

Innovative Ways to Improve Learning Language and Cultural Understanding Through Film Background Minangkabau Culture

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Abstract

This article discusses how films set in Minangkabau culture can be used as an effective platform to enable students to understand Minangkabau culture and the target language. Through films, students broaden their understanding of culture, language, geography, sociolinguistics, socioeconomic, socio-political and educational in Minang society. This article describes how a small number of films set in Minangkabau culture have been used at different skill levels in language programs in schools as one of the local content subjects, especially schools located in West Sumatra with the majority of the Minang community. It also examines the role of films in the teaching and learning process, and how watching films strengthens classroom activities such as discussions, and debates and activities outside the classroom such as interviews and research on topics related to the films. To explore student feedback on this process, there was a discussion about responses to watching the film. It is proposed that three main issues need to be considered: film choice; development of lesson plans; and possible efficiency is obtained by asking students to watch movies. In conclusion, it is argued that the combination of these strategies demonstrates how films set in Minangkabau culture can be used in innovative ways to teach Minang language and culture in West Sumatra. Development of lesson plans; and possible efficiency is obtained by asking students to watch movies.

Keywords: Film, Minangkabau Culture, Language, Cultural Understanding

Introduction

Indonesia has cultural diversity that makes it a cultured country by upholding its values. The culture has a function to regulate, control and direct the behavior of its people. Various cultures that exist in Indonesia become a hallmark for the people of Indonesia. The existence of various cultures makes diversity in community groups. It is this diversity that gives rise to differences between individuals with different backgrounds, customs, cultures and values. Films can be said to be the embodiment of all the realities of life that are so widespread in society, and films are also able to foster imagination, tension, fear and emotional clashes in the audience, as if they feel and become part of the story in the film. This means that they can recognize each other with different cultural backgrounds, such as customs, characteristics of food, types of dance and so on.

In addition, the content of the message in the film set in Minang culture can also lead to aspects of social criticism, science, norms of life and also entertainment for the audience. The meaning of the film as a representation of the reality of society, for Turner (in Sobur, 2013:127), "is different from the film merely as a reflection of reality. As a reflection of reality, films only transfer reality to the screen without changing that reality. And if as a representation of reality, films can shape and re-

present the existing reality based on codes and ideological studies of culture. In general, the existence of films set in Minang culture reflects the social and cultural conditions of the Minangkabau community. Through films, students can learn about existing cultures. Knowing many things related to the rules or norms that apply in Minangkabau. This has a good impact on students who now live in the age of billions, they are often exposed to modern films without containing Minang cultural elements in them.

Then in schools in Minangkabau in general the Minangkabau Natural Culture (BAM) subject is one of the local content subjects that must be studied by students. Thus students can learn to know how the culture exists in Minangkabau and it will be even more interesting if it is shown, especially through a film. Students will feel happy, entertained and increase knowledge about Minang culture. According to Siagan (2010: 1), films can be said to have the most influence on human life. A film critic once argued that films can take us to heaven or hell. What is meant by heaven is that a good film can provide benefits for those who enjoy it, such as in the world of education or in the arts. So, as a movie connoisseur, you should be able to choose films that have good moral messages to be used as lessons in everyday life.

Indonesian films with cultural backgrounds in each of Indonesia, for example the film *Sinking of the Van Der Wijck Ship*, *Sitti Nurbaya*, *Sengsara Brings Pleasure* and *Merantau*. These films raised Minangkabau culture (West Sumatra). Not only highlighting Minangkabau culture in general, these films include more specific cultures, such as *silek* (pencak silat) and *merantau*. In this *Merantau* film, Minangkabau culture is not widely displayed in narrative and cinematic aspects, for example in a place set in West Sumatra which also displays the natural beauty found in Minangkabau and its *Gadang House*, as well as gardening activities as a livelihood in the area. The *Merantau* film also shows the art of *silek* and its black and gold clothes, which have become the distinctive colors of Minangkabau itself. In the conversations that are displayed, they also include a little Minangkabau language and more of the Minangkabau dialect so that the dialogue presented makes the common people understand what is being discussed. The background of the location in Minangkabau is placed in areas in Minangkabau and is presented with social issues that are currently rife.

Merantau is an action film by Gareth Evans. This film takes the background of the Minangkabau tradition of wandering. Migrating is very closely related to Minangkabau culture. Even today, this tradition is still carried out by young people and even women in Minangkabau. The traditional background that wants to be shown in this film. However, Gareth Evans is still lacking in showing how this migration should be. This results in viewers who do not have knowledge about it, which in the end means that wandering is only going from villages to cities in the hope of changing fate and the end. *rnya* can "raise the trunk tarandam", meaning, when young go to wander and seek experience and money so that they can build a *nagari* later when they are successfully monitored. In this paper, we will discuss how films set in Minangkabau culture can be an effective platform for students to understand culture, especially Minangkabau culture and expand their geographical knowledge of Minangkabau Culture and pay attention to sociolinguistic, socio-economic, socio-political, and educational problems in the target community. Several films set in Minang have been carefully selected as a means to instill cultural values at different skill levels from teaching (from intermediate to advanced) to language lessons.

The use of film in the language teaching and learning process strengthens classroom activities such as discussing and debating, as well as activities outside the classroom such as interviews and research on certain topics related to films set in Minangkabau. To understand students' perceptions, a survey on the impact of films set in Minangkabau on students' understanding of Minang culture and language will be discussed. This means that films play an important role in equipping students with a background knowledge of the Minang community, in providing information, knowledge and strong motivation for students to learn Minang language and culture, deepening their understanding of the moral values of Minang culture and improving students' language skills.

Methods

The research method used is library research (library research). This research is not a field study, but is carried out by means of a literature review of written data. These data are documents resulting from the study of *randai* as well as other written references related to the problem. The position of the researcher in this research library is not only to read, record, and summarize the results

of existing Minangkabau cultural studies, but the role of the researcher is to formulate new findings related to new phenomena and symptoms found based on the results of the analysis.

Result and Discussion

1. What is Culture?

Kramsch (2000) describes culture as membership in a discourse community that shares a shared social and historical space, and a shared imagination. Culture can store and provide information that contains social values in living life in the future. Liddicoat, Scarino and Kohler (2018) define culture as; a complex (complete) system of concepts, attitudes, values, beliefs, conventions, behaviors, practices, rituals, and lifestyles of the people who make up a cultural group that has been defined by each community, as well as the artifacts they produce and the institutions that create them. they do for the common good. Inrasari (2015) when I asked my students about the definition of 'culture' their answers varied from food to festivals to costumes to music to dance. Some of them define culture as customs, traditions, behavior, manners, patterns of life, and how people relate to one another. There are also those who say that culture is a way of life, beliefs, values, religion, and norms.

This indicates that the culture is everything related to their life, environment and habits. Furthermore, some mention the history of society, actions or words that are considered rude or polite to others, spoken or written ways and even language itself belongs to 'culture'. Everything in life is a culture that must be preserved and maintained by the nation who uses that culture. Indonesia is the largest archipelagic country in the world, with approximately 17,000 islands, where more than 500 different races live, and is home to many different subcultures. However, as the nation's motto is "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" (Bhinneka Tunggal Ika), Indonesians believe that they are part of one national culture, namely Indonesian culture. Mutual care and respect for existing cultural differences is an attitude that should be instilled in students as a cultured group.

2. Why Teach Culture in Language Classes?

Language and culture are inseparable, and learning a language requires studying its culture. Apart from being a means of communication and interaction, language also has an important meaning as a learning method in the scope of the language itself. Language also functions as the identity of a tribe or nation because of its uniqueness. Because every tribe or nation certainly has a different language. According to Kramsch (2013), second and foreign language learners should become second culture learners because language cannot be learned without an understanding of the cultural context in which it is used. In Indonesian, for example, there are different greeting terms, depending on age, status, gender, and the level of intimacy between the person being addressed and the speaker. The correct use of greeting terms is important in Indonesian culture and society. Learning vocabulary without knowing the cultural background of use may lead to hiccups in communication. Students must be aware of the cultural differences between their own culture and the culture of the target culture. Without this knowledge, awkward situations may arise.

In Minang culture, for example, it is considered impolite for children to listen to their parents talking to other people, wash their hands after eating before the elders finish washing their hands, enter the house without reading greetings or knocking on the door first. Learning body language and gestures is important to avoid misunderstandings. For example, a gaze accompanied by a blink indicates forbidden. Language has a very important meaning in understanding and knowing culture, with language we can carry out culture according to applicable rules. Byram (2014) placed 'cultural studies' at the core of foreign language learning and proposed a four-part related model, namely language learning, language awareness, cultural experience, and cultural awareness. Byram and Peter (2002) state that cultural learning should take place as an integral part of language learning and vice versa.

3. Is Teaching Culture Just a Waste of Time?

Habits in the learning process sometimes make students stiff and inactive. Many teachers sometimes hesitate to include cultural studies in their language syllabus, for fear of wasting time, feeling unimportant that could be allocated to teaching grammar or other language skills, as stated and Angela (2010) states, a special emphasis on culture will not waste class time but actually give students something valuable knowledge more than language learning alone. Byram (2002) also note that in

most language courses, the greatest amount of time and effort is still devoted to the grammatical and vocabulary aspects of the language. Preferably, in language learning, culture is also introduced that is useful for students. Lafayette (1998) mentions that among the three main components of the curriculum (language, literature, and culture), most of the time and energy is still devoted to aspects of grammar and language vocabulary. Culture remains the weakest and rarely conveyed component in language classes because of the unequal treatment in textbooks and the lack of familiarity, among teachers, with culture itself and with the techniques needed to teach it.

Based on observations, many teachers who teach Indonesian are still not aware of the importance of teaching culture in language classes. Teachers focus more on their students knowing grammar and feel that culture is not too important to be taught in language classes. This is because teachers think they are familiar with one of the locally charged subjects, namely the Minangkabau Natural Culture subject. The problem of limited time in class can be overcome by asking students to watch movies outside of class. The films they watch are films set in the Mianang Culture so that students can know and love their own culture. So, in this way, valuable time can be allocated to studying other aspects of the language in the classroom. So, this needs to be developed in a lesson plan that provides details on how to use the material in class, and will illustrate how the lesson provides opportunities for students to role-play, discuss or debate related to the film they are watching.

4. What is the Teacher's Role in Fostering Cultural Understanding?

Teachers must believe that learning a language cannot be separated from learning its culture, we have a responsibility to incorporate culture into the language classroom. By introducing culture in language classes students will know more that with language they can know the very importance of culture in their country. We must try to find ways to teach it, and facilitate students in learning the culture. If class activities don't fit, we can create opportunities outside the classroom. In addition to overcoming time constraints, teachers must also find suitable materials that can be used to teach culture, and develop materials in such a way that students can benefit from them.

Teachers' knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about the importance of maintaining a culture of understanding play an important role in making instructional and methodological choices (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2010). It is the responsibility of the teacher, inside or outside the classroom, to explicitly take on the role of cultural educator and purposefully assist students with the process of analyzing their culture. I also believe that nurturing students' cultural awareness is the responsibility of a language teacher. Culture as education, in terms of conveying it is not only done in the educational complex, but the family environment also influences Amirkulovna and Djavokhir (2019). The environment also has a very important role in human behavior, especially in the school environment. Because in school there is a lot of hope in order to improve student behavior from less good to better, and so on. Schools and teachers also provide a supportive environment for the expected success of education.

5. Why Teach Culture through Minang Set Films?

If students do not have the opportunity to experience the culture of the destination country, one way to teach them culture is by taking them to watch their cultural films. In his book "Film and Television in Education," Watson (2003) states, "The culture provided by all mass media, but especially by film and television, represents the most significant environmental factor that teachers must pay attention to. Watson (2003), in his book "Film in Higher Education and Research" writes that film represents one group in the whole 'family' of modern mechanical aids for learning. Film is a means of expression, language and art, based on modern technology. By watching movies, students' understanding of the target culture is not only enhanced, but also their interest in other areas of the target culture is fostered. Marcelli (2010) about his experimental results, "It is only while exploring the breadth of cinema that the Use of Film to Improve Language Learning and Cultural Understanding.

Students discuss various interests, because they have watched the film, historical, philosophical, linguistic, psychological, sociological, geographical, architectural aspects that can be found in one film." So, in other words, film is also a research instrument. Knowing the advantages of using films to teach culture, and the entertainment value of films can bring student learning, I believe films will have a good impact on student learning. Thus, films should be included in language classes

to motivate students' interest in learning, make lessons more interesting and foster students' understanding of cultural targets.

6. How are Suitable Films selected?

As cultural educators, teachers play an important role in selecting appropriate films and preparing classroom activities after students watch the film. Teachers can choose selectively the films that will be shown to their students, which have good moral messages. Not all films are good and suitable for instilling cultural values and other aspects, such as geography, sociolinguistics, socio-economic, socio-political and education of the target community. The selection of films must be based on several criteria that can meet the goals of the teacher. Students' language skills are for lower secondary school students, films in the language preferred by students. Complex film contents are better to use for higher modules. The use of language, films that use everyday language are more suitable for higher levels. The location of the filming, because there are many ethnic groups living in Minangkabau with a diverse and unique culture, it is better to choose a film that is shot in the Minang culture.

The importance of choosing a suitable film for students who will watch the film, because it is very influential on the values, information that will be received from the film. Usually students prefer cultural films that are very close to their respective lives. This is because they have lived, felt and seen for themselves. Very good benefits are received by students who can watch films set in Minang today. If students are advised to read books with Minang background, it will not interest them in reading them, moreover there are so many Minang languages that they do not understand. And currently generation 4.0 students are a little difficult to deal with books that don't attract attention. They are already faced with sophisticated media and technology in recognizing and learning everything, which is all digital.

7. How is Film used?

As mentioned, in order not to waste valuable class time, students were asked to watch movies outside of class via IVLE 2 or use CDs/DVDs that were loaned to students. The higher the level, the greater the variety and the more challenging the tasks. The teacher prepares questions about the film such as who the main characters are, what happens to them, and how the storyline. In addition, there are several topics of discussion about friendship, family relationships, boy and girl relationships, the impact of politics on family life, and the practice of using everyday words used in the film. In this way, not only students' understanding of the target culture and listening skills are improved, but also speaking skills; how students express their opinions orally in the target language is discussed. The use of everyday words introduced in the film enriches vocabulary and understanding of language use which is different from their formal language usually learned in class.

After the teacher asked basic questions about the plot of the film, there was a discussion about the film being watched. Culture and traditions in Minang society, the life of Chinese Indonesians compared to Singaporean Chinese, and mixed marriages. After that, there are other activities related to mixed marriages, which are role playing sessions Galtung and Dietrich (2013). The activity was expanded by providing reading materials for "Language and Systems" to students of the Minangkabau Society" (Language and Social Systems in Minangkabau) and "The Grief of Being a Minang Man" to add insight into the unique Minang Tradition and culture compared to other regions in Indonesia Inrasari (2015). To provide further information on the origin and life of Chinese Indonesians, another reading material "The Origin and Life of Chinese in Indonesia" (Origin and Life of Chinese in Indonesia) is used in the following class. This activity was further expanded by assigning students to interview several Chinese Indonesians by telephone, and to write essays in the target language (min 300 words) based on their own interviews and research.

By using this film, many related activities can also be developed to support aspects other than listening and speaking skills. This film also provides background knowledge about the target culture, so that students are better able to understand when they read reading material about the practice of Minang matriarchal law and the lives of Chinese Indonesians. By conducting telephone interviews and writing reports based on student interviews and research, students' speaking and writing skills and research skills are enhanced. Here we can see that one activity can lead to different types of activities all of which support the learning process in an interesting way. The activity class begins with

questions about geography, such as where the area is located, natural resources, population, historical background of the island, religious background of the population, and the current political situation in the area.

The teacher has also prepared questions about the film, the main characters, and the storyline. Some of the discussion topics raised included the culture and traditions of the Minang people, the educational problems faced by most children in Minang as well as those faced by poor children, the ecological problems caused by gold mining and illegal logging and so on.

8. Advantages of Using Film in Language Class

There are several advantages to using films in language classes. As mentioned in the discussion section, films can be an effective platform for students to immerse themselves in the culture or way of life of the target community. This can broaden geographic knowledge of the target country, provide exposure to sociolinguistic issues, socio-economic and socio-political situations as well as educational issues in Indonesia. In addition to the factors mentioned above, films can also provide a strong motivation for students to learn Minang language and culture because students can learn in a more interesting way compared to traditional classroom activities, as noted in one of the student comments below (Oktaviani, 2019). The film can certainly motivate students' interest in understanding the target culture. By using films instead of taking notes, this is already an interesting way of learning because it looks more 'real'.

Films can provide background knowledge of students, as noted by some important things they are not familiar with. Some students said that movies facilitate effective learning. According to them, some concepts are easier to understand by watching movies instead of using other teaching media such as reading materials or books. Also, it's a more interesting way to learn because it's a kind of entertainment too, as students comment below. The exposure from a film is far greater than what you can learn from a book in two hours. This is because the film covers a myriad of aspects of Indonesian life in a short duration of the show, and that allows us to learn more about them. Apart from those discussed above, watching movies also improves students' language skills. By using this media in their language learning process, it can also improve critical thinking skills, encouraging students to be creative and artistic (Apriyanti and Sumira, 2021: 4). From twenty-two respondents reading different modules (middle-low, medium-high and advanced-low level) ten students wrote that by watching movies, their listening skills were improved; five students wrote that they developed listening and speaking skills; two students wrote that they developed listening and writing skills; two students wrote that they developed listening and reading skills; two students wrote that their listening, speaking and writing skills were improved, and one student wrote that their speaking and reading skills were improved. It has also been discussed that using films in language classes stimulates language and other creative activities such as discussion, role playing, conducting interviews, and research.

Conclusion

This article explains that a teacher plays an important role in choosing films to be discussed and introduced to their students in class. Teachers also think that films can be an excellent and suitable resource for developing students' interest in various topics. Films can provide cultural knowledge, expand geographic knowledge, provide sociolinguistic, socio-economic, and socio-political background and introduce educational issues related to the target community. If selected correctly, films equip students with background knowledge about the target culture and provide educational opportunities for students to witness non-verbal behavior as they observe native speakers in an authentic setting speaking with different accents, facial expressions, gestures, and subtleties of demeanor, which cannot be easily explained in words. The selected films carry an emotional impact so that the learning experience increases retention, provides a strong motivation for students to learn the target language and culture, and thus students experience learning through entertainment. Students are involved during classroom activities because lesson plans provide interactive assignments, and open-ended activities such as role playing, discussion, and debate.

Students can learn more than just language skills through films. Understand values, principles of life as understood by speakers of the language and stimulate empathy in language and culture. In other words, the film promotes a favorable attitude towards the Minang language and culture, and brings a greater level of cultural awareness. In conclusion, I will highlight the three factors described

in this article. First, the selection of films gives students exposure to many aspects of knowledge from culture (geographic, sociolinguistic, socio-economic, socio-political and educational). Second, the lesson plans can improve four skills in learning languages. Third, efficiency in using class time by asking students to watch movies outside of class hours. This combined with the learning strategies that are taught, and the interactive and communicative way of learning, illustrates how films can be used in innovative ways to teach the target language and culture.

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