Telling ELT Tales out of School

Popular films in the EFL classroom: Study of methodology

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Abstract

Using English Speaking Foreign Films in the EFL classroom to teach vocabulary and culture is not a relatively new idea. However, while exposing students to new lexicons and cultural situations, teachers need to use appropriate methodology to ensure that students obtain maximum learning potential. Culture, however, is not so easily taught. Rather it is absorbed through the process of language learning. This research explores commonly used listening activities, their success with the transference of culture and how to better enhance student learning through practical activities. It aims at identifying students level of recognition and recall with cultural vocabulary within popular English speaking films and how to improve them with practical activities for the common EFL classroom.

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1. Introduction

Since the early 1970s, video material has made its way into the EFL classroom, promoting authenticity and diversity for student learning. With the development of technology in the last 40 or so years EFL classrooms have also expanded their methods of exposing students to the target language through the use of popular foreign films via digital media. Using English Speaking Foreign Films (ESFF) (as opposed to native films with English subtitles or dubbing) provides students with an excellent source of native dialogue, cultural context and interesting material. Unlike using video material specifically made and designed for EFL learners (which have historically been bland, monotonous and culturally ambiguous unless stated), ESFF have the potential for rich visuals and exposing students to a variety of positive learning experiences as well as exposure to the associated culture of the target language. Encounters including: natural (seeming) discourse, accents and dialects, slang and colloquialisms, body and gesticulatory language and lastly, cultural customs. From a teaching perspective, ESFF are the most direct resource available to learning of a target culture and language. Not to forget that from ESFF, a wide variety of activities branching to the 4 skills can be creatively devised and employed, making them an all-in-one resource with a
plethora of teaching facets. These facets are wonderful when exploring the potential for student learning and exposure, however methodology for such material can be difficult to create when teaching 1st year university students with the hopes of cultural absorption in mind.

1.1. The Context

This study takes place in Japan and examines university freshmen who have begun a Diploma of English. Japan as a country could be seen to be insular with its culture and foreign culture penetration; students rarely seem to have any exposure to outside cultures unless expressly sought. Although students have had 3 years of English tuition in high school, many are not past elementary English. These three years do however have a strong focus on grammar and literacy, but have in the past often ignored communicative aspects such as speaking and listening, leaving students at a high elementary stage for reading and writing, but far from communicatively competent. Using films is a refreshing break from the repetitive verbal instruction with the bonus of hearing and interpreting native dialogue, slang, accents and so on. However, ESFF are not geared towards EFL learners and can be quite enigmatic for anyone outside the culture who is additionally a non-native speaker. Despite creating interest from students, ESFF characters do not always have perfect enunciation; they speak faster than learner’s pace and use a variety of unfamiliar collocations, idioms, and so on. With Japanese learners in mind, who are not as advanced as the movie they are watching, ESFF are more than a challenge to comprehend themes, dialogue and ideas. Ironically, it is the same qualitative feature that makes them a rich teaching source that also makes them an advanced learning resource. For example, if a student recognises a word in a collocation set, they may not grasp the intended meaning. Similarly, situational conversations may be difficult for students to understand who are unfamiliar with cultural expressions. Finally, if a conversation is heavily based on dialogue, with little body language, gesticulation, etc, then an entire scenario may be lost on students. So while ESFF can be used in many ways and for many learning purposes, movies themselves need to be approached with specific amount of preparation and consideration for instruction.

2. Literature

Past literature on the subject of using video material in the EFL/ESL classroom spans back to the 1970s, when the technology was starting to enter classrooms, and video resources especially made for EFL/ESL learners were starting to emerge. Of course, only since the appropriate technology was available (DVD players) has there been investigation into using DVDs in the classroom. Naturally, using video tapes became common but proved to cause difficulties for teachers in setting up, rewinding, forwarding, bringing extra equipment, etc (Yamanaka, 2002, p. 48). As expected this caused a certain amount of avoidance with teachers in the early days. Once technology was past this arduous phase, EFL and ESL classrooms started to use ESFF and saw the multitude of benefits. As King notes, artificial situations were replaced with real life contexts, students were exposed to many different kinds of native speakers (2002, p.510). Learners were generally more motivated to watch and learn; because learning was now entertaining.

Exploring the notion of using ESFF, exposing students to the culture of the target language has been explored (though not to great extent) and has been recognised as being more beneficial for students’ communicative skills, rather than grammar and such. Many authors have advocated the use of ESFF if for nothing more than students are given the chance to become acquainted with the target language and assimilate simple English sentence structure (Quiang, Hai & Wolff, 2007, p. 42). Secles, Herron and Tomasello explain “Viewing the video would enhance students’ learning of vocabulary and idiomatic structures because of the contextualised presentation of the video” (1992, p. 481). While this view is perfectly correct, and that simple video viewing has potential to teach students of another culture and the linguistic features within, appropriate methodology and scaffolding needs to be partnered with ESFF. Viewing ESFF of course gives necessary exposure and experience, but without a defined goal or guided activity, only short term learning benefits. In relation to the cultural teaching aspect of ESFF, there has been some debate on whether focusing on the cultural language is necessary. Seferoglu argues that the dense language of ESFF might not provide students with useful language outside the classroom (2008, p. 2). This point is extremely valid, especially when considering who the learners are; when will first year English students in Japan use colloquial English, let alone conversational? It might appear inane to immerse students with an arsenal of slang before they
have fully learnt the basics of the English language, but a small amount of colloquial English mixed in with the basics has the potential to become an ingrained part of EFL, therefore becoming a standard element of the process.

At first glance, a scarce amount of research has consequentially been done on slang and the like in relation to pedagogical success and even fewer on vocabulary particles. Pieces of vocabulary have many definitions to many people, dependent on an assortment of factors (such as where you are, what social group you associate with etc). It is possibly for this reason that scoring and comparing individual words and collocation sets have been avoided. In 1997 however, Swaffer and Vlatten undertook research that linked visual recognition abilities to identifying linguistic differences with differences in meanings, in which students were able to identify that a collocation actually had a different meaning as opposed to its literal interpretation (1997, p. 182). While this is an elementary approach to the desired results of students retaining and actively using slang and similar, it does have the intended aspiration of student recognition. That while slang should be considered as a facet of language, it is also considered different dependent on cultural perspective. ESFF offer perfect models of such discrepancies with slang and other cultural lexicons (supposed that appropriate ones are chosen) in which students can use as a basis of their language acquirement.

Japanese University freshmen that have a basic hold on English grammar, but would not be classified as communicatively competent would benefit from using popular ESFF in order to not only further language skills but also their cultural language skills. Using ESFF may be difficult however, due to 1st year students’ current lack of language ability and the general inherent lack of interest in outside cultures. In order to ascertain how ESFF can best benefit freshman’s language skills and cultural knowledge, methodologies and activities need to be explored, tried and tested. Although testing language ability is standard and can be easily scored, how do we then test cultural language ability? For the purpose of this study, testing student’s advancing cultural knowledge will be kept relatively simple by looking at their Vocabulary Retention (VR) and their ability to explain cultural expressions (CE) examined and used in ESFF. This was thought best due to the wide definition of culture and how it is shown. By keeping it to the restraints of VR and CE, culture knowledge is more easily defined and tested while additionally giving students a concrete idea of class goals and end results.

3. Methodology

Participants of the study were 80 freshmen in a foreign languages university in central Japan. Students had finished high school 6 months prior, and as said, had concluded 3 years of English studies, which was highly geared towards grammar and reading, but not particularly speaking. For this reason, students might not be classified as communicatively competent, nor might they be able to follow conversations between native speakers. Demographics for the participants were classified as 90% female and all between the ages of 17 and 19. Students were divided into two classes of 40 each, making it difficult to give students adequate qualitative learning and impossible for one on one conversations. The instructor for these classes was a 26-year-old native speaker with an Australian/US background and a Master of Applied Linguistics degree. It was felt that having a native speaker and not just a fluent speaker was important for the aims of the research. It was thought that a fluent speaker might understand what is said, but a native speaker can better explain and demonstrate the cultural meaning while also giving secondary examples and rules for students to accumulate the vocabulary.

The course was listed as an ‘integrated skills’ class, activities used prior for these lessons are well known and common (gap-fill, summaries, etc); included a variety of listening and writing activities which were based on the content of a film. Short segments ranging between 7 to 10 minutes were shown for the 90 minute lessons and were replayed in various sections dependent upon the activities used. Due to time constraints and the size of the classes, combined with secondary homework task that evaluated students retention of the movie material from the last lesson, previous lessons were felt to be rushed and never fully focused on helping students understand the cultural context.

It was previously noted that students could more easily understand animated films or films that leant on facial expressions and gesticulating to tell the story. For this reason, it was anticipated that students could understand the ‘gist’ of the story, but perhaps not the finer details, due to reliance on body language. It was therefore decided that to acquire accurate results, non-animated movies that rely on dialogue should be used. It was also considered that two different cultures should be featured in each of the movies. This was to assure that students did not use the cultural knowledge gained from the first movie to supplement knowledge for the second, and therefore to ascertain true
results. This research was divided into 2 sections, each featuring a different movie that ran for 7 weeks, totalling in 14 weeks that made up the semester.

3.1. Section One

The first section of the study was used as a control, in order to explicitly determine standard levels of students VR and CE. For the VR section, students would be tested on commonly used, culturally specific vocabulary chosen by the teacher beforehand, e.g. nerd, hottie. The CE aspect of the study was for students to define in their own words what was happening in a situation when an expression is used, e.g. What does Gretchen mean when she says ‘She’s driving me nuts’? These questions sometimes used specific vocabulary, but more often than not students could learn by simply watching the movie and body language. Students’ abilities had been guessed prior, but no actual examination of their progression had been documented. Using this first section to set the level would aid to make adjustments and corrections to activities and methodologies in the second section.

Mean Girls is a popular 2004 coming of age comedy based on the lives of American teenage girls in high school and was the film choice for this section. Due to the majority gender and age of the participants, it was deemed level appropriate and interesting for the class. Before starting the movie and activities, it was thought best to ascertain particular information about student’s current knowledge of American slang / colloquialisms and other cultural knowledge they will encounter in the film. This was to establish whether students had a base knowledge from independent sources and whether they had procured cultural knowledge from them. Due to time constraints in class, the most efficient method of data collection was questionnaires. This method was continued throughout the entirety of the study and students were encouraged to think of them as a test, in order to get their full cooperation and best results.

The Pre-movie Questionnaire (MQ1) featured several definition questions and was to ascertain the following:

- Whether students understand any commonly used vocabulary before watching the film
- Whether students were familiar with several cultural expressions.
- To draw their attention to particular vocabulary featured in the film

Once given, MQ1 students were then given a double-sided sheet with several activities on each side and then shown the movie segment.

3.1.1. Activities

Activities used were identical to those in the previous unit of work and students had thorough knowledge on how to complete them. These activities are commonly used and do not explicitly instruct on culture, but rather give student listening and writing practice.

First, students were given a list of words and phrases and were asked to spend 10 minutes using their dictionaries and reference them. If they could not find a word, they were encouraged to talk to their neighbour and discuss. After 10 minutes, the teacher would explain what each piece of vocabulary meant and how it is used. These words were important to the upcoming scene and students would have to use them in the following activities. The movie segment would then be shown: students were under instruction to simply watch and listen. After the viewing, students would be asked to complete Activity One, which was to give a short summary of the scene. This activity was used as writing practice for students as well as to clearly define for them what happened in the scene. Once the teacher went through the events and answers for Activity One, students were directed to Activity Two which was a script correction. A section of dialogue was given to students that had multiple mistakes. Students were instructed to listen to the audio 3 times, making whatever corrections to the script they could hear. Afterward, the teacher again went through answers and students were allowed to hear it once more with all the corrections in place. Activity Three gave several events from the scene, which students were to number in order of sequence. Once going through these answers, students were then directed to Activity Four which were short and long answer questions that students had to either specifically listen for or watch and create their own answers. Once reading answers to students, and going through vocabulary with them, students were shown the scene one last time.

After the segment and activities were completed, during the same lesson students were given a second Questionnaire (MQ2). The aims were;
- Evaluate if students could identify and give a correct definition of the words highlighted in MQ1 and the activities.
- Whether students could identify several cultural expressions in the film and correctly identify their meaning, demonstrating understanding of the 'gist' of the conversation.

After this initial lesson with the two Questionnaires, the movie was shown over the next 6 weeks, using the same format and activities.

In week four, students were given a short Questionnaire (MQ3) at the end of the lesson. This questionnaire was to evaluate student’s progression. It contained five words and phrases for defining, all viewed in the segment. As usual students were given the words at the beginning of the lesson; they then watched the segment and completed the activities. Afterward, they were asked to pack away their worksheets and filled out MQ3. The aim was to assess if students could immediately recall the word meaning and definitions.

For the ending segment of the movie, students were given a test featuring the same activities and evaluated their knowledge of the film and general concepts featured within. They were also given the last questionnaire (MQ4), which concluded the first section of the research. The main priority was to discover how many pieces of highlighted and discussed vocabulary and cultural expressions students could remember from over the 7 weeks.

### 3.1.2. Results

The results are as follows in Figures 1 and 2.

![Figure 1. VR (Horizontal axis denotes amount of words acquired, vertical axis denotes amount of students)](image1)

![Figure 2. CE (Horizontal axis denotes correctly or incorrectly answered, vertical axis denoted amount of students)](image2)
3.1.3. Discussion

This first section demonstrated the effectiveness of using common listening and writing tasks and what effect they had in regards to students VR and CE.

VR

Students’ abilities to identify popular vocabulary were varied, and could overall be said to have improved very little over the course of 7 weeks. MQ1 demonstrated that students were starting the course with very little prior knowledge of the cultural words or expressions. It was also guessed that a majority of the students who could identify 1 word or more guessed the meaning of ‘homeschooled’, not being a particularly culturally explicit term. MQ2, given immediately after the segment and activities was expected to show that all students could identify at least one word. However, with 21% of the class failing to identify anything, it was shown that a large amount of students could not either immediately recall meanings, or did not get sufficient usage of the vocabulary during the lesson in order to fully acquire it. This proved that the idea previously hailed by other authors, that students merely watching a film and having exposure to the language, has no significant impact on knowledge. Indeed students did not only have the exposure, but had the benefit of the few simple activities. These results are confirmed in MQ3; completed halfway through the course, when student’s comprehension of the vocabulary only increased by 12% over the lesson.

For the final week, MQ4 words consisted of many cultural items that had been repeatedly explored over the 7 weeks, and it was thought that students could easily identify many. This however was proven false, with over a quarter of students still unable to identify any of the vocabulary. From these results, it is apparent that although vocabulary was explained to the class, a majority of students did either not pay enough attention or did not get enough time with using the vocabulary in order to successfully remember it. The amount of students who could recall one word did improve over the 7 weeks, however this was not considered especially successful, as many students were expected to guess the meaning of at least one item. A success for students VR over 7 weeks would have been considered to be over 50% correctly identifying 2 or more. This amount would have shown that even if students had guessed one word, they had taken in something more.

CE

The CE aptitude of students was not expected to be as successful as that of VR. For one, more often than not, the expression depended upon students knowing a piece of vocabulary. Due to this reason, it was predicted to be varied and not particularly consistent amongst the participants. MQ1 showed that while a large percentage of the students had no experience with the expression, a considerable amount could either guess or knew of the expression. The numbers changed after students had watched the segment, with the larger majority able to define and explain the situation. This was promising and showed that the segment viewing and activities had some impact upon students.

MQ3 however was surprising, while students were hoped to have had a small amount of progression, the opposite occurred. MQ1 and 2 had given hope that students might be able to pick up cultural expressions and such, this result however were disconcerting and the specific phrase used for this lesson was examined thoroughly; “She’s driving me nuts”. Upon second inspection, the simple collocation that expresses annoyance was not the problem, but rather how it was used in the film. A subject name was not used with the expression, and instead of giving an image of a particular person, students had no indication of who ‘she’ was, therefore ‘driving me nuts’ was not associated with anyone in particular; thereby not giving a particular behaviour to associate it with.

The last questionnaire, MQ4, demonstrated similar disappointing results, despite that the expression used was appropriate for the level. When these results appeared, coupled with MQ3, it was thought that possibly ‘driving me nuts’ was not the problem, but perhaps the activities did not foster enough active student participation. These results at first showed some success with instructing and drawing attention to CE. With generally a third of students understanding or guessing the situation/expression in the beginning and later falling to a poor 15-20% for the latter half, it was seen that maybe the higher ability students comprehended the material, but not the average and lower ability students. In this regards, instruction and activities could be made more simplistic for the lower level ability students while also giving more interactive features.

Overall, Section One was seen to have a mix of results with ordinary results. This could be contributed to the mix in students’ abilities or the activity structure and instruction itself. Students achieved mediocre results with VR and poor results with CE. To achieve greater student recall and learning from all the abilities, it was concluded that
activities needed to be simpler and allow students more active participation with materials, rather than sitting, watching and listening for particular dialogue. While this may be frustratingly slow for more advance students, it ensures that all participants achieve knowledge.

3.2. Section Two

The second section was concentrated on using results from the first and attempted to improve levels of VR and CE. In order to ensure precise results and that students would not use knowledge gained from the 1st film to supplement answers and cultural knowledge for the 2nd, the two films should be of different cultures. It was decided that the second film would be the popular 2001 British comedy Bridget Jones’s Diary. Again, owing to the gender and age of the participants, this romantic comedy was thought interesting for content and hopefully would prove to be even fun for students. It is full of rich cultural material and would highly benefit student’s cultural awareness. In order to ensure that students were starting at the same level as Section One, the same Pre-movie Questionnaire (BQ1) as Mean Girls (with vocabulary and situational context changed for Britain) was given.

3.2.1. New Activities

Owing to the lack of positive results from Section 1, three longer activities were used in class for Section 2. These were thought to be more detailed and gave students more time to acquire with qualitative activities. Due to the results of the first section, it was concluded that activities did not allow students to actively use vocabulary enough for them to accurately remember. Additionally, they also did not give students enough time to memorise the vocabulary; it was unrealistic to expect students to be able to instantly recall words and phrases they had only just heard and maybe did not understand. The second set of activities for Bridget Jones’s Diary tried to remedy these two faults.

The first step was preparation. Students were given a list of words and phrases that would be used in the segment in the following week. Participants’ weekly homework task was to research this list and successfully create a sentence using each. By giving students a repetitive and standard homework task, it was hoped that students had sufficient time to become familiar with the vocabulary and be able to correctly hear and identify. Students’ homework was not marked; rather, the list was discussed as a class, the teacher giving example sentences. The first activity was a summary of the segment. Unlike Mean Girls, this summary gave students direction on what they should write about with some guided questions. By providing students with one or two questions, they had a better idea of what was important in the scene and how it contributed to the storyline. After watching the scene, students were given 10 minutes to write the 4-6 sentences. They were encouraged to use from the weeks vocabulary list, as well as their dictionaries and anything they heard or took away from the segment.

Next, students were given listening practice with a gap-fill activity. Rather than giving students a script and leaving them to find the mistakes (as was with Mean Girls), an underlined space was left for students to complete. This gap-fill was specifically designed for students to hear a particular word that was culturally significant and/or a word that was a little harder to comprehend due to accent or stress. This was significantly more within students’ abilities, as it gave them an achievable goal that they could identify. The last activity was a set of short answer questions students had to listen for; they were given a question that contained a key word that would signal an upcoming answer. It was thought that if students had an indicator to tell them when to listen, they would score more correct answers. Questions were usually related to one of the vocabulary pieces or the weekly phrase/situation.

Students were again given the activities on a double-sided A4 sheet. Once all the activities were completed, students had another 5 minutes to complete and review their answers before the teacher gave and explained them.

3.2.2. Results

The results are as follows in Figures 3 and 4.
3.2.3. Discussion

Results were much improved from Section 1, but not as great as anticipated. BQ1 demonstrated that students had a similar amount of starting knowledge as they did for Mean Girls and were essentially a ‘blank slate’ when it came to British slang and colloquialisms. This then meant that any differences in results were chiefly based on the different activities. Vocabulary and phrases given in Bridget Jones’s Diary were used with similar frequency as those in Mean Girls and were thought by the teacher to be similar in degree of difficulty. This idea is reinforced by the VR results in BQ1.

VR

Retention for Bridget Jones’s Diary had risen; while BQ1 shows students starting with very little to no knowledge, 3 weeks later for BQ2 an overwhelming majority could identify one word, if not more. Although there was still some 15% who could not identify any words, these results were very satisfying; students had improved with their cultural vocabulary. Due to the majority being over 1 word, this implies that students had enough time to become familiar with them during the week and enough use of them in the activities. However, levels of VR dropped in BQ3. This could indicate many things; either slang used in BQ2 was either too easy for students, BQ3 had become too hard for the level or maybe just students had an off week. Taken as a whole however, the VR results were very satisfactory.

CE

The expressions used for the CE experiment rose by only 20% throughout Section 2, a more disappointing result in comparison to VR. This comparison gives many clues to CE’s failure. While students were often given the expression along with the next segment’s vocabulary, finding the meaning of a word or even a series of words is
much easier than being able to apply an expression to a variety of situations. Additionally, while the vocabulary was constantly being heard or used, students needed more interaction with the expression and putting its use into practice. Although the amount of students increased over BQ2 and 3, the idea of interaction seemed to be proven right. While the CE results are not as complicated as VR and were marked either correct or incorrect, an amount of leniency was given to answer at the discretion of the marker as to which was right or wrong. With this in mind, it shows a definite failure of student understanding in that no more than 20% improved over the 6 weeks.

From these results overall, it seemed that the preparation and time given to students for the vocabulary aided in their memorisation and application skills, however, the activities were not conducive to fostering students abilities to actively apply the expression. The new activities seemed to give students plenty of exposure to the vocabulary and expressions, but perhaps not enough qualitative interaction. Students needed a stage of observation and then be able to use the phrase for themselves. The preparation stage was appropriate, however the summary activity, even with the guided questions, was perhaps too soon in the lesson, with some students being bombarded with perhaps all new dialogue alongside the culture vocabulary. Students essentially did not get a trial and error period in which they could experiment with the expression and have their ideas confirmed by the teacher. This seemed somewhat detrimental to students overall learning experience as it meant that students could be somewhat detached from the classroom environment and as long as they were filling in their sheets and listening, they might succeed. It can also be finally concluded that to teach speaker-dependent cultural language, students need to be involved in qualitative speaking activities, rather than the tried and tested quantitative writing based activities. VR was proven to be successfully taught with the combination of preparation and repetition, this was not so however with CR.

4. Problems

A major problem encountered with this study was the participants themselves, more particularly the workload they had with other classes and the attitude towards the class itself. This class, also known unofficially as the ‘movie class’, is considered to be a practice of the four skills, not one that teaches subject matter. Therefore students may have considered the weekly homework activity of no value, being as there is no final knowledge test, just a skills test. Homework was suspected to be not always completed by several students, or if it was, not committed to memory. In addition to this lack of concern for the class, most students had some 15 other 90-minute classes per week to attend, each with its own homework. With this in mind, it is easy to assume that the ‘movie class’ was often down the bottom of the homework priorities list and many students were suspected of procrastinating on studies.

The second most obvious problem was the size of the classes. Due to the nature of the study (cultural language), this class should have been smaller and involved class discussions and more student based activities, rather than teacher centred. With trials in the previous semester demonstrating that small group discussions in a class of 40 only led to friends chatting to each other off topic and in Japanese, it was deemed not appropriate for the larger class setting. Class size also became an issue when dealing with students who had queries, questions or did simply not understand. These students were simply too embarrassed to stand up in front of their classmates.

The last problem that had a blatant effect on the proceedings of the study was that not all students were on the same ability level. Classes had not been segregated into abilities and while many students were confident with the material and following along with some challenges, others had trouble with understanding the teacher’s instructions. This of course had repercussions when it came to creating material for the weekly activities. Many of the better students were often bored with material that was suitable for the others, and often scored much higher. If all the students were on the same level, it may have been possible to cater a lesson structure that gave all students maximum learning potential.

Looking to the future and using these classes outside the experimental phase, a possible problem that might occur may be from the point of the teacher. Movies that are particularly esoteric from a specific culture may become hard to teach if one is not from the culture. As the creator of a series of lessons, a teacher must have all the knowledge that students may want from a movie.

5. Conclusions

This research was by no means fully comprehensive; rather it was a short plunge into short-term recall abilities of student learning. Many aspects of the process of student learning were either overlooked or ignored due to the ever-present time constraint and resources available. However, we can determine a few simple truths about students’
abilities. The first is that colloquial vocabulary can be taught as any other specialised vocabulary given time and preparation. While students’ results lacked in the first section, it was deemed that this was due to a lack of familiarisation; students could not reasonably be expected to remember and explain something they had only heard of an hour ago. The research showed that with a subsequent amount of time given to learners and an adequate amount of repetition, a majority of learners could acquire the vocabulary. Repetition and activities that focused on students listening for a word they knew and hearing its contextual use proved to be successful with the majority of learners.

The second truth to emerge is that cultural expressions are not as easy to teach as their vocabulary counterparts. It would seem that collocations and the like, which are reliant on a variety of speaker choices (tones, contextual situations, timing, etc) are not so readily acquired by learners when repetition is used as the basis of teaching. Even when more student based activities were introduced, students’ CE levels still did not rise significantly. Activities that were thought to be more interactive did not have enough exchange between the material and student knowledge. Due to the multiple combinations of writing and listening based activities given to students with little to no positive results ensuing, it appears that for effective teaching learners need an interactive speaking activity. It is thought from these results that a student based activity, such as group discussion, or role play would be an ideal activity to gain positive transference to students who are still not understanding and a knowledge confirming experience for those better students. Of course, in the class of 40 students and 1 teacher, this is near to impossible if students are to remain on-task, but with a class of 20, could be quite successful. This ultimately has difficult implications for teachers who are not native speakers. With the complication of supervising conversations, teachers without the native knowledge may look forward to possible fruitless activities without the proper instruction.

Teaching English through movies is one of the better methods for cultural transference, short of learners going abroad. It would seem though that in order to ensure students are learning the material and retaining it, a certain amount of time and thought need to be invested into lessons. First year university students are experiencing a multitude of new rules and skills and need solid tasks that are well crafted. On average 2-3 hours was given to creating lessons and activities that were both appropriate for students’ abilities and conveyed the desired learning. Study of appropriate ESFF also needs to be completed before lessons start. ESFF that are too culturally recondite will be a hindrance on the learning process, rather than the focus of the lesson. While on the other hand, movies that are too culturally ambiguous have little to offer students in the way of cultural tuition. Either way, if exposure to the culture language is given with appropriate tasks, 1st year students will undoubtedly benefit, if only for familiarity with the language itself. Overall, this small research proved that even with carefully thought out tasks that are created with cultural acquirement in mind, culture specific vocabulary takes time and opportunities for students to engage and actively use such knowledge.

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