Kannywood Films as Tools for Teaching Hausa Language and Culture

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Abstract

This paper explores the pedagogical practice of utilizing Kannywood films to teach Hausa language and culture to American college students. It argues that films, as dynamic educational resources, effectively animate cultural contexts and enhance intercultural competence among learners. With their diverse themes and complex characters, films vividly capture not only the general attributes of Hausa society but also its nuanced intricacies. By humanizing the Hausa-speaking world, this approach aims to deepen students' cultural awareness and linguistic proficiency. Nevertheless, films alone are insufficient as standalone instructional materials. Thus, this article discusses the educator's rationale behind course design and instructional methods, emphasizing how these films have reshaped students' perceptions. The instructional approach outlined involves, firstly, recognizing foundational cultural norms and their historical origins within Hausa society; secondly, establishing a coherent cultural framework and thematic context; and thirdly, using films strategically to illustrate contemporary social issues and behavioral patterns. The selected films referenced herein serve merely as representative examples, rather than exhaustive illustrations, of how cinematic resources can effectively humanize and enrich understanding of a diverse and multifaceted culture.

Introduction

In recent times, the Hausa language and culture have frequently been subjected to negative stereotypes, underscoring the need for educational interventions aimed at fostering a deeper and more nuanced understanding of this complex society. One effective educational approach involves the integration of films into language and cultural instruction. Films are dynamic teaching resources that not only illustrate broad cultural concepts but also reveal subtle intricacies and complexities inherent within a society. By presenting diverse, authentic narratives, films help challenge and counteract existing stereotypes, promoting intercultural competence among students.

As digital communication continues to facilitate global interaction, the United

States is experiencing unprecedented levels of multicultural exchange. However, this increased connectivity has not necessarily translated into greater harmony among diverse communities domestically or internationally. Given the heightened awareness of cultural diversity within the U.S. and ongoing tensions between American and Muslim communities, cultivating intercultural competence has emerged as a critical educational goal. According to Lopez-Littleton (2018), cultural competence involves an individual's ability to respect, appreciate, and effectively engage with people from different cultural backgrounds, addressing factors such as race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, religion, and more.

Enhancing intercultural competence through education can significantly contribute to reducing misunderstandings, particularly those fueling Islamophobia (Green, 2015). A comprehensive understanding and appreciation of Hausa culture could thus facilitate improved interactions and relationships, notably for U.S. scholars and students participating in study-abroad programs in northern Nigeria, where millions speak Hausa. Consequently, employing Hausa films as pedagogical tools can help students develop cultural empathy and prepare them to effectively navigate cross-cultural situations.

The Need to Teach Hausa Culture beyond Language Textbooks

Teaching Hausa language and culture at the college level in US universities takes place mainly through language departments. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) promotes the teaching of culture as one of the components of the five Cs: "communication, culture, connections, comparisons, communities." (Standards for Foreign Language Learning, 2006). ACTFL views cultural understanding as an essential part of world language education.

However, it is challenging to teach the diverse and complex aspects of a culture solely through language textbooks, as they are constricted linguistically and lexically by the respective proficiency level. Due to the constraints of language levels, many Hausa language textbooks tend to generalize facts and highlight the most favorable characteristics. For example, the most widely used Hausa language textbook in the USA, Mu Zanta Da Harshen Hausa (2008), simplifies Hausa culture by focusing mainly on a host of elite and highly educated characters, who can be easily assimilated to life in the USA and command admiration from US learners. As Hausa language textbooks are generally conducive to a favorable presentation of Hausa men and women, they have little room for including the complexities of society, history, and politics that are detrimental to understanding the thinking and behavioral trends in the Hausa society. Developing intercultural competence, the learner needs to supplement language learning with other classes in politics sociology history and culture.

To teach the culture of the Hausa people in US institutions, it is imperative that teachers highlight not only similarities, but also differences. The practice of minimizing the differences between cultures does not promote real understanding of the Hausa world. Hofstede (2011), in his famous comprehensive study on cross-cultural psychology, warns

against such a practice. Despite the evidence that groups are different from each other, Hofstede believes "that deep inside all people are the same. In fact, as we are generally not aware of other countries' cultures, we tend to minimize cultural differences. This leads to misunderstandings and misinterpretations between people from different countries" (Hofstede's Academic website, n.d.). In teaching foreign language and cultures, it is customary to highlight the commonality of the human condition. However, this would not be enough to establish an understanding between two societies that have recently experienced tribal conflicts and security challenges. Aiming to promote tolerance, it is mandatory to, also, clarify differences and analyze their causes. As Hofstede put it, "Culture is more often a source of conflict than of synergy. Cultural differences are a nuisance at best and often a disaster" (Hofstede's Academic Website, n.d.). Such a potential conflict can be best counteracted by proper education, which promotes the understanding of human beings in their diversity. Such objectives often serve as the mission of liberal art universities and colleges of Humanities. There is a wide variety of methods for teaching language and culture across curricula. This article, however, contends that teaching Hausa language and culture requires more than language classes and language textbooks. Offering a film component about a contemporary Hausa society is a useful way of showing the human complexity within the variables of Hausa societies.

Teaching Hausa Language and Culture through Film

Film serves as an invaluable tool in assisting educators to convey cultural contexts effectively. The recent security challenges in Northern Nigeria have significantly contributed to widespread misconceptions about the region, often causing it to be perceived as inherently dangerous, even within other parts of Nigeria. However, films have the unique capacity to humanize and contextualize complex global issues, with Northern Nigeria being no exception. As noted by Fawna (2023), empathetic characters in films deliver the emotional depth necessary to complement factual historical and political narratives. This emotional connection fosters empathy, providing learners with numerous opportunities to internalize and appreciate the cultural frameworks of societies different from their own.

In examining the pedagogical benefits of film as a teaching resource, Mallinger and Rossy (2003) emphasize that effectively teaching culture requires engagement with both rational and non-rational, as well as explicit and implicit elements. They further argue that films uniquely present not just the broad outlines of culture but also its inherent complexities, including the subtle ambiguities and paradoxes found within intercultural interactions (Mallinger & Rossy, 2003, p. 613). This viewpoint aligns with findings by Herron, Cole, Corrie, and Dubreil (1999), who suggest that films enhance language acquisition by providing authentic linguistic contexts and fostering critical cultural insights. Furthermore, Sherman (2003) supports this assertion by highlighting that film-based instruction significantly increases students' motivation and cultural awareness, thus enriching the overall language learning experience. Incorporating such academic

insights underscores the potential of Kannywood films as robust tools for teaching Hausa language and culture, effectively challenging stereotypes and facilitating deeper intercultural understanding.

Objectives of Teaching Hausa Language and Culture as a Foreign or Second Language

The primary objectives of this course include providing students with an authentic representation of contemporary Hausa communities by exploring their values, cultural practices, social dynamics, aspirations, and the challenges faced by individuals within Hausa-speaking societies. Utilizing Kannywood films as instructional tools, the course facilitates immersive exposure to cultural narratives, enabling learners to critically engage with and reflect upon cultural content. According to Sherman (2003), films are particularly effective in language education because they expose students to real-life language use and cultural contexts, thereby significantly enhancing learners' intercultural competencies.

Additionally, classroom discussions based on these films stimulate critical thinking and deepen students' cultural awareness. Mallinger and Rossy (2003) note that "films effectively illustrate the ambiguities and paradoxes inherent in cultural interactions, providing rich opportunities for students to critically analyze and appreciate diverse cultural perspectives" (p. 613). Herron et al. (1999) also affirm that the visual and emotional engagement provided by films significantly bolsters students' understanding and retention of linguistic and cultural information.

Ultimately, this approach equips learners not only with linguistic proficiency but also with nuanced cultural literacy, enabling them to interact empathetically and knowledgeably with Hausa-speaking communities.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, classroom-based research approach to examine the effectiveness of Kannywood films as pedagogical tools for teaching Hausa language and culture to American college students. The methodology combines curriculum design, classroom observation, student feedback, and content analysis of selected films to assess how cinematic narratives enhance linguistic proficiency and intercultural competence. The following steps outline the research process:

Course Design and Instructional Framework

The study was implemented within an undergraduate Hausa language and culture course offered in a U.S. university setting. The course was structured over a 12-week semester, integrating both foundational readings on Hausa culture and weekly film viewings. A thematic framework was established to guide teaching, focusing on:

Language acquisition: Vocabulary, expressions, and sentence structures embedded in authentic conversational settings within films.

Cultural understanding: Social norms, traditions, gender roles, honor systems, and daily interactions as portrayed in Kannywood Hausa films.

Critical thinking: Addressing stereotypes, comparing cultural values, and engaging students in analytical discussions about the complexities of Hausa society.

Selection of Film Materials

Three Kannywood film series—Dadin Kowa, Labarina, and Kwana Casa'in—were chosen based on their popularity, cultural richness, and representation of diverse social issues such as gender dynamics, family structures, morality, religion, and modernization. The selection criteria included:

1. Use of authentic Hausa language and dialect variations.
2. Depiction of real-life cultural practices (greetings, cuisine, dressing styles, social interactions).
3. Representation of both urban and rural Hausa communities.
4. Potential to challenge stereotypes about Northern Nigeria and Islam.

Classroom Implementation

Students engaged with the films through a three-stage process:

1. Pre-viewing activities:
2. Background lectures introducing key cultural and historical context.
3. Discussion prompts to activate prior knowledge and guide observations (e.g., "What greeting styles are used?" "What meals are shown?" "How do gender roles appear in family and community life?").

Film Viewing:

Weekly independent or in-class film sessions, where students watched assigned episodes or clips, taking notes on language usage and cultural elements.

Post-viewing Discussions and Activities:

Small-group discussions, instructor-led analysis, and class presentations comparing cultural observations to their own experiences.

Written reflections and short essays analyzing themes from the films using provided guiding questions.

Data Collection

To assess the impact of this teaching approach, data were collected from:

1. Student reflections and essays: These provided insights into how learners interpreted cultural elements and improved their linguistic skills.
2. Classroom discussions: Recorded observations of students' engagement, questions, and evolving perspectives.
3. Language assessments: Oral and written evaluations measuring the acquisition of Hausa vocabulary, phrases, and cultural etiquette introduced through films.

Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis was conducted to identify:

1. Recurring themes in students' reflections that indicated increased understanding of Hausa cultural values.
2. Language acquisition outcomes demonstrated through vocabulary usage, sentence formation, and culturally appropriate expressions.
3. Changes in perceptions of Hausa society, including reductions in stereotypes and improved empathy toward cultural differences.

Ethical Considerations

All student contributions were anonymized to maintain confidentiality. Participation in research-related data collection (beyond normal coursework) was voluntary, ensuring no negative impact on academic grading.

Rationale for This Methodology

This methodology was chosen to:

1. Provide experiential, context-rich exposure to Hausa culture beyond textbooks.
2. Enable authentic language learning through real-life dialogue and scenarios.
3. Promote critical intercultural competence, preparing students for real-world interactions with Hausa-speaking communities locally and abroad.

By combining structured academic learning with immersive film-based experiences, this approach seeks to demonstrate the pedagogical value of Kannywood films as a bridge between theoretical knowledge and practical, lived cultural understanding.

Teaching Procedure

To achieve such goals, the course assigns the students with a reading list, together with various episodes from different Hausa movies series, which vary in the extent of cultural and linguistic content in both traditional and contemporary Hausa communities.

The suggested films, include Dadin Kowa (Arewa24, 2017, 2019) Labarina (Saira 2020), and Kwana Casa'in (Arewa24, 2020) As an instructor, I divide the class into three and assigned one film each

Discussing the culture of each region, the instructor gives a power-point presentation that surveys the necessary background information which is most influential in forming the culture. The preliminary lecture includes geographical, ethnographical, historical, political, and theological data. Besides, students are assigned to watch a random Hausa movie on YouTube to have some idea of the region and culture of Hausa people.

The following questions are given prior to watching the movies:

1. What are the most visible dressing styles identified in the film?
2. Identify names and ingredients of at least one meal from the film
3. How does the Hausa people exchange pleasantries across class, gender, and age?

These discussion questions progressively allow for defining basic concepts, explaining ideas, applying information in new setting, drawing connection among ideas, justifying a stand, and, finally, creating original work such as an essay or a final presentation. At this juncture, as an instructor dividing the class into small groups and prompts them to discuss, analyze and evaluate the excerpt for five minutes. Each group will then elect one student to share with the class the highlight of their findings or queries about certain phenomena. As an instructor I help by guiding the discussions, answering students' questions, and helping them draw parallels, comparisons, and contrasts with their own cultures. As students come up with their own questions and help each other answer them, they negotiate their initial attitudes and develop critical thinking.

At the regular interval, be it end of each three-week grading period, students may be required to write a short essay about a theme or a cultural issue encountered in the assigned films. Again, as instructor I gave students the liberty to choose one of many prompts and do the necessary research to produce a well-informed argument in an organized essay. The written reflections, class participation, and four essays are the tools that help me as an instructor in measuring the learning outcome, link it to the goals, and find ways for improvement for future semesters.

A film, however, is only a teaching tool and is by no means enough as class material. Some foundational knowledge must be established, such as, first, recognizing stereotypes and their origins, and second, delineating a cultural framework. Film analysis is the third stage by which theoretical knowledge can be applied and processed. The hope is that the following rationale and literature review will give fellow instructors structure and practical ideas for teaching Hausa and other African languages and cultures to the US colleges and beyond.

Recognizing and Addressing Stereotypes

A crucial initial step in teaching Hausa language and culture involves guiding students

to recognize and critically examine prevalent negative stereotypes concerning Northern Nigeria and their origins. At the outset of each semester, instructors may engage students in a brainstorming activity to uncover widespread stereotypes associated with the African continent, Nigeria in general, and Northern Nigeria specifically—stereotypes such as poverty, backwardness, illiteracy, terrorism, gender inequality, and disease prevalence. Understanding the roots of these biases is essential for fostering a nuanced perspective and facilitating meaningful intercultural dialogue.

Sources of such stereotypes frequently include mainstream visual media, literature, and social media platforms. To effectively address and counteract these misconceptions, instructors must encourage a critical examination of media portrayals to differentiate propaganda from reality. This analytical approach enables students to move beyond fear and rejection toward informed understanding and empathy.

To contextualize the historical emergence and reinforcement of these stereotypes, David Murphy's "Africans Filming Africa: Questioning Theories of an Authentic African Cinema" (2000) serves as an essential text. Murphy argues that Western cinematic representations often portray Africa stereotypically as primitive, exotic, dangerous, and morally corrupt, and demonstrates how these portrayals have influenced contemporary African filmmakers (Murphy, 2000). Similarly, Erap (2006) asserts that Western media consistently depict Africa negatively, reinforcing the continent's image as inherently hazardous or uninviting. These portrayals, embedded within colonial and post-colonial discourses, reinforce a cycle of misinformation and marginalization.

To effectively counteract such misrepresentations, instructors should utilize authentic media sources and literature that offer an insider's perspective. The selected films for this course highlight the internal cultural and social struggles of Hausa communities and Africans broadly, presenting characters as multidimensional individuals navigating universal issues such as dignity, social justice, poverty, governance, insecurity, and education. These portrayals enable American learners to identify common human aspirations for security, dignity, and freedom, thus challenging and dismantling entrenched stereotypes by humanizing Hausa culture and emphasizing shared humanity. Ultimately, by presenting Hausa people neither as superior nor inferior, but as inherently equal, students develop a deeper, more empathetic understanding of cultural diversity.

Defining Cultural Framework

The second critical stage in teaching Hausa language and culture involves the development of a comprehensive and practical cultural framework that encompasses core values, belief systems, cognitive orientations, and behavioral patterns. Although originally conceptualized within business contexts, the notion of a cultural framework—extensively theorized by anthropologists—is highly adaptable to educational applications in the humanities. For example, Hofstede's seminal model identifies six dimensions through which national cultures can be analyzed: power distance, individualism versus collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity versus femininity, long-term versus

short-term orientation, and indulgence versus restraint (Hofstede, 2011). In a similar vein, Mallinger and Rossy (2003) introduce the Integrated Cultural Framework (ICF), which synthesizes various theoretical models to examine culture through six dimensions: the ability to influence, tolerance for ambiguity, achievement orientation, individualism versus collectivism, time orientation, and spatial orientation (Mallinger & Rossy, 2003, p. 613).

Building upon these theoretical insights, instructors can develop a specialized cultural framework tailored specifically to the Hausa cultural context. Such a framework would enable students to critically contrast and connect Hausa cultural norms with those familiar in their own societies, particularly within the US context. Specific dimensions suggested for analyzing Hausa culture include piety versus secularism, moderation versus extremism, peace versus violence, abundance versus scarcity, femininity versus feminism, individualism versus collectivism, honor versus humiliation, and class distinction versus equity.

Consistent with the thematic content of selected films, this cultural framework is instrumental in defining Hausa cultural practices, encompassing traditions, values, belief systems, myths, and symbolic representations found across diverse Hausa communities. To enrich students' theoretical understanding, instructors can assign relevant chapters from Chekarau's (2008) detailed exploration of Hausa culture throughout the semester. Chekarau provides an insider's perspective on critical aspects such as modernization, social values, religious beliefs, gender roles, societal structures, etiquette, and tensions between moderate Islam and fundamentalism within Hausa society.

While employing generalizations or stereotypes in teaching culture may raise concerns about oversimplification, Osland (2000) acknowledges the pragmatic necessity of forming "sophisticated stereotypes," asserting that nuanced generalizations, when supported by detailed case studies, are valuable educational tools (Osland, 2000, p. 66). Mallinger and Rossy (2003) further support this pedagogical strategy, stating, "Stereotyping can facilitate student learning by making subtle cultural differences more obvious and easier to recognize. These characterizations can be especially useful in explaining broad theoretical constructs to students who have limited international experience" (Mallinger & Rossy, 2003, p. 613). Thus, it is recommended that instruction progressively moves from broad theoretical constructs toward more complex, illustrative examples presented within the selected film narratives, effectively grounding abstract concepts in relatable cultural experiences.

Film as a Case Study of Cultural Issues: Enhancing Learning Outcomes

In alignment with Mallinger and Rossy's (2003) pedagogical recommendations, films effectively highlight the nuanced variations and shared elements within and between cultures. They assert that film "addresses the more subtle variations and similarities within and between cultures," making abstract theoretical concepts tangible for students

(Mallinger & Rossy, 2003, p. 613). Films and movie clips offer dynamic instructional tools by enriching theoretical discussions with vivid visual elements and emotionally resonant human narratives, thus fostering active student engagement. McPherson (n.d.) emphasizes the pedagogical value of emotional appeal in films, noting its capacity to enhance students' retention of learned information, embedding it within their long-term memory, and motivating learners to critically examine preconceived cultural stereotypes (McPherson, n.d., p. 1).

Furthermore, as outlined by Herron et al. (1999), film-based teaching not only aids linguistic acquisition but also deepens students' cultural insights through authentic language use and cultural scenarios. Sherman (2003) similarly underscores film's unique ability to captivate students' interest and facilitate deeper emotional and cognitive engagement with cultural content. The specificity offered by case studies presented through films allows learners to contextualize broader theoretical frameworks while simultaneously grasping the intricacies and uniqueness of human behaviors across different cultural settings (Osland, 2000).

Experiential cognition achieved through films integrates seamlessly with theoretical knowledge, fostering intercultural competence and enabling learners to more effectively negotiate cross-cultural interactions (Lopez-Littleton, 2018). Films from Kannywood, which creatively depict authentic narratives and cultural expressions of Hausa communities, are particularly valuable resources in facilitating this process. Such cinematic experiences bridge theoretical frameworks and practical cultural understanding, thereby cultivating nuanced cultural literacy among students.

The students, divided into various groups, successfully addressed the preliminary questions posed earlier, and after comparing their responses, several commonalities emerged:

a. The traditional mode of dress among the Hausa typically comprises three distinct articles of clothing: trousers (wando), a shirt (riga), and a flowing gown (babban riga), accompanied by a hat or cap (hula). Specific styles and accessories may vary depending on age and social context.

b. The ingredients and dishes identified by students varied according to the time of day. For breakfast, all three groups consistently mentioned koko (millet porridge) and kosai (bean cakes). Additionally, tuwo shinkafa/masara (rice or corn flour balls) served with an assortment of soups such as kuka (baobab leaves), kubewa (okra), and alayyahu (vegetable) were frequently cited as common meals.

c. Greetings within Hausa communities are largely uniform and frequently influenced by Islamic and Arabic traditions. Common greetings include "Salam Alaikum," to which the standard response is "Wa Alaikum Salam." Additionally, "Ina kwana?" is commonly used in the morning, equivalent to

> "Good morning" or "How did you sleep?" In the afternoon, greetings shift slightly to phrases such as "Barka da rana" or "Ina wuni?" which correspond to "Good afternoon" or "How is your day?"

The cultural attributes and films highlighted in this discussion exemplify but do not exhaustively represent the rationale and methodologies applicable to teaching Hausa language and culture effectively. These cinematic resources, combined with informed theoretical grounding, enhance pedagogical practices, equipping students with critical analytical skills and cultural empathy essential for global competence.

Hausa Men, Women, Family, and Society

As the course aims to teach the target language and culture, replace prevalent stereotypes with a nuanced cultural understanding, examining the status and roles of women in Hausa society provides rich material for dynamic classroom discussions. The class endeavors to present a balanced depiction of both the privileges and challenges experienced by women across the diverse northern Nigerian regions where Hausa speakers predominate. Students are encouraged to critically analyze the societal and familial roles of both men and women. Selected Kannywood films serve to illustrate various overlapping issues related to gender dynamics and feminist perspectives specific to Hausa culture.

One prominent Hausa film series that effectively explores feminist themes is *Manyan Mata* (The Influential Women, 2023). This series portrays women from both urban and rural settings, highlighting their significant social skills and roles as societal leaders. Through its narrative, the film argues compellingly that women often possess superior capabilities for leadership and conflict resolution compared to their male counterparts, who are frequently depicted as inclined toward irrational and oppressive behaviors. Within the narrative, women skillfully mediate and resolve domestic conflicts, showcasing their vital role in maintaining social cohesion. In the fictional small communities depicted, escalating political rivalries and violence threaten community harmony. It is the intervention of women in *Manyan Mata* that successfully reconciles men—husbands, brothers, and sons—to move beyond minor disputes. United in their stand against social injustices, women in the series significantly contribute to reintegrating out-of-school children into educational systems, transforming street violence into peaceful interactions, and empowering other women through skill-acquisition programs aimed at fostering economic self-sufficiency. Although the storyline is fictional, its realistic depiction of gender relations and societal dynamics provides students with valuable insights into contemporary Hausa communities, including religious coexistence between Muslims and Christians and the influential roles women hold as mothers and community leaders.

When exploring the status of women more deeply within Hausa society, the series *Labarina* (Saira, 2019) and *Dadin Kowa* (Arewa24, 2020) offer profound insights into gender relations and social structures within conservative Hausa regions. *Labarina* specifically dissects class distinctions, gender roles, and the individual's relationship to family and

society, enabling students to experience an authentic representation of Hausa community life. Classroom discussions based on this series reveal to students that both men and women are often constrained by traditional social norms that limit personal freedoms. Moreover, these films provide rare, intimate glimpses into domestic life, highlighting the complex dynamics of gender interactions and societal values. Such vivid portrayals make these films exceptionally effective educational tools for illustrating women's unique privileges and persistent struggles within Hausa society's often segregated gender roles.

Conversely, the series *Kwana Casa'in* presents a nuanced perspective on how women attain status through class advantages and strict adherence to established social codes. In a straightforward narrative, the character Hajiya Rabi, the first lady of the fictional Alfawa state, mentors and supports a village girl named Rayya, who subsequently becomes a first lady herself as the governor's wife. This storyline highlights the significant ways in which women within predominantly patriarchal contexts strategically support each other's ascent to positions of power and influence, emphasizing female solidarity within constrained societal frameworks (Green, 2015).

Collectively, these films effectively illustrate the multifaceted roles of Hausa women, their influential societal contributions, and the intricate dynamics of gender and familial relationships, thereby enriching students' cultural competence and analytical skills.

Morality, and Chastity Among Hausa People

The binary concepts of honor and chastity constitute essential components in teaching Hausa language and culture effectively. Although textbooks provide straightforward definitions, it is through films that students more vividly comprehend the emotional and social significance of these concepts. Nydell (2006) underscores this importance, noting, "A person's dignity, honor, and reputation are of paramount importance in Hausa society, and no effort should be spared to protect them. Honor or shame is often viewed as collective, pertaining to the entire family or group" (Nydell, 2006, p. 15). Such values are repeatedly depicted in Hausa films, which allow students to internalize the profound societal importance placed on maintaining honor and avoiding shame.

Films from Kannywood consistently portray honor as central to individual and collective identities. The imperative to preserve one's honor, integral to upbringing and daily social interactions, is prominently featured across selected Kannywood films. Characters constantly navigate public scrutiny, striving to project an image of respectability and moral integrity. For instance, scenes set in public spaces such as marketplaces, courtyards, or streets in series like "Labarina" and "Kwana Casa'in" vividly illustrate societal expectations and pressures related to maintaining personal and family honor.

The profound significance of honor further emerges in the narratives of economically disadvantaged characters in the series "Dadin Kowa" (Arewa24, 2018), where individuals such as Ibrahim, Iliya, and Sallau continuously struggle against adversity while steadfastly maintaining their moral reputation and dignity. This portrayal aligns with the findings of

Green (2015), who emphasizes that within Hausa society, honor and morality are deeply intertwined with economic and social survival. The maintenance of chastity and moral rectitude, therefore, extends beyond individual reputation, profoundly influencing social relationships, family dynamics, and community perceptions (Green, 2015).

By engaging with these cinematic representations, students gain critical insights into the nuanced ways honor, chastity, and morality inform behavior, shape social interactions, and reinforce communal norms within Hausa culture, thus enhancing their intercultural competence and depth of understanding.

Shortcomings of Using Hausa Films in Teaching Foreign Language and Culture in Class, and Recommendations

While films significantly contribute to humanizing cultures and presenting ideologies vividly, they also have inherent limitations in educational settings. One notable drawback is the length of films, which students frequently report as too extensive for viewing outside class hours, thereby limiting their preparedness for in-depth class discussions. According to Sherman (2003), films must be carefully selected and aligned with curricular demands to ensure student engagement and effective learning outcomes. To mitigate this issue, syllabi should clearly communicate the expectation of students' commitment to watching films outside class and require written reflections, reinforcing the importance of active participation and preparedness as graded components of the course. Additionally, instructors might enhance student engagement by organizing regular, bi-weekly movie night events on campus, thus integrating an enjoyable social experience with the academic curriculum (Herron et al., 1999).

Another critical shortcoming involves the risk of inadvertently replacing one stereotype with another. Students often tend to generalize cultural attributes based on limited portrayals or characterizations depicted in films. As Osland (2000) suggests, instructors must proactively challenge oversimplified generalizations by facilitating critical, nuanced class discussions that underscore the complexity and diversity inherent within any culture. Films typically aim to convey specific themes or narratives and may not accurately represent the comprehensive realities of the cultures they depict (Mallinger & Rossy, 2003). Therefore, instructors should possess thorough cultural knowledge to effectively distinguish factual information from fictional portrayals and dramatic embellishments.

To address these challenges, instructors must implement structured pedagogical approaches that promote critical thinking and analytical rigor. Assigning supplementary background readings relevant to each film enhances students' contextual understanding and critical perspective. Requiring reflective writing assignments before class discussions further prepares students for meaningful dialogue. In-class discussions should be student-centered and strategically guided by questions progressively elevated through Bloom's Taxonomy, from basic comprehension to higher-order analysis and synthesis (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). Moreover, regular written essays, submitted at three-week intervals,

should demonstrate students' capacity to synthesize and critically analyze themes from various films and academic resources, encouraging them to create original, insightful work (Bean, 2011).

In sum, while Hausa films serve as powerful instructional tools for teaching language and culture, careful selection, structured support, critical engagement, and rigorous instructional methods are essential to maximize their educational effectiveness and minimize potential pedagogical shortcomings.

Conclusion

Teaching Hausa language and culture through films offers significant educational benefits, considerably outweighing any limitations associated with this method. Although films are inherently fictional representations, they vividly illustrate societal complexities and provide valuable insights into diverse cultural worlds. Effective study of a language and culture begins with identifying common linguistic expressions, stereotypes, and essential cultural traits. Consequently, establishing clear criteria by which Hausa cultural norms can be systematically examined and contrasted with students' own cultural backgrounds is fundamental. To achieve this, the instructor first provides a robust theoretical foundation outlining the key themes, values, challenges, social norms, and behavioral patterns essential for class discussions. Furthermore, a comprehensive survey of the historical, geographical, and political contexts of each region under study enriches students' understanding and prepares them for deeper cultural engagement.

Films, given their visual, emotional, and intellectual resonance, significantly enhance students' abilities to engage creatively, retain information, and foster critical thinking skills. Therefore, coursework involves students engaging with foundational reading materials related to regional contexts, viewing assigned films independently, and submitting reflective responses guided by initial questions designed around the lower-order cognitive skills of Bloom's taxonomy, such as recall and comprehension. In-class sessions further deepen students' learning through interactive, student-centered discussions utilizing prompts crafted to stimulate higher-order thinking skills, including application, analysis, and critical evaluation. The culmination of this learning process occurs when students demonstrate creative thought and analytical skills through independently conducted research projects exploring chosen cultural issues. The instructor assesses the qualitative aspects of students' learning outcomes by evaluating these final research papers in comparison to initial reflective assignments, thus clearly tracking students' developmental trajectory.

Drawing on experience gained over a semester of teaching Hausa language and culture via films, it becomes evident that cinematic narratives significantly aid students in grasping both general cultural attributes and nuanced societal intricacies. Moreover, the empathetic portrayal of human experiences in Kannywood films effectively counters existing negative stereotypes, thereby fostering deeper intercultural understanding and greater appreciation of Hausa culture within Nigeria and the broader African context.

Ultimately, films represent invaluable pedagogical tools capable of cultivating meaningful cultural insight, intercultural empathy, and intellectual rigor among learners.

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