

# Devising an Effective Methodology for Measuring the Benefit of L2 Subtitled Extensive Watching on Learner Motivation, Autonomy and Skill Development

L2 字幕付き多試聴 (Extensive Watching) によるモチベーション、自律学習、スキル発達に与える効果に対する測定方法の考察

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## ABSTRACT

*As the digital revolution continues apace, those involved in education are presented with an increasing number of choices for improving second language (L2) skills and abilities. Some of these technological advancements represent a relatively novel way to incorporate modern media into educational approaches. This paper maintains that watching videos in particular, lends itself to heightened student engagement. As Uematsu (2004) has demonstrated, students who engage in film watching, with L2 captions enabled, showed a distinct improvement over subjects who watched the same material with using L1 captions. The authors hope to take these findings a step further and distinguish a quantified comparative advantage in the efficiency of this practice, when combined with Extensive Watching (EW) activities that maximise exposure to authentic, natural and contextualized language. The contention is that, by engaging in EW activities with English Captions (EC) enabled, students can simultaneously exercise both their listening and reading faculty. Although this paper does not attempt to gauge tangible skill-improvements at this time, it will act as a precursor to a forthcoming and deeper study that will attempt to do so. For now, we will investigate the effects of an EW pilot project on learner motivation and autonomy.*

**KEYWORDS:** extensive watching, closed captioning, learner motivation, learner autonomy, extensive reading principles

## 要旨

デジタル革命の急速な進行に伴い、教育関係者にとっては第2言語の技能向上をはかる上でより多様な学習方法が選択できるようになりつつある。こうしたテクノロジーの進歩により、現代のメディアを教育手法に取り入れた比較的新しい学習方法も提起されている。本稿ではその中で特に映画鑑賞が学習行動を促す効果に着目する。植松(2004)は英語(L2)字幕を利用した映画を使用し、同じ映画を日本語(L1)字幕で鑑賞したグループよりも高い学習効果が得られたことを示している。本稿ではこの知見をさらに深め、上記の活動と、Extensive Watching(EW)ー学習者がより現実に近い自然でかつ状況を伴った言語使用に可能な限り多くふれることを意図した活動ーとを組み合わせ、その活動の優位性について量的な分析を行うことを想定している。この研究の目的は、英語字幕を使用した多試聴(EW)という学習活動を採用することにより学習者がリスニングとリーディングの両方の技能を並行して学習することができるかを検証することである。なお、本稿は学習者の技能の向上について量的に測定を行うことを意図するものではなく、これを行うためのより詳細な研究に向けての先行研究として位置付けられるものである。今回の研究は、後に予定されているより包括的な研究の計画に向け、まずはEWの試験運用による学習者の動機づけや自律学習への効果を検証する。

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Brief Background

Technological advancements in the last 20~30 years have led to an immense increase in the availability of digital media and Information Technology (IT) resources for a growing number of people. The increasing ubiquity of these developments has led to great changes in the ways people approach all manner of activities and daily pursuits – educational practices and ways of learning have by no means been immune to these vicissitudes. It is impossible to investigate all these manifestations and their effects on teaching practices in one essay. However, the authors would like to focus on a particular advancement and how it might be beneficially applied in the realm of foreign language study: digitised video material with controllable subtitling capabilities. It is the authors' belief that the digitisation of videos, such as DVDs and web streaming, represent a modern media advancement that can provide learners with several education-specific advantages while also providing students with innovative and engaging materials that increases motivation. Used strategically, the authors postulate that these can be immensely valuable tools in these changing times.

### 1.2 Aims of This Paper

More specifically, this paper will focus on a teaching practice termed Extensive Watching (EW), and look to investigate learners' attitudes toward it. In this instance, the implementation of this EW methodology was aimed at improving the listening and reading skills of several university-level English as Lingua Franca (ELF) students in Japan. It's hard to pin down exactly when EW activities began, but it is safe to say that it is a relatively new concept in ELT –especially when one considers the novelty of controllable subtitling capabilities, that have only come about in the Digital Age. That said, EW derives many of its tenets from the well-established practices of Extensive Reading (ER) and places a specific focus on exposing students to large volumes of language use as its greatest benefit. Stalwarts of both the EW and ER philosophy, contend that activities of this nature can foster and improve higher levels of motivation and learner-autonomy in ELF study, while simultaneously improving

ability in the target language (Bell, 2001; Day & Bamford, 1998; King, 2002; Lin, 2002; Uematsu, 2004). One of the key concepts behind the advantages of EW implications is a direct derivative of Extensive Reading (ER), as adapted to film and video viewing. There is already considerable research to support the utility of the ER methodology and its practical effectiveness (Bell, 2001; Day & Bamford, 1998). This paper aims to distinguish a competent and practical means of implementing EW techniques in the realm of ELF education, as well as make initial explorations into its effects on user motivation and learner autonomy. The authors believe that the digitisation of visual media (and its expressed relation to DVDs and their language options), adds a tremendously valuable functionality, when applied to EW exercises and activities.

The basis of this claim is heavily founded on studies and papers that have been published and presented elsewhere, which make assertions to the advantage of watching English language films with the English Captions (EC) engaged (King, 2002; Uematsu, 2004). It has been argued that by doing so, students not only improve their listening abilities, but also improve their reading capacity as well (King, 2002; Uematsu, 2004). The primary goals of this project are twofold: first, to shed further light on the advantages of using digital video media with English captions, as an interesting means for students to work on improving their listening and reading capacities; and second, doing so while also being exposed to high volumes of vocabulary and language-in-context, in the same spirit of ER enterprise.

### 1.3 A Small Caveat

Finally, it is important to note that this project is very much a “work-in-progress” and is a precursor to a longer forthcoming paper that aims to investigate the comparative advantage of this method over more traditional means of study. However, at the time of publication, the project lacks the empirical data and primary sources to distinguish these claims with any definitive proclamation. Without deliberately attempting to answer any specific research question(s), the aim of this paper is to discern and delineate the theories and practices behind this project; the overall architecture of its methodology; analyse implications of learner autonomy and motivation; and address any considerations and adaptations that the researchers may need to undertake in the longer-term.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Video and DVD use in ELT

There have been a great many studies conducted on the efficacy of using films, TV shows, and other video technology resources (VTR) material as tools in English Language Study (Hirano & Matsumoto, 2011; Ismaili, 2013; King, 2002; Lin, 2002; Nakamura, 2007). Although there is great variance in approaches and techniques, the general consensus is that these are useful study mechanisms, with somewhat nuanced differences in findings and conclusions. Where there is contention, it is largely in the arenas of comparative effectiveness of one method over another, or the depth of their efficacy and utility. Without contesting a singular procedural superiority, a brief review of these findings is useful here.

There are countless arguments that have shown that video use enhances several areas of language capacity and Nakamura (2007; p.126) has conveniently listed these

advantages as providing: (a) exposure to genuine and realistic language (demonstrating natural speed and pronunciation); (b) understandings of different cultural features or practices; (c) clear contexts for students and learners to understand situation-specific English usage; (d) enjoyable settings to lower students' affective filters; (e) identification of common spoken language through subtitles and/or scripts; (f) encouragement of independent and autonomous study outside the classroom; and (g) longer concentration periods with lower levels of study fatigue. There is little research to contest these assertions, yet the potency of corollary outcomes in actual language ability and improvement is debatable. Yet, almost all scholars agree on the positive effects and affirmations above, when taken in relation to the advantages of student motivation and engagement, as they relate to video watching activities.

The use of subtitles and their effectiveness on the other hand, is an area of scholastic review that has generated a fair degree of dispute. There is a relatively large body of inquiry in this sphere and one can find any number of reports and papers to make assertions (with a high level of certainty) about the positive and/or negative outcomes of watching video with (or without) captions engaged. That said, the vast majority of these analyses have been too myopic in their scope. Most reports tend to focus on the utility function or marginal benefit as it applies to one specific area of language improvement (most often listening ability) (Hirano & Matsumoto, 2011). Where studies have not focused on individual language skills, there is limited literature that investigates the direct benefit of watching videos with L2 audio and L2 captions simultaneously engaged. For example, some reports look at using video as supplemental to scripts, captions and other reading material or vice versa (Ismaili, 2013; Iwasaki, 2011); or the comparison of focusing on one video extensively, over many short clips from several sources (Osuka, 2007). Although the findings are interesting, most studies of this sort do not look at the marginal benefit of watching English language videos with the ECs engaged -especially not in the spirit of an extensive exercise, where high volumes of consumption are specifically encouraged.

On the other hand, Uematsu (2004) has cogently demonstrated that when students watched video content with ECs engaged they were able to improve in multiple skill areas (both listening and reading) and demonstrated the advantages of this practice. His study separated students into two groups and had them watch the same material. One group watched the films with L2 audio and L1 subtitles, the other with both L2 audio and captions. Upon completion of the project, it was discovered that while both groups saw some improvement in listening abilities, as measured by the TOEIC Test, the second group (with L2 audio and L2 captions), also enjoyed a measurable enhancement in the reading section of the test -presumably, other areas of language proficiency would have seen some comparative improvement in the second group as well, but these were not quantified. Additionally, Ryu (2011) and Lin (2002) have argued that closed caption use (either L1 or L2) lowers the difficulty level of the authentic material movies, and makes input more comprehensible. Also, Garza (1991) explained that watching captions-engaged video gives students a familiar graphic representation of spoken language. Students are therefore more empowered to begin assigning meaning to previously difficult aural utterances and can gradually build up their listening comprehension, in tandem with their reading fluency.

Keeping these advantages in mind, the digitalisation of video and the widespread

development and distribution of DVDs means that students have increasing access to controllable media, where language and caption choice can be decided by the user. Further, because DVDs allow viewers to stop, pause, rewind and review scenes or whole films and programs, there is an undisputed gain in learner-autonomy for the development of effective study practices. This is of course not limited to the DVD format (some video-streaming websites such as [www.TED.com](http://www.TED.com) have toggles for multi-lingual closed captioning capabilities). However, since almost all films are now released or available on DVD, there is an immense amount of choice for pupils to select from and they can elect to watch films or other media that suits their individual preference. This element of choice and learner-agency is an important factor when considering extensive study exercises and their merits for student incentive and action. This consideration was a key motivating factor when devising this study and the authors aimed at creating a high level of choice for the students to decide from.

## 2.2 Principles of Extensive Reading and Applications for Extensive Watching

Although its educational merit is somewhat less contested in terms of measured advantages for language learners' skill development, the field of study surrounding ER practices is quite profound. Yet, for the purposes of this project, the authors will focus on the key advantages of the ER approach and its theoretical understandings; especially as they relate to their adaptation for EW activities and methods.

Extensive Watching is not an entirely novel concept and its development or conception is heavily couched in the literature, philosophy, and practice of the Extensive Reading approaches (Holden, 2000; Lin, 2002). A key theoretical principle of ER is the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which generally states that learners are intrinsically motivated when they have more control of their learning and the materials used. In their Top Ten-Principles of Teaching Extensive Reading, Day and Bamford (2002) include the following tenets (among others) as being central to the effectiveness of ER activities: (a) students and learners should choose what they want to read; and (b) the purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information acquisition and general understanding. Both of these claims are consistent with the theory of self-determination and, when applied to a medium such as films or TV shows (which already lend themselves to higher degrees of learner motivation and engagement), should (as this paper contends) provide a virtuous cycle of reinforcement in regards to learner-autonomy and motivation.

Yet, before addressing elements of engagement and motivation, it is important to note that Day and Bamford also distinguish two other aspects of effective ER activity that have some bearing on this study: (a) the material should be easy; and (b) a focus is placed on students reading as much as possible. With regard to the former, deciding levels of written texts is somewhat easier than choosing levels of films and videos. There is a litany of resources, such as Graded Readers and thorough investigation in the ways and means of grading written material. However, this is not the case for films, and cataloguing video according to English difficulty or content is an underdeveloped area of study - something that proved to be a minor stumbling block when designing this survey.

In terms of the volume of consumption, it is the position of these researchers that exposure to English (in any form) is tantamount to any effective learning in L2 study. With that sentiment, EW activities adapted from ER principles (particularly with ECs engaged),



espouse an unprecedented level of consumption of the target language in all its forms. In a highly homogeneous and relatively insular society such as Japan (where access to natural, authentic, and contextualised English is at a premium), the value of this exposure to aural varieties of the studied language cannot be understated.

### 2.3 Enhanced Learner Autonomy and Motivation

Furthering the above arguments, Yoshino (2008) has shown that using Graded Readers through ER activities in her course promoted learner autonomy and reported a positive attitude toward English study among learners. Her conclusions implied that students were more intrinsically motivated to study on their own time and their own terms, when given a high level of choice regarding the materials employed to improve their foreign language fluency.

As evidenced above, other scholars have argued that video use also increases learner engagement and motivation (Hirano & Matsumoto, 2011; Ismaili, 2013; Lin, 2002; Nakamura, 2007). Therefore, it stands to reason that if these two practices are combined in EW-inspired education, students should demonstrate a high level of commitment and autonomous educational industry. As such, the first stage of this project, and the primary purpose of this paper, is to establish a strong correlation between EW-oriented enterprise and user or student motivation -learner autonomy. With that in mind, the authors devised a scheme to grade and quantify student responses to EW-directed study in order to measure the effectiveness of the longer-term study centered on the efficiency of EW-based curricula.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

Before discussing the finer details of the methodology it will be useful to restate that this was a pilot project and its main goals were to: (a) to examine learners' attitude toward the activity; and (b) to flesh out any administrative problems or drawbacks that the researchers could face when implementing the more robust investigation of EW benefit in an educational context. Since these purposes were rather limited in scope, it was deemed sufficient to only allot a short period of time for its completion.

More specifically, this activity was assigned as homework in four separate ELF classes during the 2014/15 Fall-Winter Semester (assigned over the year-end winter break from December 20, 2014 ~ January 8, 2015), at a private Japanese university. The classes ranged in size from 15-20 students (69 participants total) and all subjects were Japanese nationals (save one, who was from China), in 1st and 2nd year university (usually aged 18-20), majoring in either the Liberal Arts or Comparative Culture faculties. Subjects were explicitly instructed to watch the various titles with ECs engaged and asked to watch as many films as possible. The completion of this project was mandatory and students were told that it would factor into their final grades, yet in order to maintain an element of the voluntary spirit of Extensive Watching, subjects were given a large list of films and TV shows to choose from, which included 100 titles, and set a minimum watching requirement. Anything beyond that minimum was done on their own accord, however, a grading incentive was attached to the extra films they watched.

In order to devise the list, the researchers brainstormed several titles that were thought

to be interesting or relevant to the students. During this process, considerations were made to include a wide variety of titles and genres that would give the subjects as much choice as possible. However, since the researchers are also the teachers of these classes and have well-founded relationships with the learners, the list was devised with the students' levels in mind. An in-depth review of the films will reveal that there is a slight bias toward films and titles that are marketed to more juvenile audiences or subjects. This is a direct reflection of generally selecting level- and subject-appropriate movies or shows.

It must also be mentioned that there was no way to assign levels to the films and TV shows, as there is a considerable dearth of research and study in this area. There are a few web resources and studies, which aimed to create a quasi-leveling system for films, however these were based on scripts found on the Internet Movie Script Database <[www.imsdb.com](http://www.imsdb.com)>, which is a crowd-based site and materials are all user-generated. Scripts on IMSDB are written or submitted by anyone who chooses to do so, therefore there is a considerable degree of variance in standards and styles. As such, the accuracy of word counts and levels is very unreliable. For example, some scripts were very heavy on scene descriptions or character actions, while others were explicitly dialogue based.

Since accurate word counts of the various scripts were unavailable among the accessible resources, the authors decided to use runtimes as the congruent variable by which to assign points for the films. The purpose of this points system was twofold: first, to ensure that students watched the films and participated in the activity; and second, to establish a baseline of viewing time to meet minimal requirements of sufficient quantifiability. The titles were awarded one point for every thirty-minute block of runtime. For example, a 102 minute film would receive 3 points as it is in the 3 block range, whereas a 22 minute TV show would be awarded 1 point as it did not surpass the first 30 minute block. Regretfully, this led to some discrepancy and potential selection bias among the titles since a video that was, for example, 94 minutes long would receive the same point value as a film that was 119 minutes in length (both fall in the 30 minute block of 91~120 minutes, meaning they both get 3 points). A further shortfall of this method was that it did not account for films that might be seen to utilise difficult language or subject matter, however, as mentioned above, the overall importance of the project was to expose students to as much English as possible, and the authors felt this was the simplest way to achieve this end.

Once the list was compiled and distributed to the classes, the researchers asked that students complete two online surveys, which were facilitated by the survey and data-generating website, SurveyMonkey <[www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)>. The two surveys differed in the fact that one was to be filled-out on multiple occasions, after watching each selection (the Extensive Watching Film/Video Report -see Appendix B); and the second was to be completed at the end of the whole activity, to provide overall feedback about the assignment. The purpose of these questionnaires was threefold: (a) to demonstrate evidence of task completion and film viewing; (b) to provide an element of interactivity and help students to digest the films they were watching by delivering task-based activities and questions pertaining to each title watched; and (c) to generate data for analysis of the project's efficacy and development of autonomous study practices.

Upon completion of the assignment, the researchers were able to draw certain conclusions from the data and generate several suggested changes and amendments for

their proposed forthcoming research project, as well as considerations for further analysis. These findings and any limitations that were encountered are discussed below.

#### 4. FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Relying more heavily on the second survey (a post-activity questionnaire), the authors proceeded to clean the data and found that 49 of 66 responses were suitable for analysis. The pertinent data to gauge motivation and effectiveness of the project are delineated here.

##### 4.1 Volume of EW Completion and Student Activity

In the final survey, Q1 and Q15 (Tables 1 & 2) demonstrate the overall amount of films watched and approximate time spent for the EW activity. Except for two subjects that watched 12 movies, the majority of students watched between 2 to 6 films, or between 4 to 16 hours.

Table 1

Q1. How many movies did you watch?

Number of movies	Number of respondents
12	2
11	0
10	0
9	0
8	1
7	1
6	6
5	5
4	5
3	19
2	8
1	2

Table 2

Q15. About how many hours did you spend on this activity in total?

Hours	Number of respondents
24-26	2
22-24	0
20-22	1
18-20	0
16-18	0
14-16	5
12-14	2
10-12	2
8-10	7
6-8	17
4-6	10
2-4	2
0-2	0



Unfortunately, these figures do not demonstrate a high level of EW activity on the part of the students by their own agency, and when one cross-checks these results with answers provided in the Extensive Watching Film/Video Reports, or the points allotment in the video list, it is plain to see that many of the students chose to do the minimum required viewing. Unless a subject chooses two extremely long films worth 6 points each, they must watch between 3 and 4 films. This majority likely reflects students choosing to view the minimum runtime (or slightly above it) to ensure completion of the assignment and receive a passing grade.

However, the structural time limitation of the exercise may account for part of the reasoning behind this. Since this project was assigned over the winter holidays students may not have had enough time to view much more than the base requirement. Given more time to watch these films or had the project been implemented earlier in the term these numbers may have reflected a higher level of interest and participation. That said, the subjects within the majority that demonstrated slightly higher viewing rates than the mean average (5 to 8 films in Q1, or 10 to 16 hours in Q15), did show some level of engagement beyond the minimum requirement.

A final note regarding the two subjects who claimed to have watched 12 films each must be made here. Upon further inspection, there were some discrepancies between the data provided by these two students and their responses compiled in the Extensive Watching Film/Video Reports. Discrepancies of this sort represent a form of administrative constraint, which will be discussed in greater detail under the Limitations and Constraints section below. Since the assignment had a direct link to the students' grades there was an inherent incentive for the subjects to exaggerate the number of films they watched. Although the answers provided by these two subjects were found to contain potential deviations of this sort, it is impossible to ascertain whether or not this reflects the structural bias intrinsic in the assignment's grade component. There is a possibility that the two students in question misunderstood the task or were confused about the method of filling out the two different surveys. Despite this variance, the subjects' responses were included even after the data cleaning stage, as the authors deemed that their feedback in the rest of the survey would still be useful.

#### 4.2 Levels of Learning and Perceived Skill Improvement

Q2 to Q4 (see Table 3), probe the perceived levels of skill improvement for each of the major areas in language study. However, since time constraints did not allow for empirical testing via a standardised proficiency test such as the TOEIC®, these results cannot be verified with quantifiable data. Yet, it is still useful to note that the majority of students felt they had improved their overall abilities and this could have a positive influence on confidence and learner engagement in the future. With a particular focus on listening and reading capacities, the subjects demonstrated a very high level of accordance with the statements affirming the positive effects of this activity.

Table 3

*Summary of student perceptions about the language learning benefits of EW*

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Q2. Watching videos for this activity helped you improve your listening skills.	41%	49%	10%	-	-
Q3. Watching videos for this activity helped you improve your reading skills.	22%	47%	24%	6%	-
Q4. Watching videos for this activity helped you improve your writing skills.	2%	31%	33%	31%	4%
Q5. Watching videos for this activity helped you improve your speaking skills.	8%	29%	49%	10%	4%

**4.3 Learner Attitudes and Motivation**

Overall, the results of the final survey showed a generally positive attitude toward the activity. Table 4 shows responses to Q6, Q7 and Q8, which address participant opinions about the project. Generally, students claimed that they enjoyed this method of study and many of them showed a markedly positive attitude toward the endeavor as a means to keep motivated in their continued pursuit of English improvement. The responses to Q7 and Q8 in particular, demonstrate a very positive sentiment toward the EW experiment and this reassures one of the central assumptions of this paper, regarding student motivation and learner autonomy.

Table 4

*Numerical representations of learner attitudes and opinions*

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Q6. Watching videos for this activity motivated you to learn English more.	49%	39%	8%	4%	-
Q7. This is a good way to study English.	65%	27%	8%	-	-

Q8. I would recommend this method of study to a friend.	57%	37%	4%	2%	-
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#### 4.4 Negative Questions

Negative questions were also employed in the survey to act as a secondary check for the purposes of cross-referencing answers and distinguishing any deviations that may arise from students failing to understand the questions. Table 5 speaks to these questions and the data suggests that these effectively served their purpose of reinforcement. In both topic areas (Preference and Attitude for Q9; and Perception of Learning in Q10), subjects showed positive attitudes and opinions toward the activity.

Table 5

*Student responses to the negative statements*

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Q9. I did not like this activity.	-	8%	6%	43%	43%
Q10. I did not learn much from this activity.	-	-	10%	49%	41%

#### 4.5 Continued EW Study

At first glance, the following preferences illustrated in Table 6 shows somewhat contradictory information, but upon consideration, there is a logical explanation for the minor discrepancy. The responses to Q11 seem to suggest that the subjects were interested in viewing films with ECs engaged. In fact, upon completion of the method after the term of the project, 86% of respondents affirmed their intention to continue utilising this method. Yet the student responses to Q12 suggest that many students (who had an opinion on the matter) felt that this may not be the best method for improving their English. The authors feel that although the information in these two figures might be at odds with one another, one explanation for this could be that many students choose to utilise a wide variety of techniques when studying English. Although a lot of the respondents may not have felt that this method was the optimum practice available to them, they may elect to include it among their repertoire of study approaches and continue to occasionally watch films with ECs engaged.

Table 6

*Student responses to items relating to the future implementation of EW*

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Q11. I will continue to use this method of study to improve my English.	37%	49%	12%	2%	-
Q12. I feel that other methods of study are better for improving my English.	4%	29%	63%	4%	-

## 4.6 Language Preference Before and After

Although the respondents were not explicitly queried on their language preference for films before the assignment, Q13 asked what their predilection is in their free time (see Table 7). Since this was asked at the termination of the exercise, it's likely safe to assume that even after the EW activity, the majority of subjects still preferred Japanese subtitles when watching films for leisure. Conversely, Q14 (Table 7) suggests that the EW activity had an impact on their preference of language. However, from this survey, we cannot tell how this inclination has changed and to what degree. To investigate this further, the researchers may want to administer a pre-activity questionnaire and a post-hoc survey to quantify and determine the depth of its effect on language preference when watching L2 films. In the future, it will be useful for researchers to conduct a focus-group discussion to elicit immediate responses. It will also be good to include open-ended questions to learn more about the extant preferences and how they might change over time. Lastly, it will be interesting to see how much students will engage in viewing films with L2 audio and L2 captions when watching media without the explicit goal of language study in mind.

Table 7

*Students' language preference of film viewing for leisure*

Q13. When I watch English language films in my free time I prefer...	Japanese dubbing	Japanese subtitles	English subtitles	Neither dubbing nor subtitles	-
	8%	55%	35%	2%	
Q14. The activity changed my preference for language films.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	20%	53%	24%	2%	-

## 5. LIMITATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS

The authors encountered several limitations to this study and these will need to be addressed going forward with this research. The limitations can be broken down into the four sub-headings of: Administrative Issues; Structural Biases and Shortcomings; Survey- or Data-Specific Problems; and, User Engagement Issues.

### 5.1 Administrative Constraints

As analysis of the data took place it became apparent that some students may not have been entirely honest in their answers or about how thoroughly they completed the assignment. Overall, there was no mechanism to ensure the candor of the students when performing the tasks demanded of them. Participants could cut corners at any number of areas in the assignment (e.g. actually watching the films with ECs engaged; actually watching the videos at all; copying each other's work; etc.) and responses had to be taken at face value.

As mentioned above, there were some debatable answers to some of the questions (more so in the Extensive Watching Film/Video Reports than elsewhere) and the only recourse was to clean the data as thoroughly as possible to ensure the legitimacy of the research. Of course, these constraints exist in other areas of study as well, and one must understand that there will always be some incentive to cheat or not be entirely honest when completing the tasked homework.

Ideally, as the longer-term project is rolled out over entire semesters and restructured to not have as much of a time constraint factor, there could be a change in the way subjects approach the activity. Furthermore, as discussed below, making EW a weekly exercise, where students are asked to fill out a form each week, might help to mitigate the urge to cheat. That said, there is currently no means by which to totally ensure user honesty and the researchers must have faith that the incentive to cheat does not outweigh the desire to maintain academic integrity.

### 5.2 Structural Biases and Shortcomings

As with all research, there were some structural biases and issues that affected the research. Chief among these was time constraints, as this was carried out over a very short period of time. Students did not have enough time to develop a habit of EW practice and were only allotted a few weeks to complete the assignment. If this were made into a weekly exercise, where learners were asked to view and report on one film per week, perhaps they would have watched more videos and benefited from a habit-forming routine that ensured greater amounts of films were watched and thus larger data generated. Although the short term goals were seen to be reached for this stage of the project, the authors are currently entertaining ideas that could mitigate this minor drawback and ideally demonstrate a quantifiable and tangible improvement in skills and abilities.

Additionally, although the list of film and show titles was quite vast, it was limited to approximately 100 titles. This is partly due to the fact that the researchers did not have enough time to compile a more comprehensive list and will surely be addressed by the next stage of the study.

Finally, since the authors were unable to discover truly useful grading or leveling



quotients for the films and TV shows, there was no means to assist students in selecting level-appropriate films to ensure the maximum benefit of an extensive reading style programme.

### 5.3 Survey or Data-Specific Problems

There were also some areas related to the data collection that could be improved upon. The biggest of these is certainly with regard to the verification of improved skills and abilities. Since there was no empirically measurable testing done (such as a standardised proficiency test) at the beginning and end of the project, any perceptions of language improvement on the part of the subjects had to be taken at face value and could not be objectively quantified. In relation to this, the study lacked a control group against which to measure the marginal utility value of this method. That said, it was never the purview of this study (at this stage, anyway) to attempt to investigate this comparative advantage.

Furthermore, it became apparent that several of the questions were perhaps poorly formulated. In hindsight, it will be useful to restructure several of the questions to improve on response options and data accuracy. For instance, many questions included a middle option such as "3 -Neither Agree Nor Disagree". Although the availability of this option is appropriate in certain questions, there were quite a few (particularly in the post hoc survey) that may have conditioned the respondents' answers.

Finally, and somewhat in relation to the above, the authors encountered some questions where students were given too much leeway in response types. For example, there were some questions that should have been limited to selecting a numerical value, but during the survey creation stage, "text input" options were used on SurveyMonkey and therefore respondents could give ambiguous or inaccurate answers. This meant that in the data cleaning and analysing stage, researchers had to use rounding and approximations to discern the optimum quantitative data. More care will be necessary in future.

### 5.4 User Engagement Issues

Although closely linked with the Structural Biases and Shortcomings above, a few user- or subject-centered problems were encountered as well.

First, as we saw in the data analysis section, many of the students chose to only do the minimum-viewing requirement. Again, had the subjects been given more time, then perhaps this problem would not have been so acute. However, it must be noted that the true strategy behind Extensive Watching was not entirely realised. Although the majority of the learners completed the assignment, there were only a few who elected to watch a greater number of titles and videos.

Also, there may have been some confusion regarding the English used in the survey questions. This was addressed in the preceding section, but must also be understood as a shortcoming of the study subjects as well. As mentioned above, it will probably be useful to have bilingual questions that ensure the subjects fully comprehend each question, allowing for responses to be as accurate as possible.

## 6. FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Beyond what has already been discussed above, the authors feel that in order to create

more effective and directed study, there are several areas that will benefit from some attention. First, giving more time to conduct the exercise will certainly alleviate some of the concerns and difficulties in implementation. As alluded to above, the project should prosper if the subjects are asked to watch one film per week and keep a film viewing log or report. Second, having a direct correlation between grades and a minimum viewing requirement over a limited time will tempt students to cheat or be disingenuous about their answers. Minimum thresholds are certainly useful, but if the participants are given a more leisurely viewing schedule, then perhaps the outcomes would be different. As for quantifying the progress and effectiveness of this exercise in regard to skills-assessments, the authors will be continuing the project in the coming terms and using TOEIC IP results to discern if there are any tangible benefits, as Uematsu (2004) has already suggested.

In a slightly different vein, since the students involved are all enrolled in a university ELF program, more ELF-specific principles and considerations could be taken into account. There was some effort made to include a selection of films that were demonstrative of different English varieties, however these titles were quite limited and the list could certainly include a few more. Interestingly, the most popular titles were from the Harry Potter series and/or Disney selections, so the subjects may not actually be interested in viewing a large selection of films that demonstrate the worldwide variances of English. Again, this could change if the term of the assignment is altered and/or if the instructors made more of an effort to emphasise the importance of ELF philosophy in the regular classes. If a priority on ELF tutelage were made more apparent, then perhaps the surveys should include questions that deliberately force students to think about and consider ELF, while watching the films. Finally, with consideration to the list itself, more titles in general will provide more choice and the authors should attempt to devise a means by which to have accurate leveling and grading for the video options.

However, overall the researchers found that the data - albeit limited in scope and depth - was sufficiently reassuring to continue with the project and devise a more comprehensive study to engage in for the future. At the time of writing, the authors are already working to adjust the parameters of the inquiry to accommodate the above considerations, as well as delineate a truly effective means of implementing this digitised medium and approach in their ELT methodologies.

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## APPENDIX A

CELF 202/302 Extensive Watching Assignment

INSTRUCTOR: Thomas (Tommy) Chikao Saunders/Kensaku Ishimaki

SEMESTER: F/W 2014

COURSE CODES & SECTIONS:

2014F-ELF 302 (E9) (Tues. 1/2 & Fri. 3/4) Rm. 348

2014F-ELF 302 (F9) (Tues. 3/4 & Fri. 1/2) Rm. 348

2014F-ELF 202 (E4) (Tues. 1/2 & Fri. 3/4) Rm. 434

2014F-ELF 202 (F4) (Tues. 3/4 & Fri. 1/2) Rm. 434

OVERVIEW/BACKGROUND:

There are many ways to improve your English comprehension techniques and abilities. One of these methods, that might be more enjoyable, is to watch English films and/or TV shows. However, sometimes this can be a bit difficult, as the dialogue can be very fast or a bit advanced. There is significant evidence to suggest that the best way to maximise your English learning experience in while watching videos, is to watch them with the English

subtitles/captions enabled. In this way, you can work on your listening ability, at the same time as improving your reading speed and proficiency.

With that in mind, the following assignment (which will count toward the “Homework and Participation” portion of your grade) is aimed at helping you improve your English skills in a fun and interesting manner. The main purpose of this assignment is to have students expose themselves to as much naturally spoken English as possible, while reading in English (at the same time) to follow the story. In this way, we hope that the students will be able to strengthen their listening and reading skills, while experiencing a variety of vocabulary in contextual settings.

Finally, the students who participate in this activity will be given an opportunity to communicate their opinions and feelings about the project, and their responses will assist researchers find the best way to incorporate videos, films and other audio-visual material in the ELF/EFL classroom.

**\*\*Note:** The information gathered in this exercise will be used for a teaching practices article that Mr. Saunders and Mr. Ishimaki are co-authoring for the forthcoming CELF Journal, published by Tamagawa University. That said, in accordance with Japanese Personal Information Protection Laws, none of your personal information will be published or made public to the readers of the journal. The authors appreciate your assistance and cooperation in this matter and thank you in advance for your honest and clear answers in completing the accompanying surveys and documents.

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

Each of the films in the list below has been given a point value between 1~6, based on its length (measured in minutes per video). Students will be asked to watch a minimum of 12-points worth of videos, with the English captions engaged (and English audio on). Students can choose any combination of films and TV shows, so long as they meet the minimum requirement of 12-points for the entire assignment.

As an added bonus, if students watch more than the minimum 12-points of video they can earn extra points toward their final grade. For every 3 points above the minimum 12-points, students will earn an additional 1% toward their final grade in their ELF class (up to a maximum of 5%).

In addition, students will have to complete a short Movie/TV Show Report at the end of each video they watch. This report can be found at this address <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/-video-report>.

Also, upon completion of the entire assignment student will be asked to fill out a short survey about their feelings toward the “Extensive Watching” exercise. The final survey can be found here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/EWFinalSurvey>. If either of these reports or surveys are not completed, the instructors will not be able to verify (check) the completion of the assignment and this may result in a student not being awarded the correct grade for the work they have done.

- To be clear, students must watch the various media WITH ENGLISH AUDIO AND CAPTIONS ENGAGED.
- Also, the Extensive Watching Film Report(s) are to be completed after watching each TV

show or film.

- Lastly, the Extensive Watching Assignment Final Survey is to be done after the student as finished watching videos and will only be available to complete from.

## APPENDIX B

### Extensive Watching Film/Video Report

#### Extensive Watching Video Report - Basic Info

**Please answer each question on this page and include as much information as necessary.**

1. What was the title of the movie or TV show you watched (if it was a TV show, please indicate the episode title, the season number and the episode number - Example: (Friends; Season 1, Episode 1))?

2. Who is the director of the film?

3. What was the genre of the film?

4. When was the film or TV show originally released (what year was it made)?

5. What was the film's runtime (how long was the video in minutes -- Example: "112 min")?

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### Extensive Watching Film/Video Report

#### Extensive Watching Video Report - Comprehension

**Please answer all of the questions with as much information as necessary**

6. What was the setting of the film (where did it take place)?



## APPENDIX B continued

7. Who was in the film (names of the main actors) and what were their character's names?

8. Please give a brief plot summary of the film (explain what happens in the story).

9. Was there anything about the film that surprised you?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

10. If you answered, "Yes" to question #9, please explain more.

11. Overall, how much of the movie do you think you understood (with English audio and English Subtitles engaged)?

- ☐ 0% ~ 20%
- ☐ 21% ~ 40%
- ☐ 41% ~ 60%
- ☐ 61% ~ 80%
- ☐ 81% ~ 100%

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### Extensive Watching Film/Video Report

#### Extensive Watching Video Report - Personal Response

**Please answer all of the questions with as much information as necessary**

12. Why did you choose this film?

## APPENDIX B continued

13. On a scale of 1 -5 (1 = worst; 5 = best), how much did you enjoy the film?

- ☐ 1 "I did not enjoy the film at all"
- ☐ 2 "I only enjoyed the film a little"
- ☐ 3 "I enjoyed the film"
- ☐ 4 "I really enjoyed the film"
- ☐ 5 "I really enjoyed the film a lot!"

14. What was your favourite part of the film? Please describe it in detail.

15. How would you rate the difficulty of the ENGLISH in this film/TV show (1 = very easy; 5 = very difficult)?

- ☐ 1 "Very Easy"
- ☐ 2 "Easy"
- ☐ 3 "Moderate"
- ☐ 4 "Difficult"
- ☐ 5 "Very Difficult"

16. How would you rate the difficulty of the STORY of this film/TV show (1 = very easy; 5 = very difficult)?

- ☐ 1 "Very Easy"
- ☐ 2 "Easy"
- ☐ 3 "Moderate"
- ☐ 4 "Difficult"
- ☐ 5 "Very Difficult"

17. Would you recommend this film/TV show to a friend?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

\* 18. Have you seen this film/TV show before in Japanese?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes, with English audio and Japanese captions/subtitles engaged
- ☐ Yes, with Japanese audio/dubbing

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## Extensive Watching Film/Video Report

### Extensive Watching Video Report - Student Information

Please answer the following questions to ensure that you will receive grades for this assignment

\* 19. What is your name?

\* 20. What is your student ID?

21. Which class are you in?

☐ CELF 302

☐ CELF 202

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Done