

THE APPLICATION OF FILM FRAGMENTS TO ENHANCE INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION LEARNING

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In today's interconnected world, intercultural competence is increasingly essential for effective communication across diverse cultural contexts. For students, learning to understand and appreciate cultural differences fosters empathy, enhances communication skills, and prepares them for global careers. One innovative approach to developing intercultural competence in educational settings is through the use of film fragments. Films provide rich, realistic portrayals of cultural interactions, values, and conflicts that enable students to observe and analyze cultural dynamics in action.

This paper explores the application of film fragments in intercultural communication learning, emphasizing their potential to make cultural education both engaging and impactful. Educators can expose students to various cultural perspectives by focusing on carefully selected film scenes, stimulating critical thinking, and encouraging discussions about cultural norms and values. Key strategies include pre-watching contextualization, guided discussions, role-playing, and reflective writing exercises. Additionally, the paper provides practical examples of films that illustrate specific intercultural themes, such as *Lost in Translation* for culture shock, *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* for familial cultural expectations, *The Farewell* for differences in emotional expression across Eastern and Western cultures, *The Pursuit of Happyness* for the intersection of race, class, and culture, *The Last Samurai* for historical cultural conflict, and *East is East* for generational and cultural clashes in immigrant families, etc. By incorporating such films into the curriculum, educators can foster critical thinking, empathy, and a deeper understanding of intercultural dynamics.

Film fragments become a valuable pedagogical tool through these methods, enabling students to experience the nuances of intercultural communication firsthand. This approach not only enriches language learning but also broadens students' worldviews, preparing them for diverse social and professional environments. The paper concludes with recommendations for integrating film fragments into curriculum design and directions for future research on multimedia's role in intercultural education.

Key words: *cultural competence, education, film, intercultural communication.*

ЗАСТОСУВАННЯ ФРАГМЕНТІВ ФІЛЬМІВ ДЛЯ ВДОСКОНАЛЕННЯ НАВЧАННЯ МІЖКУЛЬТУРНОЇ КОМУНІКАЦІЇ

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У сучасному глобалізованому світі міжкультурна компетентність стає дедалі важливішою для ефективного спілкування в різноманітних культурних контекстах. Розуміння студентами та повага до культурних відмінностей сприяють розвитку емпатії, покращенню комунікативних навичок, готують їх до роботи в міжнародному середовищі. Одним з інноваційних підходів до формування міжкультурної компетентності в освітніх закладах є використання фрагментів фільмів. Фільми надають багатий, реалістичний опис культурних взаємодій, цінностей і конфліктів, що дозволяє студентам спостерігати й аналізувати культурну динаміку.

У статті досліджено використання фрагментів фільмів у навчанні міжкультурної комунікації, підкреслено їхній потенціал зробити культурну освіту водночас цікавою та результативною. Завдяки ретельно підібраним сценам викладачі можуть ознайомити студентів із різними культурними перспективами, стимулювати критичне мислення та заохочувати до обговорення культурних норм і цінностей. Основні стратегії включають контекстуалізацію перед переглядом, керовані дискусії, рольові ігри та рефлексійні письмові завдання. У статті також подано практичні приклади фільмів, що ілюструють конкретні міжкультурні теми, зокрема: «Труднощі перекладу» – для теми культурного шоку, «Моє велике грецьке весілля» – для питання сімейних цінностей, «Прощання» – для розбіжностей у вираженні емоцій у східних і західних культурах, «У гонитві за щастям» – для перетину раси, класу та культури, «Останній самурай» – для історичних культурних конфліктів, а також «Схід – це Схід» – для міжгенераційних і культурних зіткнень в іммігрантських родинх тощо.

Завдяки таким методам фрагменти фільмів стають цінним педагогічним інструментом, який дозволяє студентам наочно ознайомитися з тонкощами міжкультурної комунікації. Такий підхід не лише збагачує мовне навчання, а й розширює світогляд студентів, готує їх до взаємодії в різноманітних соціальних і професійних середовищах. Стаття завершується рекомендаціями щодо інтеграції фрагментів фільмів у навчальні програми та пропозиціями для подальших досліджень ролі мультимедіа в міжкультурній освіті.

Ключові слова: міжкультурна комунікація, культурна компетентність, освіта, фільм.

Problem Statement. Intercultural competence is increasingly recognized as a key educational goal in an interconnected world. As globalization leads to more cross-cultural interactions, a growing demand exists for learners to understand, appreciate, and engage effectively with diverse cultures. There is a shift toward integrating cultural awareness into various curricula in education, and it is evident that intercultural communication skills are essential in social and professional settings. Developing intercultural competence involves more than just theoretical knowledge; it requires practical, experiential learning methods that allow students to immerse themselves in the complexities of cross-cultural interactions.

One such method is the use of multimedia, particularly film fragments, to enhance learning experiences. Films provide a dynamic and authentic representation of cultural practices, behaviors, and communication styles. Unlike textbooks, films present not only the spoken language but also the visual, emotional, and non-verbal aspects of communication, which are central to understanding intercultural dynamics. Research in this area has shown that visual learning helps students process and retain cultural information more effectively than reading or listening alone [1]. Moreover, films bring to life abstract cultural concepts, making them tangible and relatable for students. They are able to witness how individuals from different cultures navigate misunderstandings, resolve conflicts, and interact with one another in various contexts.

This paper explores how educators can utilize film fragments as a pedagogical tool to foster intercultural communication skills in students. By focusing on scenes from films, instructors can stimulate discussions, guide reflections, and facilitate activities promoting critical thinking and a deeper understanding of cultural differences. Furthermore, films have the added advantage of being inherently engaging, capturing students' attention, and encouraging active participation in the learning process.

While films offer rich potential, their use in education requires careful planning and thoughtful integration into the curriculum. This article will examine practical strategies for incorporating film fragments into intercultural communication learning, discuss the benefits of this approach, and highlight specific examples of films that are particularly effective in teaching cultural awareness. The objective is to provide educators with the tools to integrate film as a medium that educates and enhances students' intercultural competence.

Purpose of the Article. The primary aim of this article is to explore the use of film fragments in enhancing intercultural communication learning. While intercultural communication has traditionally been taught through theoretical frameworks and case studies, integrating film as a pedagogical tool provides an opportunity to move beyond abstract concepts and engage students with real-world scenarios. This article offers practical strategies for using film clips to facilitate intercultural learning, fostering empathy and understanding of cultural differences.

The paper emphasizes the power of film to capture the nuances of cross-cultural interactions, making it easier for students to comprehend and reflect on the subtleties of cultural norms and behaviors. Through film, students are exposed to culture's emotional and social dimensions, which are often difficult to convey through textbooks.

The use of film fragments, with their visual and auditory elements, allows students to observe cultural differences more effectively.

Furthermore, this paper seeks to highlight the importance of integrating film fragments into existing curricula in a structured and purposeful way. It proposes strategies for using film to teach cultural concepts and create a more dynamic and engaging learning environment. By adopting this approach, educators can enhance students' ability to understand and navigate intercultural situations, preparing them for success in both professional and social spheres. In doing so, this article contributes to the growing body of research on the use of multimedia in education, providing educators with practical tools and methodologies for improving intercultural communication instruction.

Presentation of the main content. Advantages of Using Film Fragments:

1. Enhancing Understanding of Cultural Nuances

Films are powerful tools for conveying intercultural communication's subtle yet important aspects. Unlike textbooks, films immerse students in realistic and nuanced portrayals of different cultures, highlighting overt and subtle communication aspects that often escape written descriptions. The visual nature of films allows students to see non-verbal cues such as body language, facial expressions, and gestures, which are crucial to understanding intercultural interactions. Research on intercultural communication emphasizes the significance of non-verbal communication in understanding cultural differences [2, p. 92; 3, p. 45]. These elements of communication can only be effectively demonstrated through media such as films, providing a deeper and more holistic understanding of intercultural behavior.

For example, in the film "The Farewell" (2019), the characters navigate complex cultural expectations in a Chinese family setting, where the concept of "saving face" influences their behavior. Billi, the protagonist, struggles with the family's decision to conceal a health diagnosis from her grandmother. The emotional conflict in the film is heightened by non-verbal communication, such as the characters' tense body language and restrained emotional expression, reflecting the deep-rooted cultural value of protecting the family's reputation and maintaining harmony [4]. The visual presentation of such moments helps students appreciate how cultural norms dictate behavior in ways that words alone cannot fully convey.

Similarly, "Bend It Like Beckham" (2002) highlights the tension between British and Indian cultures through the protagonist's desire to pursue a football career, which clashes with her traditional family's expectations. The portrayal of family dynamics, the roles of women, and cultural expectations around identity are clear through the characters' expressions, gestures, and interactions. Such films provide valuable learning moments for students to analyze how cultural values shape verbal and non-verbal communication and how misunderstandings arise when individuals from different cultures fail to recognize these nuances [5].

Films like these offer a comprehensive view of culture, helping students recognize the often invisible forces that shape communication and behavior. Through these

cinematic portrayals, students learn about cultural practices and gain a deeper empathy for people from different cultural backgrounds.

2. Engagement and Emotional Impact

Another advantage of using film fragments is their ability to create an emotional connection with students. Research on emotional learning suggests that students are more likely to remember and engage with material that evokes an emotional response [6, p. 51]. Films are particularly effective because they combine visual and auditory elements, engaging viewers on multiple sensory levels. This emotional engagement helps students process and retain information more effectively.

For instance, in “My Big Fat Greek Wedding” (2002), the humorous portrayal of cultural misunderstandings between a Greek-American family and a more reserved American fiancé provides an accessible and lighthearted way for students to reflect on intercultural communication. The film captures the challenges of navigating family expectations, cultural identity, and assimilation, all of which are central themes in intercultural studies. Watching the characters struggle with and ultimately accept cultural differences can provoke emotional empathy, allowing students to reflect on their own biases and cultural assumptions [7].

Moreover, emotional engagement with films can also help students process the more complex, difficult aspects of intercultural communication, such as conflict, tension, and prejudice. Films such as “The Pursuit of Happyness” (2006), which tells the story of an African American father striving to overcome socioeconomic barriers, provide powerful insights into how race, class, and culture intersect. Students who watch such films can connect emotionally with the characters, understanding the systemic challenges they face while also gaining an understanding of how culture shapes individual experiences. These emotional connections help students build empathy for individuals from different cultural backgrounds, an essential skill in intercultural communication [8].

3. Cognitive Benefits of Film-based Learning

Incorporating films into educational settings also promotes critical thinking and cognitive development. Research in multimedia learning indicates that students retain information more effectively when presented in visual and auditory formats [9, p. 225]. By integrating film fragments into the learning process, educators can stimulate students’ critical thinking about intercultural topics, such as cultural stereotypes, power dynamics, and social norms. Students can analyze the implications of different cultural practices and discuss how these practices influence interpersonal communication.

Films also encourage students to engage in reflective thinking. For example, after viewing a film like “The Last Samurai” (2003), which depicts the clash between Japanese and American cultures during the Meiji Restoration, students can reflect on the historical and cultural contexts that shaped the characters’ actions and decisions. These discussions deepen students’ understanding of intercultural issues and develop their ability to critically and contextually analyze cultural artifacts.

Additionally, the film “*Crash*” (2004) provides a poignant examination of racial tensions and complex social dynamics in a multicultural urban setting. By exploring how

different characters' biases and experiences intersect and influence their interactions, "*Crash*" allows students to confront uncomfortable truths about prejudice, privilege, and systemic inequities. Reflecting on such themes encourages students to question their own assumptions and promotes intercultural awareness by highlighting how individual perspectives are shaped by broader societal forces.

By challenging students to reflect on the cultural assumptions depicted in films, educators foster the development of intercultural awareness. Films offer rich, layered content that allows for multifaceted analysis, making them an ideal resource for encouraging complex, critical thought.

Films also encourage students to engage in reflective thinking. For instance, "*East is East*" (1999), a comedic drama about a Pakistani-English family in 1970s England, offers a portrayal of cultural clashes and identity struggles within an immigrant family. Through the generational conflict between the father, who holds firmly to Pakistani traditions, and his children, who are navigating their British identities, students can reflect on the challenges of balancing heritage with the pressures of assimilation. These discussions provide a space for students to consider how cultural values shape personal identity and influence family dynamics.

By challenging students to analyze the interactions and conflicts depicted in "*East is East*", educators foster the development of intercultural awareness. Films like this provide nuanced, realistic depictions of cultural dynamics, allowing students to examine and discuss issues of identity, tradition, and adaptation within a multicultural context. This approach deepens students' understanding of intercultural communication and enhances their critical and contextual analysis capacity.

Practical Strategies for Integrating Film Fragments into Education:

1. Pre-Watching Activities

Before showing a film fragment, it is crucial for educators to provide students with sufficient background knowledge about the cultural context of the film. This can include a brief overview of cultural norms, values, and social practices that are relevant to the film's content. For instance, before watching "*The Farewell*", instructors might introduce the concept of "saving face" and discuss its role in Chinese family dynamics. This helps students understand the significance of certain actions or behaviors they may encounter in the film.

Additionally, students can be assigned preliminary readings on the cultural themes depicted in the film. These readings can include scholarly articles, cultural reports, or chapters from intercultural communication textbooks. This will ensure that students have the foundational knowledge needed to engage with the film critically and meaningfully.

Pre-watching activities also help set the stage for discussions and reflective activities after the film. By familiarizing students with the cultural context beforehand, educators can guide them in making connections between the film's content and the broader themes of intercultural communication.

2. During-Watching Activities

While watching the film, students should be given specific tasks to focus on. These tasks might include taking notes on cultural behaviors, identifying instances of

intercultural conflict, or paying attention to the non-verbal cues that convey cultural differences. Educators can also provide students with a worksheet that includes questions or prompts to guide their observations. For example, students might be asked to identify specific cultural misunderstandings and reflect on how these moments could have been handled differently.

Additionally, educators can encourage students to observe the film's emotional dynamics. How do the characters respond to cultural differences? What non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions or body language, indicate how characters feel about the intercultural interactions taking place? Students can deepen their understanding of how culture shapes emotional responses and communication strategies by focusing on these elements.

3. Post-Watching Discussions and Activities

After watching the film, students can participate in guided discussions where they share their observations and insights. Teachers can ask questions such as, "What cultural values influenced the characters' actions in this scene?" or "How did the characters navigate cultural differences, and what strategies did they use?" These discussions encourage students to reflect on what they have learned and how it applies to real-world intercultural interactions.

In addition to discussions, students can engage in role-playing activities that allow them to practice navigating intercultural scenarios similar to those depicted in the film. This experiential learning approach helps students apply the concepts they have learned in a practical context, reinforcing their understanding of intercultural communication.

Conclusion. The use of film fragments in intercultural communication education offers numerous benefits, including enhanced understanding of cultural nuances, emotional engagement, and the promotion of critical thinking. By providing students with a visual and emotional context for intercultural interactions, films allow them to engage with cultural differences in ways that textbooks and lectures alone cannot achieve. When used effectively, films help students develop the empathy, awareness, and skills necessary to communicate successfully across cultures.

The presented film recommendations serve as cultural canvases, each painting a unique narrative that unravels the intricacies of human connections, societal norms, and the impact of cultural diversity. From the comedic exploration of family dynamics in "My Big Fat Greek Wedding" to the poignant examination of racial tensions in "Crash", these films serve as both mirrors and windows, reflecting the diversity of human experiences and broadening the perspectives of learners.

As educators continue to explore innovative methods for teaching intercultural communication, the integration of film into the curriculum offers a promising avenue for enhancing students' learning experiences. Moving forward, educators should seek to expand the use of films in their teaching practices by incorporating diverse cultural perspectives and addressing issues such as stereotypes, power dynamics, and globalization.

Future research could further investigate the long-term effects of using films in intercultural communication education and explore how different genres of films – such as

documentaries, comedies, or dramas – may be used to address various intercultural themes. By continuing to refine and develop these pedagogical strategies, educators can ensure that students are equipped with the intercultural competence necessary to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world.

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