The Effect of Authentic Video on Communicative Competence

JOSEPH R. WEYERS
Department of Spanish
College of Charleston
Charleston, SC 29424
Email: weyersj@cofc.edu

Given that exposure to video programming has been shown to increase students' listening comprehension, the subsequent effects of that increase on communicative competence were studied in order to assess the impact of exposure to authentic video on the language acquisition process. Following their contact with an authentic Spanish-language *telenovela*, student viewers demonstrated a statistically significant increase over their counterparts in a control group not only in listening comprehension but also in the number of words they used in discourse and in two component parts of communicative competence, specifically, their confidence in generating output and the scope and breadth of their discourse. This study shows that authentic television programming is a valuable tool that provides high levels of input and results in improvements in students' output.

INTRODUCTION

The growth in number of Spanish-language television stations throughout the U.S., coupled with the widespread availability of home and school VCRs, has made a valuable source of linguistic input readily available for classroom use. Authentic video—defined as authentic television programming taped off-air and used with permission for educational purposes—provides student viewers with an abundance of target language samples, used in context by native speakers.

Of the diverse programming broadcast on Spanish-language television, the serialized *telenovela*, or soap opera, stands out over other genres as most propitious to long-term contact with authentic linguistic input. The Latin American soap opera offers continuity: its typical run of approximately 3 to 6 months, broadcast daily, allows student viewers to follow the episodic development of the same characters and plot(s), with each episode building on prior events and leading to future actions. The familiarity with the genre and the evolving story lines, coupled with the valuable extralinguistic clues available through television, aids in students' comprehension of the unstructured, authentic language samples to which they are exposed (Terrell, 1993).

The present study shows that long-term exposure to an authentic *telenovela* serves to enhance the language acquisition process. The experiment reported herein was conducted for two purposes: (a) to measure the increase in listening comprehension that exposure to the authentic soap opera would afford the student viewers who participated in the study, and (b) to test the validity of the hypothesis that an increase in the *quantity* and *quality* of input provided by the authentic video would result in enhanced oral production in terms of both quantity and quality, as defined in the following sections.

THEORETICAL RATIONALE FOR THE EXPERIMENT

The use of video in the foreign language classroom has been the subject of numerous studies, with nearly exclusive emphasis placed on its linguistic benefits and its effectiveness in increasing listening comprehension. To date, however, there is no published research that points to the applicability of authentic video to enhancement of

oral production. Hence, the present study was designed to fill this void.[1]

Researchers have long reported that authentic video is beneficial in providing natural, content-rich samples of the target language (Bacon & Finnemann, 1990; Liontas, 1992) and that it reflects current linguistic changes more effectively than printed sources (Richardson & Scinicariello, 1989). Authentic video has also been shown to be motivating (Beeching, 1982; Terrell, 1993) and loaded with "sensory impact" (Wen, 1989, p. 246), affective factors that aid comprehension.

Video, by nature, is filled with valuable extralinguistic clues. Research shows that exposure to visual stimuli increases students' comprehension and retention of lexical items (Snyder & Colon, 1988) and that visual exposure, when coupled with an audio component, significantly increases students' comprehension of a video text (Altman, 1989; Baltova, 1994). Furthermore, exposure to video programming has been shown to result in a significant increase in student viewers' listening comprehension in cases when they have had contact with both commercially prepared video programs, such as *French in Action* (Secules, Herron, & Tomasello, 1992), as well as authentic *telenovelas* (Terrell, 1993).

It is widely accepted that target language input, specifically comprehensible input, is the first vital component to the language acquisition process (Krashen, 1985). According to Krashen (1991), once input is comprehended, it is processed in the brain as intake. Krashen's Input Hypothesis suggests that the quality and quantity of output (speech) is "crucially dependent on the quality and quantity of comprehensible input learners process" (Terrell, 1993, p. 18). As such, it is logical to propose that an increase in the quantity and quality of the input should result in a similar increase in the quantity and quality of students' output, the research hypothesis on which this study was based.

Before proceeding, it is important to define quantity and quality in both input and output. Quantity refers to the sheer amount of input reaching student viewers via video programming, which far surpasses the capabilities of a sole instructor. It was hypothesized, therefore, that this increase in input would result in a similar increase in output, measured by the number of lexical items available to the learners. The quality of the input refers to the contextualized, unstructured (not graded for foreign language learners) native speech provided by the *telenovela*. Student viewers are exposed to target language samples—again surpassing the capabilities of an instructor—which, although scripted and delivered by professional actors, approximate what they would encounter in real life situations. The quality of students' output, then, refers to their communicative competence in transmitting messages understandable to native speakers, with no reference to the grammatical accuracy of their discourse. It was also hypothesized that an increase in quality—communicative competence—would result from long-term exposure to an authentic *telenovela*.

A mere increase in input should not be the sole factor considered in attempting to increase the quantity and quality of output. Since the inception of the Natural Approach, researchers have shown that affective environmental factors have an influential role in how input is accepted by the language learner (e.g., Dulay, Krashen, & Burt, 1982), as does the structure of the input, with episodically organized material being more effective than its counterpart (Taira, 1993). Furthermore, input is more likely to be received as intake when it is interesting and relevant to the learner (Krashen, 1981) and triggers some aspect of his or her background knowledge (Sato & Jacobs, 1992).

Authentic *telenovelas* provide such an outlet. Weyers (1998) suggests that *telenovelas*, by nature of the unstructured, nongraded linguistic samples they provide, are more effective than commercially prepared video programs in exposing student viewers to genuine language samples, much like what they would encounter in the target culture. *Telenovelas*, like communication, are episodic in nature, logically leading student viewers through the many transitions in the story line. In addition, students are able to call on even their most superficial familiarity with the soap opera genre in predicting possible future events. Studies of student attitudes have shown that foreign-language television has positive affective results for student viewers (Wen, 1989; Baltova, 1994). Authentic video has even been shown to inspire self-confidence and, as a result, students exposed to it report feeling fewer inhibitions about using their second language (Terrell, 1993).

Finally, the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning appear to support the use of authentic video. Target-language television programming is a community resource, the use of which meets Goal 5 of the Standards. Comprehension of, and interaction with, authentic video clearly fit well with Standards 1.2 and 1.3; that is, respectively, that students understand spoken language and present information and ideas on a variety of topics (ACTFL, 1997).

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

The experiment was conducted in two second-semester Spanish classes during the 1994 Summer Session at the University of New Mexico. Both the control and experimental classes were taught by the same instructor, the author of this article. The classes met daily for 60 minutes, for a total of 8 weeks. Two intact classes were used for this experiment. The students were not aware of the special nature of the experimental treatment when they registered for either of the classes. They did, however, agree to participate in the experiment when its purpose was explained to them on the first day of class. Due to the fluctuating nature of course registration—with course drops and late additions—42 students were enrolled in the two participating classes, but only 37 (17 in the control group, 20 in the experimental group) were present for the pre- and posttreatment battery of tests.

The established curriculum for Lower Division Spanish at the University of New Mexico is communicative and follows the tenets of the Natural Approach. Students are expected to study key grammatical structures at home; the principal focus of class time is on communicative activities that incorporate the vocabulary and grammatical information covered. The second-semester curriculum at the time of the experiment consisted of six chapters (Chapters 6–12) of the required textbook, *Dos mundos* (Terrell, Andrade, Egasse, & Muñoz, 1990).

The control group followed the established curriculum for second-semester Spanish, without alteration. The experimental group followed the same curriculum, which was supplemented by the experimental treatment.

The experimental treatment required that the students in the second group watch two episodes per week of the Mexican *telenovela*, *María Mercedes* (Pimstein, 1992), taped off-air and used with permission (KLUZ, Albuquerque, NM). They saw the first 13 episodes of the program, the focus of the experimental manipulation, as well as the final—83rd—episode, the program's happy ending. They watched each episode in class, with the instructor present. The viewing consumed approximately 45 minutes of the 60-minute class period. Given that the episodes used in class were taped from commercial television, the commercials were not edited out, but instead were manually fast forwarded through by the instructor. These short breaks in the activity provided the participants with meaningful intervals of the soap opera, allowing for short breaks between segments to aid in comprehension (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Because the experimental group watched the *telenovela* in class, the participants in that group had less time for oral activities than those in the control condition and were responsible for more outside preparation. The students were aware of this factor when agreeing to participate in the experiment.

Preparation and Task

Before beginning the study, the instructor gave the participants in the experimental group a brief written synopsis in English of the *telenovela*, which explained the characters, their family history, and set the scene for what transpired in the program. The synopsis served as an advance organizer to aid the students' comprehension of the development of the story line. Indeed, it was estimated that it would have required a minimum of four episodes (2 weeks of the experiment) to extract the information provided by the synopsis from the dialogue of the program.

In addition, students in the experimental group had basic vocabulary lists for the first five episodes, also prepared by the instructor, that defined a number of the most commonly used colloquialisms in the program. The vocabulary lists were only provided for the first five episodes given that it was assumed that by the sixth episode most student viewers would have developed strategies for dealing with unfamiliar lexical items.

Before viewing each episode, the participants in the experimental group received a list of 10 comprehension questions, written in Spanish, to answer while watching the program. The questions required either recall of the plot or summary of the dialogue (e.g., "What did X and Y talk about on the telephone?" and "Why is X upset?"). The comprehension questions were designed to assist in listening selectively for the main points and, thereby, to aid in the overall comprehension of the *telenovela*. The questions, like the vocabulary lists, served as advance organizers that allowed the participants to anticipate what they were about to hear and to listen selectively (Omaggio Hadley, 1993). The students were to answer the questions in English to avoid the pitfall of measuring one skill (listening) by means of another (writing). At the end of each episode, the instructor collected the responses to the questions, retained them, and subsequently used them in class as a postviewing activity.

Listening Comprehension Test

In order to measure the increase in listening comprehension and to evaluate the validity of the hypothesis previously stated, the participants in the control and experimental groups completed pre- and posttreatment tests. All participants took the same two tests, one to measure listening comprehension and the other to assess oral production, at the beginning and end of the experiment. A standardized test was administered to verify the expected increase in listening comprehension in the experimental group.

The listening comprehension section of the Level Two 1994 National Spanish Exam, prepared by the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP), was used to assess listening comprehension. Level Two was deemed the most adequate for second-semester university students as it is designed to be used with second-year high school students of Spanish who have an equivalent skills level. The National Spanish Exam was chosen because of its recognition and endorsement by the AATSP, its standardized form, and the range of tasks it includes. The exam tests aural recognition of discrete vocabulary items in reference to visual stimuli, context recognition, determined by means of the presentation of short monologues and dialogues, and text comprehension, presented in the form of a short academic lecture followed by a series of comprehension questions. It consisted of 30 multiple-choice items and required 21 minutes to administer. The instructions and test questions were recorded on cassette, in Spanish, by native speakers. The exam was used with permission from the AATSP.

Oral Production Test

Given that the primary focus of this experiment was to assess an increase in oral production as a result of exposure to authentic video, the principal component of the pre- and posttesting battery was the measurement of oral communicative skills. The objectives for Lower Division Spanish at the University of New Mexico are communicative; hence, the most effective manner to measure such skills was to allow students the opportunity and freedom to use their second language in an open-ended setting. Given that samples of each student's extemporaneous speech were needed and had to be recorded for evaluation and study, a Narration from Pictures approach was chosen. This approach is defined as a type of connected discourse test that, although it does not approximate communication in real life, still "maintains that

flow of language generally felt to typify real communication" (Madsen & Jones, 1981, p. 24).

The test for pre- and posttreatment oral production was a series of six pictures that depicted a young woman and man preparing for and going out on a date. This particular series was chosen because of the accessibility of the necessary vocabulary to second-semester students. In particular, the lexical and grammatical items necessary to narrate the series included clothing, reflexive verbs (showering, getting dressed, etc.), and basic present tense actions like eating and dancing, all of which were determined to form the corpus of second-semester students' linguistic inventory. The directions for the oral production test were purposefully open and vague so as to elicit the greatest amount of speech production. The students were to study the picture series for 1 minute. They had 3 minutes to describe as much as possible in each of the pictures; they were to stop the tape once they had exhausted their repertoire, even if the 3 minutes had not expired. The narrations were recorded on cassette in the language laboratory and retained by the instructor.

The listening comprehension and oral production tests were administered consecutively on the same day in the language laboratory. The students received a test book and answer sheet for the listening comprehension test. For the oral production part of the test, they randomly chose blank cassettes, which were precoded with identification numbers.

In the assessment of communicative competence, the tapes were evaluated on a scale of 0 to 5 in five categories. The categories were determined to represent the five most prominent characteristics making up communicative competence, based on the model proposed by Canale and Swain (1980), as well as on their inclusion in the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Guidelines. They are described briefly as follows:

1. *Confidence in Speech* relates to the students' use of monitoring and subsequent hesitation for self-correction. A low score was given for excessive monitoring.

2. *Scope and Breadth of Response* relates to the detail given to each action. A mechanical, one-sentence-per-picture response received a low score.

3. *Style/Flow of Response* deals with the students' general fluidity in spoken Spanish, with special attention given to "choppiness" not related to monitoring (#1, above). A high score resulted from a natural, native-like, flow to the narration.

4. *Effectiveness of Message* relates to the comprehensibility of the response to a native speaker.

5. *Communicative Techniques* employed were evaluated according to the students' use of circumlocution and their avoidance of English lexical items when the desired lexical item was not known. A high score in this category was given when the students spoke exclusively in Spanish and demonstrated some skill in circumlocution.

Although the entire rating scheme is quite lengthy, a sample of some of the descriptions is included in the Appendix for the reader's reference.

An argument could be made that these categories are rather subjective and could therefore lend themselves to rater bias. Although this could appear to be true, it must be emphasized that the rating scale was narrow enough to specify exact traits and left little to be assumed by the rater. Objectively evaluating oral production is a daunting task because the quality of the discourse must be determined by each evaluator. Although subjective tests are more vulnerable to reliability problems than objective tests, it must be acknowledged that subjective tests, when constructed, administered, and scored following precise guidelines, such as those outlined here, can achieve high reliability (Jones, 1985).

Evaluators

Three evaluators assessed the oral production tapes. They were instructors of Spanish at the University of New Mexico at the time of the experiment. One of the evaluators, a native speaker of English and the author of this article, was the instructor of the two participating classes. The other two were native speakers of Spanish. They were chosen because of their teaching experience (both had taught at least 2 years in the Lower Division Spanish program at the university) and their familiarity with the second-semester Spanish curriculum.

The formal evaluation of the tapes began after the three evaluators reached a .95 interrater agreement. This required approximately 2 hours of independent rating. The evaluators listened to each tape a minimum of two times to make an accurate evaluation. Each evaluator spent approximately 8 hours assessing the tapes.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The data were analyzed by means of a One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), run by Number Crunching Statistical System (NCSS), version 5.03. Prior to analyzing the posttreatment data, the groups' pretest means were analyzed to test the Null Hypothesis that the participants in the respective groups came from the same population, that is, that they began the experiment at comparable levels of skills. In all cases presented below, the Null Hypothesis was maintained ($p > .05$).

Listening Comprehension

The raw data presented in Table 1 show that the experimental group's 7.45-item mean increase on the standardized listening comprehension test is far greater than the control group's 4.29-item increase. As the ANOVA data indicate (Table 2), there is a significant difference ($p < .01$) in favor of the experimental group in listening comprehension following exposure to the experimental treatment.

These results are consistent with prior research conducted on the relationship of video exposure to listening comprehension (Baltova, 1994; Secules et al., 1992; Terrell, 1993). In light of the previous studies, and following the stated hypothesis that an increase in input, in both quantity and quality, would result in a similar increase in output, the significance of the experimental group's increase in listening comprehension is fundamental to this study as a foundation on

TABLE 1
Listening Comprehension Test Mean Scores
Number of Correct Responses out of 30

	Control Group (N = 17)		Experimental Group (N = 20)	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Pretest	12.24	4.99	13.85	4.02
Posttest	16.53	4.50	21.30	3.59
Increase	4.29	2.29	7.45	2.33

TABLE 2
ANOVA Summary Table for Means Between Groups
Listening Comprehension

Source	*DF*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Between groups	1	91.52	91.52	9.14	.01
Within groups	35	350.48	10.01		
Total	36	442.00			

which to test the hypothesis. The experimental group's increase suggests that exposure to an authentic *telenovela* resulted in that group's participants receiving and processing significantly more target language input than the control group. The analysis of these data with those derived from the oral production test serves as a basis for conclusions regarding the research hypothesis.

Oral Production: Measurement of Quantity

The criterion used to determine the quantity of speech produced was the number of words used in the picture narration test of oral production. The assumption was that a demonstrated increase in quantity (number of words used) indicated that a student had at his or her disposal comparably more communicative ability than a student with a lesser word count in his or her responses.

In order to measure quantity, a words-per-minute analysis of each taped response was performed. The instructor tallied each lexical item used in the responses and timed the tapes to the hundredths of a second with a stopwatch. Each tape was listened to three times in order to derive a reliable words-per-minute count for each student. Both groups' raw data appear in Table 3; the ANOVA summary data for the increase in groups' mean appear in Table 4.

The overall gains of the experimental group in comparison to the control group, reported in line 3 of Table 3, show a significant difference between groups ($p = .01$) following exposure to the *telenovela*.

Given the hypothesis, it was necessary to determine whether the experimental group's increase in listening comprehension was related to the increase in the quantity of the speech they produced following exposure to the *telenovela*. Calculation of a Pearson product correlation coeffi-

TABLE 4
ANOVA Summary Table for Means Between Groups Words-Per-Minute Spoken

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p
Between groups	1	401.10	401.10	7.15	.01
Within groups	35	1964.13	56.12		
Total	36	2365.22			

cient shows a weak positive correlation ($r = .31$, $DF = 18$, $\alpha = .05$) between the experimental group's increase in listening comprehension and their number of words spoken per minute.

Although the correlation is weak, a scatterplot (Figure 1) of these two variables shows a general upward trend of the plotted points. Such a trend suggests a relationship between listening comprehension and oral production in terms of increased quantity of both. Nonetheless, this suggestion is inconclusive. The weak correlation coefficient is insufficient to warrant the strong conclusion that an increase in the quantity of input results in a similar increase in quantity of output.

Oral Production: Measurement of Quality

Each of the five communicative categories was studied individually to determine which, if any, of the component parts of communicative competence was affected by the experimental treatment. The data are presented here in order of their significance. Recall that a scale of 0 to 5 was used in assessing each category.

The greatest increase in the experimental group's communicative competence at the conclusion of the study was for the category Confidence in Speech. The evaluation of the participants' confidence in their speech was based on the assurance they demonstrated in speaking Spanish, regardless of their grammatical accuracy. A low score in this category was attributed to extended hesitation in speech, a high level of perceived frustration during the students' narration, and excessive reliance on monitoring. The raw data for both groups in this category appear in Table 5.

The ANOVA data for this category (Table 6) show that the experimental group's increase compared to the control group's increase is significant ($p = .0002$). This strongly suggests that exposure to authentic video results in a significant improvement in confidence in speech. As Dulay et al. (1982) maintain in their canonical

TABLE 3
Oral Production Mean Scores
Words-Per-Minute Spoken

	Control Group (N = 17)		Experimental Group (N = 20)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Pretest	37.72	12.02	34.69	13.99
Posttest	46.67	12.80	50.25	14.29
Increase	8.95	5.86	15.56	8.63

FIGURE 1
Correlation Between Increase in Listening Comprehension and in Words-Per-Minute Spoken for the
Experimental Group

Note. r = .32
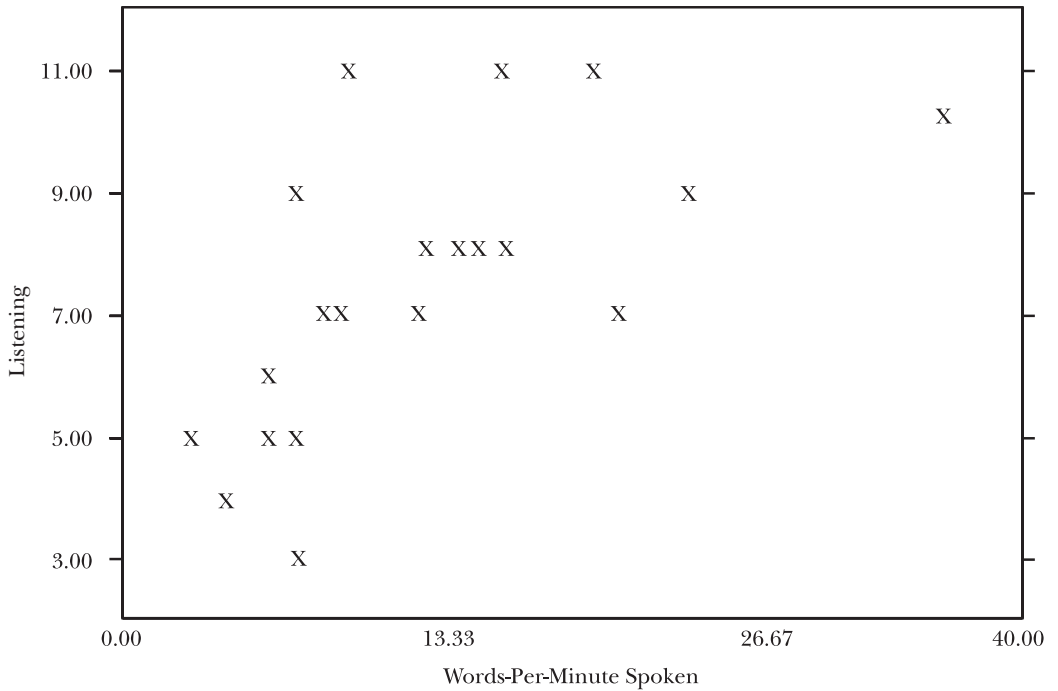
work, confidence is an important factor in foreign language speech production, and it is influential in the overall language acquisition process, because "the self-confident, secure person is a more successful language learner" (p. 75).

In addition to an improvement in confidence in speech, the experimental group showed a significant increase in the category Scope and Breadth of Response. This category focused on the way in which the student performed the nar-

ration task, specifically, whether he or she narrated with a structured one-sentence-per-picture approach or attempted to arrive at a detailed description by describing several actions per each picture stimulus. Table 7 shows the two groups' scores in this category.

The statistical analysis for this category (Table 8) points to a significant increase ($p < .01$) in the experimental group's scope and breadth of their response in comparison with that of the control group.

The increase shown in Table 7 establishes that the experimental group used more detail in re-

TABLE 5
Confidence in Speech
Mean Scores (Scale: 0–5)

	Control Group (*N* = 17)		Experimental Group (*N* = 20)	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Pretest	2.28	.69	2.68	.77
Posttest	2.73	.68	3.93	.64
Increase	.45	.64	1.25	.64

TABLE 6
ANOVA Summary Table for Means Between Groups
Confidence in Speech

Source	*DF*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Between groups	1	5.89	5.89	17.22	.0002
Within groups	35	11.96	.34		
Total	36	17.85			

TABLE 7
Scope and Breadth of Response
Mean Scores (Scale: 0–5)

	Control Group (N = 17)		Experimental Group (N = 20)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Pretest	2.26	.72	2.62	.79
Posttest	2.61	.65	3.57	.78
Increase	.35	.42	.95	.81

TABLE 9
Style/Flow of Response
Mean Scores (Scale: 0–5)

	Control Group (N = 17)		Experimental Group (N = 20)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Pretest	2.55	.78	2.78	.94
Posttest	2.90	.65	3.45	.63
Increase	.35	.51	.67	.73

TABLE 8
ANOVA Summary Table for Means Between Groups
Scope and Breadth of Response

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p
Between groups	1	3.30	3.30	7.57	.01
Within groups	35	15.26	.44		
Total	36	18.56			

TABLE 10
ANOVA Summary Table for Means Between Groups
Style/Flow of Response

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p
Between groups	1	.90	.90	2.21	.15
Within groups	35	14.29	.41		
Total	36	15.20			

sponses to the oral production posttest following exposure to the authentic soap opera than did the control group. The moderately positive correlation ($r = .42$, $DF = 18$, $\alpha = .05$) between Scope and Breadth of Response and Confidence in Speech suggests that the self-assurance afforded the experimental group (Table 5) resulted in the participants' increased ability to speak (in this case, narrate) with detailed descriptions.

Returning to the research hypothesis at hand, it was necessary to determine whether these two significant increases in the quantity of the students' output were correlated to their increase in listening comprehension. The Pearson product correlation coefficients for both Confidence in Speech ($r = -.15$, $DF = 18$, $\alpha = .05$) and Scope and Breadth of Response ($r = -.35$, $DF = 18$, $\alpha = .05$) do not establish much of a relationship between increased listening comprehension and these two communicative categories, although all three areas show significant increases in the experimental group's scores following their exposure to the experimental treatment.

Finally, the oral production tapes were evaluated according to the three remaining communicative categories: Style/Flow of Response, Effectiveness of Message, and Communicative Techniques. None of them revealed a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups, which indicates that expo-

TABLE 11
Effectiveness of Message
Mean Scores (Scale: 0–5)

	Control Group (N = 17)		Experimental Group (N = 20)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Pretest	2.43	.73	2.98	.99
Posttest	2.92	.56	3.65	.78
Increase	.49	.61	.67	.57

TABLE 12
ANOVA Summary Table for Means Between Groups
Effectiveness of Message

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p
Between groups	1	.29	.29	.83	.37
Within groups	35	12.21	.35		
Total	36	12.50			

sure to an authentic *telenovela* did not affect the students' style or effectiveness of their discourse, nor did it alter their ability to utilize circumlocution. The mean scores and the corresponding ANOVA data appear in Tables 9 through 14.

TABLE 13
Communicative Techniques
Mean Scores (Scale: 0–5)

	Control Group (N = 17)		Experimental Group (N = 20)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Pretest	2.26	.86	2.83	1.17
Posttest	2.82	.85	3.50	.98
Increase	.56	.57	.67	.72

TABLE 14
ANOVA Summary Table for Means Between Groups
Communicative Techniques

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p
Between groups	1	.90	.90	.21	.65
Within groups	35	15.05	.43		
Total	36	15.14			

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the experiment described above do not provide the evidence necessary to maintain the Alternative Hypothesis, that is, that an increase in the quantity and quality of input reaching students via authentic video results in an increase in the quantity and quality of their output. Nonetheless, the significant increases experienced by the experimental group in listening comprehension and in three areas of oral production provide quantitative data to support the pedagogical value of authentic video in improving some language acquisition skills.

After their exposure to an authentic *telenovela*, the experimental group's listening comprehension increased over that of the control group. Subsequently, they had at their disposal significantly more lexical items and they demonstrated greater confidence in their speech and an ability to provide greater detail in their discourse when compared with the participants in the control group. Although the Pearson product correlation coefficients indicate weak to negligible correlations between increased listening comprehension and the quantity and quality of output, the significant increases in those areas mentioned point to the value of authentic video in some fundamental component parts of communicative competence.

The filtering out of five distinct communicative categories, combined with the corresponding data for each area, reveals an important secondary finding. The data indicate that not all the component parts of the major category communicative competence are affected equally. This point is meaningful, as the term communicative competence generally appears to be used as a catch-all referring to an assumed single, indivisible skill that all people can acquire if exposed to the same situations. As such, this study shows that general belief to be erroneous. When broken down, communicative competence has certain components, such as confidence and detail in narration, that can be enhanced by exposure to an authentic *telenovela*. However, other components are more idiosyncratic, for instance, effective speaking, style, and circumlocution. It appears logical to surmise that those who have acquired these abilities in their native language can transfer them to a second language; likewise, those who have not, obviously cannot. This study demonstrates that although a Natural Approach–based curriculum, supplemented by exposure to authentic video, cannot affect certain individual characteristics of all language learners (e.g., speaking style), it does affect other component aspects of communicative competence, particularly confidence and detail in narration.

The increase shown for the experimental group in the category Confidence in Speech is the most telling of the results. As the students understood more of the *telenovela*, they became increasingly comfortable hearing Spanish spoken by native speakers. Their level of comfort with the input influenced their confidence in their own output, as shown in Tables 5 and 6. The students in the experimental group spoke with a high level of confidence and took chances in their speech in daring to make mistakes in order to communicate an idea. In support of this statement, one anonymous comment on the experimental group's course evaluations stated: "[I] don't know if I learned directly from it, but [it] certainly made me more comfortable hearing fast Spanish." These results are comparable to those reported by Terrell (1993) under similar conditions.

The data reported here point to the effectiveness of an authentic Spanish-language soap opera in increasing the listening comprehension skills and some component parts of the communicative competence of second-semester university students of Spanish. As such, this study suggests to foreign language instructors that *telenovelas* are a valuable source of authentic target language usage that has a positive effect on students' communicative skills.

NOTES

[1] The experiment for this study was conducted in 1994. Outside of further studies of video's effect on listening comprehension (Progosh, 1996; Gruba, 1997) and guidelines for using video in class (Chung, 1996; Swaffar & Vlatten, 1997), this researcher found no more recent research on the effect of authentic video on the output of students exposed to it.

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APPENDIX
SAMPLE OF CRITERIA USED FOR EVALUATING ORAL PRODUCTION TAPES

Confidence in Speech

5 Although there may be some brief pauses in the discourse, the student demonstrates complete confidence in his or her ability to speak Spanish. The student makes every possible effort to communicate.

4 The student pauses periodically to monitor his or her speech; aside from such pauses (more than three), he or she appears to demonstrate confidence in his or her speech. The student is not frustrated.

3 The student monitors his or her speech and pauses briefly at times to think about lexical items. He or she appears to be fairly confident and is not frustrated.

2 The student monitors his or her speech by self-correction. There are several pauses in the narration; his or her voice waivers as he or she thinks of lexical items to use. The student becomes frustrated approximately halfway through the task.

1 The student hesitates in responding and pauses frequently; he or she thinks aloud in attempts to monitor his or her speech. He or she gets very frustrated.

0 The student is frustrated as indicated by many long lapses of silence and stumbling.

Scope and Breadth of Response

5 The narration is descriptive and is not limited in any way. The student includes several (three or more) details per picture. The narration includes approximately three or more sentences per picture.

4 The narration consists of several details per picture, including, but not limited to, two or more actions and two or more descriptions.

3 The student describes in detail the characters (and other objects), identifies them, and narrates with approximately two full sentences per picture.

2 The student describes the characters (and other objects), identifies them and expresses at least one action per picture. The narration tends to be composed of one full sentence per picture.

1 The narration consists nearly exclusively of descriptions of the characters and other objects, and identification of them, with no actions expressed.

0 The narration consists of isolated lexical items.

Communicative Techniques

5 The student effectively uses circumlocution and descriptions when he or she does not control the exact lexical item. No English is used. Speech is smooth and such techniques enhance the narration.

4 The student effectively uses circumlocution and descriptions; he or she inserts only one English lexical item.

3 The narration is complete, with some hesitation, and the student uses some circumlocution. The student uses two or three English lexical items

2 The student uses circumlocution only once and inserts more than three English lexical items in his or her speech.

1 The student is unable to use circumlocution and, when unsure of a lexical item in Spanish, will use English lexical items.

0 The student uses English lexical items in the narration more than 50% of the time.