



Subtitles are only the most visible and charged markers of the way in which films engage, in direct and oblique fashion, pressing matters of difference, otherness, and translation.

- Atom Egoyan and Ian Balfour

Cinema is a matter of what's in the frame, and what's out.

- Martin Scorsese

Films have to be carefully watched; audiences need to concentrate.

- Hirokazu Kore-eda

Developing Student Competencies through Film (Clips)

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Outline for Today's Talk

- Film & clips in the curriculum
- Clips and the development of student competencies
- Berkeley Language Center's Library of Foreign Language Film Clips

Why Feature Film?

- Pervasiveness of video
- Authentic material modeling natural conversation
- Spoken language in a visual context
- Develop students' cultural capital
- Depiction of cultural artifacts
- Depiction of attitudes and values
- Fosters analysis of text

Textbook

vs

Film

- Language of urban center and educated upper-middle class
- Language devoid of emotions; stick-figure personalities
- Sanitization of social, economic, and historical issues
- Controlled language

- Variety of dialects and sociolects (variation by social class, sex, age, etc.)
- Full range of emotions and personalities
- Replete with social, economic, historical issues
- Authentic, 'natural' language

(Historical) Obstacles?

- Can be shown in classroom only
- A full length feature film requires multiple class sessions
- Stigma
- Clip sources
 - YouTube: Quality? Control? Still present?
 - Self-created: Time consuming. Limited to what you know

Why Clips (vs. whole films)?

- Clips enable a close reading of a scene or sequence of scenes, i.e., students can focus on:
 - filmic devices (camera angle, camera distance, length of shot, focus, setting (lighting, shadows, colors))
 - Language, i.e., the specific words, phrases, intonations, pronunciations; nuance of using this word as opposed to another
 - Nonverbal communication
- Amount of language in a clip is more manageable for students to handle without resorting to subtitles in the L1

Issues

- Comprehension issues
 - Subtitles vs. captions vs. nothing
- Clips and decontextualization
- Film studies degree?

Linguistic competence

- Using clips to develop
 - Vocabulary
 - Listening comprehension
 - Speech acts
 - Communicative competence
 - See Jane Sherman, *Using Authentic Video in the Language Classroom*, Cambridge UP, 2003

Legal vocabulary

Vocabulary

accused, alternate, another, apply, bench, bring, case, charge, complex, conscience, continue, court, criminal, dead, death sentence, decide, degree, doubt, down, duty, entertain, excused, faced, fact, fancy, find, first, gentleman, good, grave, guilty, however, if, in the event, juror, jury, law, life, listen, long, man, mercy, most, murder, must, now, one, premeditated, read, reasonable, recommendation, responsibility, retire, separate, serious, shhh, sit, stake, testimony, thank you, tried, unanimous, verdict

Linguistic competence

- Using clips to develop
 - Listening comprehension
 - Vocabulary
 - Speech acts
 - Communicative competence
 - See Jane Sherman, *Using Authentic Video in the Language Classroom*, Cambridge U Press, 2003

Cultural competence

- Cultural artifacts
- Values and attitudes

Symbolic Competence - 1

- Based on the work of Kramersch 2006, Kramersch and Whiteside 2008, and Kramersch 2009
- Kramersch 2006:
 - “playing with the code”
 - Reaction against communicative competence
 - Information exchange
 - Denotative function of language
 - Reaction against the ways cultural competence is often taught
 - e.g., cultural notes in textbook margins

Symbolic Competence - 2

- We recognize the many ways that meaning is made...
 - Connotative meaning of words
 - Phatic and poetic functions of language
 - Subjectivity: position (power) and
 - Reframing
 - Historicity: geographical, political, historical and social references in speech acts by individuals
 - Through language we seek to understand the motivations and agenda of our interlocutors
- ... and are able to use those ways to create meaning

Symbolic Competence - 3

- Interpretive skill
- Productive skill
- Kramersch 2013: “SC is an apprehension of the affordances of the context to produce meaning”
 - Language use in a specific context
- Film and literature are the primary vehicles for developing SC, because of their tolerance of ambiguity

Film and Symbolic Competence

- Focus on filmic context: the dialog, the setting, and how the scene was shot

Dialog and Context

Mikey is waiting amid the trees next to his bike as Wendy arrives. (segment of the screenplay from *The Ice Storm*):

- MIKEY: Want some gum?
 - WENDY: Sure. Twinkie?
 - MIKEY: I'm chewing.
 - WENDY: Did you tell Sandy?
 - MIKEY: Tell Sandy what?
- (Wendy doesn't say anything.)
- MIKEY (continues): You didn't tell him either, did you?

Film and Symbolic Competence

- Focus on filmic context: the dialog, the setting, and how the scene was shot
- Focus on the utterances of characters
 - How do the characters themselves display SC?
- Have students imagine scenes not in the film and write those dialogs
 - Forces students to examine characters deeply and to imagine their world, their motivations, their agendas, but ...
- (see Kaiser & Shibahara, L2 Journal, 2014)

Sample Treatment of a Clip - 1

- 1. Can you tell it's in the morning even if you don't hear their greetings? If so, why?
- あいさつの言葉がなくても朝だと分かりますか。もし、分かるなら、どうしてですか。
- (this and following questions courtesy of Chika Shibahara)

Sample Treatment of a Clip - 2

- 2. What are the two foods mentioned in their conversation?
- 会話に出て来る二つの食べ物は何ですか。

Sample Treatment of a Clip - 3

- 3. Why are they talking about these two foods?
- どうしてこの二つの食べ物について話しているのですか。
- Have you ever heard of “doyo no ushi no hi” ?
Look it up on the Internet.
- 「土用の丑の日」という言葉を聞いたことがありますか。インターネットで調べてみてください。

Sample Treatment of a Clip - 4

- 4. Who are these people? How do you know that?
- この人達は誰ですか。どうしてそれが分かりますか。

Sample Treatment of a Clip - 5

- 5. Do you think the doctor was comfortable with this conversation? Why did the doctor finish the conversation the way he did?
- 男性は女性と楽に話ができただと思いますか。男性はどのように話を終わらせましたか。

... a paradox ...

... and the problem with clips ...

... is the decontextualization of an individual scene from the larger filmic context.

Some Ideas for Clips as Homework - 1

Linguistic / communicative focus

- Students answer questions focusing on language use
- Students create subtitles, captions (i.e., subtitles in the language spoken)
- Students describe and/or narrate a scene
- Students play-act a scene

Some Ideas for Clips as Homework - 2

Culture / symbolic competence

- Decisions: have students speculate on what happened before or after a clip
- Detective: have students determine place, time, genre, mood, etc., based on cultural clues within the clip
- Determine point of view in a scene; retell the scene from different points of view
- Compare scenes from written texts to screen adaptation
- Compare similar scenes across films and languages (e.g., Hollywood remakes)
- Students act out scenes
- Students create new scenes (and act them out)
- Ask students to react to situations where there is ambiguity

LFLFC

- 15,800 clips in 24 languages
 - Up to 4 minutes in length
 - Tagged for discursive, cultural, and linguistic content
 - Tagged for the spoken vocabulary
 - Searchable
 - Annotatable
 - Clips are presented to the student with comprehension aids
 - When available, subtitles and/or captions are available

Accessing the LFLFC

- Requires an institutional relationship
- Institution must ...
 - Agree to provide access only to films that it owns
 - Agree to provide access only to instructors at the institution
 - Assign the role of campus administrator to someone who will be responsible for films and faculty



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Welcome to the LFLFC, Mark Kaiser. You have nothing in your cart, and [1 clip saved for later](#).

English Clips at UC Berkeley



Post-shooting café (1:59)

Thelma and Louise

Thelma and Louise grab a meal at a café and discuss their plan of action. They get into an argument. Thelma tries calling home, but Darryl doesn't answer.



A peppy actress (1:55)

Lost in Translation

John and Charlotte stroll down the corridor of a hotel in Tokyo when a famous actress recognizes John. After the actress flirts with John, Charlotte and John exchange terse words.



The start of Carolyn's affair (1:19)

American Beauty

Recent Lesson Plans in English

NYC Dialects (Test Lesson Plan)

Created May 21, 2013 by Steve Welsh

[Download lesson plan file \(.docx\)](#)

There are many dialects of English used in New York City. Find me some, and see if you can emulate them.

Student Level: Beginner, Intermediate

Duration: Multiple Days

Context: Homework

2 clips in this plan

This plan has attachments

[View all lesson plans in your language →](#)

English Films at UC Berkeley



Father of the Bride

Father of the Bride

Charles Shyer, 1991



Henry observes Lucy from a distance as she makes an interesting structure out of her waffles. Another person at the bar worries that Henry is staring at him.

Actions

[Go to your cart \(0\)](#)

[Save for later \(1\)](#)

[View/Add comments](#)

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Choose clip(s) with...

- No subtitles
- English subtitles

Choose what students will see while viewing this clip:

- Show clip title
- Show clip description
- Show year portrayed
- Show vocabulary
- Show film info

Thank YOU!

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Homework

- Go to <http://blcvideoclips.berkeley.edu>
- Register using your email
 - Put “Arizona2015” in department
 - Put “Temp7/15/2015” in phone
 - For school, use “UC Berkeley”
 - Complete the registration process by 10 p.m.
- You will receive an email back from the system with a temporary password
- Log on to the site
- Explore! Order a clip! Annotate it!