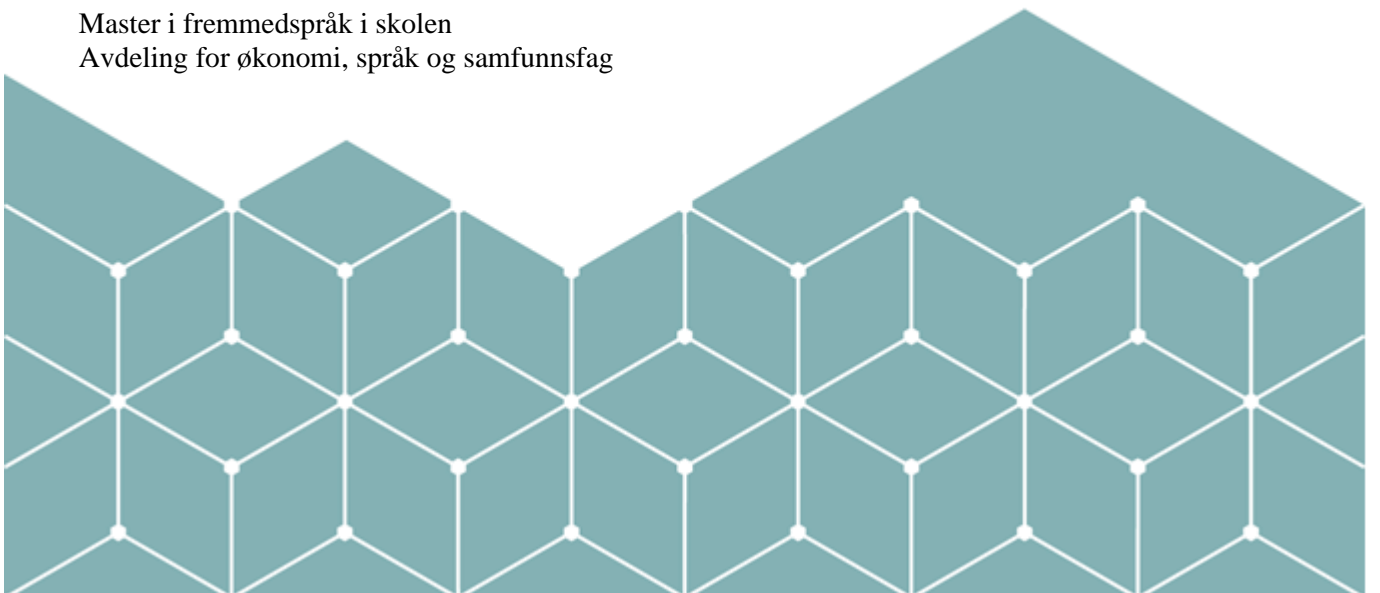# *MASTER'S THESIS*

To what extent may *Love Actually* and clips from other selected films starring Hugh Grant be used to teach British culture and promote intercultural competence?

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Acknowledgements

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Abstract

This thesis analyses the film *Love Actually* (Curtis, 2003) in search for elements that can be used to teach British culture and promote intercultural competence. In addition, four more films starring Hugh Grant are analysed to be used as support for the same purpose. Communication across cultures is increasing both in real life and online encounters, and for this communication to be successful the interlocutors need to understand each other's cultures. Films can be useful when teaching culture. However, the danger of stereotyping must be addressed. The theoretical framework includes concepts of intercultural competence and how films can increase this competence. Further the danger of stereotyping is shown and lastly some aspects of British culture are presented. In this thesis, the aspects of British culture involve politeness, the class system, Christmas and iconic objects.

The study includes analysis of the films, where useful clips are presented. The findings show that the films contain many scenes presenting British culture. Furthermore, many of these scenes stereotype British culture, and the didactic implementation suggest how this can be used in making students aware of stereotyping to further increase their intercultural competence.

Table of contents

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The value of possessing intercultural competence is increasing, since communication across cultures is progressively common. Up to 2020, one of the main reasons for intercultural communication was tourists traveling around the world. In 2018 there were 1,8 billion international tourist arrivals (UNWTO, 2019). Some travelled for business, and others chose to study abroad. According to UNESCO, more than 5,3 million students studied abroad in 2017 (UNESCO, 2019). Some people move because they are forced to. There were "79.5 MILLION forcibly displaced people worldwide at the end of 2019 as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations or events seriously disturbing public order" (UNHCR, 2020). When people relocate, they will interact with people from other cultures. Since the early months of 2020, the pandemic has changed many of these physical relocations. Even if people are not traveling between countries as much now as they did the years before Covid-19, they are still communicating over borders. Internet has proven to be a crucial tool for people to communicate, and many international companies have discovered how practical videoconferencing can be. All over the world, people from different cultures are communicating, either physically or virtually. In these communication settings, understanding and knowledge of culture, both own and others', are crucial. The Norwegian Curriculum, the Knowledge Promotion (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020), aims for students to study culture when learning a language. This includes studying the way of living, people's mindsets, various patterns of communication and the diversity in the English-speaking world.

The Knowledge Promotion encourages the use of different medias. However, no media is being mentioned specifically. Different approaches have been used to teach culture, and one interesting approach is using film. Teachers have been using films in the classroom for decades. Sometimes they are used only for entertainment purposes, other times for learning. In foreign language teaching, film can contribute in different aspects. Brown reports that language teachers consider authentic films to be useful for students developing their vocabulary, communicative skills, and probably also their understanding of a culture (Brown, 2010, p. 46). Since technology is developing rapidly, film is now easy to access and use in the classroom.

The Knowledge Promotion from 2020 wants students to explore and describe various elements of culture in the English-speaking world. However, no specific English-speaking country is mentioned (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020). One can still argue that British culture should be taught. Although British culture can be found in numerous films, and the country has produced many international film stars, there are only a few that stand out as what many would call typical British actors. One of these is Hugh Grant. He has played many roles which media often have judged to be characteristically British. As Lazic puts it, his characters often show "a typically British kind of discomfort" (2020). Grant tends to be in films where British culture is present. In the Christmas film *Love Actually* (Curtis, 2003), people of different ages, sex and social classes interact in various settings. The film is a good starting point for teaching about British culture.

1.2   Research question

My aim is to investigate whether selected films starring British actor Hugh Grant may be used to develop intercultural competence. The research question is therefore, **to what extent may *Love Actually* and clips from other selected films starring Hugh Grant be used to teach British culture and promote intercultural competence?**

1.3   Overview of study

This thesis comprises six chapters. After the introduction chapter, the second chapter contains theoretical framework which includes intercultural competence, film and intercultural learning, stereotyping and British culture. The section about British culture focuses on politeness, class system, Christmas and iconic objects. In this thesis, Hugh Grant and five films featuring him are studied. The procedure of how this material was chosen and a presentation of the actor and of the films can be found in chapter three. The films are analysed for content that can be used for teaching culture, and in chapter 4 the findings of this study of the films are portrayed. Here, it is pointed out where examples of each theme can be found in *Love Actually* (Curtis, 2003) and what clips to use for each theme in the supporting films. An overview of times for each clip can also be found in Appendix A. Chapter 5 contains suggestions and discussions of how the films can be used, and why they can be used in that way. Finally, a conclusion is drawn in chapter six.

2   Theoretical framework

2.1   Intercultural competence

Intercultural competence is, as mentioned, important when communicating across borders, either online or in the real world, and many educators see this competence as important in their teaching. Many definitions of intercultural competence in language teaching exist. Although, as Lingfen points out, there is "no agreement on a unified definition" (Lingfen, 2020, p. 332), Deardorff observes that nearly all definitions include knowledge, attitudes, and skills (Deardorff, 2004, p.15). Byram, Gribkova and Starkey divide intercultural competence into five areas: attitudes, knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction and critical cultural awareness (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002, pp. 7-9). Since it is impossible to achieve knowledge about all the cultures linked to a language, the students need tools to be prepared for meetings with people of different cultures. By introducing the students to the five areas of Byram et al., the students will be more equipped to handle future intercultural relations.

   The attitudes of the interlocutors are crucial in a communication setting. Byram et al. reason that one must be open to and curious about other cultures. Understanding that one's own values, beliefs and behaviours might not be the only correct ones, could lead to a readiness to increase intercultural competence. The students should be willing to change their perspectives. Byram et al. introduce "the ability to decentre'" (Byram et al., 2002, p. 7). This ability helps students "see how others see the world" (Byram & Wagner, 2018, p.146) and picture how their own values, beliefs and behaviours are seen by someone from a different culture.

   As mentioned earlier, it is impossible to have all knowledge about all cultures associated with a language, for example knowing about all cultures that use the English language. English is often used as a lingua franca. Which means in theory, students would need to know about all cultures in the world. Byram and Wagner therefore underline the importance of "the 'knowing how' or 'can-do' approach" instead of encouraging "'knowledge about' national cultures" (Byram & Wagner, 2018, p. 147). This knowledge can be seen as "knowledge of how social groups and identities function and what is involved in intercultural interaction" (Byram et al., 2002, p. 7). When learning about a specific culture, students should be taught how to use this knowledge in meetings with other unfamiliar cultures in the future.

Additionally, possessing knowledge about own culture develops intercultural competence, and must be a central part when teaching culture.

When students have knowledge about their own culture, they are more able to compare with other cultures. Byram et al. (2002, p. 8) find "the skills of comparison, of interpreting and relating" crucial to avoid misunderstandings. Students should for example investigate events from other cultures and compare them with events from their own. They can also interpret documents from other cultures and try to relate them to documents from their own culture. By explaining events and documents from the view of the other's culture, they could recognise how misunderstandings might occur.

Since it is impossible to foresee all cultural knowledge needed for future interactions, the students need tools to independently find out about new cultures. Byram et al. call this the "skills of discovery and interaction" (2002, p. 8). Byram and Risager claim these skills are needed to "manage a new environment" (1999, p. 66).   By recognising how to discover new knowledge and how to assimilate it with old knowledge, students can later use this when encountering new cultures.

No matter how willing the students are to learn about other cultures, they will need to be aware of their own values in order to develop their intercultural competence. Byram et al. underline that teachers are not supposed to change their students' values, but to make them aware of these values. The students need a "critical cultural awareness" (2002, p. 9). When students are aware of "their own beliefs, values and behaviours" (Byram et al., 2002, p. 9) and understand that these can have an impact on their understanding of people from other cultures, they are better equipped as intercultural speakers. Byram and Wagner argue that when the "students reflect critically on their own identity" (2018, p.148), they will also regard this skill in a wider perspective beyond the language classroom, as a learning for life.

2.2   Film and intercultural learning

Due to improved technology the last few years, film is just a click away in most classrooms today. This accessibility has made films increasingly popular among teachers. This is noticeable in social media groups for teachers, where film often is suggested and discussed in all school subjects, and English language teaching is no exception. In regard to teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL), film has been seen as valuable with multiple learning outcomes. Film has for example been shown to develop students' oral skills (King, 2002, pp.

519-520), listening skills (Swaffer & Vlatten, 1997, pp.175-176) and intercultural competence (Byram & Risager, 1999, pp. 123-124). Byram and Risager show how film can be an alternative when class trips to other countries are not an option. They suggest that film "bring[s] to life the communication and cultural and societal conditions in target language countries" (Byram & Risager, 1999, pp. 123-124). In films, students can experience real life encounters without traveling outside of the classroom.

In 1996, ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) introduces the five C's as part of *The Standards for Foreign Language Learning* in the USA. The standards were revised in 2015 and are now called *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages*, but still comprise the five C's which are Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons and Communities (ACTFL, 2015). Sturm believes that "film and video in the L2 classroom can contribute to each of these areas" (2012, p. 248). When cultures are introduced through films in the classroom, it gives the students the chance to discuss, reflect and compare which in addition to already mentioned learning outcomes, will possibly lead to an increase in intercultural competence. Film offers an opportunity for students to compare simple and more advanced differences and similarities in their own culture and in the one of the target language's culture. They might recognise values, behaviours and beliefs in the film that are either different or similar to their own. By becoming aware of these and being able to recognise these in other future settings, they may increase their critical cultural awareness.

Materials used in teaching languages are often made especially for learners. However, the advantages of using authentic material are known to be many, and "authenticity is frequently used as a selling point in the marketing strategies of publishers" (Gilmore, 2007, p. 106). One advantage is that since authentic films are made for the target culture audience, they give a more realistic impression than what graded material does. Students encounter what Brown calls "natural (seeming) discourse" (2010, p. 45). In authentic films, learners are more likely to meet idioms, collocations and slang which often reflect the culture. In addition, accents and sociolects are often present, and these tend to mirror the society, as will be discussed later. Some could claim that all these elements might make authentic material difficult for learners to understand. However, in films, the advantage is that body language, facial expressions and settings can increase their comprehension.

When introducing film as a tool in language learning, it is important to underline that it is still language, in the broader sense, being taught and not film. Hughes argues that the focus should not be on the camera angles or the lighting but on the language components

(2019, p.45). This could be grammar or vocabulary, or as will be the focus in this study, culture. Sturm warns that film should not be used as "fillers" but always have "a pedagogical goal that is well supported by research" (2012, p. 251). She makes the point that "film can show dozens of cultural details more efficiently than an instructor can explain" (Sturm, 2012, p. 248). Film offers real-world contexts which can lay the foundation for conversations among the students about culture. Discussing various authentic situations in films and comparing them to own culture might lead to an in-depth awareness.

From her study in 2010, Brown concludes that "for effective teaching the learners need an interactive speaking activity" (p. 54). She suggests group discussions and role plays. Equally, Hughes (2019) promotes a student-centred approach where students are encouraged to be involved in the learning process. In his course the curriculum "is designed to help students make the connection between their language and culture learning processes" (p. 48). During the course the instructor will encourage the students to discuss the film segments. Even during the assessment process the students should reflect on their own learning outcome, especially regarding the cultural understanding and how they may benefit from this new knowledge and understanding in future situations.

Films can give language learners the opportunity to increase their intercultural competence. By presenting the films with activities that make the students active in their own learning, it is likely that the students will reflect on their own values and attitudes. In addition to giving the students knowledge about a specific culture, films can give them knowledge that Byram refers to as "knowledge of how social groups and identities function" (2002, p. 7). By guiding the students through appropriate tasks, the students can develop useful skills. Students normally like watching films, and the aim is that this enjoyable component can also be used for developing their critical cultural awareness.

2.3 Stereotyping

According to psychology teacher McLeod:

A stereotype is a fixed, over generalized belief about a particular group or class of people.

By stereotyping we infer that a person has a whole range of characteristics and abilities

that we assume all members of that group have (McLeod, 2017).

McLeod explains that stereotypes make the social world easier to understand for people. With new encounters, people do not have to think as much but will rely on their previous beliefs. The benefit could be that people can "respond rapidly" in various situations (McLeod, 2017). Unfortunately, stereotyping could have the negative consequence of ignoring the individual differences, and people might add features to individuals they meet that are not accurate. Some stereotypes might be positive. McLeod uses the example of television newsreaders, and that they are often seen as respectable. However, according to McLeod, negative stereotypes are more common. These negative thoughts, also known as prejudices, can lead to negative feelings towards a certain group. Byram et al. point out that if the interlocutors are too focused on the stereotypes it "reduces the individual from a complex human being to someone who is seen as a representative of a country or 'culture'" (2002, p. 5). Therefore, when teaching about other cultures, it is important to be aware of the dangers of stereotyping.

Welsh (2011) argues that "we all generalize in order to make sense of the world around us" (p. 35). When learning something new, whether this being about new cultures or new grammar, students use their existing knowledge and patterns to fit in this new knowledge. She uses grammar learning as an example where generalizing helps students understand and use their knowledge in new settings. Unfortunately, when students use their previous knowledge and follow patterns already learned, this could lead to mistakes when they come across exceptions from the rules. For example, assuming the plural of 'mouse' is 'mouses' is a typical mistake caused by over-generalizing. Welsh (2011) argues that, as with grammar, over-generalizing might also occur in meetings with new cultures, and that this can lead to stereotyping. She challenges teachers to be aware of the language they use when introducing various cultures. She suggests avoiding statements like 'In Australia there are kangaroos everywhere', and instead using a more realistic generalization like 'In Australia there are a lot of kangaroos' (Welsh, 2011, pp. 36-37). Students should also be made aware of their own selection of vocabulary in similar expressions.

Aufa (2017) reasons that since students use stereotyping to make sense of the world around them and to integrate new knowledge into existing patterns, discussing stereotypes in the language classroom could be useful. A good introduction to the theme stereotyping could be to make students investigate stereotyping of their own culture. Byram and Risager refer to this as "the power of other's views of us to make us re-consider our perceptions of ourselves" (1999, 114). In Norway for instance, students will discover that they do not all eat brown cheese and not everyone enjoys skiing, even though this could be said about some, or even many, Norwegians. By showing the students that their culture is more complex, Welsh (2011)

suggests that they should understand that this also should be applied to other cultures and that they should be careful of over-simplifying any culture. This supports the view of Byram et al. (2002), that in a conversation, they need to see the other one as an individual and not just "as a representative of a country" (p. 5). Intercultural speakers need to remember that a person is part of several social groups which makes the person more complex. Byram et al. warn about simplification of a person's social identity and believe the learners need to remember there are "other identities hidden in the person" (2002, p. 6). A Norwegian person is not just Norwegian but can at the same time be 'a mum', 'a nurse' and perhaps 'a football player'.

As mentioned earlier Byram et al. (2002) believe "the skills of comparison, of interpreting and relating" (p. 8) are important for developing intercultural competence. When comparing other cultures to own, it is crucial to look at the similarities, not just the differences. If students focus too much on the differences, it might lead to negative stereotyping. Welsh is convinced that "a focus on similarities may help students to identify with the 'otherness' and therefore promote understanding and empathy" (2011, p. 41). She also believes that by comparing other cultures to their own, the students will have the opportunity to analyse their own culture in a critical way. The aim should be to develop a positive attitude towards both differences and similarities in cultures.

Byram underlines the importance of being able to challenge stereotypes. Students will use their previous knowledge to make sense of their new, using stereotyping to learn. However, they need to be made aware of the generalisations in order to develop their intercultural competence. When teaching culture, it is good to recognise stereotyping. To investigate where the stereotype came from, and to see if there is any truth to the stereotypical idea could perhaps be interesting. For example, the idea that all Norwegians are assumed to be great skiers. Knowing that these ideas might say something about a culture but is not the full truth is crucial.

2.4   British Culture

2.4.1   Politeness

Politeness is defined in the Cambridge Dictionary as "behaviour that is socially correct and shows understanding of and care for other people's feelings" (Politeness, 2020). What socially correct behaviour is, can often be seen differently in various cultures. According to Klimczak (2011), knowing about a culture's view on politeness can be crucial for the communication.

The variances in how people from different cultures act in situations that require politeness may lead to misunderstandings. Being aware of and understanding the differences in politeness in own and other cultures, can be beneficial in intercultural encounters to avoid being perceived as rude. Kasper distinguishes between motivated and unmotivated rudeness (1990, p. 208). She argues that unmotivated rudeness can occur when someone does not know the culture. When a person is unfamiliar with the norms of the culture it might lead to misinterpretations and misunderstandings.

One of the most well-known theories of politeness is the one of Brown and Levinson. They use the term 'face-wants' in their model (1987, Introduction, 2.2.1). The negative face refers to a person's desire to be free in his actions. At the same time the person wants to be approved by the person he is interacting with, and this is referred to as positive face. When using the strategy of positive politeness, the speaker wants to address the positive face-needs of the hearer. Brown and Levinson show different techniques to accomplish positive politeness, and they point out the importance of claiming "common ground" (1987, 5.3.1.). One technique could be to compliment the addressee. Another way is to take notice of the hearer. An example they use is: "Goodness, you cut your hair! […] By the way, I came to borrow some flour." (1987, 5.3.1.). The speaker could also take note of the hearer's needs, as in "You must be hungry. It's a long time since breakfast. How about some lunch?" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, 5.3.1). In positive politeness the hearer's needs could be fulfilled by the speaker in order to strengthen their communicative relationship.

In Western cultures, Brown and Levinson, believe that "negative politeness is the most elaborate" (1987, 5.4). Using this strategy could mean that the speaker is "conventionally indirect" (1987, 5.4.1.). They show the degrees of politeness using examples where the sentence "Lend me your car" is the least polite, and "May I borrow your car please" being more polite. The politest way could be using indirectness and being pessimistic, as in their example "There wouldn't I suppose be any chance of you being able to lend me your car for just a few minutes, would there?" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, 5.4.1.). Strategies can also include hedging, using words like 'perhaps' and 'may', or full adverbial-clause hedges like "if I may ask you" or "if you don't mind" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, 5.4.2.). Brown and Levinson also suggest that a speaker can "minimize the imposition" (1987, 5.4.3.) by using the word 'just', and phrases like 'a tiny bit' or 'a taste of', as in "I just wanted to ask you if I can borrow a tiny bit of paper" (1987, 5.4.3.). In addition, the speaker might want to show that he does not want to impinge on the hearer. We recognise this by apologizing sentences like "I know this is a bore, but…" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, 5.4.4.) or impersonalising sentences

like "One shouldn't do things like that" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, 5.4.4.) where 'I' and 'you' are replaced. Brown and Levinson are convinced that directness is associated with levels of politeness.

British culture is known for being polite. The British tend to prefer a negative politeness and the use of indirect strategies in requesting. Stewart (2005) points out that when compared to the Japanese who are also known for being a negative politeness culture, the British "use a narrower variety of strategies" (p. 117). "In the case of apologies, they show a marked preference for intensifying 'I'm sorry' with a whole range of adverbs (e.g. dreadfully); they give lengthy explanations; and they show a clear need to redress the addressee's negative face" (Stewart, 2005, p. 117). The British way of apologising and requesting has been noticed by many, and Ford and Legon make a point of this in their book "How to be British Collection" (2003), with this illustration:

Brown and Levinson argue that their politeness model is universal, however, they expect this "to be the subject of much cultural elaboration" (1987, 2.2.1). One who questions the universal use of their model is Ogiermann. She argues that "some cultures appreciate pragmatic clarity while associating directness with honesty" (2009, p. 191). She gives the example of Russian culture where honesty and directness are highly valued. This culture prefers directness and can perceive avoidance and indirectness as almost impolite.

Many have compared politeness in different countries and cultures (e.g. House, 2005; Ogiermann, 2009; Fretheim, 2009). Norwegians are often recognised as being direct and not using as many words to get to the point, as for example the British. Fretheim (2005) points out that there is also little use of polite markers, like Sir, in the Norwegian language. Furthermore, it does not have a word that "correspond[s] directly with the English word

please" (Fretheim, 2005, p. 146). Still, there is an excessive use of the word 'takk' (thank you) in Norwegian. Politeness in Norway is saying 'thank you' for almost everything, which other cultures would not. Claiming British are more polite than others is hardly correct. As House discovered when studying German politeness "being polite in German is different from being polite in an English-speaking country" (2005, p. 25). Therefore, when teaching politeness in different cultures, the aim may not be to compare the level of politeness, but to focus more on the differences in how to act politely within the cultural expectancy.

2.4.2 Class System

Britain is known for being "a country historically obsessed by social class" (Chalabi, 2013). The traditional classes in Britain are the upper, middle and working classes. Throughout history, what classes people were born into, have often decided what their lives would be like. Where they would live, what education they would receive and even who they would marry were determined by their family's rank in society. There have, over the years, been discussions on whether the class system is dead or not. Many would say that the system is still very much alive. "'Class distinctions do not die; they merely learn new ways of expressing themselves,' the British sociologist Hoggart once wrote. 'Each decade we shiftily declare we have buried class; each decade the coffin stays empty'" (in Robson, 2016). In his article, Robson discusses if the class system is still present in Britain, and how the prediction of a person's outcome in life can be done by looking at the person's family history.

One study Robson refers to, is the one of Clark and Cummins (2014). They studied if social status is inherited by investigating surnames in the educational system in England from 1170 to 2012 (Clark & Cummins, 2014, p. 517). They examined surnames of wealthy landlords back in 1066, and how often these names were registered at Oxford and Cambridge universities throughout history (Clark & Cummins, 2014, pp. 525-226). They found that "initial status differences in surnames can persist for as many as 20–30 generations" (Clark & Cummins, 2014, p. 518). Thus, according to their study there is a slow social mobility. Even the industrial revolution and more open universities have not had much influence on the mobility rate.

One of the elite surnames Clark and Cummins examined was "Darcy" (2014, p. 525). This name can be found in literature almost 200 years apart. In both Jane Austen's 1813 novel *Pride and Prejudice* and in Helen Fielding's 1996 novel *Bridget Jones's Diary*, Mr. Darcy represents the upper class. These novels illustrate Clark and Cumming's point about the upper

class keeping their position in society over years. Throughout history, literature has also been used to focus on the negative sides of the class system in Britain. Especially in the early 20th century, many writers used their voices to try to end the system. An example is Rebecca West who in her novel, *The Return of the Soldier* (2018) shows how the hierarchical system can be unfair, not only in an economic way, but also emotionally. West shows how love between people of different classes encounters difficulties just because of society's expectance of them. She also indicates that social class and status were more important than love when choosing a life partner. This theme can also be recognised in Austen's book one hundred years earlier.

Although many have tried to end the class system and many have claimed it is dead, after the BBC's 2011 Great British Class Survey, a new seven class model was introduced (Savage et al., 2013, p. 220). The survey included questions about finance, both salary, savings and value of homes. In addition, "its questions on cultural capital asked about people's leisure interests, musical tastes, use of the media, and food preferences" (Savage et al., 2013, p. 224). To investigate people's social capital, they "asked respondents whether they knew anyone in 37 different occupations" (Savage et al., 2013, p. 224). The results from the study included an overview of the seven classes with descriptions, which can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1.

The Seven Classes with Descriptions.

Class	Description
Elite	Very high economic capital (especially savings), high social capital, very high highbrow cultural capital
Established middle class	High economic capital, high status of mean contacts, high highbrow and emerging cultural capital
Technical middle class	High economic capital, very high mean social contacts, but relatively few contacts reported, moderate cultural capital
New affluent workers	Moderately good economic capital, moderately poor mean score of social contacts, though high range, moderate highbrow but good emerging cultural capital
Traditional working class	Moderately poor economic capital, though with reasonable house price, few social contacts, low highbrow and emerging cultural capital
Emergent service workers	Moderately poor economic capital, though with reasonable household income, moderate social contacts, high emerging (but low highbrow) cultural capital
Precariat	Poor economic capital, and the lowest scores on every other criterion

Note. Adapted from *A Model of Social Class*, by Savage et al., 2013, p.230.

As we see from Table 1, the Elite class and the Precariat classes are the two extremes in British society today. As Savage et al. note, the other classes are less distinct than they used to be (2013, p. 245). Therefore, spotting the class differences of the five other classes might be more difficult now than a few decades ago. Furthermore, Chalabi makes a point that people's appearance might be more determined by their moral choices than their opportunities in life. She reasons that "where once riding a bike and having only one pair of shoes may have been an indicator of meagre earnings and weak social status, they might now suggest the ethical choices of a highly skilled professional" (Chalabi, 2013). This might indicate that when looking for social class, not only appearance needs to be considered, but also other factors, like language and behaviour need to be studied more closely.

It may be beneficial to compare Britain to own one's culture when learning about the British social class system. Clarks and Cummings (2014) found that the inheritance of social class also appears in other countries, including the USA and Sweden. Still, in Scandinavia, the people are known for having less differences between classes than in the UK. According to Chan et al. (2011), "social status is more equitably distributed in Norway than in the United Kingdom" (p. 451). There also seems to be a higher social mobility rate in Norway (Chan et al., 2011, p. 452). In their research, Chan et al. found that although there were similarities in status hierarchy in Norway and in the UK, the distance between the social classes is smaller since "the distribution of status is more egalitarian in Norway than in the United Kingdom" (Chan et al., 2011, p. 465). In addition, Fredsted (2005) found when investigating politeness, that "it is not good 'tone' in the Scandinavian welfare states to show off" (p. 159). Status and rank are often invisible, and markers like 'Sir' are not being used, not even in business situations. These differences between the countries could be of interest when teaching about social class.

Although, Britain is known for their established class system, in a work place the power distance between employers and employees are not as high as may be expected. The power distance in the United Kingdom is by Hofstede et al. set to be 35, which is not much higher than Norway at 31(Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 59). Still, there are differences. In Norway, employees are more likely to be consulted in decisions and more encouraged to take initiatives (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 333). As mentioned in the chapter about politeness, Norwegians are likely to communicate more directly, which can be recognised in the communication style in a workplace. What is more recognisable is perhaps the use of polite markers, or the lack thereof. In Norway, both employers and employees are more likely to be called by their first names. Whereas in Britain, people of higher rank will be addressed as

either Madame or Sir, or by their family names. This can be observed in schools as well, where teachers are known by their family names rather than their first names.

2.4.3   Christmas

A quick Google search on Christmas in different countries, will show that traditions vary greatly. Although, some customs seem to be common, "Christmas celebrations reflect local traditions and culture" (Toast, 2017, p. 1). As Toast points out, the feeling of wonder and magic seems to be present in many cultures around Christmas time (Toast, 2017, p. 1). However, the ways to achieve this feeling differ. Toast adds that countries also focus on "different aspects of the nativity story" (Toast, 2017, p. 1). In some countries, like the Scandinavian ones, there is very little focus on the nativity story altogether. What people do, what they eat and even when they celebrate vary. Knowing about some of these differences in traditions can be helpful when interacting with other cultures than one's own.

Christmas often tends to centre around food. For many, it is the main feast of the year. There are of course local variations within each country as well. In Norway for example, two of the main historical trends have been a pork meal called 'ribbe' in the east, and a lamb dish called 'pinnekjøtt' in the west. Furthermore, some parts of Norway are known traditionally to eat fish for Christmas. These regional variations have naturally changed over time, especially in the last 50-60 years, according to Høberg (2019). Still, it is possible to say something about what Norwegians generally eat for Christmas with 88% eating either 'ribbe' or 'pinnekjøtt' on Christmas eve in 2014 (Høberg, 2019). The same can be said for what is the common dish for Christmas in England, most people would agree on turkey and roast potatoes. In addition, many would add pigs in blankets, Yorkshire puddings, Brussels sprouts and mince pies as important for their annual feast (Watson, 2014).

One of the most noticeable differences in celebrations, is what day Christmas is celebrated on. Some countries, like Russia and Ethiopia, follow the Julian calendar and celebrate on the 7th of January. Still, most countries celebrate on the 24th or the 25th of December. For Norwegians who are used to celebrating in the evening of the 24th, learning about the British way of celebrating on the morning of the 25th is of significance. Especially for younger students, the traditions around presents can be interesting. Many children in Norway are used to Santa coming into the house to greet them, while in England he slips into the house in the middle of the night to fill their stockings with presents while they are asleep.

In "Consumption, Coca-colonisation, Cultural resistance and Santa Claus" (2008), McKay argues that the American export of Christmas traditions has influenced countries around the world. Simultaneously, McKay recognises how also other cultures have influenced the British celebrations as well. He gives examples of the tradition of the Christmas tree from Germany and of the filling of stockings from Holland (McKay, 2008, p. 50). Countries and cultures are more easily influenced in newer times through more accessible international media. Teachers might want to make students aware of how Christmas cultures can spread over borders, and how traditions and trends often change over time.

An example of a Christmas trend that has changed over time, and spread over borders, is the 'ugly Christmas jumper'. According to Cerini, "Christmas-themed pullovers started making an appearance in the 1950s" (2019). The jumpers were seen often in for example office parties in the 80's, but they were not cool, and in the 90's "it was something only your unfashionable older relatives would ever think of wearing or gifting" (Cerini, 2019). Cerini mentions the film *Bridget Jones's Diary* from 2001, where Mark Darcy is wearing one of these jumpers. Even though the jumper might have made the viewers smile, both Bridget Jones and the viewers were at the time "horrified". Nevertheless, around the same time as the film was released, people started attending Christmas jumper parties. And in 2012, "British newspaper The Telegraph described the item as 'this season's must-have'" (Cerini, 2019). A couple of years later, the trend also hit Norway, and has now become part of the Christmas tradition for many Norwegians. Watching this same film twenty years later, could generate different feelings.

Although, traditions vary within British families, some traditions could be regarded as quite typically British. Various English language teaching sites, for example The British Study Centres and The British Council Teaching English, promote some traditions within British culture. There seems to be an agreement that school children perform in nativity plays, many people watch pantomimes around Christmas time and the Queen's speech on Christmas day. Additionally, stockings are hung up and crackers are pulled in most homes in England. As mentioned earlier, Christmas food traditions are often similar in most homes in the country as well. These traditions could be interesting and educational for students to compare with their own.

2.4.4   Iconic objects

When people see an image of the Eiffel Tower, they are likely to think of France. Just as they are likely to think of Australia when they see a picture of a kangaroo. Most countries have these cultural elements that function almost like symbols which represent the country. These types of icons can often be found in the form of souvenirs from that specific country or culture. Using some of these iconic images in language teaching could help the students distinguish the culture from other cultures. By spotting some of the country's icons, the students might recognise this culture more easily in the future. Using icons could be a concrete way to integrate culture in language teaching and could lead to students being more curious about the country. However, it is important to underline that this may be a shallow way of seeing a country and should perhaps be used as starting points for deeper discussions and investigations.

In Britain there are several of these iconic objects that can be spotted, and some are probably more known to the students than others. The iconic double-decker bus and the London cabs, the red phone box, the British flag and maybe the Beefeaters should be easy for language learners to recognise. Furthermore, landmarks like the London Eye, Big Ben and Stonehenge may be useful. Additionally, other images to look out for could be of a football, the English rose, a teapot and perhaps the underground sign. These symbols have stories behind which might be interesting to learn more about in order to discover more about British culture. As an extension of these symbols, students could also recognise other cultural features such as architecture. This does not have to be very complicated. They could for instance look at British homes compared to Norwegian ones. As mentioned earlier, when being taught about culture, the students need to be made aware of similarities as well as differences to develop intercultural competence.

3   Procedure and Material

3.1   Choosing the Material

As shown in the previous chapter, the focus in this thesis is on the cultural themes politeness, class system, Christmas and iconic objects. When choosing films and scenes the aim was to find good examples of these themes and to find film clips that can make students discuss,

reflect, and compare. After investigating several films starring Hugh Grant, it became obvious that they often portray British culture. Simultaneously, it was also noticeable that British culture in these films was sometimes portrayed in a stereotypical way. The scenes chosen are good examples of the mentioned cultural themes, but could and should also be discussed in regard to stereotyping.

Since the main film is to be shown in full for students to recognise all the cultural themes mentioned, it was crucial that this film contained elements of all these themes, and *Love Actually* (Curtis, 2003) does. Scenes were found in this film for each of the themes, and the results can be found in chapter 4.1. In addition to politeness, class system, Christmas and iconic objects, *Love Actually* (Curtis, 2003) is an excellent film to use when demonstrating stereotyping. Consequently, when analysing this film, scenes where Americans are stereotyped were identified. In this film, there are more examples of the mentioned cultural themes to be spotted, and the aim is that students will be able to recognise even more examples than the ones mentioned in chapter 4.1.

When choosing scenes from the other films, it was important to find scenes that portrayed elements of the themes but is was not necessary for all elements to be present in each film. Furthermore, the clips should be possible to watch without too much knowledge of the rest of film. Several films starring Hugh Grant were studied where British culture was clearly present, but not all of them had specific scenes that met the set goals of this study. Each film was analysed for each theme, and appropriate scenes were picked accordingly. This approach led to the film clips being grouped into themes, for example clips showing politeness. Even though politeness can be spotted in all films mentioned in this thesis, not all the films were used for this purpose, only four clips from three films were picked as examples of politeness. These clips show different variations of politeness and when shown together, they should contribute to the understanding of politeness culture in Britain. Likewise, the six clips from three films showing the theme class, including a scene from *The Gentlemen* (Ritchie, 2019) showing the Cockney accent, are grouped together. Both supporting film clips representing the theme Christmas are taken from *Bridget Jones's Diary* (Maguire, 2001), and the ones showing examples of iconic objects are taken from *Paddington 2* (King, 2017). The scenes needed to be easily recognisable for their theme, and as a result they tend to portray British culture in a somewhat stereotypical way and could function as good starting points for discussions.

3.2   Presentation of actor

As mentioned earlier, Hugh Grant is by many called a typical British actor since he has played numerous roles which media often have found to be characteristically British. In films like *Four weddings and a funeral* (Nevill, 1994), *Love actually* (Curtis, 2003) and even *Paddington 2* (King, 2017), Grant plays characters with strong, upper-class British accents. In his latest film from 2019, *The gentlemen* (Ritchie, 2019), he suddenly plays a character with a cockney accent, showing a different British cultural trait. Rowsell suggests that "maybe, just maybe, Hugh Grant represents something bigger than Hugh Grant" (2018). She claims that "Hugh Grant is the 90s and the early 00s British culture" (Rowsell, 2018). Throughout his career his Britishness has been pointed out by many, and often his films portray a good amount of British culture.

Sweeney discusses Grant's masculinity, and especially his British masculinity (2001). He points out how Grant's "British charm and humor" represented an opposite to the typical American masculinity known in the 80's (2001, p.1). When Grant was ranked "Fourth Sexiest Man" in a 1997 world-wide film poll, the three men above him on the list, Mel Gibson, Sylvester Stallone and Clint Eastwood, represented a more macho, American masculinity "that Grant's presence so firmly disavows" (Sweeney, 2001, p.10). In many of Hugh Grant's films, his characters are romantically involved with American women, for example in *Notting Hill* (Michell, 1999), *Mickey Blue Eyes* (Makin, 1999) and *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (Nevil, 1994). In these romantic encounters his non-macho masculinity is often underlined. In *Notting Hill* (Michell, 1999), his character cries out the effeminate expression 'whoopsidaisies' when attempting to climb a fence with the American woman. In *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (Nevil, 1994), his character stutters and bumbles when exclaiming his love to the American woman. And lastly, in *Mickey Blue Eyes* (Makin, 1999), his American fiancée's family is trying to teach him American masculinity. This attempt proves in the end not to work, and Sweeney believes this shows "the inability – and the unwillingness – of British masculinity to merge with mainstream, and therefore American, masculinity" (2001, p. 13). According to Sweeney, Grant's body even represents the British Body on film, which "is usually offered in contrast to the buff, muscular and laboring American body" (2001, p. 3). In this article, Sweeney is stereotyping British masculinity to a certain extent, by viewing Grant's characters as representing British cultural masculinity. Many would argue that other British male ideals, for example manual labourers from the working class, might be better representatives as models of British masculinity than Grant's characters.

Accents are known as one of the traits that can show where you are from but also your social class. In most of his films, Grant speaks with a strong upper-class British accent, something that is facilitated by him having studied English at Oxford. Even though he is often portrayed as a man who bumbles and stutters his words, his language and accent show him as a member of high social class. His characters are often of this class, and the accent is therefore appropriate. However, it could be discussed if his accent is too posh for some of his roles. For teaching purposes, his upper-class accent might still be a good starting point when looking into accents and class. Using a clip from his latest film, *The Gentlemen* (Ritchie, 2019), could be interesting for comparing accents, since Grant here plays a character with a cockney accent.

Although Hugh Grant films may present British culture, teachers need to be careful of stereotyping and prejudice. The French journalist, Bock, points out that the French like films with what they think of as British culture: "Top hats, black cabs, ugly Christmas jumpers and the more Hugh Grant the better" (Bock, 2018). Bock has over the years realised that these are clichés, and she argues that films for example about the working class are normally not shown internationally. In this thesis the aim is to show how the selected films also can be used as a starting point to discuss stereotyping. Hugh Grant's characters may be good as both examples of British culture as well as stereotyping.

3.3   Presentation of the films

The Christmas film *Love Actually* from 2003, is for many a favourite to watch in December. In addition to being the screenwriter, this film was also Richard Curtis' directorial debut. The film is set in London in the weeks before Christmas. The main theme in the film is love, and various types of relationships are portrayed. Through the film several stories are intertwined, and various types of relationships bring the different stories together. From beginning to end, people of different ages, sex and social classes interact in various settings. Hugh Grant plays the Prime Minister who falls in love with one of his employees. The difference in age in this relationship is perhaps not as obvious as the difference in class. This disparity is shown in for example language, behaviour and living standard. One of the final events in the film is a nativity play at a local school, and the majority of the characters from the various stories are here brought together, either as lovers, families, neighbours, friends or colleagues. Even though most of the stories take place in, what seems to be, a small area of

London, many aspects of British culture are represented, and this will be investigated more in the study section.

Screenwriter Richard Curtis has worked with Hugh Grant in several movies, and the first one was *Four Weddings and a Funeral* in 1994. The film became a huge success and had an enormous impact on Grant's career. In the film, a group of friends keep attending weddings but are themselves still searching for true love. Grant's character is a charming, but bumbling and slightly unconfident, British young man who falls in love with an American woman named Carrie, in one of these weddings. Through the film, he becomes certain that Carrie is the one, but their timing always seems to be wrong. Using an American woman as a contrast to the British people, emphasises the British cultural features in the film. As Duffy points out, the film tries to portray "an idea of what it means to be English" (2014). She uses a dialogue as an example from the first wedding when Charles asks his friend: "Do you think there really are people who can just go up and say, 'Hi, babe. Name's Charles. This is your lucky night'?" and Matthew replies: "Well, if there are, they're not English." Some criticise Curtis and argue that his "one-sided version of British life is limited and only takes into account the white middle class" (Duffy, 2014). However, one-sided as it may be, the film still shows examples of what could maybe be called mainstream, middle-class, British culture.

Bridget Jones's Diary is a film from 2001 based on the novel of Helen Fielding from 1996, and Richard Curtis co-wrote the script. Bridget is a single woman in her thirties who is trying to improve both her career and love life. The story takes place from one Christmas to the next where she reveals her inner thoughts through her diary. The main story is based around her choice between two men, both of higher social class than Bridget. One is her boss, played by Hugh Grant. The other bachelor is a friend of the family, and this character is named Mark Darcy. As mentioned earlier, the name Darcy can also be found in Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice*. Interestingly, Mark Darcy in *Bridget Jones's Diary* (Maguire, 2001) is played by Colin Firth, who also plays Mr. Darcy in the 1995 TV mini-series adapted from Austen's book. Additionally, several similarities between the two stories have been pointed out (Gallagher, 2016). In fact, Fielding even admitted that she stole parts of the plot in *Pride and Prejudice* since she was "infatuated" by Austen's story at the time (Gallagher, 2016). The film *Bridget Jones's Diary* (Maguire, 2001*)* is a romantic film portraying British cultural elements in a sometimes-humorous way.

In the children's film *Paddington 2* (King, 2017), Hugh Grant plays the role of an old actor who turns out to be a thief. He steals a book which the cute bear, Paddington, wanted to buy for his auntie. Misunderstandings lead to Paddington's imprisonment and the viewers

follow the bear's and his family's and friend's adventures to find the thief and clear Paddington's name. The story mainly takes place in London, and the stolen book contains significant and known landmarks from the city. Paddington is very well behaved, and he sees the good in everyone and believes in people. As a result, he tries to teach his new friends in prison manners and politeness. In this film from 2017, selected components of British culture are shown in a nice and friendly way.

Guy Ritchie's film from 2019 *The Gentlemen*, is an action and comedy gangster film about a cannabis baron who is trying to sell his whole business for £400 million so that he can retire. This leads to complications in the criminal world, and sets off briberies, blackmails, and murders. Hugh Grant plays a private investigator who has been hired by a newspaper to find links between the cannabis baron and a well-known lord. In this film, Grant changed his accent from his usual posh upper-class to a cockney accent. The film has an age rating of 18 years in England, but in Norway it is set to 15. The use of very strong language, the showing of drug misuse, racist comments, sexual references and at times extreme violence may be a consideration when showing this film in school. However, there are scenes in this film which can be of value when teaching British culture, and by selecting scenes carefully one can avoid the most violent scenes.

4   The Study

4.1   Love Actually

4.1.1   Politeness

In the film there are several examples of the use of the polite marker 'Sir'. One of the best examples is the one where the new junior member of staff, Natalie, is being introduced to the Prime Minister and she makes the mistake of calling him by his first name (0:07:13-0:09:00). There are also scenes where the polite marker 'Sir' is being used, for example by the shop assistant in the scene in the jewellery shop (0:14:22-0:17:15), and when the little girls want carol singing from the Prime Minister (1:39:25-1:39:40).

Politeness can also be seen in the scenes involving two people working as stand-ins in a film. In many of these scenes they appear naked, and the situation comes across as

awkward. Still, the stand-ins continue the chitchats about the weather and the horrific traffic. While simulating various sex acts, they keep up the politeness of the conversation. When the man finally finds the courage to ask the woman out, he uses what Brown and Levinson calls negative politeness by saying:

Look, erm...sorry to be a bit forward and all that but...you don't fancy going for a Christmas drink, do you? I mean, nothing implied. Just maybe go and see something Christmassy or something. Obviously, if you don't want to, you don't have to (0:17:56-0:18:30).

As shown in Chapter 2, Brown and Levinson suggest the politest way could be using indirectness and being pessimistic. Using the phrase "you don't want to" shows his pessimistic approach. In this example, the man also does not want to impinge on the hearer, the woman, so he starts with what Brown and Levinson point out in their theory, an apologizing sentence. The British politeness and indirectness in these scenes contribute to the humour. However, this might also contribute to stereotyping British behaviour.

4.1.2   Class

As mentioned earlier, Curtis has been criticized for focusing his stories around the middle class. Still, there are some elements in the film showing some differences in class. The Prime Minister's home is of course a good example of upper-class living. Other homes that can be noticed are the middle-class homes of the widowed man and the one of the Prime Minister's sister. When the junior staff member, Natalie, explains where she lives, Wandsworth, she refers to it as the 'dodgy end' (0:30:20-0:30:50). Later in the film, the Prime Minister goes to this area (1.37:40-1.42:06) and these houses compared with the ones mentioned earlier, are smaller, much closer to each other and of lower standard, and could represent lower middle-class, and maybe even working-class.

Class can also be detected in a workplace. In the office situations, it is expected that the employees address their manager with a marker or their family name in Britain. Therefore, it is interesting how the secretary, Sarah, addresses her manager by his first name, Harry, when entering his office. On the other hand, she does respond with 'Thanks, boss' later in the conversation when receiving orders (0:17:52-0:18:57). As expected, the Prime Minister has staff working for him. However, there is another example of upper-middle-class people having someone from a lower class working for them. The writer, Jamie, employs a cleaner,

Aurelia, in France. Aurelia seems to work more as a full-time servant for him. This relationship develops into a romance between two people coming from different social classes. Yet, especially in the early scenes with these two characters, her behaviour around him shows the class difference (0:36:34-0:37:30, 0:44:50-0:45:27)

Language and accent can often reveal class. Grant's accent in this film underlines his upper middle-class background, and his sister in the film has the same accent. As mentioned, the stories involve mostly middle-class people and their accents are as a result quite similar. A boy, Samuel, who has recently lost his mother, has a clear posh accent that is very noticeable for example in the clip where he tells his stepdad about his brilliant plan to play in the school band (1:00:35-1:01:21). By contrast, when the Prime Minister goes to see Natalie at her parents' house, her parants' accents indicate a lower social class. Noticing especially Natalie's mother in this clip could be interesting for comparison (1:40:43-1:42:06).

4.1.3   Christmas

Since *Love Actually* (Curtis, 2003) is a Christmas film, there are many elements of Christmas to be discovered. All through the film, there are Christmas decorations of all sorts. These are normally very similar to the Norwegian ones, like trees, lights and red ribbons. The use of mistletoe is worth mentioning, and a secretary, Mia, refers to it in the conversation with her boss, Harry, who she is trying to seduce (0:25:00-0:25:25). Furthermore, the tradition of gift giving appears in several occasions. In the clip when a family is gathered around the Christmas tree before the school's nativity play, the presents are located under the tree, which is equal to the tradition in Norway (1.23:53-1:24:55).

Billy Mack is the washed-up rock star in the film, desperately trying to make a come-back with his song 'Christmas is all around'. Throughout the film, he does interviews on TV and radio, and his goal is to have the year's Christmas number one song (0:20:30-0:20:50). In the UK, the announcement of the number one song of the music charts in the week of Christmas is a known tradition and has been part of the Christmas culture for decades. Another musical feature to notice, is the importance of Carol singing in British Christmas culture. One clip which illustrates this is the one where the Prime Minister and his driver sing a carol for some small girls (1:39:25-1.40:15). One more clip to point out, is when one of the characters, who is in love with his best friend's wife, uses a cd-player and posters to tell her he loves her (1:32:38-1:34:33). In both scenes, the characters expect carol singers to show up on their doorstep. The importance of nativity plays at schools across Britain is an additional

musical tradition to notice. Most British people have taken part in at least one nativity play during their lives and will be able to relate to the scenes from the show at the school in the film (1:46:07-1.46:40).

4.1.4   Iconic objects

In the Prime Minister's speech where he stands up to the American president, he refers to some of Britain's cultural iconic figures, "Shakespeare, Churchill, The Beatles, Sean Connery, Harry Potter, David Beckham's right foot, David Beckham's left foot, come to that…" (0:40:58-0:42:22). These cultural iconic figures can be seen as symbolic. In addition, there are some iconic symbols to look out for in the film. Black cabs, double-deckers and the red phone boxes all represent Britain. There are also some British house features to look out for. Of course, the famous Georgian style door at 10 Downing street is notable (0:07:13-0:07:30). However, noticing other doors can also be of interest. In Britain, doors of different sizes, styles and colours are quite typical and differ from the norm in Norway (1:38:50-1.40:32).

Clothes often differ from culture to culture. Since the film is from 2003, the general fashion would have changed both in Britain and Norway. Still, there are two things worth mentioning in regard to clothing. In weddings in Britain, the use of hats is more common than in Norway, and in the wedding in the film the use of hats is well illustrated (0:09:22-0:10:54). Another outfit that can be of interest to notice is the school uniform, which can be spotted in the scene with the Prime Minister's niece in her kitchen (0:04:58-0:05:32).

4.1.5   Stereotyping Americans

As previously underlined, when teaching culture, it is important to remind students of the danger of stereotyping. The film provides a good starting point when the caterer Colin, stereotypes not only British girls and American girls but also himself. He argues that British girls are stuck up, and that all American girls love his cute British accent (0:12:42-0:13:22). Colin's stereotyping of America and the country's girls could perhaps be a product of American films that he has watched. When Colin later meets the American girls, they live up to his stereotyping (1:20:35-1:22:17).

The USA appears in more stories in the film. The boy who has recently lost his mother, Samuel, falls in love with an American girl and is devastated when she is going back to the States. One of the secretaries' love story ends badly, mainly because she needs to take

care of her sick brother since their parents are still in the States. Finally, there is the greater story of the politics between the USA and Britain where the USA is portrayed as bullying the smaller Britain. The presence of American culture in the film could perhaps be used as starting point for some comparisons, however, caution needs to be exercised considering stereotyping.

4.2 Supporting film clips

4.2.1 Politeness

Paddington is a well-behaved bear brought up by his auntie who values politeness. Paddington's politeness values include raising his hat to strangers, saying please and thank you, and only complaining when good reason. Paddington sees the best in people, and he makes friends of all sorts. In *Paddington 2* (King, 2017), his new friends in prison do not share his politeness values in the start, and he tries to teach them manners. In the clip with him and the prison chef, Knuckles, he refers to his auntie and points out how to behave and showing how opening doors is polite. His aunt has also told him to use a hard stare when people have forgotten their manners, which he uses on Knuckles in this same clip (0:41:31-0:44:51).

During all the events in *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (Nevill, 1994), there are naturally situations where politeness is required. In the first wedding, we see how the friends discuss what to say in 'these wretched line ups', one suggesting using the phrase 'You must be so proud'. Then when meeting the family of the bride and groom, we hear them use this specific phrase (0:12:30-0:12:56). As discussed earlier, part of British politeness is the use of indirectness. A clip where this is evident, is Grant's character's attempt to confess his love to the American girl. Grant's character's personality certainly plays a part in this insecure speech. Still, it can be a fun way of seeing how apologising is used to an extreme extent. He wraps his declaration of love in babble and nonsense but also uses excuses and polite phrases like "Sorry, sorry […] I just wondered by any chance you wouldn't like to […] Excellent, excellent, fantastic […] Lovely to see you […] Sorry to disturb […]" (1:06:51-1:08:55).

In *Bridget Jones's Diary* (Maguire, 2001), the two men fighting for Bridget's love, Daniel Cleaver and Mark Darcy, are both well-educated and upper-class. When they end up in an actual physical fight in a restaurant, they excuse themselves several times to the guests while fighting, using phrases as 'I'm sorry' and 'I really am sorry'. They even join in on a

birthday song to be polite before they continue fighting (1:06:00-1:09:00). This fighting scene is humorous since the two men seem to never have been in a fight before. Simultaneously, the politeness mixed in, seems almost inappropriate and adds more humour.

The use of polite markers is common in Britain. Bridget uses 'Sir' and 'Mr' to people over higher rank than her in the office. An example is when a boss comes into the office and she uses the polite marker 'Mr' with his last name, by which he replies with her first name, 'Bridget' (0:08:30-0:08:50). In addition to being an example of politeness, this also shows the different layers of class, which can be recognised not only in the office but in society in general.

4.2.2   Class

As pointed out in the section above, the use of polite markers illustrates class differences. In the film *Bridget Jones's Diary* (Maguire, 2001), there are in addition to the ones presented above, other clips that can be utilised for showing class differences. The homes in the film represent various classes. Comparing clips of Bridget's parents' home (0:01.00-0:04:53) and Mark Darcy's parents' home (1:14:50-1:20:00) could be of interest. These are physical indications that the families are of middle and upper class, respectively. Looking at concrete examples as artwork, ceiling height and decorations could be of help.

The mentioned clip above that shows these features of the Darcy's home also shows another characteristic of class. As mentioned in the chapter about class, the mobility between classes is slow in England. In this clip, we see how Mark Darcy's father announces the engagement between Mark and his fiancée. Both Mark and his fiancée are lawyers, and the engagement between them lives up to the expectation and tradition of remaining within own class. Also worth noticing, is the father's upper-class accent with the well-articulated language which can be viewed as yet another proof of class belonging.

In the same clip, Bridget's mother is wearing a hat. In Britain, wearing hats is tradition in formal settings, like weddings. Since nobody else seems to be wearing hats in this clip, it might indicate that Bridget's mum is trying too hard to fit in with the people of higher social class than herself. Still, it is worth pointing out that the royals wear hats on special occasions, and that the public seems to follow the same procedure to a certain extent, and perhaps more if they are upper middle-class or above.

Examples of hats in weddings can of course be found in the film *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (Nevill, 1994). Hats can be seen in several clips, for example in the first wedding

(0:05:12-0:09:389. In this clip, the main character Charles, played by Hugh Grant, has forgotten the wedding couple's rings and needs to find substitutions. The clip has entertainment value without seeing the rest of the film. By paying attention to the congregation, a variety of hats can be spotted. Literally, all woman in this wedding are wearing one. Later in the same wedding, a conversation between Charles and his friend, Tom, revolves around Tom's wealth (0:22:28-0:23:20). They talk about Tom's family being one of the richest in the country, and it is obvious that he belongs to the upper class. Even though this cannot be said about all the wedding guests, it is apparent that the wedding does not include guests from the lower classes.

The Gentlemen (Ritchie, 2019) might sound like a film about well-behaved men from the upper class. This is true to a certain extent, except they have obtained their upper-class lifestyle through crime. In one of the introduction scenes in the film, the cannabis baron explains how the inheritance of huge estates might cause a problem if the ones inheriting them do not have enough cash (0:16:00-0:17:55). In this clip, lords, ladies, and their fortunes are shown. He goes on by showing how he has vast cannabis plantations located under these estates. Drawing a line between fiction and facts is especially important in this film, underlining that these estates do not survive financially on drug dealing in the real world. However, the majestic estates and the upper class that live there do exist in the country and are shown in a fascinating way. In this clip, the cannabis baron also talks about how difficult it is to find any hidden land in England for drug plantations, since there are people everywhere. The mentioning of walkers, and especially dog walkers is perhaps worth noticing for cultural purposes.

As mentioned previously, accents can reveal social class. Grant's accent in *The Gentlemen* (Ritchie, 2019) could be compared to the accent used by him in any of the other films in this thesis. The opening scene starts with Grant's character surprising one of the gangsters in the gangster's own kitchen (0:04:06-0:07:25). Here he explains his blackmail offer and goes on telling the story of a film script he has written which happens to be the true story about the gangster, his boss and their associates. His language is very strong in this scene and he is using some words generally considered offensive. However, the focus should rather be more on the tone and the pronunciation of words.

4.2.3 Christmas

In *Bridget Jones's Diary* (Maguire, 2001), the viewers follow the life of Bridget for a year. The story starts and ends around Christmas time. There are a few Christmas elements which are typically British, worth spotting. The first time Bridget is introduced to Mark Darcy, they are attending a Turkey Curry Buffet arranged by Bridget's mother (0:01:00-0:04:53). In this clip, Mark is wearing an 'Ugly Christmas jumper', and several Christmas decorations can be noticed, including Christmas trees and colourful tinsels. Christmas a year later, the clip starts with carol singers, both adults out in the street and children out by the door at Bridget's parents' house (1:10:56-1:11:55). Bridget is sitting with her dad in the living room with Christmas cracker hats on.

4.2.4 Iconic objects

In all the films mentioned in this thesis, iconic British objects are visible. For example, a typical pub in *The Gentlemen* (Ritchie, 2019) and a Mini Morris in *Bridget Jones's Diary* (Maguire, 2001). Still, the most suitable film for showing iconic objects is *Paddington 2* (King, 2017). The pop-up book Grant's character steals is full of London landmarks. This clip of the book shows Big Ben, Tower Bridge, the Parliament and St. Paul's Cathedral (0:07:25-0:09:11). Furthermore, double-decker buses, mailboxes, the underground, pigeons in a square and the British flag pop up in this book. In addition, there are other scenes where iconic objects are portrayed. Scenes such as the one where Paddington helps people on his way through the streets of London, show several objects which can be seen as typically British (0:03.48-0:04:42).

5 Didactic Implementation

5.1 Introducing the project in class

Paddington 2 (King, 2017) suits an audience of all ages while the other films address an adult audience. Consequently, the suggestion is to use the films in this project when teaching older students. Although this project is aimed at Year 10 students, it can easily be adapted to older

students in upper secondary or to adult English language classes. The main idea is to briefly introduce the topic of culture and stereotyping, then move over to more specific themes using the supporting film clips. As Sunderland, Rothermel and Lusk (2009) illustrate it is "important to prepare the students. Students should have a basic understanding of the concepts and theories addressed in the movie" (2009, p.544). In this preparation part, the teacher will therefore provide the students with learning goals and some theory about the concepts taught in this project. The teacher will also give specific tasks and lead class discussions. Even though this preparation part is mostly teacher lead, the students should be given the opportunity to identify, discuss and compare cultures. As pointed out by Byram et al. (2002, p. 8) "the skills of comparison, of interpreting and relating" are crucial to avoid misunderstandings in future encounters. Increasing the students' knowledge of culture and stereotyping in this first part will enable them to work more independently and to recognise the cultural themes and stereotyping in the second part of the project working with the main film of this project *Love Actually* (Curtis, 2003). The aim is that the students will use the acquired knowledge and skills from their experiences in this project when watching films and in real life situations in the future.

INTRODUCTION
LEARNING GOALS

The students are

➢ able to define the concept of culture
➢ aware of the complexity in their own and other's culture
➢ conscious about their own identity and values, and how this can affect their view on other cultures
➢ aware of negative consequences of stereotyping
➢ able to recognise own and other's stereotypical attitudes

To accommodate different learning styles and maintain a good structure throughout the project, a PowerPoint could be useful (See Appendix B for a suggested PowerPoint presentation). According to Lauridsen (n.d.), PowerPoint presentations can be a helpful tool to meet learners with various preferred learning styles. In this project, the PowerPoint will especially accommodate the visual learner and the analytic learner. In addition, Lauridsen points out that "with respect to the structure of new and difficult information, some people

need support; they prefer to have a firm structure provided for them" (n.d., p. 8), and Power Point is a great tool for structure. A short introduction about what culture is, starts the project off. Student involvement should be encouraged and making a word cloud on an interactive board, using for example the tools found on menti.com, is a good solution to include everyone. In an experiment on social classroom applications, including a Word Cloud application, Wang, Elvemo and Gangnes (2014) found that when the "use of applications is well planned and well integrated, it will boost engagement, learning, creativity, focus, attention, and social interaction" (p. 12). As explained by Wang et al. (2014), word cloud applications "allow students to brainstorm or give comments related to a given topic" (p. 1). This way students can make suggestions to what their understanding of culture is in a quick and non-threatening way. The teacher can also easily comment and add information as the answers appear on the board. Since this project is meant for older students, a certain preconception of what culture is can be expected.

As seen in the previous chapters, the films used in this project tend to be stereotypical in the way culture is presented. As a consequence, it is crucial that the students are given a proper introduction to stereotyping. In chapter 2.1, the importance of students' awareness of how their own values can affect their understanding of other culture, were discussed. As Byram et al. underline "the ability to decentre'" (Byram et al., 2002, p. 7) helps students "see how others see the world" (Byram & Wagner, 2018, p.146) and picture how their own values, beliefs and behaviours are seen by someone from a different culture. To increase this understanding, when teaching about stereotyping it could be wise to ask the students what they perceive as typically Norwegian. Again, using word clouds on an interactive board is a good option. Then, discuss if all Norwegians would recognise themselves in the word cloud and make the students consider if there are more qualities that are needed to describe each individual Norwegian as a person. This way, the students will be made aware of the fact that their culture is more complex, and that it is dangerous to stereotype and believe that all Norwegians possess the same qualities just because they belong to the same culture. As discussed in chapter 2.3, the students should then realise that this should also be applied to other people with different cultural backgrounds.

Only the film *Love Actually* (Curtis, 2003) will be shown in full during these lessons. As Sherman (2010) points out, there is "a logistical problem with feature films: movies are long, teaching hours are short, so we also need to *fit films into* a classroom schedule" (p.18). It is an advantage if the teacher has seen the other films, but the students do not need to see the entire films to follow the teaching in this project. Using one full-length film and only clips

from the others will be more time efficient. However, by showing the trailers of the supporting films at the start of the project, the students will be given a glimpse into the stories. Some films might even appeal to some students making them want to watch the films in their spare time, which could be encouraged. Knowing the full background story before watching the clips can be beneficial, but not necessary.

5.2   Themes taught using supporting film clips

POLITENESS
LEARNING GOALS

The students

➢ are able to recognise similarities and differences in use of politeness in Norwegian and British culture
➢ can agree that differences in politeness does not necessarily mean the level of politeness is higher or lower
➢ are able to identify use of polite markers in British culture
➢ are able to believe that indirectness and being pessimistic can express politeness
➢ can demonstrate how to use of negative sentences for politeness purposes
➢ are able to identify use of typical polite phrases, like 'lovely to see you'
➢ can distinguish between the use of 'sorry', 'excuse me' and 'pardon'
➢ can identify and explain the use of stereotyping

As pointed out by Kasper (1990), not knowing about the differences in politeness in own and other cultures, can lead to being perceived as rude. Therefore, knowing about the politeness in a culture is beneficial in intercultural encounters. Paddington will introduce the theme politeness to the class with his hard stare and speech about manners. The question after this clip will be: 'Are the British people more polite than Norwegians?'. The emphasis should be on showing that the answer to this is that differences in politeness do not necessarily mean that the level of politeness is higher or lower. Students usually mention that the British use apologising phrases and the word 'please' more. Using the examples of Fretheim (2005)

could be helpful. He shows that in the Norwegian language there is little use of polite markers, like Sir, and there is no word that "correspond[s] directly with the English word *please*" (Fretheim, 2005, p. 146) but Norwegians use the expression 'takk' in many situations where British would not. In this way the attention is drawn more to the differences than to the level of politeness.

Before showing the rest of the clips, some recognisable varieties of British politeness could be presented, with emphasis on the use of:

- o   Polite phrases like 'lovely to see you'
- o   Negative sentences like 'You wouldn't like to…?'
- o   'Please', 'excuse me' and 'thank you'
- o   Polite markers like 'Sir' and 'Mr'

The students can then be asked to identify these uses in the four film clips, each film clip representing each of the bullet points above, first showing the two clips from *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (Nevill, 1994) followed by two from *Bridget Jones's Diary* (Maguire, 2001). After watching all the clips, the students will share their findings in class. Sherman (2010) promotes the use of authentic films in the language classroom, and she argues that they show "language in most of its uses and contexts – something neither coursebook nor classroom can do" (p. 2). Watching these acts of politeness in authentic settings in film clips will make it easier for many students to remember the acts, and also make use of them in real life settings.

As seen in chapter 2.1, Byram et al. (2002, p. 8) find "the skills of comparison, of interpreting and relating" crucial to avoid misunderstandings. Thus, to increase students' intercultural competence, comparing acts and speech of politeness with Norwegian use is important, both to see different and similar use. If students focus too much on the differences, it might lead to negative stereotyping. Welsh is convinced that "a focus on similarities may help students to identify with the 'otherness' and therefore promote understanding and empathy" (2011, p. 41). Here, as throughout the project, pointing out the use of stereotyping is necessary. The scene from *Bridget Jones's Diary* (Maguire, 2001) where the two men educated from Oxford are too polite to have a proper fist fight without saying 'sorry' several times and politely stopping to sing the birthday song, could be a good example of stereotyping. When pointing out the use of 'sorry', the students should also be reminded of the different uses of 'sorry', 'excuse me' and 'pardon', as these differentiate greatly from politeness expressions in Norwegian.

The students
➢ are able to recognise the use of polite markers between classes
➢ can describe and identify the main traits of the traditional British class system
➢ can compare the British system with the Norwegian and recognise both differences and similarities
➢ are able to distinguish between two accents representing different social classes
➢ are able to discover and discuss the use of stereotyping social classes

The last clip shown in the session about politeness shows the use of the polite marker 'Mr' which leads to the next theme 'class'. This clip could be a good starting point when comparing British and Norwegian society. Even if there are social classes in Norway, they are not as visible as in Britain. The gap between classes tends to be more significant in Britain, as discussed in chapter 2.4.2. Robson (2016) claims that the class system is still present in Britain, and a short introduction of the history of the traditional classes in Britain (the upper, middle and working classes) should be made in this part of the project. Robson's article shows how the prediction of a person's outcome in life can be done by looking at the person's family history, and the students should be made aware of this. In this part of the project, the teacher will use the film clips as illustrations to supplement the lecture. The auditive learner will benefit from the teacher explaining and talking about the subject. However, the aim should be to accommodate for more than one learning style. Parmar (2019) argues that film clips make "information processing easier", and as he points out "a picture is worth a thousand words". Therefore, the clips will especially benefit the visual learners.

Robson (2016) points to the study of Clark and Cummins who examined the name 'Darcy', and found it to be representing the upper class throughout history. Starting off with three film clips from *Bridget Jones's Diary* (Maguire, 2001), the students will recognise this name in the film through the character of Mark Darcy, who belongs to the upper class. In addition, the students will see an example of the slow mobility between classes which Robson (2016) refers to, with the engagement of the two lawyers. Parmar reasons that by providing "students with key areas to note while they are watching the video and use these notes as topic areas to question and discuss" film clips can be "a valuable asset to the unit of study or understanding of a topic" (2019). So, while watching these clips, the students should be

encouraged to make notes about the themes introduced by the teacher, for example spotting differences between homes of the upper class and the middle class. In addition, the language of Mark's father could be studied as evidence of class and can be used later for comparing with the Cockney accent.

As explained in chapter 4.2.2, the use of hats has derived from the royals, and is often associated with the upper classes. The last clip from *Bridget Jones's Diary* (Maguire, 2001), shows Bridget's mother wearing a hat, which can be linked to the next clip from *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (Nevill, 1994), where the students will see hats used in weddings. Hats in weddings is a tradition that is still much present today. However, explaining how social classes do change over time and that some traits are stereotyped, is important. Therefore, in the next clip the students should be made aware of the comic side to the clip, and that Tom, one of Hugh Grant's character's wealthy friends, may not represent the upper class in a true way when talking about his wealth and one of his castles. Yet, this scene does reveal how some families have been exceptionally rich for hundreds of years and still are. Parmar argues that the teacher should point out what is important and useful to the students. He continues by saying the teacher should "ask the students their opinions and push them for arguments. Encourage the class to debate" (2019). When showing scenes like the one about Tom's wealth, which can be seen as stereotypical, Parmar's advice should be followed and there should be room for students to discuss the stereotypical aspect.

The first clip from *The Gentlemen* (Ritchie, 2017) will also show the upper class, their appearances, and majestic estates. Again, remembering the danger of stereotyping in films is essential. The students should be made aware of the cannabis baron's American accent since the focus will be on British accents in the next section. The last clip from this film shows Hugh Grant's character's Cockney accent and can be used for comparisons with the upper-class accent. Sherman (2010) suggests an activity she calls "Act along" (p. 123), where the students 'shadow' the speakers in the film clip. She believes that using this activity when learning accents can be helpful. She claims that "recognizing accents is important not only for comprehension but as a clue to cultural identity" (Sherman, 2010, p. 123). The students should be given a chance to try out the accents themselves, echoing the characters from the films. Half the class could try out Mark Darcy's father's accent and the other half Hugh Grant's character from *The Gentlemen* (Ritchie, 2017). The students need to be reminded that when echoing others' accents, it might be seen as stereotyping. Using some examples from Norway could be helpful to underline this problem. They could for example be asked if they know of any known stereotyping of the dialect of the Østfold area or the Kristiansand area.

Even though there is a danger of stereotyping, by trying out British accents themselves, they will notice what Sherman calls the "distinguishing pronunciation features" (2010, p. 123). The teacher should guide the students through this and could point out features like leaving out the pronunciation of 't' in the word 'water' in the Cockney accent. This exercise might lead to someone spotting some accents in *Love Actually* (Curtis, 2003).

CHRISTMAS
LEARNING GOALS

The students
➢ are able to find evidence of similar and dissimilar traits of Christmas in Norway and Britain.
➢ are able to discover that there are many similarities between the two cultures
➢ can accept that focusing on dissimilarities can lead to negative stereotyping
➢ have developed a more positive attitude towards differences and similarities in cultures

When teaching about the culture of Christmas, it is important to compare with own culture. Although many students in Norway belong to different cultures, and some might not even celebrate Christmas, they will know about many Christmas traditions in Norway. The Norwegian Christmas culture is very visible, for example in advertisements, shops and school. Consequently, most students should have enough knowledge to be able to compare Norwegian and British Christmas cultures. For even more interesting comparisons, there might even be some students from other cultures who can share their Christmas traditions. The students should be able to find both similar and dissimilar traits in Norwegian and British Christmas culture. In reference to Welsh (2011), the focus should be more on similarities than differences to avoid negative stereotyping and explaining this to the students is essential. As the students will discover, there are many traditions which are the same in Norway and Britain.

According to Sunderland et al. (2009) films can also create problems in the classroom and "the most important issue is that movies often produce a passive audience" (p. 543). They therefore underline the importance of the students' "need to be attached and actively engaged

in the movie, and not just reflect at the end" (Sunderland, 2009, p. 543). To prevent the students from turning passive, the task for the students in this section will be an easy one and might even lead to competitive students being extra eager. Two clips from the film *Bridget Jones's Diary* (Maguire, 2001) will be shown and the students are to find as many signs of Christmas as possible. After the clips, the students can reveal all their discoveries in groups, followed by a comparison with own culture. The conclusion could perhaps be that much is the same but in all probability turkey, carol singers and cracker hats are more common in Britain than in Norway.

ICONIC OBJECTS
LEARNING GOALS
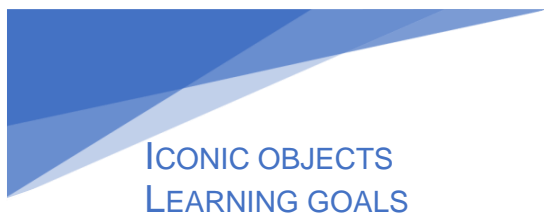
The students
➢ are able to identify British iconic objects
➢ are able to discover meaning behind an iconic object
➢ are prepared to independently identify and investigate iconic objects for deeper meaning

According to Tomalin and Stempleski (1998) countries have "a range of images and symbols embedded in songs and pictures, places, and customs" (p. 14). Iconic objects like these might be the easiest to recognise in films, and it is a good way to present something concrete. Knowing about some iconic objects could make it easier for students to distinguish between cultures in the future, and even though teaching about these objects is on a surface level, it could lead to a deeper understanding of the culture. The red phone box for instance, might not be important in everyday people's lives for practical reasons anymore, but many fight for the existence of this cultural object, including Luxford (2018) who refers to the phone box as "an ingrained part of British culture", and Odone (2013) who argues they "should be preserved on national heritage grounds". As they point out, these types of objects are about tradition, history, and national heritage. The students might be curious about the story and deeper meaning behind these iconic objects. For example, a pot of tea is often associated with British

culture. Digging deeper into this symbol, the students could discover the history of colonialism and Britain's part of history in India.

As a starting point, a Power Point slide with iconic symbols from other countries will be shown. The students will be asked what countries they associate with a picture of the Eiffel Tower, a kangaroo, and a pizza. Tomalin and Stempleski (1998) claim that familiarity with cultural images and symbols "helps students feel more confident and to become more fluent" (p. 14). They suggest using activities where students can identify various images and symbols representing the culture. In this project, film clips will be used for activities of identification. The students will be asked to search for British iconic objects in two clips from *Paddington 2* (King, 2017). The objects could be famous buildings, items like buses and phone boxes or architectural features like doors. By asking the students to find as many as possible, the teacher avoids the issue pointed out by Sunderland et al. (2009) of students becoming passive when watching films. In groups, the students then can see how many they have found, and furthermore share with the rest of the class. The teacher will then pick out one of the objects found and tell the students more about this object. This could be interesting facts, some history associated with it or the cultural meaning of this symbol today. The aim is that the students later will independently spot iconic objects in the main film. Then, as described in the next section, the students will be asked to investigate one of the objects found in *Love Actually* (Curtis, 2003), and share information about the object with the class in a similar way as done by the teacher in this part.

LOVE ACTUALLY
LEARNING GOALS

The students
➢ are able to identify cultural traits of politeness, class, and Christmas
➢ can reflect on these themes' importance for intercultural competence
➢ are able to identify iconic objects and demonstrate a deeper meaning behind them
➢ can find evidence of stereotyping and demonstrate how and why it is used
➢ are aware of the dangers of stereotyping
➢ are more conscious of how their own culture and value affect their attitudes
➢ develop tools to independently find out about new cultures in the future

In this last part of the project, the aim is for the students to use what they have learnt in the preparation part to identify cultural traits in the film *Love Actually* (Curtis, 2003). The class will be divided into six groups. Two groups will look for the theme politeness in the film, the next two will search for class and the last two for Christmas. All students will keep their eyes open for British iconic objects. All will also be asked to watch out for stereotyping in the film and should be given a hint that it might not only be British culture that is stereotyped. They will all be given a form (See Appendix C) which they need to fill out while watching. It is important that the time is showing on the screen while watching, so they can note the times of interesting scenes. In each of these lessons when the film is shown, the students need to be given some time at the end to compare their notes in the groups. They should aim to only use the English language in these dialogues. Tomalin and Stempleski (1998) point out that when teaching language, it is important "to help students to increase their awareness of the cultural connotations of words and phrases in the target language" (p. 9). By talking about the cultural traits in the film with fellow students in English, they might notice some of these words and phrases.

When the full film has been shown, the students will be given time to prepare a presentation of their discoveries, using their notes. Encouraging them to create a PowerPoint presentation will improve the learning outcomes for the rest of the class, as these presentations provide structure. While watching *Love Actually* (Curtis, 2003), the students searched for valuable clips for the group's theme and noted the times. They will now be asked to select some of these clips and use these as illustrations in the groups' presentations. Along with the clips, they should explain why they chose them and how the clips illustrate British culture. In addition, they will be given the opportunity to be creative. As shown previously, Brown (2010) suggests role plays as an interactive speaking activity, and some groups might choose to make a small role play of perhaps a dialogue adapted from a scene in the film.

Although the groups will mainly focus on their given theme, they will all be asked to include two additional themes. First, they are to identify iconic objects seen in the film. One of these objects needs to be investigated further. Using the teacher's presentation as a model from the aforementioned lesson about iconic objects, they will look for facts, history and other data of value about the object. Some groups might choose to investigate the same object but discover different qualities of it. The students will play an important part in showing the others the meaning behind the chosen object. The aim is for the students to discover how iconic objects are valuable resources to understand more about a culture. Second, each group needs to reveal at least one scene from *Love Actually* (Curtis, 2003) where they believe

stereotyping is present. They will be asked to show the film clip and specify what they find stereotyping. The group should demonstrate how the selected scene might influence the viewers and explain why they think the makers of the films chose to use stereotyping. By including this in their presentation, the students are given a chance to display their knowledge of the subject and show their own awareness of the dangers of stereotyping.

The teacher should provide guidance during the preparation. However, it is expected that the groups will be able to work mostly independently using what they learned in the preparation part of the project. The project will end with each group giving their presentation, with the aim that the students will learn from each other. By having the students present their findings, explanations and opinions, the teacher will also be given an opportunity to evaluate what the class has learned. The aim is also that the teacher will observe a difference in students' attitude towards differences and similarities in other cultures, that the students are more conscious of how their own culture and values affect their attitudes, and that the students are more aware of the complexity in individuals to avoid stereotyping.

6   Conclusion

In this thesis, the aim was to investigate if the film *Love Actually* (Curtis, 2003) and other films featuring Hugh Grant can be used in the English language classroom to promote intercultural competence. Since communication situations between people from different cultures are increasing, understanding each other across cultures has become more important and intercultural competence is needed in addition to language skills. Teaching culture can be challenging, and educators seek efficient ways to do this. Film has proved to be a useful tool in developing intercultural competence. When analysing the film *Love Actually* (Curtis, 2003), the focus was on elements of politeness, the class system, Christmas, and iconic objects in British culture. The film proved to contain some useful clips portraying these elements. The other four films were analysed for the same elements, and valuable clips were selected.

The analysis showed that these films often portrayed British culture in a stereotypical way. There is obviously a danger in stereotyping cultures. However, the students need to be

made aware of these types of generalisations in order to develop their intercultural competence. Many of the scenes in these films are helpful in making students aware of the positives and negatives in categorizing cultures. Byram et al. (2002) underline the importance of "the skills of comparison, of interpreting and relating" (p. 8), and by using the films mentioned, the students are given the opportunities to practice these skills. When comparing to their own culture, they should be encouraged to focus more on similarities than differences, since according to Welsh "a focus on similarities may help students to identify with the 'otherness' and therefore promote understanding and empathy" (2011, p. 41). By interpreting the elements of culture discovered through the project, both of other cultures and own, the aim is that the students will develop an awareness of and a more positive attitude towards both differences and similarities. Relating other cultures to their own also forces the students to analyse their own culture in a critical way.

The didactic implementation suggests dividing the teaching period into two parts, where the first part is a preparation part mostly led by the teacher, whilst the second part consists of group work where the students work independently. In the preparation part the teacher uses films clips as supplements to the various topics and lets the students practice identifying, comparing and interpreting cultural elements. In the second part, the students use what they have learned from the preparation part to investigate the main film, *Love Actually* (Curtis, 2003), on their own and in groups. By ending the project in presentations by the students, the students' knowledge, skills and attitudes will be demonstrated.

This thesis' conclusion is that *Love Actually* (Curtis, 2003) and clips from other selected films starring Hugh Grant can be used to teach British culture and promote intercultural competence. In addition to finding elements representing British culture, the students need to be encouraged to find evidence of stereotyping and demonstrate how and why it is used to make the students aware of the dangers of stereotyping. By doing this, they will develop their intercultural knowledge and be equipped for future intercultural encounters.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Film Clips

FILM	THEME	DESCRIPTION	TIME
Paddington 2	Politeness	Hard stare with Knuckles	0:41:31-0:44:51
Four Weddings and a Funeral		You must be so proud	0:12:30-0:12:56
		Love confession	1:06:51-1:08:55
Bridget Jones's Diary		Fist fight	1:06:00-1:09:00
		Use of Mr	0:08:30-0:08:50
	Class	Bridget's parents' home	0:01.00-0:04:53
		Mark Darcy's parents' home +	1:14:50-1:20:00
		Party with engagement announcement	1:14:50-1:20:00
Four Weddings and a Funeral		Hats	0:05:12-0:09:38
		Tom's fortune	0:22:28-0:23:20
The Gentlemen		The cannabis baron explains	0:16:00-0:17:55
		Cockney accent	0:04:06-0:07:25
Bridget Jones's Diary	Christmas	Party with ugly Christmas jumper	0:01:00-0:04:53
		Carol singing + cracker hats	1:10:56-1:11:55
Paddington 2	Iconic objects	The pop-up book	0:07:25-0:09:11
		The street	0:03.48-0:04:42
Love Actually	Politeness	Natalie calling PM by first name	0:07:13-0.09:00
		Shop assistant using Sir	0:14:22-0:17:15
		Girls using Sir	1:39:25-1:39:40
		Naked couple	0:17:56-0:18:30
	Class	Natalie: 'The dodgy end'	0:30:20-0:30:50
		PM goes to 'the dodgy end'	1.37:40-1.42:06
		"Thanks, boss"	0:17:52-0:18:57
		Aurelia and Jamie in France	0:36:34-0:37:30 0:44:50-0:45:27
		Samuel's accent	1:00:35-1:01:21
		Natalie's mum's accent	1:40:43-1:42:06
	Christmas	Mistletoe	0:25:00-0:25:25
		Gifts under the tree	1.23:53-1:24:55
		Billy Mack Christmas number 1	0:20:30-0:20:50
		PM carol singing	1:39:25-1.40:15
		Mark plays cd-player	1:32:38-1:34:33
		Nativity play	1:46:07-1.46:40
	Iconic objects	PM's speech	0:40:58-0:42:22
		10 Downing Street	0:07:13-0:07:30
		Doors in Harris Street	1:38:50-1:40:32
		Wedding Hats	0:09:22-0:10:54
		School uniform	0:04:58-0:05:32
	Stereotyping	Cute British Accent	0:12:42-0:13:22
		Girls at the bar	1:20:35-1:22:17

Example Word Cloud taken from
https://www.shutterstock.com/nb/image-illustration/tradition-culture-
issues-concepts-word-cloud-219123967

Stereotyping

■ What is typical Norwegian?

■ Go to menti.com

■ Use code XXXXX

Study the word cloud we just made

■ Are you all like this?

■ Advantages/ disadvantages with stereotyping

The films

- Bridget Jones's Diary
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EH9CWWqb-6E
- Paddington 2
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52x5HJ9H8DM
- Four Weddings and a Funeral
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-HeV8Z6iXc
- The Gentlemen
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lfy9S7hj480

Feel free to watch these film during the next couple of weeks.

Politeness

- Polite phrases like 'lovely to see you'
- Negative sentences like 'You wouldn't like to...?'
- 'Please', 'excuse me' and 'thank you'
- Polite markers like 'Sir' and 'Mr'

Politeness

- Polite phrases like 'lovely to see you'
- Negative sentences like 'You wouldn't like to...?'
- 'Please', 'excuse me' and 'thank you'
- Polite markers like 'sir' and 'Mr'

Class

- The upper, middle and working classes
- Slow mobility between classes, example the name Darcy
- Visible traits, language and behaviour

Picture from https://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/news/britain-needs-a-new-approach-to-class-if-inequalities-are-to-be-addressed/

Christmas

- Differences and similarities bewtween Britain and Norway

ICONIC OBJECTS

- Which countries do you think of?

Group preparation

- Politeness
- Class
- Christmas

- Everyone – look out for stereotyping and iconic objects

Pay attention, fill in your forms
and enjoy!

Picture: https://letterboxd.com/film/love-actually/

Love Actually

My name:
Other members of my group:

My theme:

Time	What happens?

Iconic objects

Time	Object	Time	Object

Stereotyping

Time	What happens?

Reflective Note

My initial plan for my thesis was to investigate how Australian films could promote intercultural competence. My family and I had planned to move to Australia in June 2020, and I was to study at a university in Brisbane. The coronavirus outbreak put a halt to our plans, and we decided to move to England instead. Since I was now surrounded by British culture, I decided to change my focus from Australian culture to British. As a teacher, I have often shown the film *Love Actually* at Christmas time. It has sometimes resulted in some spontaneous, fruitful conversations in class, but mostly this film has been shown for entertainment purposes. Since the film has always struck me as portraying elements of British culture, I thought it would be interesting to investigate these elements further.

When I first started my master's course, I had pictured doing a research project in a class for my thesis. Therefore, my main challenge initially was to understand how to complete a master's thesis without a class to complete a project in. I found it challenging to start without questionnaires or data from any participants. However, once I started studying the films, I realised this was a challenging yet enjoyable task. Due to lockdowns here in England, visits to the library have been limited. As a result, searching online for literature became the main solution, and I am amazed at how much I have learned about the cultural themes. I came across some interesting theories especially about politeness and the British class system, that I had never heard of before. These theories will certainly be useful in my future teaching.

Since Hugh Grant films give the impression of representing British culture, I was surprised by how hard it sometimes was to find explicit scenes to illustrate the cultural themes. Detailed analysing was necessary to spot suitable clips, and some films that I had planned to use were withdrawn from the project due to the lack of usable scenes. Furthermore, Hugh Grant films tend to stereotype British people and their customs. Using stereotyping as a basis for teaching about British culture is possible, but it is crucial to find the right balance. This was challenging at times, but I believe there are several advantages using the stereotypical scenes portrayed to make the students aware of the dangers of stereotyping.

Although the films I used were available on various apps, it might be a challenge for teachers to gain access to them all. During my study, I found countless clips on youtube.com which are excellent for teaching purposes. If I were to complete a similar project again, I would maybe rely on even easier accessible film clips to make the project less complicated to implement. I will certainly use film clips more in my teaching in the future, and I am looking forward to putting the plan from this project into action the weeks before Christmas with students in Norway.