

Telenovelas, Subtitles and Spanish Language Acquisition

Objective

Given the several studies that highlight the linguistic benefits of watching foreign language television programs as a second language learner, this study seeks to determine whether or not looking at a *telenovela* (Spanish soap opera) with untranslated captioning can serve as an effective way to acquire new words in Spanish.

Participants

- 33 in total (13 Males, 21 Females)
- Of ages between 16 and 21 years
- All but 2 are native English speakers
- All current students of Intermediate Spanish
 - Dividend in 3 Groups:
Group A – 16, *Group B* – 17, *Control Group* – 5

Materials

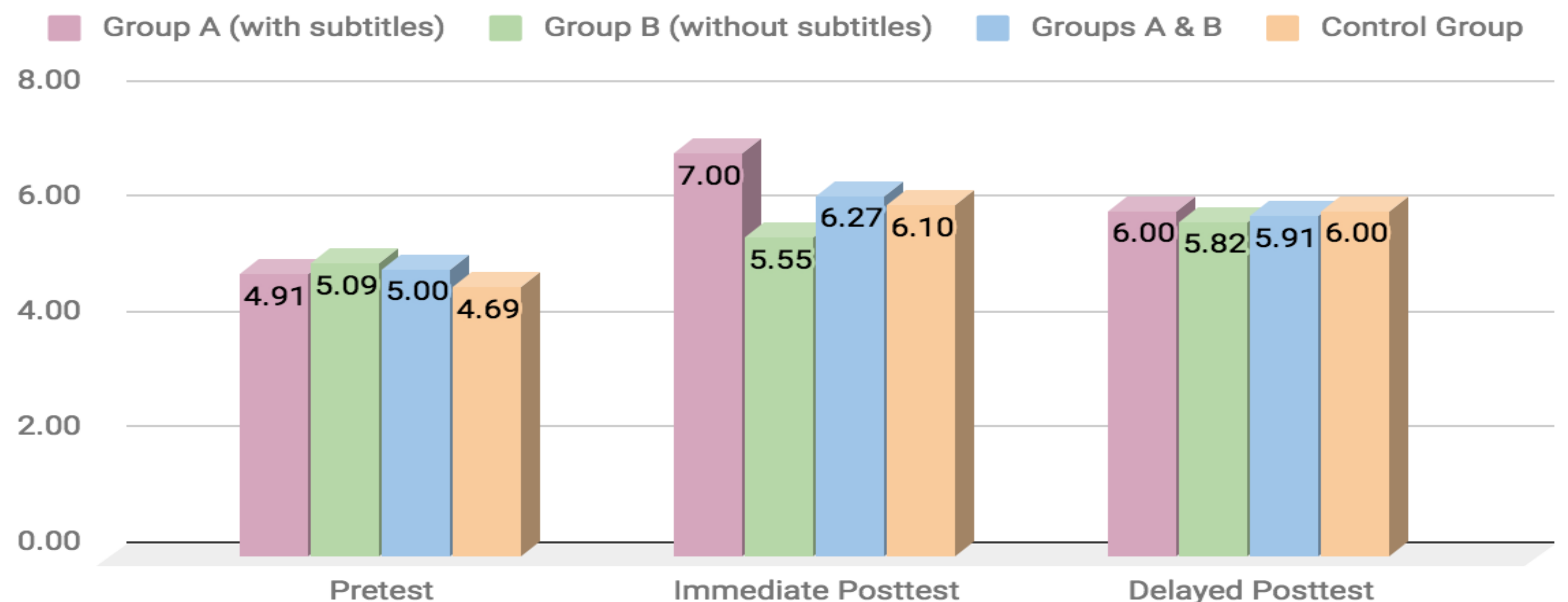
- 3 Vocabulary Test (20 words from the telenovela + 10 distractors)
- 10 min clip of a telenovela

Procedure

- **Session A:**
Participants completed a pretest.
- **Session B:**
One week later participants watched the clip and completed an immediate posttest.
Group A watched with Spanish subtitles while *Group B* watched without.
- **Session C:**
Participants did a delayed posttest after 2 weeks.

Results

Comparison Between Scores Obtained by the Control Group and Experimental Groups



Participants who watched the telenovela with same language captioning appeared to learn more words

BUT

participants who watched without also appeared to acquire new vocabulary.

Conclusion

- Reaffirms the linguistic benefits of watching foreign language television programs.
- Suggests that second language instructors should use these television programs in the classroom.
- Serves as a basis for future studies, including:
 - Analysis of the pedagogical differences between translated and untranslated captioning?
 - Similar study in which participants watch an entire season
 - Similar study with a much larger experimental group