# Massive Input Through *'Eiga Shosetsu'*: A Pilot Study with Japanese Learners

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## Introduction

There are many kinds of reading instruction. We can move from phonics on the minimalist left, to Whole Language (Rigg, 1991) on the right (brain). A number of specialists have advocated the use of what has come to be known as the Comprehension Approach (Nord, 1974; 1975; 1980; 1981, Redfield, 1991b). At the very base of the approach lies the idea that comprehension is a necessary requisite for learning. Simply phrased, if learners do not in some way or another understand the meaning of what they encounter in their learning environment, be it written or oral, then the learners do not learn. Regardless of whether one is inclined to support the strong version of the Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1983c; 1985), asserting that comprehensible input leads directly to language acquisition (Krashen, 1980; 1982; 1985), or the weaker version of the hypothesis, that comprehensible input under certain restraints can, but does not necessarily, lead to acquisition (Ellis, 1986; 1988; 1990), both researchers and classroom practitioners would agree that without comprehensible input no meaningful language acquisition is likely to take place. A corollary of this need for comprehensible input is that more input is better for learning than less input. The amount of comprehensible input in other words, matters. Once these fundamental ideas behind foreign language acquisition are understood and accepted, it then becomes a matter of applying this knowledge to classroom practice.

If we apply the above ideas to *yaku-doku* instruction we quickly see why it is so ineffective (see Redfield, 1990; 1991a; 1991c; 1992; 1994a; 1995). The language of instruction and thought in *yaku-doku* instruction is Japanese. The emphasis is almost entirely on form rather than meaning, 'understanding' means direct translation into Japanese, and the amount of English language input is less than minimal. English language majors report having to read (i.e. translate) less than ten pages of modified English text per class per year. If direct translation of a severely limited number of English sentences, paragraphs, and passages per class, as is the norm in *yaku-doku* instruction, qualifies as comprehensible input, it most certainly does not qualify as massive comprehensible input. If what Long, Krashen, Ellis, and almost all applied linguists believe is correct, that we need massive amounts of comprehensible input in order to acquire foreign languages and since such massive input is not automatically available in the English as a Foreign Language environment, then we as classroom instructors should attempt to provide such input. The present study, the third in a series of research reports, describes an innovative approach to supplying massive, comprehensible input in the Japanese college classroom.

Krashen claims the most effective way to provide input is through reading (1982, 1991).

Others suggest using graded readers. Today, most scholars suggest using authentic materials. I have a third suggestion; read what is known in Japan as *'Eiga Shosetsu,'* those novels that come out right after popular movies. Unlike novels upon which movies are made, and where the two different versions, print and celluloid, clash more often than not, *Eiga Shosetsu* have the advantage of following the plot religiously, right down to the dialog. Unlike screenplays or tape scripts, *Eiga Shosetsu* have narrative and description as well as dialog. Making no pretensions towards literature, they are eminently easy to read. The real beauty of them, besides the popularity that automatically accrues to them (only the most popular movies are chosen for *Eiga Shosetsu*), is that if the learner sees the film first, he already has absorbed the meaning of the story. For listening purposes *Eiga Shosetsu* are equally as good. Just read the book beforehand and you know the meaning of what you hear. *Eiga Shosetsu* are popular with college aged learners, authentic but not literary, and relatively easy to read, all because of the tie in with the move. When read rapidly for enjoyment, they potentially provide massive meaning-focused comprehensible input. The trick of course is to get the learner to read them, and then to provide objective evidence that reading *Eiga Shosetsu* actually helps learners acquire English. That is what the present study attempts to provide.

This is the third in a series of *Eiga Shosetsu* Program evaluation studies. In the initial pilot study (Redfield, 1999), over the course of one Japanese academic year, participants (N＝28) viewed six current movies in class and were required to read the six corresponding *Eiga Shosetsu'* ('movie tie-in novels in English), plus one additional novel of the student's choice, read as homework. Pre and post instructional tests measuring reading (SRA), vocabulary (AVT) and listening (CLT) showed statistically significant gains on all measures. The gains were attributed to the experimental *Eiga Shosetsu* Program. Because there was no control group in the pilot study however, it is possible that the observed gains were due to other factors, including the testing instruments themselves. Therefore a second study, comparing the experimental *Eiga Shosetsu* Program with a similarly constructed control group, which received instruction in English composition, was undertaken. In the second, one semester study, reading and vocabulary were measured. Both the experimental *Eiga Shosetsu* group, which saw three current films and then read the corresponding *Eiga Shosetsu* and the more traditional control group improved significantly on both measures (Miller & Redfield, 1999).

The present study, described below, looks at the second year of the revised edition of the year long *Eiga Shosetsu* Program, and adds an important student program evaluation element to the discussion.

## The Study

### Method

*Participants.* The participants were drawn from an intact group of sophomore English majors taking a required English composition class at an elite Japanese private university. Out of an original class of fifty-one, forty-three learners took oth the pre and posttest reading and forty-four took the vocabulary tests. Forty-seven students filled out the class evaluation survey. Students who only took the tests during a single administration were eliminated from the present study. All of the students were sophomores, meaning that they had had a minimum of

seven years of formal English instruction, many a good bit more than the minimum. Their ability levels ranged from false beginner through elementary to intermediate. None had studied overseas or in an international school.

*Classroom procedures:* The *Eiga Shosetsu* Program. The twenty-four week school year was divided into six four-week sessions. On the initial week of each session, the learners were shown the first part of a contemporary popular film. They were asked to rent the video and finish watching it at home (and strongly recommend to watch it a second time, entirely in English). They also were instructed to read the six corresponding *Eiga Shosetsu* outside of class (approximately 1750 pages). Each subsequent class period (one per week for the traditional ninety minutes) in the four week cycle, began with a fifteen minute silent reading period, in order to give the instructor the opportunity to see how the learners were progressing in their reading, and to give learners an English warm up period before the interactive part of the class began. The seventy-five minutes after the silent reading warm up were devoted to improving the learners' oral skills through EFL listening and speaking activities. As an additional reading check, and to fulfill the composition requirement of the course, five-page movie/book reports were to be handed in each month, one for each movie/book. Students who did not have the correct book with them were allowed to read other material in English, often *Eiga Shosetsu* that they had not yet finished. The movies chosen for viewing in the program included *Dead Poets Society, An Officer and a Gentleman, Indecent Proposal,* and *The Bridges of Madison County* (not strictly a movie tie-in novel, but very close), among others. The students were also required to read a novel of their choice as summer vacation homework (most but not all of them choosing other, unrelated *Eiga Shosetsu*). The rational behind the program was to provide massive amounts of comprehensible input, in order to facilitate language acquisition. There was no overt language instruction in the class. In order to apply pressure to complete the assignments, each student was asked how many pages he had read on the current *Eiga Shosetsu* each week when the class role was called. Although many of the learners most probably did not actually finish all seven novels (the six assigned during the school year, and the seventh read as summer homework), they all read at least parts of all of them, witnessed by the instructor during the silent reading sessions. Even the least diligent of the class probably averaged at least fifty pages read per novel, for a minimum total of 350 pages, which is a far cry more than the normal ten pages intensively 'read' in *yaku-doku* classes. The most diligent students read all seven novels, for an estimated total of nearly 2,000 pages. And of course all the learners saw the first ninety minutes of six films, for an additional nine hours of aural input. Many of the learners reported re-watching the films at home, for even more listening practice. In summary then, the *Eiga Shosetsu* Program consisted of watching six contemporary films, reading the seven movie tie-in novels, and writing seven formal film/book reviews.

*Instruments.*

*Reading.* The Scholastic Research Associates reading laboratory (SRA) is a well known reading program used through America (and the world) to improve learners' reading abilities. The accompanying placement test measures American grade school childrens' reading skills. Form 'B,' consisting of two passages, followed by five and nine items (for a total of 14) respectfully, was used as both the pre-test and posttest. Each passage is timed, with students having exactly

three minutes to complete reading the passage and to answer the multiple choice questions accompanying each reading. The SRA is easy to administer, score, and interpret. It also has proven reliability with American learners.

*Vocabulary.* The new Campbell Vocabulary Test (CVT) was used to measure vocabulary. The test consists of 100 multiple choice items drawn from the Japanese Ministry of Education high school guidelines. Participants were required to select the word closest in meaning to the item headword from among four choices. The long version of the CVT was used in the pre-test, with the short version (50 items) used as the post instructional vocabulary instrument. Because the CVT is a new exam, a reliability test was performed on the data collected in the present study, yielding a Cronbach alpha of .7439, acceptable for research purposes.

*Administration.* The reading (SRA) and vocabulary (CVT) measures were administered on the first day of class, in April 1997 and again on the last day of the academic year, in January 1998. The results were scored, tabulated, and statistically analyzed using the StatView, JMP, and Statistica statistical packages for the Macintosh computer.

*Hypothesis.* Due to the massive amounts of input involved in watching the six movies and reading seven *Eiga Shosetsu*, the following results were hypothesized:

1. The learners would perform significantly higher on the reading (SRA) post-test then they would on the pre-test.
2. The learners would perform significantly higher on the vocabulary (CVT) post-test then they would on the pre-test.

The alpha for statistical significance was set at the .05 level, usual for studies in the field.

## Results

*Reading.*

The pre test, given in April before instruction, yielded a mean of 6.2558, with a standard deviation of 1.7740. On the posttest, after one academic year, the corresponding figures were 10.2558 and 1.9284. Forty-three learners took both tests. See Table one for descriptive statistics, and Figure one for a graphical representation of the data.

**Table one. SRA descriptive statistics.**

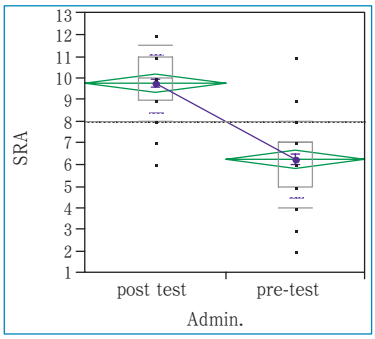
| Administration | Number | Mean | Std Dev | Std Err Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| pre-test (B) | 43 | 6.2558 | 1.7740 | .2705 |
| posttest (B) | 43 | 10.2558 | 1.9284 | .2940 |

*Analysis.* The combined SRA reading score distribution not being normal (Shapiro-Wilk W＝0.9388, Prob＜W＝0.0000), the nonparametric Wilcoxon Rank Sums measure was calculated, yielding a Chi-square approximation of 52.0428, with a Prob＞ChiSq＝0.0000. The differences in means between test results were therefore significant. Hypothesis one has therefore been confirmed.

*Vocabulary*

The pre-test CVT mean was 61.2955, with a standard deviation of 8.5605. The results for the

**Figure one. SRA test results.**

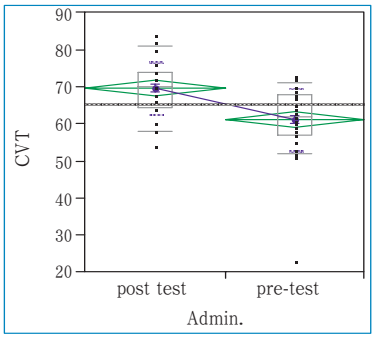



posttest were much higher, with a mean of 69.7273, with standard deviation of 7.3528. Forty-four learners took both the pre and posttest vocabulary measure. See Table two for descriptive statistics and Figure two for a graphic display.

**Table two. CVT descriptive statistics.**

| Administration | Number | Mean | Std Dev | Std Err Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| pre-test | 44 | 61.2955 | 8.5605 | 1.2905 |
| posttest | 44 | 69.7273 | 7.3528 | 1.1085 |

**Figure two. CVT test results.**




*Analysis.* The combined CVT reading score distribution not being normal (Shapiro-Wilk W＝0.9544, Prob＜W＝0.0015), the nonparametric Wilcoxon Rank Sums measure was calculated, yielding a Chi-square approximation of 20.7392, with a Prob＞ChiSq＝0.0000. The differences in means between test results were therefore significant. Hypothesis two, that the posttest scores would be significantly higher than the pre-test scores has been confirmed.

## Discussion

The formal results of the *Eiga Shosetsu* Program were most satisfactory, in both reading and vocabulary. As measured by the SRA test, the participants improved an average of over two grade levels in reading over the course of a year, from roughly third grade second semester to fifth grade second semester. This is impressive because it took these learners at least seven years to reach grade three in reading, and yet after a single course, they are now almost at grade level six. Massive pleasure reading, the seven *Eiga Shosetsu*, probably contributed to this gain. When the students first took the SRA they had a hard time with it, even though we slowly and carefully went over a sample test before undertaking the actual exam. It was obvious that these students, typical of Japanese students in general I submit, had precious little experience of reading for meaning, especially under time constraints. At the end of the program, however, they breezed through the SRA. These students appear well on their way to becoming fluent English readers, which is the professed goal of the Japanese English educational system, to produce fluent readers. Massive comprehensible input, provided via the *Eiga Shosetsu* Program, seems to have acted at least as a catalyst in converting the learners' passive knowledge of English into measurable reading skills.

Vocabulary learning, which is so closely related to reading (Day, Omura, & Hiramatsu, 1991, Jenkins, Stein, & Wysocki, 1984, Nagy, Anderson, & Herman, 1987, Krashen, 1982, 1989) also showed significant gains over the course of the program, as measured by the Campbell Vocabulary Test. The CVT consists of words gleaned from the Japanese Ministry of Education's recommended vocabulary for high school, normed with college age Japanese learners, and developed specifically with our situation here in Japan, with the post secondary level in mind. A similarly designed reading measure might well exhibit a similar ability to tap into reading level gains.

*Eiga Shosetsu* are a type of easy reading. Although in no way an objective measure, it took the researcher an average of less than an hour to finish reading each of the movie tie-in books used in the program. The books generally follow the movies down to the smallest detail (which is of course what makes them so attractive as teaching materials), but concentrate on simple narrative and dialog. To this observer at least, they fall somewhere between popular fiction and graded readers. As such, the vocabulary seems quite restricted. For pedagogical purposes, all this is in fact a plus, and one of the reasons behind developing the *Eiga Shosetsu* Program in the first place.

In order to inspire even more confidence in the results, the use of a control group, a group of students from the same population studying in the traditional fashion without recourse to massive comprehensible input, would have been ideal. Despite all efforts, providing a control group for the present study proved to be impossible.

## Part two: The student evaluation survey

The primary object of any kind of educational project is to enhance learning. We have seen from the above description of the *Eiga Shosetsu* Program that learners do indeed make measurable progress in reading and vocabulary. The initial, pilot study (Redfield, *op.cit.*) also reported

listening gains as well. This of course is quite heartening, but in the 2Ist century educationally valid programs might not always be enough. The learners also have to feel that they are being served by a decent program. One way to measure learner satisfaction with an educational product is to directly query the learners about said product. In the case of the *Eiga Shosetsu* Program, this was done through a student evaluation survey, which we turn to next.

## The survey

*Instrument.* A twenty-five item, five point Likert type scale, classroom evaluation survey was employed to measure participant satisfaction with the *Eiga Shosetsu* Program. The instrument consists of twelve pairs of mirror items, one part of the pair worded positively ('This class was too easy for me') and the other negatively ('This class was too hard for me'), plus one additional positively worded item. The areas covered by the survey include the famous four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), plus items on culture, methods, materials, teacher and general class evaluation, the grading system, and learner perceived usefulness, learning, and interest. Each of the items is weighted equally, and a converted 'Class Evaluation Score' is determined (see Redfield & Larson, 1999).

*Administration.* The classroom evaluation survey was administered during the final class period, in January 1998. For comparison purposes, participants were asked to fill out two identical surveys, one for the *Eiga Shosetsu* Program and another for what they 'considered their most typical *yaku-doku* English class' during the same academic year. Students were also encouraged to write their own opinions about the *Eiga Shosetsu* class on the back of the survey itself.

*Results.* Correlations were derived for all of the mirror items. Given that each of the positively worded and negatively worded items making up the pairs showed a correlation of at least .60, only the results for the positively worded half of the items are included here in this discussion. The Class Evaluation Score, of course, reflects input from each of the twenty-five items.

*Class Evaluation Score.* The Class Evaluation Score for the *Eiga Shosetsu* class was 91.208. The composite *yaku-doku* score was 62.551. The Class Evaluation Score was designed to be immediately interpretable to anyone familiar with the standard A-B-C-D-F, 100 point scoring system so prevalent in educational institutions. The learners (N=47), in other words, thought the *Eiga Shosetsu* class worthy of an 'A' but graded their typical *yaku-doku* classes as 'D.' This should be seen as a strong endorsement of the movie-tie in class.

*Individual items.* All thirteen of the positively worded items were analyzed using LogLikelihood procedures to determine statistically significant differences between the *Eiga Shosetsu* and *yaku-doku* classes. Frequency counts and percentages were also derived (see Table three). Statistically significant differences were observed on every item, at extremely high confidence levels (usually approaching Prob>0.0000). All of these differences favored the *Eiga Shosetsu* class. This program obviously struck a cord with the learners. They found every facet of it superior to their traditional *yaku-doku classes*. Since the vast majority of these learners also had non-Japanese instructors for English Conversation, Language Lab, and the Communications Class, the novelty of having a foreign instructor cannot be the sole reason for the almost universally high ratings given to the *Eiga Shosetsu* class. There was something about the program that made them endorse it so highly. A look at the next section, which presents

the learners own personal evaluations of the program, might lead us to a better understanding of just why the program was so successful in the eyes of the actual participants.

**Table three. Positively worded item frequencies and percentages.**

| Item | Program | St. disagree | disagree | no opinion | agree | s. agree | prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| reading | Eiga Shosetsu | 1 (2.17%) | 9 (19.57%) | 13 (28.26%) | 21 (45.65%) | 2 (4.35%) | 0.0002 |
| | Yaku-doku | 5 (11.11%) | 23 (51.11%) | 13 (28.26%) | 4 (8.89%) | 0 | |
| usefulness | Eiga Shosetsu | 0 | 3 (6.52%) | 4 (8.70%) | 31 (67.39%) | 8 (17.39%) | 0.0000 |
| | Yaku-doku | 8 (17.39%) | 17 (36.96%) | 8 (17.39%) | 11 (23.91%) | 2 (4.35%) | |
| listening | Eiga Shosetsu | 0 | 8 (17.39%) | 7 (15.22%) | 26 (56.52%) | 5 (10.87%) | 0.0000 |
| | Yaku-doku | 19 (41.30%) | 14 (30.43%) | 11 (23.91%) | 1 (2.17%) | 1 (2.17%) | |
| method | Eiga Shosetsu | 1 (2.17%) | 10 (21.74%) | 12 (26.09%) | 18 (9.13%) | 13 (28.26%) | 0.0002 |
| | Yaku-doku | 17 (36.96%) | 10 (21.74%) | 5 (10.87%) | 11 (23.91%) | 3 (6.52%) | |
| excellence | Eiga Shosetsu | 1 (2.17%) | 7 (15.22%) | 12 (26.09%) | 21 (45.65%) | 5 (10.87%) | 0.0000 |
| | Yaku-doku | 11 (23.91%) | 23 (50.00%) | 5 (10.87%) | 6 (13.04%) | 1 (2.17%) | |
| learning | Eiga Shosetsu | 0 | 4 (8.70%) | 7 (15.22%) | 24 (52.17%) | 11 (23.91%) | 0.0000 |
| | Yaku-doku | 7 (15.22%) | 25 (54.35%) | 9 (19.57%) | 5 (10.87%) | 0 | |
| writing | Eiga Shosetsu | 4 (8.70%) | 17 (36.96%) | 16 (34.78%) | 6 (13.04%) | 3 (6.52%) | 0.0076 |
| | Yaku-doku | 17 (36.96%) | 11 (23.91%) | 16 (34.78%) | 1 (2.17%) | 1 (2.17%) | |
| speaking | Eiga Shosetsu | 0 | 6 (13.04%) | 9 (19.57%) | 25 (54.35%) | 6 (13.04%) | 0.0000 |
| | Yaku-doku | 11 (23.91%) | 21 (45.65%) | 13 (28.26%) | 1 (2.17%) | 0 | |
| instructor | Eiga Shosetsu | 1 (2.17%) | 3 (6.52%) | 6 (13.04%) | 24 (52.17%) | 12 (26.09%) | 0.0000 |
| | Yaku-doku | 12 (26.09%) | 16 (34.78%) | 8 (17.39%) | 7 (15.22%) | 3 (6.52%) | |
| materials | Eiga Shosetsu | 1 (2.17%) | 10 (21.74%) | 5 (10.87%) | 24 (52.17%) | 6 (13.04%) | 0.0009 |
| | Yaku-doku | 4 (8.70%) | 13 (28.26%) | 17 (36.96%) | 12 (26.09%) | 0 | |
| grading | Eiga Shosetsu | 1 (2.17%) | 6 (13.04%) | 6 (13.04%) | 28 (60.87%) | 5 (10.87%) | 0.0003 |
| | Yaku-doku | 6 (13.04%) | 8 (17.39%) | 20 (43.48%) | 11 (23.91%) | 1 (2.17%) | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| culture | Eiga Shosetsu | 0 | 9 (19.57%) | 6 (13.04%) | 26 (56.52%) | 5 (10.87%) | 0.0000 |
| | Yaku-doku | 18 (39.13%) | 12 (26.09%) | 4 (8.70%) | 6 (13.04%) | 5 (10.87%) | |
| interest | Eiga Shosetsu | 1 (2.17%) | 3 (6.52%) | 3 (6.52%) | 28 (60.87%) | 11 (23.91%) | 0.0000 |
| | Yaku-doku | 15 (32.61%) | 13 (28.26%) | 8 (17.39%) | 9 (19.57%) | 1 (2.17%) | |

*Written evaluation.* In addition to the objective class evaluation survey, the learners were given the opportunity to evaluate the *Eiga Shosetsu* class in a more subjective, free form manner. All of the participants (N=47) took advantage of the final twenty minutes of class time allotted for this written evaluation, some writing a sentence or two, most a full paragraph. This being a formal composition class, most, but not all, of the written evaluations were in English. Excerpts citing the most common themes are cited below by category. I have taken the liberty of correcting only the spelling. The rest of the words are the students' own.

Reading. 1. I have good experience, because I can read without dictionary. I thought I can't read English book.

2. Reading books are so hard, but at last I feel it get's easier just a little. I don't know my speed of reading became faster or not, but it was good experience. I'll last reading.

3. This class is very hard! I had pressure to read many foreign books and write my opinion, but reading them was very good experience.

4. I think it is good for us to read English paper book every month. By doing that, I could touch English.

These students found the reading segment of the program quite hard, but also very useful. It is doubtful of many (or any) of them had ever read an English novel in its entirety before, so they naturally found it difficult. Having finished several books, however, their confidence began visibly to grow.

*Writing.* 1. I wrote my own words of English which was important for me.

2. But to write book reports was good to translate thinking myself into English.

3. After we watched video of each stories, we write about that story, which is very nice. By reading novel, I can't only memorize the word but also read and write easily.

4. I don't like writing, but this class is fun.

Writing in English does not come easily for these students (many said it was hard to write five pages per month) but the *Eiga Shosetsu* class at least gave them something to write about. Several commented favorably on how the program gave them the opportunity to write in their own words.

*Listening.* 1. At first I couldn't understand that the instructor said. But thanks to a lot of conversation time, I gradually could understand English.

2. I got power listening to English more than ever, and writing, too.

3. When I hear Americans speaking in the tape, I thought I should study English.

4. And when I look at movies, I can hear English rather than before.

There were many comments as to how hard it was to understand authentic spoken English in the beginning of the year. As shown above, however, learners soon began to understand more of what they heard.

*Speaking.* 1. I don't usually speak English. It is good for me to have a chance speaking English at this class.

2. And it's hard for me to speak English, and I couldn't speak English very much. But I am glad to have chance to speak English.

3. I understand to speak in English. Till now, I have studied English for 8 years, but I can't speak English well.

In a literature-based program, students find they have few opportunity to actually speak the language. When provided the chance, most of them are hesitant at first, but soon begin to speak out. They apparently enjoy speaking in English as well, at least in this class.

*Integrated skills.* 1. This class is different from the others. In this class, we can learn 'English Conversation.' And it is interesting for me to read *Eiga Shosetsu*. Although writing "book review" is very difficult. And when I look at movies, I can hear English rather than before.

2. This is the writing class but not only writing. The reading, speaking and listening I learned.

3. In this class, we could see some interesting movies. So I enjoyed it very much. But it was hard for me to write five pages report, because I didn't have enough time to read the book. But I could learn many things, for example how to speak, how to read and so on.

4. This class is like a communication class, I think. Through this class, I often watch foreign movies! I believe it is good for studying English.

The *Eiga Shosetsu* class was not just a writing class. Writing was one of the four skills integrated into a whole language program. Language cannot truly be divided into separable skills, but is best learned as a 'whole.' Several of the students seemed to appreciate that.

*Method.* 1. I thought this class was the best class in this college. I want to increase the class like this class. I felt I studied real English in this class.

2. And it is good to read movie-book and write for the report. By the way, I can understand more the story. I hope to see you next 3 grade again.

3. This class is better than any other English class. Especially I like the teaching method. The teacher's speech is very interesting. And I think that women are superior to men in this class.

4. I like his teaching way. For his teaching way is different from the way I had ever learned in school.

The *Eiga Shosetsu* teaching method seemed popular. Through watching popular films and then reading movie tie-in stories, learners received the input necessary to acquire English. The oral part of the class was devoted to listening and speaking out on topics of contemporary interest, which thereby gave the learners the opportunities necessary for comprehensible output. The combination proved to be both effective and, according to the students' own evaluations, highly popular as well.

*Materials.* 1. The text is easy for me to understand but there are some difficult parts.
2. Too much textbooks**!** It's not good because most of students let their parents pay the money for the books. I like the textbook from Cambridge.
3. This class was very interesting for me because I like movie.
4. I wanted you to choose easier book, because for a month I couldn't read. And listening was also a little difficult.

Materials were given a rather uneven review. No one liked the expense, and while the oral English textbook was quite popular, some of the movie/books were decidedly more interesting than others. In addition, authentic materials are inherently difficult for learners used to strictly pedagogically prepared materials.

*Teacher.* 1. As the teacher spoke fast, I didn't understand what he said very much. But this class was more interesting for me than other English classes.
2. And teacher was very funny. I enjoyed your class.
3. The teacher was friendly to us.
4. I like this class, because instructor is funny guy.

By examining the test results and the class evaluation survey, it obvious that the *Eiga Shosetsu* Program has a lot going for it. However, teacher variables are always at least as important as program design. Fortunately, most (but not all: see the negative comments section below) of the students seemed reasonably pleased with their instructor.

*Interest/usefulness.* 1. This class was very interesting and useful for me. I thought this class was the best class in this college.
2. I had a very good time this class. Other writing class (Givezu, Waisunar), my friend said not interesting. I enjoyed. I think this class is the most useful for my future.
3. This class was so different from other English class. It was so interesting and stimulating for me. I want to take your class again.
4. This class was very different from others. It was interesting.

These particular students thought the *Eiga Shosetsu* class was quite useful, more interesting than their other classes, and in fact one of the best classes offered in the institution. To me this is a very ringing endorsement, especially coming from the people who really matter, the course participants.

*Learning to learn.* 1. American native teacher taught and taught us how to study English.
2. I found the way to study English from you, and I think it's really useful. I'll try to do. I wanted to study how to study English more and more.

The most gratifying of all the quite generally favorable comments on the *Eiga Shosetsu* Program, to me as a professional language educator, were the two comments on learning to learn. We know we have done our job when our students learn how to learn by themselves, and no longer need our guidance.

*Negative comments.* 1. In this class, we need to have an intention to study English earnestly. If we don't want to study hard, we don't have to do study. It is not a duty to study in this class. Therefore people in this class tend to dull.

Not all of the students were satisfied with the *Eiga Shosetsu* class. There were two entirely

negative comments; one of them reproduced here. I have included it, one, to be fair, and two, to emphasize that our classes are made up of individuals and that all individuals do not think alike. It is important to keep this obvious fact in mind when creating curriculum, syllabi, and lesson plans, and to include 'something for everyone,' perhaps most especially for those learners who are not just like us.

## Classroom implications

Since the participants made such impressive gain scores by viewing, reading, and writing about movie/novels, educators interested in achieving similar results in their own classes and programs should look to the different elements of the *Eiga Shosetsu* Program for ideas. Introducing a regular period of free, pleasure reading into a typical ninety minute Japanese college class would be one obvious application. Showing contemporary films, with required follow up (such as movie reviews) is another. Initiating a reading homework program is a third, and having learners read a novel of their choice over the summer an obvious forth. The key is to understand the theory behind the *Eiga Shosetsu* Program (i.e. massive comprehensible input is necessary, if indeed not sufficient, for second language acquisition to take place) and then come up with appropriate local applications of the theory, and not of course the uncritical and piecemeal adaptation of specific elements of the program itself.

## Conclusion

This paper describes an ELT program designed to provide massive comprehensible input to Japanese college students. Under the *Eiga Shosetsu* Program, fifty-one English majors taking a required composition class were expected to see six contemporary movies, read seven movie tie-in books, write seven movie/book reviews, as well as participate in communicative based oral English lessons. The learners took reading (SRA) and vocabulary (CVT) tests before and after finishing the nine-month program. On both measures, the pre-test posttest gains were statistically significant, indicating that the *Eiga Shosetsu* Program was successful in helping learners improve their scores in the vital areas covered by the examinations. A student program evaluation survey was also administered at the end of the program. On both the controlled scales and free writing segments of the evaluation, learners indicated high satisfaction with the program.

## Further research

The *Eiga Shosetsu* Program was successful in raising participant scores on pre and post reading and vocabulary measures. The apparent success of the program suggests that it could profitably be expanded to include learners from different faculties and institutions. Sophomore English majors from the faculty of letters at a prestigious Japanese university profited from the program. Would science majors have the same success? What about learners from less prestigious institutions, with far less stringent entrance requirements? Finally, if the principles behind the program prove of be correct, the program, with locally mandated modifications, should be expanded to include learners from other cultures as well. All of these are deserving of further research. Control groups, of course, should be included in such further studies.

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**Appendix:** Positively worded survey items.
The reading instruction was good.
What I learned in this class will be useful for my future.
The listening instruction was good.
I liked the teaching method in this class.
This was an excellent English class.
I learned a lot of English in this class.
The writing instruction in this class was good.
The speaking instruction in this class was good.
I am very satisfied with my English teacher this year.
The teaching materials (text/tape) were very good.
I think the grading system in this class is good.
I learned a lot about foreign culture in this class.
This was a very interesting English class for me.