textual enhancement and participants' comprehension seemed to work together to produce positive results.

One study in particular, by Jourdenais *et al.* (1995), sought to assess the impact of input enhancement on learners' cognitive processing of linguistic forms in the L2.

Ten adult Anglophone learners in a second semester Spanish language course participated in the study, which focused on the Spanish preterit and imperfect verb tenses. The input provided to the test group was enhanced using a combination of four techniques: underlining, bolding, shadowing and a different font. Testing methods included think-aloud protocols and a picture-based writing task. The participants who had been exposed to the enhanced input reported noticing the forms in their think-aloud protocols more than those who had been exposed to the unenhanced input. Textual enhancement did not appear to influence the degree of accuracy in the participants' production of the target form, although those exposed to enhanced input did use the target forms more often in their writing task. Overall, results indicated positive effects of input enhancement on intake.

Among the input enhancement techniques explored in these studies are textual enhancement (i.e., the manipulation of written input using boldface type, italics, underlining, different colors or sizes, etc.) and input flooding (i.e., increasing the frequency of appearance of a specific target form). These two techniques were tested in combination by Shook (1994, 1999), White (1998) and, to some extent, Leow *et al.* (2003). Although it is difficult to determine whether learners will notice forms in the input flood (Wong, 2005), empirical evidence suggests that input flooding may potentially be even more effective in drawing learners' attention than textual enhancement (Han *et al.*, 2008).

Several studies applied more than one textual enhancement technique in combination. For example, Doughty (1991) used highlighting and capitalization. Shook (1994) applied bolding and uppercase letters. Jourdenais *et al.* (1995), Jourdenais (1998) and Overstreet (1998) applied underline, bolding, shadow, and a different font. Leow (1997b) applied underlining and bolding. White (1998) applied enlargement, different combinations of bolding, italics and underlining. Izumi (2002) applied bolding, shadow and different fonts and sizes.

Because of the vast differences between the studies in terms of the target language, the task implemented, the target grammatical structure, the enhancement techniques applied, and the method used to evaluate results, it is difficult to establish reliable comparisons. As suggested by Han *et al.* (2008), future work should replicate existing studies and have a longitudinal approach, since the amount of time given between exposure to the input and post-testing varies greatly among the studies and is a key element in learning and acquisition. For example, some of the studies that showed

benefits for input enhancement (Shook, 1994; Jourdenais *et al.*, 1995) allowed for a time frame of T-1 hour. Conversely, some studies that showed no benefits had a time frame of T-2 weeks (Izumi, 2002) and T-20 weeks (White, 1998). This time effect of exposure to the stimuli may be an important factor related to short- versus long-term memory (Han *et al.*, 2008).

The present study does not seek to replicate any of the empirical studies, nor does it intend to corroborate or refute the use of input enhancement in SLA. Rather, the intention is to observe the application of input enhancement techniques in Spanish L2 textbooks. As the preceding pages have shown, input enhancement techniques (and the related concepts of noticing, focus on form and input processing) have had a considerable impact on the SLA field, and research on these topics continues to be an area of great interest.

1.3 Textbooks: theoretical perspectives

As stated earlier, a textbook is a learning tool with a double function. On the one hand, it functions as a source of L2 input for classroom instruction. On the other hand, a textbook is also an independent study tool. Thus, it could be reasonably expected that a textbook should facilitate learning of L2 grammar, vocabulary and language use both inside and outside the classroom. This means that a textbook should be conceived and designed with the idea that it should be an effective tool both with and without instructor intervention. In other words, although instructed SLA course textbooks are ideally used in the classroom with the presence of an instructor, learners also use them when studying individually outside the classroom, where no instructor is present. For this reason, the design of textbooks bears critical consideration.

As mentioned in the Introduction, textbooks are understood as organized and pre-packaged teaching and learning materials (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994). As such, they represent one of the most important influences on how the second language is learned (Kitao, 1997). In many cases, the textbook is the basis and center of instructed L2 learning. Indeed, the textbook seems to have always been the foundation on which instructors build their lesson plans and the central axis guiding the structure of the curriculum as a whole. In the case of instructed L2 learning, it is interesting to note that,

despite the great progress that has been made in terms of multimedia and online resources, the traditional textbook still occupies a central position in the course. Every student is encouraged to have a textbook for both classroom lessons and individual study and homework. It is this dual use of the textbook, as a classroom (group, often instructor-led) tool and a self-study (individual, learner-led) tool, that makes it an interesting object of study.

In North American universities, beginner language courses tend to be organized around a textbook, used both during class time and for individual study. The design of syllabi also tends to be based on the content provided by the textbook, in the sequence presented therein. Despite the seemingly timeless centrality of textbooks, it is important to examine what the SLA literature says about the purpose of the textbook, and the different positions regarding the ways in which textbooks should be used for instructed L2 learning. For example, it can appear that the organization of a textbook is an arbitrary choice, motivated more by the intuition of its writers than by the literature on instructed second language learning. However, most textbooks are ostensibly based on an underlying pedagogical approach which guides the choice of information and activities that are included therein (Kitao, 1997). However, there can be a discrepancy between the intended goals of the author and the distinct reality of the text material. For example, a study of German L2 textbooks by Johnson & Markham (1989) found that while some authors claimed to endorse the communicative approach, the textbooks often did not demonstrate evidence of this orientation. There was a general lack of meaningful communicative exercises, and an abundance of mechanical drills more aligned with rote learning through repetition. Indeed, Sheldon (1988) has suggested that a “closed circle” operates, in which “textbooks merely grow from and imitate other textbooks and do not admit the winds of change from research, methodological experimentation, or classroom feedback” (Sheldon 1988, p. 239). He offers a comprehensive methodology for choosing English as a Second Language textbooks, stressing instructor and learner feedback in evaluation processes.

Regarding the purpose of textbooks, an idea of the differing perspectives can be gleaned from the different positions offered by Allwright (1981) and O’Neill (1982). Although both authors agree that the role of materials is limited inside the classroom, they disagree as to the specific role that should be played by the textbook in instructed language learning. Allwright (1981) advocates a limited role for teaching materials in which they contribute to, but do not wholly determine, course content. He argues that

textbooks are too inflexible, as they generally reflect the pedagogical, psychological, and linguistic preferences and biases of their authors, with little consideration for learners. He asserts that the methodologies promoted by a specific textbook will influence the classroom setting by indirectly imposing external objectives and expectations on learners as well as instructors. Because of these characteristics, Allwright proposes that textbooks be used merely as a jumping-off point for teacher activities, with textbooks contributing to course content but not determining it. Any textbooks that are used, he continues, should be designed not as teaching materials but rather as *learning materials*. This would put learners in a position of action and decision-making in the learning process, oriented more toward learner-training than teacher-training. Contents would include information of particular interest to learners, such as how to benefit from the instructor's expertise, how to make the most of classroom interaction, and tips for independent study outside class time.

Conversely, O'Neill (1982) affirms that learning materials such as textbooks are not only a useful tool to orient learners' studying, but are in fact necessary resources. He argues that teaching materials provide an important jumping-off point for instructed learning, especially as they allow learners to prepare for an upcoming class or review concepts already covered. They provide the material with which to frame courses, constituting a grammatical and functional framework within which the instructor can work. When the material in a textbook is well presented, it allows the instructor to adapt and improvise during class time. Additionally, textbooks make it possible for learners to read ahead or catch up on missed class assignments, working individually. Above all, O'Neill considers textbooks to be basic tools for instructed learning, a solid foundation to which instructors and learners can add their own creativity.

Indeed, as illustrated above, one of the most compelling arguments in favor of textbooks is that they allow individual learners the chance to interact with the language outside of class time. In this sense, students who may have missed a lesson are able to catch up on the material. Likewise, teachers can ask students to complete practice activities or read ahead in preparation for upcoming lessons.

1.4 Textbooks: empirical studies

Few empirical studies have analyzed textbooks from a specifically SLA-oriented perspective; that is, examining textbooks through the lens of instructed second language learning, informed by the research in the field.

Critical studies of textbooks have often focused on sociolinguistic and cultural aspects, some tracing the ideological aspects of certain assumptions underlying textbooks, which make themselves evident in the choice of topics, for instance. One example is Váldez-Benavides' (1994) critical analysis of Spanish L2 textbooks used in US universities, which found cultural distortions and a tendency to misrepresent and stereotype Spanish-speaking groups. Other studies have included comparative examinations of the contents provided by different textbooks. One such example is Mason's (1993) comparative study of the ways in which pronunciation rules are presented in a series of Italian textbooks. The textbooks were analyzed in terms of where pronunciation was taught in each text, which types of explanations and exercises were provided, and which exact sounds were presented. Results showed a wide discrepancy among the textbooks in terms of the ways in which pronunciation was presented. There was a lack of systematic treatment of pronunciation throughout the textbooks.

A number of studies have focused specifically on textbooks as the object of an SLA-oriented analysis. For example, Johnson & Markham's (1989) study, mentioned earlier, analyzed four series of secondary school German textbooks and determined that there was a striking discrepancy between the stated objectives of the books and the evidenced shown in the types of drills the books contained. Terrell (1990) studied a series of Spanish textbooks to chart their evolution in the application of the communicative approach. The study focused especially on the type of activities offered by the textbooks: interactive vs. non-interactive; open vs. closed; contextualized vs. non-contextualized; and meaningful vs. rote. Results suggested that current textbooks are qualitatively and quantitatively different from textbooks produced in the 1960s and '70s, because majority of the current textbooks showed some degree of incorporation of communicative methodologies into their activities.

A study by Olivares-Cuhat (1999) took an SLA-oriented approach to the analysis of textbooks, focusing on the content provided by three Spanish L2 composition manuals. The study was conducted within a framework of research on second language writing, and found that the L2 writing manuals have incorporated major SLA theories on writing and L2 acquisition processes. A study by Colussi Arthur (1995) analyzed a corpus of seven introductory Italian L2 textbooks to investigate the specific pedagogical approaches taken in each case, comparing and contrasting the features of each book. It was found that the great majority of the textbooks have taken a similar approach to pedagogy, which is an integrated or eclectic approach. That is, they incorporate a variety of different teaching approaches (such as functional, inductive and deductive methods).

Despite the visual nature of textbooks and their function of rule presentation, it does not appear that any empirical studies of textual enhancement and input flooding have explicitly made textbooks their focus of investigation. Likewise, it seems that no studies of textbooks seem to have considered textual enhancement or input flooding techniques as the object of their study.

1.5 The present study

The present study aims to contribute to the field of instructed SLA by analyzing the application of two input enhancement techniques – textual enhancement and input flooding – in course textbooks. A preliminary exploration, it consists of a quantitative and qualitative analysis of a random sample of Spanish textbooks intended for beginner learners in first-year university courses in North America. The target forms included in the study are the verbs *ser* ‘to be’ and *estar* ‘to be’.

Since textbooks play a central role in language learning, it is worth observing the techniques that they apply to facilitate learners’ acquisition of grammatical forms.

A central tenet of this study is the fact that exposure to the second language input in a textbook may vary as a result of the different instances in which contents appear in a textbook chapter. As will be shown, most textbooks offer at least two instances of focused exposure to a grammatical structure (e.g., the verb *ser* ‘to be’ is presented in Chapter 1 and reappears later in Chapter 2 or 3). Therefore, it is of interest

for this study to explore the way textual enhancement and input flooding function consistently (or not) in the different instances of exposure of the learner to a grammatical form. For instance, there may be a greater emphasis on the use of color, bolding, or underlining during the first exposure to the verb *ser* 'to be'. Or, the frequency of examples of the verb could vary between the first-time exposure in an early chapter, and subsequent exposure later on in the text.

In addition to the enhancement techniques of textual enhancement and input flooding provided by the textbooks, the evolution of the presentations of the verbs *ser* 'to be' and *estar* 'to be' are also analyzed. Since all beginner Spanish textbooks present these verbs more than once, at varying stages of the text, the first and second presentations of *ser* 'to be' and *estar* 'to be' are also compared. This will make it possible to determine whether the input enhancement techniques that appear in the textbooks are applied in a consistent manner or in a manner that could be understood to change with the evolving knowledge of the learner.

1.6 Hypotheses

The present study addresses the following three hypotheses:

- H1: There will be evidence of the application of typographical techniques to highlight the target verbs *ser* 'to be' and *estar* 'to be' in print.
- H2: There will be evidence of the application of a frequency of examples in the presentation and exemplification of the target verbs *ser* 'to be' and *estar* 'to be'.
- H3: The second time the target verbs are presented, the corpus will provide more opportunity to focus on form by increasing the frequency of examples provided. This should compensate for learners' natural tendency to process meaning over form.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

2.1 Target forms analyzed

This study analyzes the presentation of two target forms, the verbs *ser* ‘to be’ and *estar* ‘to be’. The objective is to study the ways in which textbooks present challenging and complex grammatical forms to beginner learners of Spanish. With the aim of determining the contents that Spanish language instructors find the most central to the beginner curriculum, an informal electronic survey was conducted among ten professors, instructors and teaching assistants involved in teaching beginner Spanish courses offered by the Department of French, Hispanic and Italian Studies (FHIS) at the University of British Columbia (UBC). Results of the survey consistently pointed to the verbs *ser* ‘to be’ and *estar* ‘to be’ as central structures to be taught to beginner learners of Spanish.

Indeed, the verbs *ser* ‘to be’ and *estar* ‘to be’ are presented in every introductory Spanish textbook, usually in the first few chapters. In most cases, *ser* ‘to be’ is one of the first verbs to which learners are exposed, with *estar* ‘to be’ presented in a subsequent chapter. Both *ser* ‘to be’ and *estar* ‘to be’ are complex constructions, as they are irregular verbs used to express various messages associated with the concept ‘to be’ in the English language. In the case of *ser* ‘to be’, this verb conveys a wide array of meanings ranging from the basic identification of people and things (e.g., *soy profesor* ‘I am a teacher/professor’), to telling time (e.g., *son las tres* ‘it is three o’clock’), to impersonal expressions (e.g., *es importante estudiar* ‘it is important to study’). The verb *estar* ‘to be’, which is usually presented not long after *ser* ‘to be’ and often contrasted with it, is used to express different nuances of the concept. Uses of *estar* ‘to be’ include physical or emotional conditions (e.g. *mi hermana está enferma* ‘my sister is ill’) and geographical location (e.g. *la casa está en la esquina* ‘the house is on the corner’). In addition, the verb is used in more complex constructions, such as the present progressive tense (e.g., *estamos leyendo un libro* ‘we are reading a book’).

Distinguishing between when to use *ser* ‘to be’ and when to use *estar* ‘to be’ is a complex task for L2 Spanish learners. Francis (2003) argues that, along with

preterit/imperfect, clitic pronouns, present perfect, and indicative/subjunctive, one of the most difficult grammatical concepts for English-speaking learners of Spanish is the distinction between the verbs *ser* ‘to be’ and *estar* ‘to be’. Although some of the distinctions between the two are easily learned (for example, the present progressive is always expressed using *estar* ‘to be’), others require much more effort to master. Moreover, some of the distinctions between the verbs remain a challenge even after years of formal instruction. This is partly due to the fact that there are many exceptions to the established uses of *ser* ‘to be’ and *estar* ‘to be’. For example, Francis (2003, p. 54) recalls that, while dates are traditionally taught using *ser* ‘to be’, they can actually be expressed using either verb (e.g., *es el tres / estamos a tres* ‘it is the third’). Further, an English statement such as ‘he is happy’ can be expressed using either verb (*es feliz / está contento*) (Francis 2003, p. 54).

2.2 The verb *ser* ‘to be’

For an English-speaking student who is starting to learn Spanish as a foreign language, the verb *ser* ‘to be’ presents certain morphological and semantic features that make it an appealing point of grammar to study. It is interesting to note the changes that this verb undergoes over time, as the learner progresses in the textbook. As noted above, textbooks tend to expose learners to the verb *ser* ‘to be’ prior to exposing them to *estar* ‘to be’; the first exposure to *ser* ‘to be’ is often in the preliminary or first chapter of the textbook.

The first time learners are exposed to the verb *ser* ‘to be’ in a textbook, it is usually the first time the concept ‘to be’ has appeared, and *ser* ‘to be’ appears in isolation, not contrasted with any other verb. The usage of *ser* ‘to be’ is understood as being roughly equivalent to the English usage of ‘to be’. For example, a learner wishing to say ‘I am a student’ will be instructed to use *ser* ‘to be’ to communicate that message; thus they will learn that *soy estudiante* means ‘I am a student’. At this early stage, learners are shown that *ser* ‘to be’ can be put to a wide number of uses. This can be understood as intuitive for the Anglophone learner of Spanish. That is, there appears to be a one-to-one relationship between the Spanish *ser* and the English ‘to be’. Therefore, while the irregularity of its conjugation may seem challenging, it is not likely that

learning *ser* ‘to be’ the first time it appears in the textbook will pose important semantic challenges to the learner. In short, the verb *ser* ‘to be’, the first time a learner is exposed to it, appears to have relatively transparent semantic features.

Despite the semantic transparency of *ser* ‘to be’ for learners at this early stage, this target form poses an important morphological difficulty. This difficulty lies in its irregular conjugations. Figure 1 presents the complete paradigm of conjugations for the verb *ser* ‘to be’ in the present indicative. Notice the split in the arrangement to signal the morphological variation of the verb due to the change in number (i.e., singular and plural).

	Pronoun	Verb	Translation
Singular	yo	soy	I am
	tú	eres	you are (<i>familiar</i>)
	él/ella	es	he/she is
	usted	es	you are (<i>formal</i>)
Plural	nosotros	somos	we are
	vosotros	sois	you are (<i>familiar, Spain</i>)
	ellos/ellas	son	they are
	ustedes	son	you are (<i>formal, Spain; formal/familiar, Latin America</i>)

Figure 1: Conjugation of the present tense of the verb *ser* ‘to be’¹.

As shown in Figure 1, the verb *ser* ‘to be’ does not follow regular Spanish conjugations for verbs ending in *-er*². For instance, the first-person singular conjugation does not end in *-o* (as the regular *-er* verbs do) but rather in *-oy*. The rest of the conjugation paradigm is irregular as well, not following the regular *-er* verb conjugations. Recall VanPatten’s (1996, 2004) suggestion that learners prioritize meaning over form when processing input, and that form and meaning can be processed simultaneously only when one of the aspects is automatized. In light of this notion, one could assume that a semantically transparent verb such as *ser* ‘to be’ would easily be automatized, thus freeing learners to focus their processing resources on the morphology (Gass, 1988; VanPatten, 1996, 2004; Wong, 2005).

¹ Adapted from Ramos & Davis (2009)

² *-o, -es, -e, -emos, -éis, -en.*

The verb *ser* ‘to be’ becomes increasingly complex, however, the second time it appears in a textbook. Unlike most other verbs in a textbook, which are usually presented once in the present tense indicative and later revisited when other tenses or moods (past, future, subjunctive) are introduced, the verb *ser* ‘to be’ is almost always presented first in isolation (as the direct translation of the English concept), then it is presented a second time, alongside and in contrast with another verb that means the same in English, the verb *estar* ‘to be’.

2.3 The verb *estar* ‘to be’

Estar ‘to be’ is also considered at least a partially irregular verb in the present indicative.³ Figure 2 shows the complete paradigm of verb conjugations for *estar* ‘to be’ in the present indicative.

	Pronoun	Verb	Translation
Singular	yo	estoy	I am
	tú	estás	you are (<i>familiar</i>)
	él/ella	está	he/she is
	usted	está	you are (<i>formal</i>)
Plural	nosotros	estamos	we are
	vosotros	estáis	you are (<i>familiar, Spain</i>)
	ellos/ellas	están	they are
	ustedes	están	you are (<i>formal, Spain; formal/familiar, Latin America</i>)

Figure 2: Conjugation of the present tense of the verb *estar* ‘to be’⁴.

³ Two of the textbooks in the corpus (20%) identified *estar* ‘to be’ as an irregular verb. Four of them (40%) identified the verb as partially irregular, for the first person singular conjugation. The remaining four textbooks (40%) did not indicate any irregularity in *estar* ‘to be’.

⁴ Adapted from Ramos & Davis (2009).

For the learner, the appearance of *estar* ‘to be’ represents not only the need to learn a second irregular verb; it also represents a major semantic shift. What began as a direct, one-to-one connection between form and meaning (*ser* = ‘to be’ in English) becomes much more complex, with two different forms now representing different nuances of meaning.

Some of the different semantic areas covered by *ser* ‘to be’ and *estar* ‘to be’ are described in Figure 3.

<i>Ser</i> ‘to be’	<i>Estar</i> ‘to be’
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Describing people and things - Identifying people and things - Stating a person’s nationality - Stating a person’s place of origin - Stating a person’s occupation - Stating a person’s religion - Stating a person’s political affiliation - Stating the purpose of an person or thing - Stating possession - Telling time - Identifying the season, dates, days and months - Describing what material something is made of - Stating that an event is taking place - Impersonal statements (e.g., “it is important”) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Describing the condition of a person or thing - Stating physical or geographic location - Describing emotional and physical states - Indicating the present progressive (<i>-ing</i>) - Several set expressions

Figure 3: Semantic differences between *ser* ‘to be’ and *estar* ‘to be’⁵.

As shown in Figure 3, there are at least fourteen separate messages which require the verb *ser* ‘to be’, and at least five requiring *estar* ‘to be’. Learning when to use each verb poses a challenge to learners whose first language (e.g., English) uses a single verb to express the messages that, in Spanish, are divided between the two categories.

⁵ Adapted from Dorwick, Pérez-Gironés, Knorre, Glass, & Villarreal (1995); Jarvis, Lebreto, & Mena-Ayllón (2005); Castells, Guzmán, Lapuerta, & García (2006); Donley & Blanco (2006); De la Fuente & Sans (2007); Blanco & Donley (2008); Jarvis, Lebreto, Mena-Ayllón, Rowinsky-Geurts, & Stewart (2008); Zayas-Bazán, Bacon, Nibert, Aitken, & Saroli (2008); Knorre, Dorwick, Pérez-Gironés, Glass, & Villarreal (2009); Ramos & Davis (2009).

In the beginner textbook, when *ser* ‘to be’ is presented in a subsequent unit, it is transformed from being the direct translation of the English verb “to be,” to being just one of two possible choices (along with *estar* ‘to be’) for communicating “to be.” From an input processing perspective, it is crucial to examine the manner in which this radical change in *ser* is presented to the learner. No longer a verb of semantic transparency and morphological complexity, *ser* ‘to be’ now becomes semantically complex as well.

Given that the second presentation of the verb *ser* ‘to be’ is the learner’s second encounter with the verb, it could be argued that, by the time the semantic complexity of *ser* ‘to be’ is revealed in the second presentation, the learner has already had the chance to understand the first (transparent) message and focus on the (complex) form. By the time the learner encounters *ser* ‘to be’ again, this time in all its semantic complexity, might he or she have the processing resources available to focus not on the morphology of *ser* ‘to be’ but rather on its semantic features? If a learner who was able to focus on form in the first presentation can now focus on semantic features in the second presentation, then how might a textbook manipulate the input to facilitate this cognitive shift? It could be suggested that a textbook designer aware of these ideas would use the first presentation to draw the learner’s attention to the form of *ser* ‘to be’ (i.e., the morphological features of its conjugations) as much as possible, to attempt to stimulate noticing. Then, having already facilitated noticing of the form, the designer could use the second presentation to draw the learner’s attention to the semantic features of *ser* ‘to be’ (i.e., the messages that *ser* ‘to be’ conveys).

2.4 Materials

A corpus of ten introductory Spanish textbooks was randomly selected from a large collection (approximately 200) available in the Department of French, Hispanic and Italian Studies (FHIS) at the University of British Columbia (UBC). The selection was based on the criteria outlined below.

- 1) That the textbooks be intended for beginner learners.
- 2) That the target audience be English-speaking learners of Spanish.
- 3) That they be representative of textbooks used at the postsecondary level in North America.
- 4) That they be temporally in alignment with the notions of *noticing* and *focus on form*, which appeared in the 1990s.
- 5) That they be intended for instructed learning of Spanish as a second language (in other words, “teach-yourself” materials fall outside the scope of the study).

While many of the textbooks are very recent, not all of them represent the most updated editions. The intention in selecting these materials was to provide as random a sample as possible. All of the textbooks were published in North America and intended for an English-speaking audience. The language input provided in the presentations, examples and exercises corresponds overall to a Latin American-oriented variety of Spanish. Congruent with this, the Peninsular Spanish form *vosotros* ‘you’ (informal second-person plural) is included in charts but almost never included in examples or exercises, being replaced by the Latin American usage *ustedes* ‘you’.

The following textbooks comprise the corpus of the current study:

1. *¡Arriba!: Comunicación y cultura*. Second Canadian Edition. Zayas-Bazán, E., Bacon, S. M., Nibert, H. J., Aitken, G., & Saroli, A. (2008).
2. *¿Cómo se dice...?* Eighth Edition. Jarvis, A., Lebrede, R., & Mena-Ayllón, F. (2005).
3. *Gente*. Second North American Edition. De la Fuente, M., & Sans, N. (2007).
4. *¡Hola Amigos!* First Canadian Edition. Jarvis, A., Lebrede, R., Mena-Ayllón, F., Rowinsky-Geurts, M., & Stewart, R. L. (2008).

5. *Mosaicos: Spanish as a World Language*. Brief Edition. Fourth Edition. Castells, M., Guzmán, E., Lapuerta, C., & García, C. (2006).
6. *Portafolio: Lo último en español*. Vols. 1 & 2. Ramos, A., & Davis, R. L. (2009).
7. *Puntos de Partida: An Invitation to Spanish*. Eighth Edition. Knorre, M., Dorwick, T., Pérez-Gironés, A. M., Glass, W., & Villarreal, H. (2009).
8. *¿Qué Tal? An Introductory Course*. Fourth Edition. Dorwick, T., Pérez-Gironés, A. M., Knorre, M., Glass, W., & Villarreal, H. (1995).
9. *Vistas: Introducción a la lengua española*. Third Edition. Blanco, J., & Donley, P. R. (2008).
10. *¡Viva! Primer curso de lengua española*. Donley, P. R., & Blanco, J. (2006).

2.5 Procedure

All of the textbooks in the corpus expose learners to *ser* ‘to be’ and *estar* ‘to be’ two times each in different chapters; therefore, the analysis has been designed on the basis of these different instances of exposure to the target forms.

The analysis considers the ways in which the techniques of textual enhancement and input flooding are applied the first time learners are exposed to *ser* ‘to be’ and *estar* ‘to be’, and then the second time. The first time the forms appear in the textbooks is an introduction to the grammatical structures, and the second time is a follow-up and review to reinforce knowledge and/or to compare and contrast one form with another.

In addition to these separate analyses of two instances of exposure to *ser* ‘to be’ and *estar* ‘to be’, it is also important to examine both presentations of the grammatical structures from a comparative perspective. It is possible that the verbs are not presented in the same way the first and second times they appear, since the first exposure to the verb is an introduction while the second exposure is a follow-up. A comparison of the features of the first and second exposures will determine whether the techniques are

applied in a consistent manner or whether their application changes over the course of the textbooks.

For each verb studied, the observation and analysis are focused on the presentation of the grammatical structure, the chart showing the conjugations, and the examples provided for illustration of use. It should be noted that almost all of the textbooks in the corpus provide these three components.

Following the explanatory section, there is usually a practice section that provides exercises. However, the practice sections provided by the textbooks have not been included in the study. Although it is very useful to consider the number and variety of practice exercises provided by a textbook, in most cases the exercises tend to combine different structures such as vocabulary items and verbs. At this time the analysis is limited to the input provided on the page, without considering any possible learner-generated output resulting from the exercises. The intention of this study is to focus solely on the instances in which the textbooks provide explicit rule presentation and exemplification of the two target verb forms, *ser* 'to be' and *estar* 'to be'.

The study considers the ways in which the target forms are presented, following a clear procedure. It begins with an observation and analysis of textual enhancement (e.g., boldface type, italics, or underlining) as it appears in the different presentations of the verbs *ser* 'to be' and *estar* 'to be'. Charts show the types of enhancement applied in each textbook, and which target forms are enhanced. Because textual enhancement can be applied to all written input, this section of the study will cover the charts, explanations and examples of the target forms provided in the textbooks. Here, the analysis is primarily qualitative, intended to evaluate the methods used and their application.

The study continues with an examination of the use of input flooding (the frequency of examples of the target form in the input) in the presentations of the verbs *ser* 'to be' and *estar* 'to be'. The first time a verb is presented, an enumeration is provided of the sheer number of times its conjugations are provided in the presentation, explanation, and examples, while also considering the variety of conjugations (e.g., first-person or third-person) included in the input flood. The same procedure is repeated for the second appearance of the verb. Because input flooding lends itself to a quantitative study of increases or decreases in the frequency and level of variety of the conjugations provided, a third section examines the progression of input flooding throughout each textbook, between the first and second times the verbs appear.

Different charts document the quantitative aspects of the application of an increased number of examples of the conjugations of the verbs *ser* 'to be' and *estar* 'to be'. In other words, the first analysis focuses on the number of times each possible conjugation of the verbs in the present tense is provided in the examples. The aim is to gauge not only the size of the input flood provided to the learner, but also the relative richness and variety of the flood in terms of the morphology of the verbs' conjugations. This section is primarily quantitative, meant to evaluate the size and breadth of the input flood.

In the analysis of input flooding, the size and variety of the input flood is examined in terms of how it changes between the first and second presentations. One issue is whether different morphological features are emphasized at different times throughout the input flood. Patterns of change, consistency or evolution between the first and second presentations could provide clues as to the textbook designers' familiarity with the literature on cognitive processing and concern for facilitating learning according to theories of learners' evolving cognitive capabilities, from first contact with the verb to the review in which knowledge is reinforced.

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the findings of the study are presented and interpretations are offered. This section begins with an examination of the use of textual enhancement (bold, italic, underline, etc.) in the presentations of the verbs *ser* ‘to be’ and *estar* ‘to be’. A chart shows the type of enhancement applied in each textbook, where it is applied, and examples of its use.

The analysis continues with an analysis of the use of input flooding (the frequency of examples of the target form in the input) in the presentations of the verbs *ser* ‘to be’ and *estar* ‘to be’. A chart shows the sheer number of times the different conjugations are provided in the presentation, explanations, and examples, while also considering the variety of conjugations (i.e., first person, third person, etc.) included in the input flood. Finally, a third section traces the progression of input flooding throughout each textbook, between the first and second times the verbs appear.

In all of these sections, each of the ten textbooks has been assigned a number. In the discussion, individual textbooks will be referred to in terms of the number assigned.

3.1 Textual enhancement: exposures to the verb *ser* ‘to be’

Results of the qualitative analysis of the use of textual enhancement techniques in the presentation and exemplification of the verb *ser* are presented. First the results and analysis of the techniques employed for the verb *ser* ‘to be’ are presented, followed by those employed for the verb *estar* ‘to be’. Note that the treatments applied to both presentations of each target verb are discussed simultaneously, in line with the information shown in the corresponding figures.

Nine of the books (90% of the corpus) presented the verb *ser* ‘to be’ for the first time in the preliminary or first chapter, and before presenting *estar* ‘to be’. A second presentation of the verb was usually found in the second or third chapter of the textbooks in the corpus. This general tendency to present *ser* ‘to be’ first is consistent with the learning stages proposed by VanPatten (1985), whose analysis of oral production by Spanish L2 learners suggests that the norm for learners is to acquire the verb *ser* ‘to be’ before the verb *estar* ‘to be’. The analysis of textual enhancement is

motivated by the idea that beginner learners of Spanish studying individually would benefit from exposure to written input that is visually salient. In other words, external techniques intended to enhance the visual salience of a target form may draw learners' attention to that form and facilitate the possibility of noticing.

Figure 4 provides an account of the textual enhancement techniques used by each textbook in the first and second presentations of *ser* 'to be'. There is detailed specification of which techniques were used, as well as a description of the characteristics of this use at both times of focused exposure to the verb *ser* 'to be' (e.g., Chapter 1 and Chapter 3).

#	Textbook	First exposure		Second exposure	
		Technique	Where used	Technique	Where used
1	<i>¡Arriba!</i>	Bold	<i>Ser</i> conjugations exclusively	Bold	Not exclusive to <i>ser</i>
2	<i>¿Cómo se dice?</i>	Bold	Not exclusive to <i>ser</i>	Bold	<i>Ser</i> conjugations exclusively
3	<i>Gente</i>	Bold	<i>Ser</i> conjugations exclusively	Bold	<i>Ser</i> conjugations exclusively, but inconsistent
4	<i>¡Hola amigos!</i>	Bold	<i>Ser</i> conjugations exclusively	Bold	<i>Ser</i> conjugations exclusively
5	<i>Mosaicos</i>	Bold	<i>Ser</i> conjugations exclusively	Bold	Not exclusive to <i>ser</i>
6	<i>Portafolio</i>	Bold	Not exclusive to <i>ser</i>	Bold	Not exclusive to <i>ser</i>
7	<i>Puntos de Partida</i>	Bold, color (red)	<i>Ser</i> conjugations exclusively	Bold, color (red)	Not exclusive to <i>ser</i>
8	<i>¿Qué tal?</i>	Italic, bold	Not exclusive to <i>ser</i>	Bold	Not exclusive to <i>ser</i>
9	<i>Vistas</i>	Bold	Not exclusive to <i>ser</i>	Bold	Not exclusive to <i>ser</i>
10	<i>¡Viva!</i>	Bold, color (blue)	Not exclusive to <i>ser</i>	Bold, two colors (red and blue)	Not exclusive to <i>ser</i>

Figure 4: First and second exposures to *ser* 'to be', textual enhancement.

As shown in Figure 4, all of the textbooks in the corpus employed the textual enhancement technique of boldface type. Bolding is the typographical technique that makes the letters in a word or phrase thicker and darker than the surrounding text, making the bolded areas more visually salient. When forms are bolded, it is assumed that their salience will make them more likely to catch the attention of the learner. In other words, there is a possibility that bolded items may be noticed by learners when studying on their own.

One textbook, Textbook #8, moved beyond the exclusive use of boldface type to include other techniques such as italics. Italics are cursive letters routinely used throughout the corpus almost exclusively on English glosses of words or expressions. In Textbook #8, however, italics were used for the conjugation of the verb *ser* ‘to be’ in several examples in the first section of the presentation, but not in the chart, which showed the application of boldface type. The use of italics on the target verb could make the purpose of the enhancement unclear to learners, as the conjugation of *ser* ‘to be’ was enhanced using the same technique applied to the English glosses of phrases. It is not clear whether learners would be able to notice the verb conjugation and remember it as something salient, since it was treated with the same enhancement technique as the glosses.

Two of the textbooks, #7 and #10, applied more than one textual enhancement technique. At times the techniques were employed in combination, and at other times they were applied individually in separate sections of the presentation. In the first exposure of the verb *ser* ‘to be’, the verb conjugations were initially highlighted using boldface type in combination with a different color (such as blue or red), and then using only boldface type. These same textbooks followed a similar pattern in the second exposure of the verb *ser* ‘to be’. An example of the combination of techniques was found in the phrase offered by Textbook #7: *el regalo es para Sara* ‘the gift is for Sara’. Here, *es* ‘is’ and *para* ‘for’ were made visually salient and separated from the rest of the text. In addition, they were also visually distinguished from each other thanks to the extra level of enhancement. The verb form *ser* ‘to be’ received double enhancement, with both bolding and red color, while the related word *para* ‘for’ was bolded only. Textbook #10 provided a series of examples in which two colors were applied in addition to boldface type. In the example *los Gómez son peruanos* ‘the Gómez family are Peruvian’, the entire sentence was made visually salient. Within this salience, however, the verb conjugation *son* ‘are’ was further distinguished from the rest of the

example by its red color. Combining more than one typographical technique could be considered a more explicit form of input enhancement (cf. Sharwood Smith, 1991). However, in the case of Textbooks #7 and #10, the motivation behind the combination of bolding and coloring was not clear, because lexical items other than the target form were enhanced. In addition, although the use of primary colors achieved maximum contrast, the striking combination of colors could in fact run the risk of becoming visually tiring.

In later examples provided by Textbook #10 within the second presentation of the verb *ser* 'to be', the use of color was discontinued, leaving only the use of boldface type. Once again, however, the enhancement was applied in a non-exclusive manner. For example, in the phrase *el chico es listo* 'the boy is smart', both the conjugated verb and an adjective were enhanced. Because the second presentation of the verb *ser* 'to be' in this example coincided with the first appearance of the verb *estar* 'to be', the enhancement of the word *listo* 'smart', 'ready' was attributable to the important semantic difference between the Spanish expressions *es listo* 'he is smart' and *está listo* 'he is ready'. One could argue that these distinctions are an integral part of clarifying the differences between the verbs *ser* 'to be' and *estar* 'to be'.

Only 50% of the corpus (Textbooks #1, #3, #4, #5 and #7) applied boldface type to the conjugated verb exclusively, making the verb the sole visual input receiving this type of enhancement. One example, found in Textbook #4, is *ella es de Quebec* 'she is from Quebec'. The other five textbooks in the corpus (Textbooks #2, #6, #8, #9 and #10) applied bolding in a way that was not always exclusive to the conjugated form. For instance, Textbook #2 offered two examples in first presentation of the verb *ser* 'to be' which demonstrated different uses of boldface type. One example was the phrase *¿de dónde son ustedes?* 'where are you from?', in which only the conjugation of *ser* 'to be' was bolded. However, in another example, *el doctor Trujillo es profesor* 'Doctor Trujillo is a teacher/professor', boldface type was applied to the verb as well as the nominal complement stating the profession. It could be argued that, in this case, the bolding of the verb and nominal complement stems from a desire to stress the fact that, in Spanish, it is not necessary to use an article, as in "Doctor Trujillo is a teacher/professor." Therefore, the textual enhancement is also used to highlight differences that arise between the L1 (English) and the L2 (Spanish). However, it is not clear whether this application could hinder a learner's possible noticing of the conjugation of the target verb. The visual salience achieved by the boldface type, when

applied in these ways, could run the risk of undermining the intentions behind textual enhancement. This non-exclusivity and inconsistency could detract from the textbooks' ability to draw learners' attention to the verb form. Indeed, the SLA literature suggests that negative results of two empirical studies (Overstreet, 1998; Lee, 2007) could be due an attempt to enhance more than one form in the input, because making more than one form salient at the same time could have "confused, rather than enlightened, the learners" (Han *et al.*, 2008, p. 15).

These five textbooks (Textbooks #2, #6, #8, #9 and #10) applied boldface type in a non-exclusive manner, in what appeared to be an effort to link the verb to one of its uses. In several cases, the only bolded word besides the verb was the preposition *de* 'of'/'from', indicating possession or origin. For example, in the phrase *es la computadora del jefe* 'it is the boss' computer', the contracted preposition and definite article *del* 'of' denotes possession, with the possessor being a singular masculine noun. In the phrase *¿de dónde eres?* 'where are you from?', the preposition *de* 'from' is used to convey origin. In these examples, by extending the bolding technique to words related to the verb being taught, they became included in the visual salience. An effort was made to draw learners' attention equally towards the conjugation of *ser* 'to be' and the word used to denote possession or origin. However, instead of focusing learners' attention on just one form, these textbooks forced learners to divide their attention between the target verb and related items.

As shown in Figure 4, the trend toward non-exclusive application of boldface type increased from the first to the second exposure of the verb *ser* 'to be' in the corpus. However, in the second presentation, four of the textbooks (40% of the corpus; Textbooks #1, #3, #8 and #9) applied bolding in a way that was inconsistent and potentially confusing to learners. For example, Textbook #1 provided two phrases to exemplify the use of *ser* 'to be', but applied boldface type differently each time. First, the example *es importante ir al laboratorio* 'it is important to go to the laboratory', was provided. Here, boldface type was applied to the adjective *importante* 'important' to emphasize the fact that *ser* 'to be' can be used for a general impersonal statement. However, it continued with the example *¿dónde es la fiesta?* 'where is the party?', using bold to highlight only the verb, leaving the question word *dónde* 'where' without enhancement. In this case, the non-exclusive application of bolding did not seem justified, as it was inconsistent and, in addition to dividing learners' attention between the target form and related items, it also did so inconsistently. Although empirical

studies in the SLA literature have not considered inconsistent enhancement among their variables, in light of the fact that negative results could be partially attributed to more than one enhanced form in the input (Han *et al.*, 2008), it is to be imagined that the further addition of inconsistency could only further decrease any possibility for successful noticing of the target forms.

In sum, among the textbooks that comprise the corpus, boldface type was the most common textual enhancement technique used in both the first and second exposures of the verb *ser* ‘to be’. All of the textbooks employed bolding, although its application was not always limited to the conjugation of the verb. Additionally, there was an important tendency, in almost half of the textbooks, to extend the application of bolding to other words. The result of this non-exclusive application of textual enhancement meant that the verb conjugations were forced to compete with other words for learner attention. As suggested earlier, an overextension of boldface type raises doubts about the possibility for learners to be able to notice the target form and not be distracted by simultaneous emphasis on other items. In addition, there was a minor tendency to use more than one enhancement technique in combination, but this was limited to boldface type and color (e.g. *la fiesta es en mi casa* ‘the party is at my house’).

3.2 Textual enhancement: exposures to the verb *estar* ‘to be’

Results of the qualitative analysis of the use of textual enhancement techniques in the presentation and exemplification of the verb *estar* ‘to be’ are presented. As in the case of *ser* ‘to be’ above, note that the treatments applied to both presentations of the target verb are discussed simultaneously, in line with the information shown in the corresponding figures.

In almost all of the textbooks in the corpus, the verb *estar* ‘to be’ was presented for the first time after *ser* has been introduced. The tendency is to find *estar* ‘to be’ in a subsequent chapter. Only one textbook presented *estar* ‘to be’ before *ser* ‘to be’. Figure 5 outlines the textual enhancement techniques used by each textbook in the corpus in the first presentation of *estar* ‘to be’, specifying which techniques are used and detailing their use.

#	Textbook	First exposure		Second exposure	
		Technique	Where used	Technique	Where used
1	<i>¡Arriba!</i>	Bold	Not exclusive to <i>estar</i>	Bold	<i>Estar</i> conjugations exclusively
2	<i>¿Cómo se dice?</i>	Bold	Not exclusive to <i>estar</i>	Bold	<i>Estar</i> conjugations exclusively
3	<i>Gente</i>	Bold	<i>Estar</i> conjugations exclusively	Bold	<i>Estar</i> conjugations exclusively
4	<i>¡Hola amigos!</i>	Bold	<i>Estar</i> conjugations exclusively but inconsistent	Bold	<i>Estar</i> conjugations exclusively
5	<i>Mosaicos</i>	Bold	<i>Estar</i> conjugations exclusively	Bold	Not exclusive to <i>estar</i>
6	<i>Portafolio</i>	Bold, color (red)	<i>Estar</i> conjugations exclusively	Bold	<i>Estar</i> conjugations exclusively
7	<i>Puntos de Partida</i>	Bold, color (red)	<i>Estar</i> conjugations exclusively but inconsistent	Bold, color (red)	Not exclusive to <i>estar</i>
8	<i>¿Qué tal?</i>	Bold	No enhancement of <i>estar</i> conjugations, only vocabulary	Bold	Not exclusive to <i>estar</i>
9	<i>Vistas</i>	Bold, yellow background	Not exclusive to <i>estar</i>	Bold	Not exclusive to <i>estar</i>
10	<i>¡Viva!</i>	Bold, two colors (red and blue)	Not exclusive to <i>estar</i>	Bold, two colors (red and blue)	Not exclusive to <i>estar</i>

Figure 5: First and second exposures to *estar* ‘to be’, textual enhancement.

As shown in Figure 5, almost all of the textbooks in the corpus employed the textual enhancement technique of boldface type in both the first and second exposures. Only one textbook, #8, did not apply bolding to the conjugated verb *estar* ‘to be’, reserving the bolding for vocabulary items (e.g., location words) presented along with the verb. Five of the textbooks (50% of the corpus; Textbooks #1, #2, #3, #4 and #6) applied boldface type to the conjugated form of *estar* ‘to be’ exclusively, as shown in the examples *estoy muy cansada hoy* ‘I am very tired today’ and *estamos en casa* ‘we are at home’. This served to make the verb the sole visual input receiving this type of enhancement. Empirical studies in the SLA literature, attempting to assess the effectiveness of input enhancement, have applied the enhancement techniques to the target forms exclusively (e.g., Jourdenais *et al.*, 1995; Leow, 1997b; White, 1998).

Almost fifty percent of the corpus used different colors to highlight the linguistic form, in addition to boldface type. This combination of textual enhancement techniques rarely lasted throughout the entire presentation, however, and was usually reserved for the chart only. For example, in the chart offered by Textbook #6, bolding was applied to all of the conjugations of *estar* ‘to be’, with the endings of the verbs colored red (e.g., *estoy* ‘I am’, *estás* ‘you are’, *está* ‘he/she/it is’). Not only was the conjugation set apart from surrounding text by bolding, but was also visually separated in two, the stem colored black and bolded and the ending colored red and bolded. The verbal endings of the conjugations were doubly enhanced, thereby providing them with twice the possibilities of being noticed by the learner.

Textbook #7 employed bolding and the color red as well, but in a different manner. In this case, bolding was applied to all of the conjugations in the chart, but the color red was not applied equally. The chart contained, for example, the following application of the combined enhancements: *estoy* ‘I am’, *estás* ‘you are’, *está* ‘he/she/it is’, and *están* ‘they/you are’. In two of the conjugated forms, the entire ending was bolded and colored red. Yet in two more forms, the combined enhancement was not applied to the entire verb ending. The first and third person singular conjugations had their endings fully highlighted in bold and red, while the second person singular and the third person/second person plural had only the stressed letter *á* bolded and colored red. Why apply the combined enhancement to certain letters and not others? It appears that the red color was used to highlight the presence of an accented vowel. However, it was also applied to forms without accented vowels. The resulting effect seemed to be overenhanced, visually “choppy” input, which could be distracting for learners. This

situation was exacerbated by two additional elements: first, the conjugation *estamos* ‘we are’ in the chart was bolded but no part of it was colored red; and second, following the chart was a set of examples in which the conjugated form of *estar* ‘to be’ was not enhanced at all. Such inconsistencies could distract learners from focusing their attention on the target form, and could even detract from any positive effects that these techniques may have had.

Textbook #10 applied two colors in addition to boldface type, although the application of these techniques changed in different sections of the presentation of the target form. In the chart that presented the paradigm of the conjugations of the verb *estar* ‘to be’, the entire conjugation was bolded; additionally, the stem of the verb was colored blue, the accented letter *á* was colored red, and the rest was black. The result was a striking combination, as shown in the example is *estás* ‘you are’. Questions may arise, however, about the possible effectiveness of such a visually “choppy” presentation of the target form. This use of bolding and two colors continued throughout most of the examples, but their application changed as their presentation progressed. That is, instead of bolding the form only, here the entire phrase was bolded, and the verb conjugation was colored red while the rest of the phrase was colored blue. One example was *Inés está al lado de Javier* ‘Inés is next to Javier’. Here, the phrase was visually separated from the rest of the text through bolding and the color blue. Within this visual separation of the phrase, the target form was enhanced using red, a contrasting color to blue. This served to make the target verb even more salient, giving it a “platform” of sorts. That is, the blue color of the phrase provided a background for a striking contrast with the red target verb.

This “platform,” created to lend added salience to the target verb, was also present in Textbook #9. In this case, the chart displaying the paradigm of conjugations of *estar* ‘to be’ applied bolding to the verb endings, and placed them on a yellow background. This effect was found in an example like *nosotros estamos* ‘we are’. Again, the maximum contrast was reached by combining such different colors as bold black letters and a yellow background. In fact, this technique was reminiscent of the marks that would be made by a highlighter pen – one of the most popular enhancement tools used by learners. This combination of bolding and colored background did not continue throughout the rest of the presentation of *estar* ‘to be’, however. In the subsequent examples, only bolding was applied, and not exclusively to the conjugations

of *estar* 'to be'. In this case as well, bolding was extended to include lexical items such as adjectives (e.g. *el gato está vivo* 'the cat is alive').

Four of the textbooks (#1, #2, #9 and #10) applied boldface type, but not to the target form exclusively. In these cases, bolding was applied to vocabulary items as well as the conjugations of *estar* 'to be'. This was seen in the example provided by Textbook #1: *la mochila está muy sucia* 'the backpack is very dirty'. Here, the target verb was bolded along with the adjective, linking both items and making them salient. This application of boldface type to adjectives as well as target forms appeared especially in sections where the textbooks were clarifying the distinctions between the different uses of *ser* 'to be' and *estar* 'to be'. This served to put the verb forms and the adjectives at the same level of visual salience, which could result in them being noticed together by the learner. However, applying boldface type to items other than the target forms could also distract learners from focusing as much attention as possible on the target form. Results of a study by Barcroft (2003) have suggested input enhancement may be more effective when applied to fewer items, as the few enhanced items have the feature of "distinctiveness" (Han *et al.*, 2008, p. 20). This appears to be a case of competing stimuli, in which learners are faced with more than one target form that have been made salient to draw their attention.

Possibilities for distraction were increased in textbooks that seemed to overuse boldface type. One instance was found in the example *estoy de acuerdo, está bien* 'I agree, it is all right'. Here, the fixed expression *estar de acuerdo* 'to agree' was being exemplified. However, as mentioned earlier, in terms of raising awareness of the target form, it is not clear how this application of bolding could be helpful, since bolding was applied to every lexical item and yet the target form was not set apart from the rest of the items in any way. In other words, various items in the input were made salient at the same time, creating a condition that could be characterized as "competing salience."

In sum, the entire corpus of textbooks applied the technique of boldface type in almost all cases, namely to highlight the target forms of the verbs *ser* 'to be' and *estar* 'to be'. One textbook applied italics to the target form. In terms of combining enhancement techniques, 40% of the corpus (four textbooks) moved beyond the single enhancement technique of boldface type. The textbooks that did employ other methods were limited to the combination of boldface type and color. It is interesting, however, to note that the colors chosen were primary colors (red, blue and yellow) providing maximum contrast and, perhaps, noticeability. However, no textbooks moved beyond

boldface type and occasional use of primary colors (except in their use of italics for English glosses). No textbook used underlining, different font sizes, shading or uppercase letters, for example. The reason for this was unclear, given the fact that some of the most compelling empirical results of input enhancement were obtained in experiments where more than one enhancement technique was applied in combination (Doughty, 1991; Shook, 1994; Jourdenais *et al.*, 1995; Williams, 1999). Furthermore, there was a major tendency to apply bolding in a non-exclusive manner; that is, bolding other lexical items in addition to the target forms (e.g., el puente **es seguro**, ‘the bridge is safe’). This non-exclusive application of typographical enhancement could result in overly salient input that distracts from the target form. Learners could become fatigued from reading so much boldface type, and the competing salience of the forms could divide learners’ attention, allowing for less attention to be focused on the target forms. Moreover, bolding could lose its effect as an enhancement device, as its overuse could begin to make it appear normal. That is, learners could gradually become accustomed to reading boldface type and stop perceiving it as enhanced input. They could eventually be oblivious to boldface type as a consciousness-raising device, rendering it ineffective.

In the following pages, the results of the second enhancement technique studied – input flooding – are presented. First, the results for the verb *ser* ‘to be’ are presented, followed by the results for the verb *estar* ‘to be’.

3.3 Input flooding: exposures to the verb *ser* ‘to be’

In this section, results of a quantitative analysis of the frequency of examples of the verbs *ser* ‘to be’ and *estar* ‘to be’ are presented. In the same way as the previous qualitative analysis, results are presented in terms of a two-time sequence of exposure to the target forms relative to the chapters in which they are taught (e.g., Chapters 1 and 3). Once more, the emphasis of the analysis is on the possibility for a Spanish learner to study independently and on how textbooks facilitate and guide a noticing of the forms through the examples provided. Although it is difficult to determine whether learners will notice forms in the flood (Wong, 2005), empirical evidence has suggested that input flooding may have greater potential for drawing learners’ attention to forms in the

input than textual enhancement (Han *et al.*, 2008). Thus it is important to determine whether this technique is applied in textbooks.

Figure 6 shows the frequency with which the present indicative of the verb *ser* 'to be' appeared in the explanations and examples provided by the textbooks. Because all of the textbooks provided a chart displaying all of the conjugations of *ser* 'to be' as a minimum reference for learners, this study did not consider forms provided in the chart to be part of the input flood.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL
	<i>¡Arriba!</i>	<i>¿Cómo se dice?</i>	<i>Gente</i>	<i>¡Hola amigos!</i>	<i>Mosaicos</i>	<i>Portafolio</i>	<i>Puntos de partida</i>	<i>¿Qué tal?</i>	<i>Vistas</i>	<i>¡Viva!</i>	
Soy	2 (25%)	1 (14.3%)	0 (0%)	2 (25%)	0 (0%)	2 (33.3%)	5 (20.8%)	3 (11.1%)	3 (12%)	0 (0%)	18
Eres	2 (25%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	1 (16.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	6
Es	1 (12.5%)	4 (57.1%)	0 (0%)	3 (37.5%)	14 (100%)	3 (50%)	13 (54.2%)	19 (70.4%)	16 (64%)	10 (83.3%)	83
Somos	1 (12.5%)	1 (14.3%)	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (8.3%)	2 (7.4%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	8
Sois	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
Son	2 (25%)	1 (14.3%)	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (16.7%)	3 (11.1%)	3 (12%)	2 (16.7%)	16
Total	8	7	0	8	14	6	24	27	25	12	All books: 131

Figure 6. First exposure to *ser* 'to be', input flooding.

As shown in Figure 6, almost all of the textbooks made an effort to contextualize *ser* ‘to be’ through a frequency of examples in the input. Nonetheless, the data indicated major differences in level of frequency and method of exemplification of the target form across the corpus. From a total of 131 examples (mean 13.1, SD = 8.76) presented in the corpus, the number of examples offered by any individual textbook varied considerably in range, from 0 to 27.

One textbook (Textbook #3) provided no input flood at all, only a chart with the paradigm of conjugations of the verb. Therefore it provided the minimum input as a point of reference, but provided no exemplification of the verbs in the context of sentences. By contrast, another textbook provided 27 examples in addition to the chart. This means that the learner was given 27 opportunities to notice the target form in the input. As for the rest of the corpus, five of the textbooks (Textbooks #5, #7, #8, #9 and #10) provided more than 10 examples of the target verb. Therefore, fifty percent of the corpus provided a relatively sizeable flood of the target form in the written input, at least with respect to the examples.

In addition to the wide variety in the number of examples provided by the textbooks, there was also a great deal of variation in the number of times each conjugation of *ser* ‘to be’ was represented in the examples. Across all of the textbooks in the corpus, the different conjugations were represented to widely varying degrees. Some of the textbooks offered a large number of examples (a large input flood) but those examples lack variety because there was an unequal representation of all the possible conjugations.

For example, Figure 6 shows that Textbook #5 offered 14 examples of the conjugation of *ser* ‘to be’, but the third person singular form *es* ‘is’ accounted for 100% of the examples. In other words, learners using this textbook would be exposed to the conjugation *es* ‘is’ 14 times, which is a major input flood of that form. However, this would come at the cost of the other five forms, which had no representation in the flood at all. Conversely, some other textbooks offered a smaller number of examples, but with greater diversity within them. For instance, Textbook #1 provided only 8 examples in the input flood, but these examples had a relatively even distribution among the different conjugations of the verb *ser* ‘to be’. Therefore, this flood was smaller but richer in terms of providing opportunities for a greater number of target forms to be noticed.

If the technique of input flooding is premised on the notion that learners must be exposed to the flood in order to increase their probability of noticing, then it stands to reason that all of the target forms would be included in the flood. This would give all target forms an equal chance to be noticed. However, there was a major tendency in the corpus to overrepresent the third person singular conjugation *es* 'is'. Indeed, nine of the textbooks (90% of the corpus) showed this preference, and in five of those cases (50% of the corpus), the *es* 'is' conjugation accounted for fifty percent of the total number of examples provided. This means that, when studying individually using these textbooks, learners would be exposed to a large number of examples of only one form. Thus, one could argue that learners using textbooks from this corpus would be much more likely to have their attention directed to the form of the third person singular conjugation than any other form. This diminishes the chances for any possible noticing of the entire conjugation paradigm.

Continuing to the second exposure of the verb *ser* 'to be', Figure 7 shows the number of times the textbooks provided the target form in their explanations and examples. The total number of examples is noted, as well as the number of times each conjugation appeared.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL
	<i>¡Arriba!</i>	<i>¿Cómo se dice?</i>	<i>Gente</i>	<i>¡Hola amigos!</i>	<i>Mosaicos</i>	<i>Portafolio</i>	<i>Puntos de partida</i>	<i>¿Qué tal?</i>	<i>Vistas</i>	<i>¡Viva!</i>	
Soy	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (8.33%)	0 (0%)	1 (8.33%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (7.4%)	0 (0%)	4
Eres	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
Es	26 (79%)	10 (83.3%)	5 (100%)	9 (75%)	20 (95.2%)	5 (41.67%)	20 (76.9%)	20 (76.9%)	20 (74.1%)	17 (70.8%)	152
Somos	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (8.33%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (4.2%)	3
Sois	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
Son	6 (18%)	2 (16.7%)	0 (0%)	2 (16.67%)	1 (4.8%)	4 (33.34%)	6 (23.1%)	6 (23.1%)	5 (18.5%)	6 (25%)	38
Other						1 (8.33%)					1
Total	33	12	5	12	21	12	26	26	27	24	198
											All books:

Figure 7: Second exposure to *ser* 'to be', input flooding.⁶

⁶ In this chart, the "other" is a simple version of the future tense: *La operación va a ser en el hospital* 'The operation will be at the hospital'.

As shown in Figure 7, input flooding was used by all of the textbooks in the corpus, unlike the first exposure in which one textbook provided no flood at all. Nonetheless, the data again showed major differences in level of frequency and method of exemplification of the target form across the corpus. From a total of 198 examples (mean 19.8, SD = 8.51) presented in the corpus, the number of examples varied considerably in range, from 5 to 33. Nine of the textbooks (90% of the corpus) provided more than 10 examples of the target form. Indeed, Textbook #1 offered more than 30 examples of the target form, and six textbooks (60% of the corpus) offered more than 20 examples.

The volume of the flood was large in the second exposure to *ser* 'to be', but this was not always indicative of high numbers of each conjugation of *ser* 'to be'. As in the first exposure, there was a tendency to provide uneven representations of the different conjugations. One unclear element was the total absence of the second person singular conjugation *eres* 'you are' from any of the explanations or examples in the corpus. This omission of an entire conjugation would mean that learners using these textbooks would receive no input of this form at all in the second presentation of the verb. It is likely that a "gap" of this sort in the input could have a detrimental effect on any potential noticing of *eres* 'you are' that may have taken place in the first presentation; at any rate, there would be no reinforcement or supplementing of any prior noticing. Therefore, learners who may have attended to the form in the first presentation would, on the second exposure, have no way to be reminded of this to strengthen the possibility of retaining the form in their memory.

As in the first exposure to the target verb, there was an overwhelming tendency to favor the third person singular conjugation *es* 'is' in the flood across the corpus. For nine of the textbooks (90% of the corpus), *es* 'is' represented at least 70% of the conjugations provided. In other words, the third person singular form accounted for 70% of the input flood provided across 90% of the textbooks, leaving 30% of the flood to represent the remaining five conjugations. Therefore, learners using these textbooks would have a much greater chance of having their attention drawn to the third person singular conjugation of *ser* 'to be' than any of the other target forms.

There was one case in which several conjugations were given some measure of representation. Out of a total of 12 examples in the input flood, Textbook #2 offered 5 examples of *es* 'is' (accounting for almost 42% of the examples provided by this textbook), and then 6 examples of other conjugations. However, this textbook also did

something else. It provided 1 example of *ser* ‘to be’ that did not correspond to the present indicative conjugation of the verb *ser* ‘to be’ at all: *la operación va a ser en el hospital* ‘the operation is going to be at the hospital’. This example corresponds to a periphrastic form of the future using *ir a* ‘go to’, which at that point had not yet been taught in the textbook. In this conjugation, the present tense of the verb *ir* ‘to go’ + *a* ‘to’ + infinitive verb are used to denote an event that will take place in the future. *Ser* ‘to be’ is the unconjugated verb in this example. It is possible that this “preview” of lessons stems from familiarity with the “i+1” notion proposed by Krashen’s input hypothesis (1982). Recall that, according to the input hypothesis, learners make progress in language acquisition by being exposed to input that is slightly beyond their current level of competence. However, this move did not contribute to learners’ potential noticing of *ser* ‘to be’ in the present indicative, because in this example the verb *ser* ‘to be’ was unconjugated. Therefore, questions could arise regarding the possible trade-off that would take place for learners using this textbook, between being exposed to “i+1” input and being able to have their attention drawn to the different conjugations of *ser* ‘to be’ in the present tense.

In sum, a major tendency to employ the technique of input flooding was detected in the corpus, in their first and second exposures to the verb *ser* ‘to be’. However, as shown above, great disparities were found in terms of the size of the different input floods and the variety of possible conjugations represented therein. The overwhelming tendency across the corpus was for the third person singular form *es* ‘is’ to be overrepresented to a large degree. This came at the expense of other verb conjugations, which raises questions about their potential effectiveness in prompting learners to notice the target forms. Such a situation raises questions regarding whether it is more beneficial for the input flood to expose learners to a greater number of examples or a greater variety of examples. It could be speculated that a smaller but more evenly distributed flood would be more likely to elicit noticing of all the forms equally, but its small size could work against any potential noticing as it would provide fewer opportunities for noticing to occur. By contrast, a larger but less varied input flood could certainly be expected to increase the possibilities of noticing of at least the overrepresented target form, but its lack of variety could be detrimental to learners as it would not help them notice other target forms. This issue will be addressed in further detail in Chapter 4.

3.4 Input flooding: exposures to the verb *estar* ‘to be’

Figure 8 shows the sheer number of times the textbooks, in their first presentation of *estar* ‘to be’, provided conjugations of the target verb in the explanations and examples. Once again, because all of the textbooks provided a chart displaying all of the conjugations of *ser* ‘to be’ as a minimum reference for learners, this study did not consider forms provided in the chart to be part of the input flood. Because textbooks are considered as a tool used by learners for individual study, it is important for the input to facilitate, as much as possible, the possibility that learners’ attention will be drawn to the target forms.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL
	<i>¡Arriba!</i>	<i>¿Cómo se dice?</i>	<i>Gente</i>	<i>¡Hola amigos!</i>	<i>Mosaicos</i>	<i>Portafolio</i>	<i>Puntos de partida</i>	<i>¿Qué tal?</i>	<i>Vistas</i>	<i>¡Viva!</i>	
Estoy	2 (20%)	2 (40%)	0 (0%)	2 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	1 (16.675%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (17.6%)	4 (30.8%)	14
Estás	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (16.7%)	0 (0%)	1 (16.675%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (5.9%)	1 (7.65%)	5
Está	5 (50%)	3 (60%)	2 (50%)	3 (50%)	4 (100%)	2 (33.3%)	2 (66.7%)	5 (100%)	10 (58.8%)	5 (38.5%)	41
Estamos	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (16.675%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (5.9%)	2 (15.4%)	4
Estáis	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
Están	2 (20%)	0 (0%)	2 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (16.675%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	2 (11.8%)	1 (7.65%)	9
Total	10	5	4	6	4	6	3	5	17	13	73
											All books:

Figure 8: First exposure to *estar* 'to be', input flooding.

As shown in Figure 8, all of the textbooks made an effort to contextualize *estar* ‘to be’ through a frequency of examples in the input. Nonetheless, as in the case of *ser* ‘to be’, the data showed major differences in level of frequency and method of exemplification of the target form across the corpus. From a total of 73 examples (mean 7.3, SD = 4.34) presented in the corpus, the number of examples offered by any individual textbook varied considerably in range, from 3 to 17. Only three of the textbooks (30% of the corpus) provided 10 examples or more of the target form. Indeed, five of the textbooks (50% of the corpus) provided 5 examples of *estar* ‘to be’ or fewer. Therefore, the general tendency in the corpus was to provide an input flood that was relatively small compared to the flood provided for the verb *ser* ‘to be’ (131 examples). By providing fewer examples in the input flood, the textbooks in the corpus provide learners with fewer opportunities to be exposed to the target forms, this diminishing the chances for them to attend to the forms in the input.

The general tendency to overrepresent the third person singular conjugation was seen again in this case. In eight of the textbooks (representing 80% of the corpus), the conjugation *está* ‘is’ accounted for at least 50% of the examples provided in the input flood. Furthermore, all of the textbooks provided a larger proportion of examples of *está* than any other conjugation. In seven of the textbooks (representing 70% of the corpus), there was no conjugation of the first person plural *estamos* ‘we are’ in the flood. This tendency means that learners using these textbooks would have a much higher probability of noticing the target form *está* ‘is’. However, this positive aspect would come at the expense of other conjugations of the target verb, such as *estamos* ‘we are’.

Continuing to the second exposure of the verb *estar* ‘to be’, Figure 9 shows the number of times the textbooks provided the target form in their explanations and examples. The total number of examples is noted, as well as the number of times each conjugation appeared.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL
	<i>¡Arriba!</i>	<i>¿Cómo se dice?</i>	<i>Gente</i>	<i>¡Hola amigos!</i>	<i>Mosaicos</i>	<i>Portafolio</i>	<i>Puntos de partida</i>	<i>¿Qué tal?</i>	<i>Vistas</i>	<i>¡Viva!</i>	
Estoy	0 (0%)	2 (20%)	3 (30%)	1 (16.7%)	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)	6 (31.6%)	3 (42.9%)	2 (15.4%)	2 (10%)	20
Estás	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (20%)	1 (16.7%)	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)	5 (26.3%)	0 (0%)	1 (7.7%)	1 (5%)	11
Está	7 (77.8%)	6 (60%)	0 (0%)	4 (66.6%)	10 (100%)	4 (50%)	8 (42.1%)	4 (57.1%)	8 (61.5%)	14 (70%)	65
Estamos	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (7.7%)	1 (5%)	3
Estáis	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
Están	2 (22.2%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (7.7%)	2 (10%)	9
Total	9	10	6	6	10	8	19	7	13	20	All books: 108

Figure 9: Second exposure to *estar* 'to be', input flooding.

As shown in Figure 9, input flooding was again used by all of the textbooks in the corpus. Nonetheless, important disparities in terms of frequency and method of exemplification of the target forms were noted. From a total of 108 examples (mean 10.8, SD = 4.79) presented in the corpus, the number of examples ranged from 6 to 20. Five of the textbooks provided more than 10 examples of the target form.

In this second exposure, although the tendency to favor the third person singular conjugation *está* continued, Textbook #3 provided zero examples of this conjugation. Instead, it provided examples of three different conjugations (the first person singular *estoy* ‘I am’, the second person singular *estás* ‘you are’, and the third person plural *están* ‘they/you are’) over a total of 6 examples in the input flood.

This was not the norm, since in most cases several conjugations were completely ignored or severely underexemplified. The first person plural *estamos* ‘we are’ was represented by a total of only 3 examples across the corpus (representing only about 2.8% of the total number of examples provided across the corpus). Like in the first presentation, seven of the textbooks (representing 70% of the corpus), provided no conjugation of the first person plural *estamos* ‘we are’ in the flood. Once again, this means that learners using these textbooks would be much less likely to have their attention focused on the first person plural *estamos* ‘we are’ conjugation than others such as the third person singular *está* ‘is’ conjugation.

Something similar was observed in the exemplification of the third person plural *están* ‘they/you are’. Four of the textbooks (40% of the corpus) presented no examples at all of this conjugation, while three other textbooks (30% of the corpus) presented 2 examples each of this form. In the second exposure of the verb *estar* ‘to be’, it is evident that the corpus did not provide the same degree of opportunity for all of the conjugations to be incorporated in the input. Therefore, it could be argued that the input flood provided for *estar* ‘to be’, both in terms of volume and variety, may not be sufficient to give learners the chance to focus their attention on the target forms being studied.

In sum, an overall tendency to employ the technique of input flooding was observed in the corpus, in their first and second exposures to the verb *estar* ‘to be’. However, as shown above, great disparities were found in terms of the size of the different input floods and the variety of possible conjugations represented therein. The major tendency across the corpus was for the third person singular form *está* ‘is’ to be overrepresented. As in the case of *ser* ‘to be’, one could speculate on whether it would

be more beneficial for the input flood to expose learners to a greater number of examples or a greater variety of examples. A smaller but more evenly distributed flood could assist learners in attending to all forms equally, but its small size could be detrimental to any potential noticing. By contrast, a larger but less varied input flood would increase learners' chances of focusing on one form at least, but the lack of variety could harm learners' ability to attend to all target forms to the same degree. This issue will be addressed in further detail in Chapter 4.

As predicted in Hypothesis Number 1 (*There will be evidence of the application of typographical techniques to highlight the target verbs ser 'to be' and estar 'to be' in print*), the analysis of the corpus revealed positive evidence, supporting the hypothesis. However, the data mainly showed the application of boldface type, with limited evidence of color or italics, and no evidence of underlining, uppercase letters, or a variety of fonts.

As predicted in Hypothesis Number 2 (*There will be evidence of the application of a frequency of examples in the presentation and exemplification of the target verbs ser 'to be' and estar 'to be'*), the analysis of the corpus revealed positive evidence, supporting the hypothesis. However, as mentioned earlier, the input flood showed great disparities across the corpus in terms of size and variety.

In what follows, an examination of the progression of the input flood between the first and second exposures to the target forms is presented.

3.5 Progression of input flooding: exposures to the verb *ser* 'to be'

As indicated earlier, the fact that textbooks offer a focused presentation of both target forms (*ser* 'to be' and *estar* 'to be') at two different moments in different chapters (e.g., Chapters 1 and 3), it was considered pertinent to establish a comparison between treatments given to the target forms in the two presentations. The aim of this comparison was to observe the way in which input flooding was applied across the two focused presentations of the target forms. More specifically, do textbooks increase the frequency of input flooding between the first presentation of the target verb (in, for example, Chapter 1) and the second presentation (in Chapter 3, for instance)? If so,

could the increase be statistically significant? Are the tendencies in treatment equally valid for both target verbs, *ser* 'to be' and *estar* 'to be'?

The comparison of input flooding (i.e., the frequency of examples) of the conjugations of *ser* 'to be' at two different points in each textbook yielded some interesting tendencies in the data. Figure 10 provides a comparison of the first and second exposures of the target form in terms of the application of input flooding.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL
	<i>¡Arriba!</i>	<i>¿Cómo se dice?</i>	<i>Gente</i>	<i>¡Hola amigos!</i>	<i>Mosaicos</i>	<i>Portafolio</i>	<i>Puntos de partida</i>	<i>¿Qué tal?</i>	<i>Vistas</i>	<i>¡Viva!</i>	
First Exposure	8	7	0	8	14	6	24	27	25	12	131
Second exposure	33	12	5	12	21	12	26	26	27	24	198
% change	+313%	+71%	-	+50%	+50%	+100%	+8%	-4%	+8%	+100%	All books: +51%

Figure 10: Comparison of first and second exposures to *ser* 'to be', input flooding.

As shown in Figure 10, in the first presentation of the verb *ser* 'to be' in the corpus, the total number of examples in the ten books was 131 (mean 13.1, SD = 8.76). In the second presentation, there was an increase in the frequency of examples in almost all textbooks with a total of 198 examples (mean 19.8, SD = 8.51). This means that, between the first and second exposure to the target verb forms, the number of examples increased by 51%. The results of a paired T-test comparing the two presentations of *ser* 'to be' in the corpus yielded a significant difference, $t(9) = -2.901, p < 0.018$ (see output in the Appendix). This means that the overwhelming tendency to increase the number of examples was statistically significant the second time the form was presented as compared to the first time. In other words, students studying individually would experience a major influx of conjugated *ser* 'to be' forms in the input at the second presentation.

Interestingly enough, this overall increase in the sheer number of examples was overshadowed by the unbalanced way in which the conjugations were presented in the corpus. Recall that the tendency observed in the first presentation was to emphasize the third person singular conjugation *es* 'is'. This trend continued and even strengthened in the second exposure to the verb *ser* 'to be' (see Figure 7). In the second presentation, in 90% of the corpus, the *es* 'is' conjugation represented over 70% of the examples provided. That is, the remaining five conjugations had to be represented in only 30% of the examples.

The wide variation in number and range of examples provided by the different textbooks continued in this second presentation. For instance, Textbook #3 progressed from offering zero examples in the first presentation, to providing 5 examples in the second exposure. However, these 5 examples were not evenly distributed among the different conjugations of the present tense of *ser* 'to be'. In fact, out of the 5 examples provided in the second presentation of *ser* 'to be', 100% of them corresponded to the third person singular *es* 'is'. In this case, then, the textbook went from providing no input flood at all in the first presentation, to providing a small flood in the second presentation, consisting of only one conjugation form.

In the first presentation, Textbook #5 offered 14 examples of the conjugation of *ser* 'to be', but the third person singular *es* 'is' form accounted for 100% of the examples. In the second presentation, this tendency continued: a total of 21 examples were provided, 20 of which were represented by *es* 'is'. From the first to the second presentation, there were a total of 25 examples of *ser* 'to be' conjugations provided in

the input flood, of which 24 represented only one conjugation, the third person singular *es* 'is'.

Textbook #1 provided 8 examples in the first presentation, distributed among the different conjugations of *ser* 'to be'. In the second presentation, 33 examples were given, a 313% increase in the number of examples provided in the input flood. However, the conjugations were represented in a less balanced manner in the second presentation. While the first presentation offered at least 1 example of five different conjugations, in the second presentation the third person singular conjugation *es* 'is' represented 26 of the 33 examples provided. Thus, there was an increase in the number of examples provided in the input flood, along with a simultaneous decrease in the richness of the variety of the conjugations provided.

In sum, between the first and second exposures, there was a clear double trend. On one hand, there was a tendency to increase the overall frequency of examples. On the other hand, however, there was also a tendency to decrease the variety of conjugations provided in the input flood. In other words, as the textbooks progressed, the number of examples increased while the variety of conjugations represented within those examples decreased. This means that the likelihood for learners to be able to focus their attention on all of the six conjugations of the verb *ser* 'to be' was weakened by the fact that not all forms were provided in the input flood. It could be argued that learners who receive limited exposure to conjugations other than the third person *es* 'is' may face challenges in mastering the underrepresented conjugations.

3.6 Progression of input flooding: exposures to the verb *estar* 'to be'

The comparison of input flooding (i.e., the frequency of examples presented) of the conjugations of *estar* 'to be' at two different points in each textbook yielded some interesting tendencies in the data. The overall trends indicated that textbooks used input flooding to exemplify the target verb *estar* 'to be' in the same way as in the case of *ser* 'to be'. Figure 11 provides a comparison of the first and second exposures of the target form in terms of the application of input flooding.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL
	<i>¡Arriba!</i>	<i>¿Cómo se dice?</i>	<i>Gente</i>	<i>¡Hola amigos!</i>	<i>Mosaicos</i>	<i>Portafolio</i>	<i>Puntos de partida</i>	<i>¿Qué tal?</i>	<i>Vistas</i>	<i>¡Viva!</i>	
First Exposure	10	5	4	6	4	6	3	5	17	13	73
Second exposure	9	10	6	6	10	8	19	7	13	20	108
% change	-10%	+100%	+50%	-	+150%	+33%	+533%	+40%	-24%	+54%	All books: +48%

Figure 11: Comparison of first and second exposures to *estar* 'to be', input flooding.

As shown in Figure 11, in the first presentation of the verb *estar* ‘to be’ in the corpus, the total number of examples in the ten books was 73 (mean 7.3, SD = 4.34). In the second presentation, there was an increase in the frequency of examples in seven of the textbooks (70% of the corpus) with a total of 108 examples (mean 10.8, SD = 4.79). This means that, between the first and second exposure to the target verb forms, the number of examples increased by 48%. However, unlike the progression between the first and second presentations of *ser* ‘to be’, the results of a paired T-test comparing the two presentations of *estar* ‘to be’ in the corpus showed only a moderate increase: $t(9) = -2.011, p < 0.075$ (see output in the Appendix). This means that the tendency in the corpus toward an increase in the number of examples was of marginal statistical significance. Put differently, learners using these textbooks would experience an increase in the flooding of *estar* ‘to be’ forms, albeit one that would be less dramatic than in the case of *ser* ‘to be’.

Despite the fact that, across the corpus, the increase in the input flood of *estar* ‘to be’ forms between the first and second exposures was not statistically significant, there were individual instances of dramatic change. To mention one extreme case, Figure 11 indicates that Textbook #7 showed a 533% increase in the number of conjugations provided in the explanations and examples, between the first and second exposures. Large increases were also seen in Textbooks #2 and #5, with increases of over 100%. In fact, the number of conjugations of the verb *estar* ‘to be’ increased in seven of the textbooks. Only Textbook #4 did not change at all between the first and second exposures. Interestingly enough, Textbooks #1 and #9 actually underwent a *decrease* in the number of *estar* ‘to be’ examples in the second exposure; in the case of Textbook #9, this decrease was considerable at 24%.

In sum, almost the entire corpus applied the techniques of input flooding to highlight the target verbs *ser* ‘to be’ and *estar* ‘to be’, and almost all of the textbooks increased the size of their input flood between the first and second exposures. However, the overwhelming tendency to favor the third person singular form became more pronounced between the first and second exposures. Indeed, as mentioned above, there was a double trend. On one hand, there was the tendency to increase the frequency of examples in the input flood. At the same time, however, there was also a tendency to decrease the richness of the examples in terms of representation of the diverse conjugations. This raises questions about the effectiveness that such tendencies could have in terms of drawing learners’ attention to the forms. The data seemed to suggest

that noticing would be promoted but only partially, in favor of the third person singular forms. As for the other conjugations, it was not clear that they would be as likely to be noticed by learners, as they were represented to a much lesser degree in the input floods provided in the corpus.

With regard to hypothesis Number 3 (*The second time the target verbs are presented, the corpus will provide more opportunity to focus on form by increasing the frequency of examples provided*), the data partially support the hypothesis. Results showed a clear progression of input flood in the case of the verb *ser* 'to be', but it was only moderate in the case of *estar* 'to be'. In the case of *ser* 'to be', the textbooks compensate for learners' natural tendency to focus on meaning over form, by providing a markedly increased flood in the second presentation. In the case of *estar* 'to be', the textbooks compensate to a lesser extent. On the whole, however, learners using these textbooks will be exposed to a higher number of examples of the target forms on the second exposure, which would give them greater opportunity to focus on form at that stage.

Based on the changes observed in the textbooks between their first and second presentations of the target forms *ser* 'to be' and *estar* 'to be' using textual enhancement and input flooding, it appears that there has been an attempt to draw learners' attention to forms using input enhancement. It is not clear, however, that this attempt is wholly deliberate or sustained.

CHAPTER 4: GENERAL DISCUSSION

This study examined the use of two input enhancement techniques, textual enhancement (e.g., boldface type, italics, underlining) and input flooding (the frequency of examples of the target form in the input), in the presentation of the verbs *ser* ‘to be’ and *estar* ‘to be’ in ten Spanish beginner textbooks. The study aimed to observe whether the notion of noticing the grammatical form – a highly debated topic in the SLA literature – has filtered to language learning textbooks. As all of the textbooks presented the target forms at more than one point in their different chapters, the uses of textual enhancement and input flooding in the textbooks underwent a double analysis. This began with an examination of the techniques employed the first time the target forms appear in each textbook, and then continued with an analysis of those applied during learners’ second exposure to the forms.

For the analysis of textual enhancement techniques in the textbooks, this study investigated which textual enhancement techniques were applied, whether the techniques were used in isolation or in combination, and whether they were applied in a clear, consistent manner. In addition, for the second part of the analysis, focusing on the second appearance of the target forms in the textbooks, the study also sought to determine the degree of continuity between the first and second times the forms were presented. Because of the possibility of applying textual enhancement to charts of verb conjugations and examples of their use, the analysis of this input enhancement technique covered charts, explanations and examples. The analysis of the typographical techniques was primarily qualitative, intended to evaluate the selection of methods used and the ways in which they were applied by the textbooks.

For the examination of input flooding in the textbooks, the frequency of the use of the target forms (i.e., conjugations of the verbs) appeared in explanations and examples was calculated. The appearance of the conjugations in the reference chart was omitted, as this was considered a basic reference and not part of the input flood. In this quantitative analysis, attention was paid exclusively to the number of times the conjugated verbs were provided in the context of an explanation of their morphology or a set of examples of their use in practice. One important element also considered was the variety of conjugation forms (i.e., first person, third person, etc.) included in the input flood and the number of times each of these conjugations appeared. In other

words, the study focused first on how many examples were provided by each textbook (sheer size of input flood), and then how many times each different conjugation appeared (relative variety of the flood).

Following the analysis of textual enhancement and input flooding in the twofold presentations of the target forms *ser* 'to be' and *estar* 'to be', the study then developed one more area of inquiry: an evaluation of the progression of the input flood over time. As stated earlier, the technique of input flooding lends itself to a quantitative study of increases or decreases in the frequency and variety of the conjugations provided (i.e., the number of examples that each textbook provided overall, and the level of representation of each different conjugation). Therefore, it was determined that the study would also investigate how the frequency changed over the course of the different textbook chapters, between the first and second times the target forms were presented.

4.1 The treatment of textual enhancement in the corpus

The study began with an evaluation of textual enhancement as used on the verbs *ser* 'to be' and *estar* 'to be'. Interesting patterns were observed in the first and second appearances of the target forms in the corpus. The most common textual enhancement technique was bolding, which was employed in all of the textbooks. In fact, only a small percentage of the corpus moved beyond this rather basic enhancement method to combine it with another enhancement technique. The textbooks that did employ other methods were limited to the combination of bolding and color.

However, there was a major tendency to apply boldface type in a non-exclusive manner. The pattern seemed to be that, as the textbooks progressed, they increased their application of bolding to include other words besides the conjugations of the target forms. This increased extension of bolding beyond the target forms could result in a decrease in salience for the target forms, and have detrimental effects on learners' potential ability to notice the forms.

In these cases, the inconsistency in textual enhancement could detract from any desired results of visual salience and reduce the chances that noticing could be elicited. In addition, the relatively rare use of more than one technique in combination could

mean that the efforts do not go far enough in trying to elicit noticing. Therefore, if we understand textbooks as tools that need to function effectively in the classroom as well as for individual study, a question arises. How effective would these textbooks be in terms of drawing learners' attention to the forms of *ser* 'to be' and *estar* 'to be' through the application of textual enhancement? Their possible effectiveness is not clear from the data.

4.2 The treatment of input flooding in the corpus

The next section of the study considered the use of input flooding in the presentation of the verbs *ser* 'to be' and *estar* 'to be'. Almost all of the textbooks used the enhancement technique of input flooding, which served to highlight the target form through a high frequency of examples. However, the variety of conjugations that appeared in the input flood was not varied. In other words, the six possible conjugations of each verb were not always all represented in the input flood. In fact, there was an overwhelming trend to overrepresent the third person singular form, to the exclusion of other forms.

In these cases, the unequal representation of the different conjugations could detract from any noticing of the favored form (third person singular conjugation). If we expect textbooks to be effective even without instructor intervention, some doubts arise. How effective would these textbooks be in terms of drawing learners' attention to the forms of *ser* 'to be' and *estar* 'to be' through the application of input flooding? How useful would it be for them to favor one conjugation in their input flood, at the cost of other forms? The results found in the data indicate that the textbooks' possible effectiveness is not clear.

4.3 The progression of input flooding in the corpus

In the first exposure to the verb *ser* 'to be', the textbooks provided a total of 131 examples of the target (mean 13.1, SD = 8.76). The second time the verb *ser* 'to be'

appeared in the textbooks, there was a total of 198 examples (mean 19.8, SD = 8.51). There was an overwhelming general tendency to increase the number of examples across the corpus. The results of a paired T-test comparing the two presentations by each textbook yielded a significant difference ($p < 0.018$). This means that the overwhelming tendency to increase the number of examples was statistically significant.

An increase was also found in the case of the verb *estar* 'to be'. In its first exposure, the textbooks provided was a total of 73 examples (mean 7.3, SD = 4.34). The second presentation of the verb provided a total of 108 examples (mean 10.8, SD = 4.79). There was a moderate general tendency to increase the number of examples across the corpus. The results of a paired T-test comparing the two presentations by each textbook yielded a minor difference: ($p < 0.075$). This means that, although most of the textbooks did increase the volume of the input flood, in terms of the entire corpus the increase was not statistically significant.

The purpose of the present study has been to analyze beginner Spanish textbooks to determine whether there is evidence of the application of input enhancement techniques – specifically, textual enhancement and input flooding – in the twofold presentation of the present tense of the verbs *ser* 'to be' and *estar* 'to be'.

There appears to be an at least partial effort by textbook designers to employ textual enhancement and input flooding to draw learners' attention to the target forms in the second language. However, it is possible that the lack of exclusivity in the use of boldface type may detract from the intended benefits of textual enhancement.

There was an input flood present in all of the textbooks, almost all of the time. Only one textbook provided no flood in the first presentation of *ser* 'to be'. Despite the high numbers of examples, the variety of conjugations represented therein was not extensive. A major tendency to favor the third person singular conjugations of *es* 'is' for *ser* 'to be', and *está* 'is' for *estar* 'to be' in the input flood, to the exclusion of other forms, was observed.

In terms of textual enhancement, there appeared to be a tendency to apply bolding continuously throughout the textbook. Regarding the combination of bolding and color, in the case of *ser* 'to be' there was a minor tendency to increase this double enhancement over the course of the textbooks. Conversely, in the case of *estar* 'to be' there was a more marked tendency to decrease this double enhancement as the textbook progressed.

In the first presentation of *ser* ‘to be’, the most important tendency observed was the use of boldface type. In the second presentation of the form, this tendency increased but also became less exclusive. In the first presentation of *estar* ‘to be’, there was a major tendency to use bolding, and a minor tendency to combine bolding with color. In the second presentation of the form, however, the use of color decreased significantly, while the use of bolding continued.

For *ser* ‘to be’, the input flood increased between the first and second presentations. In the first presentation, not all of the textbooks provided a flood; by the second, they all provided this. The overall number of examples also increased significantly over time. For *estar* ‘to be’, a flood was provided by all texts at both points in time, and a small increase in the number of examples was observed as the textbooks progressed. For both forms, however, as the number of examples increased, the variety of different conjugations represented by those examples decreased.

In the case of the input flood, the increase in the number of examples provided appears deliberate, especially in the case of *ser* ‘to be’ where the increase is great. However, the simultaneous reduction in variety of examples is problematic and could also detract from any intended benefits of the input flood, as it could lead to the noticing of some forms but not others.

4.4 Major trends in the data

The qualitative and quantitative examination of the ten textbooks in the corpus found four overarching trends. First, it was found that there was an attempt in the corpus to draw learners’ attention to the target forms via the application of textual enhancement (i.e., boldface type, color) and input flooding (i.e., frequency of examples) across the entire corpus. Second, it was found that textual enhancement was applied, although its use was largely limited to the use of boldface type in isolation, and not combined with other techniques. Third, within the application of textual enhancement, there was a major tendency to use this technique in a non-exclusive manner; that is, textual enhancement was used not only for the target verbs *ser* ‘to be’ and *estar* ‘to be’, but also for other lexical items. This resulted in a situation of “competing stimuli” in which the

target forms were not the only items that had been made salient in the input. Fourth, it was found that, within the application of input flooding, there was a major tendency to represent the target forms in an unequal manner; that is, one conjugation (third person singular) was represented in the input flood to a much greater degree than any of the other five conjugations.

4.5 Major trends: attempts to draw learners' attention to target forms

The results of this study indicated that all of the textbooks in the corpus applied input enhancement techniques to the target forms. Thus, it can be affirmed that an attempt was made in each textbook to make these formal elements of the input more salient to learners, namely in the form of textual enhancement and input flooding. The technique of textual enhancement was found in all of the textbooks, to varying degrees. The most commonly used textual enhancement was boldface type, which was employed by the entire corpus. The technique of input flooding was also found in all of the textbooks in the corpus, again to varying degrees. That is, all of the textbooks provided a number of examples of the target forms in use, within illustrative examples. Importantly, all of the textbooks combined textual enhancement with input flooding: the target forms appearing in the input flood were also textually enhanced. This means that learners using these textbooks would be exposed to target forms that were doubly salient: both visually distinctive (textual enhancement) and highly frequent (input flood). In sum, whether stemming from an informed decision or an intuitive notion, the textbooks in the corpus did make an attempt to render target forms visually salient to readers.

4.6 Major trends: limited textual enhancement techniques

In terms of textual enhancement, all of the textbooks (100% of the corpus) applied boldface type to the target forms of *ser* 'to be' and *estar* 'to be' in the input.

Some of the textbooks employed a combination of two techniques – different colors combined with boldface type – to the target forms, to enhance their visual salience. In no case were more than two techniques used together. Therefore, the use of textual enhancement was present but it was relatively limited, since no other techniques (e.g., underlining, different font sizes, or uppercase letters) were explored. Recalling empirical studies such as that conducted by Shook (1994) and Jourdenais *et al.* (1995), combining several enhancement techniques has tended to lead to more positive results in terms of the effectiveness of textual enhancement in drawing learners' attention to forms in the input. In the case of Shook (1994), positive results were achieved with a combination of boldface and uppercase letters in the written input, along with explicit instructions to pay attention to the enhanced items and attempt to come up with a rule about them. In the case of Jourdenais *et al.* (1995), four textual enhancement techniques – underlining, bolding, shadowing, and a different font – were employed, and garnered positive results. However, the corpus of the present study tended to rely on a single technique in isolation, and the combinations that did occur never exceeded the two techniques of boldface type and color.

4.7 Major trends: competing stimuli

Along with the tendency to limit textual enhancement to boldface type, another major trend found in the data was the non-exclusive application of textual enhancement; that is, the textual enhancement techniques were not only applied to the target forms *ser* 'to be' and *estar* 'to be', but to other lexical items as well. For example, Textbook #1 provided the phrase *la mochila está muy sucia* 'the backpack is very dirty'. Here, the conjugation of *estar* 'to be' was treated with boldface type, but the adjective *sucia* 'dirty' was given that same treatment. The application of the same textual enhancement method to both the target form and another lexical item creates a situation of "competing salience," in which learners are not clearly guided to attend to one form but rather must divide their attention between the target form and another item. This could distract learners from focusing as much attention as possible on the target form. As mentioned earlier, evidence found by Barcroft (2003) has suggested that textual

enhancement is more effective when applied to fewer forms in the input. Because enhancement is used sparingly, the enhanced forms retain their “distinctiveness” (Han *et al.*, 2008), which could lead them to remain more salient and potentially able to be noticed.

4.8 Major trends: unequal representation of target forms in input flood

As stated above, all of the textbooks in the corpus applied the technique of input flooding; that is, the target form appeared in the input with a high frequency, in the form of illustrative examples. There were two major trends in the data regarding the input flood. First, the volume of the input flood tended to increase between the first and second presentations of the target forms *ser* ‘to be’ and *estar* ‘to be’. That is, between the first and second presentations (for example, in Chapters 1 and 3), learners were exposed to an increasing number of examples of the target forms. Second, the richness of the input flood tended to decrease between the first and second presentations. That is, the variety of different conjugations provided in the input flood decreased as the books progressed. Therefore, over the course of the textbooks, learners were exposed to an increasing number of examples but a decreasing variety of verbal conjugations. There was an overwhelming tendency to favor the third person singular conjugations *es* ‘is’ and *está* ‘is’, as these two forms accounted for a large proportion of the total number of examples provided in the corpus. This tendency became more extreme as the books progressed, and while the size of the input floods increased.

The lack of variety of conjugations represented in the input flood, and the dramatic overrepresentation of the third person singular *es* ‘is’ and *está* ‘is’ raises some questions. Should the input flood expose learners to a greater *number* of examples, or a greater *variety* of examples? For instance, a smaller but more evenly distributed flood could assist learners in attending to all forms equally, but its small size could be detrimental to any potential noticing. On the other hand, a larger but less varied input flood would increase learners’ chances of focusing on one form at least, but the lack of variety could harm learners’ ability to attend to all target forms to the same degree. Recalling Barcroft’s (2003) findings, it could be argued that fewer forms should be

targeted for input enhancement to make it more likely for them to be perceived as salient by learners. However, some empirical evidence (Alanen, 1995; Leeman *et al.*, 1995) has also suggested that the over-enhancement of one single form can lead to overgeneralization, hindering learners' possible noticing of other forms. Indeed, making a single target form excessively salient can hurt, rather than facilitate, learners' processing of meaning as well as form (Han *et al.* 2008, p. 15). Clearly, there is a need to strike a balance between excessive salience (which could hinder the acquisition of other forms) and not enough salience (which could fall short of drawing learners' attention at all). At this point, it is not possible to resolve this issue, and it escapes the scope of the present study. What is clear is that further consideration of this issue is needed, from both a theoretical and empirical standpoint.

CONCLUSION

This exploratory study has examined the ways in which two input enhancement techniques – textual enhancement and input flooding – are applied in a corpus of ten beginner Spanish textbooks. The target structures studied were the present indicative forms of the verbs *ser* ‘to be’ and *estar* ‘to be’. As all the textbooks presented the target verbs two times each in different chapters, the analysis was based on two different instances of exposure.

The verbs *ser* ‘to be’ and *estar* ‘to be’ are interesting forms to study from the perspective of input enhancement, as they present major morphological and semantic complexities to the beginner learner. This is especially noteworthy in the second presentation of *ser* ‘to be’, when it is often contrasted with *estar* ‘to be’. Here, the semantic features of the verbs become increasingly complex, as they represent two different ways of expressing a verb that, in English, is expressed using only one verb.

Therefore, if a beginner learner tends to automatically focus on semantics, how does a textbook work against this tendency to draw attention to morphology? If the semantics of *ser* ‘to be’ are transparent in the first presentation, the beginner learner would be expected to process the semantics as intake quickly, which would free up cognitive resources to be allocated to focusing on form. For the verb *ser* ‘to be’, that would be advantageous: focusing on morphology in the first stage would increase the learner’s chances of integrating the form as intake, which would be necessary in the second presentation, when morphology remains static but semantics becomes complex. If the textbook can make the learner notice the morphology of *ser* ‘to be’ in the first presentation, then it would be likely that, in the second presentation, the learner, already having processed the form as intake, would be able to devote his or her cognitive processing resources to the sudden complexity that *ser* ‘to be’ gains when presented the second time in tandem with *estar* ‘to be’.

Clarity and consistency are crucial in these two presentations, since the level of difficulty of *ser* ‘to be’ seems to change so drastically between the first and second presentations. If the textbook is to successfully draw the learner’s attention to form in the first presentation, in order to increase the likelihood of the learner processing that form as intake, then the focus must be on the form to the exclusion of the semantic features. In the first presentation this should not be difficult, as the semantics of *ser* ‘to

be' are transparent. However, what happens in the case of a textbook that focuses on both morphology and semantics at the same time, applying input enhancement techniques to both? One might speculate that this situation could result in an overload for the learner and cause him or her to revert back to focusing on semantics. This would not be helped by a textbook that provides, for example, a large number of examples in the input flood, in which there is a great deal of semantic variety but a narrow range of morphological variety.

As indicated earlier, there were four major trends in the data. First, the input enhancement techniques of textual enhancement and input flooding were detected in the corpus. Second, it was found that the textual enhancement technique of boldface type was applied across the entire corpus, but it was used largely in isolation, and not combined with other techniques. Third, it was observed that the textual enhancement technique of boldface type was not limited to the target verbs *ser* 'to be' and *estar* 'to be', but also applied to other lexical items, creating "competing stimuli." Fourth, the input flood demonstrated a major tendency to represent the target forms in an unequal manner, favoring the third person singular conjugation over the other five conjugations. In sum, the textbooks demonstrated an attempt to draw learners' attention to the target forms in the input, through textual enhancement and input flooding. However, these attempts can only be characterized as partial, because much could still be done in terms of combining different textual enhancement techniques and providing a more evenly distributed representation of the conjugations in the input flood. For learners using these tools to study individually outside classroom time, it is imperative that textbooks use all available means to draw their attention to the target forms in the input, in attempt to facilitate noticing of the forms as much as possible.

Limitations of the current study

There are several limitations to this exploratory study. First, it is limited to the visual and textual presentations provided by the textbooks, and does not take into account any supplementary materials such as CDs or websites. It does not allow for a consideration of any participation by the instructor, either.

Second, the study is limited to analyzing the ways in which the textbooks expose learners to the present indicative of the verbs *ser* ‘to be’ and *estar* ‘to be’. It would be illuminating to study other types of L2 input besides these two basic verbs in the present indicative. Possibilities could include other verb tenses such as the Spanish preterit and imperfect, which have been characterized as complex grammatical forms (Francis, 2003) and which have also been objects of empirical study in the SLA literature (Jourdenais *et al.*, 1995; Jourdenais, 1998; Overstreet, 1998).

Third, the corpus is comprised of only ten textbooks, and chosen on an opportunistic basis from a wide collection of textbooks available in the Department of French, Hispanic and Italian Studies at the University of British Columbia. Although care was taken to select the corpus as randomly as possible, the issue of practicality could have jeopardized a more representative selection of titles. For example, in this opportunity, no textbooks published in Europe or Latin America were included. Likewise, the corpus does not include any textbooks published before 1995. It is acknowledged that the criterion applied could have yielded a rather homogeneous and limited corpus of texts. In a subsequent project, it would be advisable to draw on a more geographically and chronologically diverse pool of textbooks. In this way, comparisons could be established over a wider range of presentation and exemplification of grammatical structures, greater variety of language use, and a diversity of pedagogical approaches to the teaching and learning of Spanish.

Fourth, the study focuses exclusively on the explanations provided by the textbooks, as well as the exemplifications of the verbs. For instance, nowhere in the present study are the practice exercises evaluated. This element would be interesting to examine in light of evidence suggesting that grammatical task performance can have similar effects as formal instruction in terms of promoting noticing (Fotos, 1993), and that task repetition may lead to overall improvement in L2 proficiency (Gass *et al.*, 2003). In keeping with the suggestion by Ellis (1997a) to design tasks in a way that encourages learners to process the language forms, it would be interesting to consider evidence of these ideas in the exercises provided by textbooks. Especially relevant would be their evolution over time in terms of difficulty or complexity, in light of Skehan’s (1998) observation that a learner’s ability to notice a form may depend on the cognitive processing demands of the tasks assigned.

Fifth, the present study is based on a series of assumptions. It is assumed that a textbook is a tool used for a didactic purpose, and as such it is designed to facilitate

learning as much as possible. While recognizing that empirical evidence regarding the usefulness of input enhancement techniques in written input is still inconclusive, the study assumes that enhancement is employed with the intention of improving learning by making specific grammatical forms more salient and thus more liable to be learned. Consequently, it assumes that didactic material intended to facilitate learning of L2 forms would be likely to apply input enhancement techniques.

Suggestions for further research

Empirical findings regarding the effectiveness of input enhancement remain inconclusive, not least because individual experiments are not comparable. Additionally, there has been a lack of longitudinal studies, which is crucial given the fact that learners' cognitive maps change over time as they encounter new input that needs to be processed (Han *et al.*, 2008). This is especially significant due to the suggestion that enhancement could draw learners' attention briefly but not necessarily in a way that leads to improvement in proficiency (White, 1998). Additionally, not all of the linguistic features that are registered by the senses are encoded in long-term memory (Williams, 1999). It appears that, although enhanced forms may attract attention, this does not necessarily guarantee further processing by the learner (Han *et al.*, 2008).

The present study is a first step in what could be a longer process moving from this qualitative and quantitative analysis of input enhancement in the texts, to empirical studies testing different textbooks against one another. Such studies would attempt to determine whether the different applications of input enhancement techniques in the textbooks could lead to differing results in learners' acquisition of target forms.

This area of SLA research still provides fertile ground for new empirical studies to be undertaken. Especially needed are studies that are comparable and longitudinal, which would make it more likely to provide conclusive evidence of a notion that is almost a universal assumption: that some degree of noticing is necessary for a target form to be acquired, and that an external manipulation of input can contribute to facilitating this process. How and to what extent is noticing necessary for acquisition? How and to what extent can external manipulation of input facilitate this process? These questions are still open to interpretation and testing. It is hoped, however, that any

positive results will make their way into learning materials, and especially to the classic centerpiece of instructed SLA: the course textbook.

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APPENDIX

Paired T-tests: comparisons of the number of examples of the target form provided in the first and second exposures

Ser 'to be'

T-Test

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	SER1	13.1000	10	9.2310	2.9191
	SER2	19.8000	10	8.9666	2.8355

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	SER1 & SER2	10	.678	.031

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
Pair 1	SER1 - SER2	-6.7000	7.3037	2.3096	-11.9248	-1.4752	-2.901	9	.018

Estar 'to be'

T-Test

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	ESTAR1	7.3000	10	4.5717	1.4457
	ESTAR2	10.8000	10	5.0509	1.5972

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	ESTAR1 & ESTAR2	10	.349	.322

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
Pair 1	ESTAR1 - ESTAR2	-3.5000	5.5025	1.7401	-7.4363	.4363	-2.011	9	.075