

Reading Intercultural Conflict in Film: Indonesian Undergraduate Students' Face-Negotiation Analyses through Pecha Kucha Presentation

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HOW TO CITE: ABSTRACT:

Ayu Saraswati, Pratiwi Retnaningdyah, Dwi Nur Cahyani Sri Kusumaningtyas (2026). Reading Intercultural Conflict in Film: Indonesian Undergraduate Students' Face-Negotiation Analyses through Pecha Kucha Presentation. International Journal of Special Education, 41(25s), 549 - 566

In spite of the fact that popular media is widely used in higher education to promote Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), literature and language students frequently study intercultural encounters subjectively due to a lack of explicit, structured theoretical frameworks. To address this gap, this study investigates how 15 Indonesian International Undergraduate Program (IUP) English Literature students applied an integrated macro-micro analytical framework that combines Hofstede's 'Cultural Value Dimensions' and Ting-Toomey's 'Face-Negotiation Theory' (FNT) in order to analyze intercultural conflict in film and television through Pecha Kucha presentations (20 slides, 20 seconds each). Qualitative content analysis shows that Power Distance was the most frequently invoked dimension (87%), far resulting 'Individualism-Collectivism' (53%), as visual media readily dramatize spatial and status hierarchies. A striking finding reveals that resolution asymmetry emerged: while 73% of presentations diagnosed on-screen conflicts as driven by a 'Dominating' conflict style, 100% proposed 'Integrating' resolutions. Furthermore, in intergenerational family narratives, collectivist elders—rather than individualist characters—enacted dominating styles, indicating that 'Power Distance', rather than 'Individualism-Collectivism', predicts domination in hierarchical family settings. Notably, only 53% of students explicitly connected named cultural dimensions directly to interactional behaviors, demonstrating a tendency to apply theoretical concepts

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT:	descriptively rather than explanatorily. These findings emphasize
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terms and conditions	superficial cultural labeling toward nuanced intercultural
of the Creative Commons Attribution	reasoning.
(CC BY)	Keywords: Intercultural communicative competence; Face-
license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).	negotiation theory; Cultural dimensions theory; Pecha Kucha;
	Indonesian undergraduates.

Introduction

The importance of intercultural competence has increased significantly, along with English proficiency, in this mediated era. Intercultural Communicative Competence has become an essential outcome of language and literature education (Byram, 2021). Even so, in many English as a Foreign Language and English-medium literature programs, instruction continues to emphasize close reading and linguistic analysis, with only implicit attention to and common-sense logic about the intercultural dimension of the texts they study. As Byram highlights, scholars have emphasized the importance of providing learners with an explicit theoretical vocabulary for cultural difference, rather than leaving intercultural understanding to develop incidentally through exposure to foreign-language texts (2021). Therefore, media play a crucial role in building learners' comprehension of intercultural competence, especially in higher education. This competence becomes specifically important for learners who will encounter cultural differences primarily through mediated rather than face-to-face contact (Hall, 1997).

For English Literature undergraduate students in Indonesia, popular media texts are applied as objects of critical reading. Popular media (such as film, television drama, advertising, and news) is one of the primary sites through which young people encounter cultural differences before, or instead of, direct intercultural contact (Hall, 1997). The media, such as films and TV shows, are discussed as a natural bridge between literary-critical skills and the application of intercultural communication to improve students' comprehension. Popular film and television are widely used in intercultural and language education as accessible, emotionally engaging texts through which learners encounter cultural differences (Donaghy, 2015). Prior research on media and intercultural learning has largely examined how instructors select and scaffold film texts (e.g., Hoff & Habegger-Conti, 2022), with comparatively little attention to what happens when students themselves are asked to select, theorize, and present on a media text using a constrained, visually driven genre like Pecha Kucha. This media text's intercultural value is limited and constructed by the readers' capabilities, in this case the students', rather than represented by the medium itself. Moreover, due to a lack of structured vocabulary for interpreting cultural differences and behavioural impact, students tend to give intercultural conflict evaluations subjectively instead of analytically. This study addresses that gap by treating the fifteen student presentations as a naturalistic corpus of applied intercultural reasoning, rather than as a purpose-built research instrument.

This study examines the intercultural learning process as the main issue involving English Literature undergraduate students' participation, specifically their presentations on intercultural conflicts in the films they chose. They are IUP (International Undergraduate Program) students and enrolled in the Global and Intercultural Communication course in the 3rd semester. The presentation is the final project of the course, which uses the Pecha Kucha presentation format that requires 20 slides and limits each slide to 20 seconds. The project asked students to: a.) select a media example, either a film or a TV show, featuring intercultural conflict or misunderstanding, b.) deconstruct the media text using Hofstede's cultural values dimensions, c.) identify crucial intercultural communication issues, and d.) analyze it using theoretically grounded alternatives. While they are typically educated in close reading in literary texts rather than in social-scientific

concepts and intercultural frameworks, few studies highlight students' processes in how they address the issue, navigate it, and integrate the theoretical concepts they are taught when applying them to analyze the issue in the media texts. In order to bridge this gap, this paper investigates the students' engagement with a two-stage analysis by integrating cultural dimensions and the face-negotiation framework. This analysis is identified by the forms of intercultural reasoning that emerge from their analysis and is explained by these research questions:

1. How do Indonesian undergraduate students apply cultural dimensions and face-negotiation concepts to describe intercultural conflict in the popular media analyzed in their Pecha Kucha presentation?
2. How do the students' proposed solutions to the conflicts reflect face-negotiation strategies, and what does this suggest about their intercultural awareness?

Cultural Dimensions and Face-Negotiation Theory in Media Analysis

This study develops its analytic framework by integrating two theories; one of the theories is already explained in the first half of the semester, and another one is selected as a linear focus of the analysis. Hofstede's (1980, 2001) cultural dimensions belong to one of the main materials delivered in the second and third meetings of the Global and Intercultural Communication class. Ting-Toomey's (1988, 2005) face-negotiation theory is chosen for its intellectual lineage with the previous theory and for its deeper analysis. The framework applies them as a macro-micro pair, which places Hofstede's dimensions in support of cultural values delivered in vocabularies and different cultural interactions in the film they chose. Meanwhile, the face-negotiation theory supplies the interactional pattern represented as observable communication behavior in a specific scene or storyline. This combination is not arbitrary, yet integrated for the face-negotiation analysis in explicitly explaining how Hofstede's individualism-collectivism represents face-concerns and conflict-management patterns across cultures.

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory (CDT)

Hofstede's (1980, 2001) theory determines value orientations on which national cultures tend to vary. In Table 1, the six dimensions are summarized as they are introduced to the participants and applied at the macro level of this analysis. This level explains the descriptive layer of the framework for identifying which cultural difference is at risk in a presented scene (e.g., the conflict between a family expectation and an individual's choice). This layer is applied before the face-negotiation theory, which explains the behavioral layer. Since Hofstede's national-level generalizations have been widely critiqued as static and essentialist (McSweeney, 2002), CDT is used in this study only as a starting point to explain evidence in specific scenes, not as a detailed description of behaviour in its own right.

Table 1. Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

Dimension	Definition
Individualism–Collectivism	The scope to which individuals are expected to look after themselves and their immediate family only (individualism) versus being integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups that offer lifelong loyalty in exchange for support (collectivism).
Power Distance	The scope to which less powerful members of institutions and organizations accept and expect that power is distributed unequally.
Uncertainty Avoidance	The scope to which members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and have created beliefs and institutions to avoid them.

Dimension	Definition
Masculinity–Femininity	The scope to which a culture values competitiveness, assertiveness, and material success (masculinity) versus cooperation, modesty, and quality of life (femininity).
Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation (L-T vs. S-T)	The scope to which a culture emphasizes future rewards such as perseverance and thrift (long-term) versus past and present orientation such as tradition and social obligation (short-term).
Indulgence vs. Restraint	The scope to which a culture allows relatively free gratification of basic human desires related to enjoying life (indulgence) versus suppressing gratification through strict social norms (restraint).

Stella Ting-Toomey's Face-Negotiation Theory

Face-negotiation theory (Ting-Toomey, 1988, 2005) proposes how cultural values contribute to face management during conflict. *Face* is defined as an individual's claimed sense of a favorable social self-image and public identity, asserted in interaction. This theory categorizes three interrelated constructs:

1. Face Orientation and Face Concerns:
 - Self-Face: Orientation toward protecting or managing one's own image, autonomy, and rights.
 - Other-Face: Orientation toward supporting, honoring, or saving the interactant's or authority figure's image.
 - Mutual-Face: Orientation toward preserving the relational bond, or in-group harmony.
2. Face Needs: This theory differentiates between *autonomy face needs* (the desire for boundary respect, independence, and unforced action) and *approval face needs* (the desire for affiliation, respect, and social acceptance).
3. Facework Strategies and Conflict Styles: Facework includes the specific verbal and non-verbal communicative strategies used to enact, defend, build, or repair face. Ting-Toomey & Kurogi (1998) identify

these as *preventive facework* (tactics to minimize impending face threat) and as *restorative facework* (tactics to mend face damage post-threat). These tactics manifest into five conflict styles:

- Dominating: High self-face concern; direct, assertive, or controlling behavior to enforce one's position.
- Avoiding: Other- or mutual-face concern; indirectness, withdrawal, or glossing over differences to prevent overt clash.
- Obliging: High other-face concern; accommodating, yielding, or prioritizing the counterpart's needs.
- Compromising: Moderate self- and other-face concern; trade-offs and middle-ground concessions.
- Integrating: High self- and other-face concern; collaborative problem-solving, open

exchange, and mutual synthesis.

Ting-Toomey and Kurogi (1998) also explain *facework competence* through three categories: cultural knowledge (understanding value shifts and face needs), mindfulness (attentive, non-judgmental observation of interactional dynamics), and interactional skills (behavioral flexibility to switch facework tactics appropriately). In this analysis, the competence is reflected in the students' ability to move beyond

prescribing generic "good communication" and instead formulate context-sensitive, face-honoring communication moves. Their interpretation works by highlighting and delivering cues from specific scenes or evidence.

Within this framework, FNT functions as the interactional, micro-level layer of analysis: it is the lens applied to code the specific behaviors, dialogue, and nonverbal evidence through which a media text dramatizes and represents intercultural miscommunication, stereotyping, and power asymmetry, and to analyze the conflict-management styles that student presentations propose as "solutions" to the intercultural problems they identify. Kachru's (1985) circles of English are also applied only as a secondary descriptive tool for presentations that specifically address language-variety-based miscommunication and are not treated as a third pillar of the framework.

Pedagogical Context and Methodology

Final Assignment Design

This paper examines 15 Pecha Kucha presentations (6 minutes 40 seconds; 20 slides at 20 seconds each) created by IUP English Literature students in a Global and Intercultural Communication course. The project required students to select a popular media text containing intercultural conflict, deconstruct the conflict using taught theories, and propose theoretically grounded communicative alternatives. The format is pedagogically significant in its own right: Pecha Kucha's rigid time-image constraint forces conceptual compression, rewarding

synthesis over exhaustive description (Beyer, 2011), which makes the resulting artifacts a useful, if compressed, trace of what students judged to be the most salient intercultural issues in their chosen text.

Participants

The corpus contains 15 Pecha Kucha presentations produced by Indonesian IUP students in the 2023 cohort of the Global and Intercultural Communication course within the English Literature Study Program at Universitas Negeri Surabaya. This International Undergraduate Program (IUP) was established as part of Unesa's strategic internationalization efforts to enhance the university's regional recognition and global competitiveness. The program is designed to equip students with learning outcomes aligned with global market demands, while simultaneously enabling faculty and staff to elevate their international competence to support continuous quality improvement, consistent with Unesa's internationalization strategic plan (Universitas Negeri Surabaya, 2026).

This set of 15 presentations was itself a filtered subset based on the number of the class and a subset of a larger pool of presentations, selected by the course team for full Hofstede-dimension coding. Each presentation analyzes a different media example selected by the student; presenters are identified here by anonymized ID (P1–P15) rather than by name, consistent with the anonymization procedure described under Ethical Considerations.

Table 2. Presenter Corpus Profile

Presenter ID	Media Text Analyzed	Media Type	Identified Conflict
P1	Past Lives	Film	Individualist/Collectivist and Romantic Identity
P2	The Karate Kid (2010)	Film	East-West Authority and Mentorship

Presenter ID	Media Text Analyzed	Media Type	Identified Conflict
P3	Invictus (2009)	Film	Post-Apartheid Intergroup and Political Power
P4	Raya and the Last Dragon	Film (animated)	Inter-tribal Trust and Ideological Difference
P5	Gossip Girl	TV series	Class Hierarchy and Status Autonomy
P6	Rush Hour	Film	Intercultural Law Enforcement Style
P7	Modern Family	TV series	Intergenerational and Cultural Nuance
P8	Atonement	Film	Class Structure and Narrative Authority
P9	Brave (2012)	Film (animated)	Filial Obligation and Autonomy
P10	Fast and Furious: Tokyo Drift	Film	Sub-Cultural Belonging and Cultural Norms
P11	Turning Red	Film (animated)	Mother-Daughter Filial Identity
P12	The Odyssey	Film/TV adaptation	Royal Status and Patriarchal Authority
P13	Elemental	Film (animated)	Immigrant Family Values and Assimilation
P14	Crazy Rich Asians	Film	Class, Filial Duty, and Individual Choice
P15	Moana	Film (animated)	Tribal Duty and Individual Calling

Ethical Considerations

This research uses audiovisual projects submitted as part of a required final assignment in the Global and Intercultural Communication course as its primary data source. Since the corpus consists of students' work produced for assessment rather than data elicited specifically for research purposes, ethics approval was obtained before analysis, and students whose presentations are included provided informed consent for their projects to be used for research purposes independent of their course grade. Consent was sought after final grades were

released without academic consequence, and they were informed that participation or non-participation would not affect their assessment.

All presentations are identified in this paper by anonymized ID (P1–15) rather than by name. There is a lecturer who takes part as the instructor and limits the projects with the instruments students' records from which this corpus is drawn, a dual role that carries an inherent positionality consideration: the same person who designed and delivered the assignment is also its analyst. This relationship is disclosed here in the interest of the reflexivity criteria for

trustworthiness in qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), and readers should weigh the findings with this dual role in mind, particularly the paper's recommendations for course redesign, which follow directly from the instructor's own analytic judgments about the coding scheme rather than from independent classroom observation. The single-coder limitation of the reported analysis compounds this positionality concern: with only one coder, who is also the course instructor, there is no independent check on whether coding decisions were shaped by prior knowledge of individual students' coursework, class participation, or grades. Future iterations of this research should engage a second coder without instructional involvement in the course to mitigate this risk.

Analytical Approach

This paper explores how the participants apply cultural dimensions and face-negotiation concepts when analyzing intercultural conflict in popular media. The exploratory nature of the research questions in this study requires an in-depth understanding of how students reason about specific media scenes rather than the measurement of predefined variables (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The corpus, the transcribed

presentation narration and slide texts, is evaluated by applying qualitative content analysis (Schreier, 2021). It was selected because the corpus consists of existing student artifacts (Pecha Kucha presentations) rather than data elicited through researcher-designed interviews, making a structured, codebook-driven analysis of naturalistic material more appropriate than an inductive thematic approach built for interview transcripts. The transcripts are categorized into analytic units corresponding to specific scenes or conflict episodes. These two layers are the coding process:

1. Deductive Coding (Stage 1): Identifying conflict diagnoses against Hofstede's dimensions and Ting-Toomey's conflict styles, and evaluating proposed resolutions for theoretical grounding.
2. Supplementary Deep Coding (Stage 2): Applying Ting-Toomey's focus on FNT constructs, face concern (self, other, mutual), face needs (autonomy vs. approval/inclusion), and facework type (preventive vs. restorative), to interrogate the students' point of view for the conflicts they found in the media.

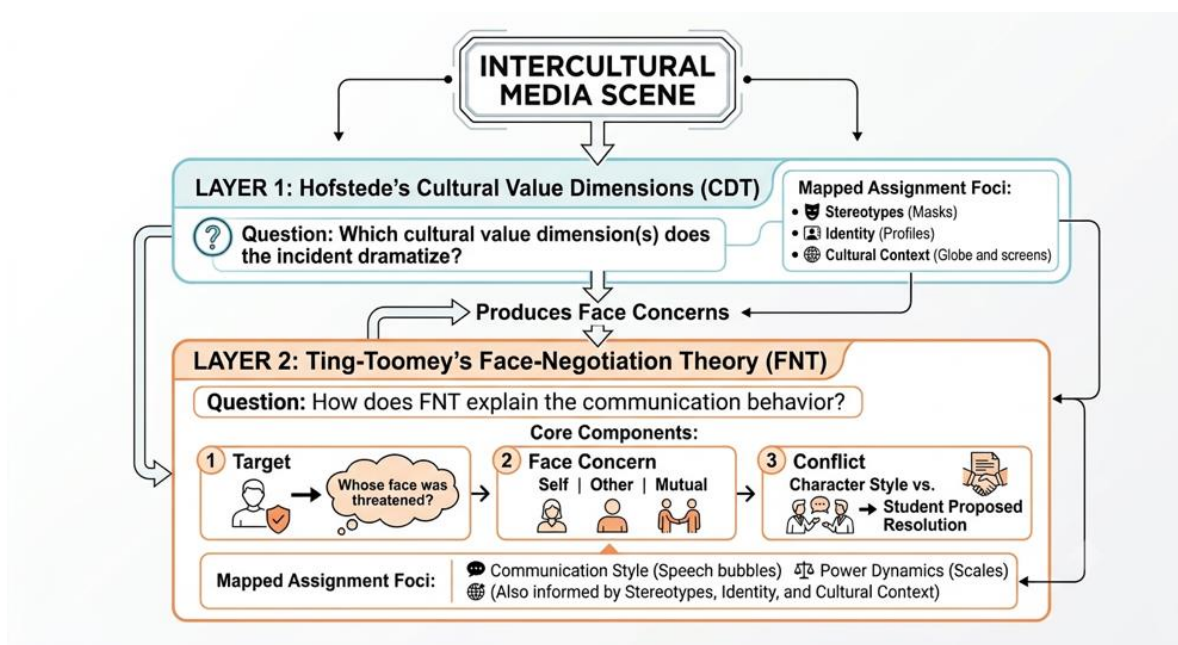


Figure 1. Two Layers of The Analysis Process

Instrument

The primary analytic instrument is a codebook derived from the two theoretical constructs described above. Each presentation is transcribed (narration and on-slide text) and segmented into analytic units, defined as one distinct intercultural incident or scene the student discusses. Each unit is then coded deductively using the categories in Table 3, drawn from Hofstede's dimensions and Ting-Toomey's face-negotiation constructs and cross-referenced against the assignment's five

analytic foci (communication style, stereotype, identity, power, context). Inductive, open coding runs alongside this to capture emergent themes not anticipated by the framework (e.g., students' own theoretical blends, misapplications of course concepts, or affective responses to the media text). Only the Hofstede dimensions and face-negotiation categories that actually emerge in the corpus will be retained in the final codebook; categories with no supporting instances will be reported as absent rather than populated with invented examples.

Table 3. Coding Scheme with Illustrative Examples from the Corpus

Layer	Code	Definition	Illustrative example (paraphrased from corpus)
RQ1: Diagnosis (CDT)	Individualism–Collectivism	Student attributes a character's behavior to individualist or collectivist value orientation	P15 (Moana): a collectivist, teamwork-oriented protagonist versus a self-glorifying individualist antagonist
RQ1: Diagnosis (CDT)	Power Distance	Student attributes behavior to acceptance/rejection of unequal power or authority	P8 (Atonement): an upper-class family's word is accepted unquestioned over a servant's son's
RQ1: Diagnosis (CDT)	Other dimensions (as emergent) CDT (as)	Uncertainty Avoidance, Masculinity–Femininity, Long-/Short-Term, Indulgence–Restraint	P12 (The Odyssey): suitors dismiss a prince as insufficiently masculine to command authority
RQ1: Diagnosis (FNT)	Face Concern: Self / Other / Mutual	Whose face (own, other's, or both/relationship's) the student identifies as being protected or threatened	P6 (Rush Hour): a partner's reserve is misread as incompetence, threatening his professional face
RQ1: Diagnosis (FNT)	Conflict Style	Dominating, avoiding, integrating, compromising, or obliging — the style enacted by characters in the incident	P14 (Crazy Rich Asians): a matriarch uses her authority to override her son's choice of partner
RQ2: Resolution (FNT)	Proposed Solution Style	Conflict style implied or named in the student's suggested resolution	P11 (Turning Red): resolution frames identity as "both/and" rather than a forced choice
RQ2: Resolution	Theory-Grounded (Yes/Partial/No)	Whether the proposed solution is explicitly linked to	P10 (Tokyo Drift): solution explicitly names "applying

Layer	Code	Definition	Illustrative example (paraphrased from corpus)
		a value dimension or face-negotiation strategy, only gestures at one, or is generic advice	Hofstede value dimensions" — coded Yes

The codebook was developed in three steps, following established practice for deductive qualitative content analysis (Schreier, 2012). First, an initial category set was drawn directly from Hofstede's (1980, 2001) six dimensions and Ting-Toomey's (1988, 2005) face-concern and conflict-style constructs. Second, categories were cross-referenced against the assignment's five stated analytic foci to ensure the codebook could account for every dimension of the task students were asked to complete. Third, the codebook was applied to the full corpus in a single-coder first pass (reported in Results below); a second coder has not yet independently verified this pass, which is noted as a limitation in the Conclusion.

Data Analysis

The narration and on-slide text of each Pecha Kucha presentation — captured in the corpus as narrative evidence organized by the presenters' own five analytic categories (cultural identity, difference/similarity, context, power and representation, and meaning-making) — was analyzed using qualitative content analysis (Schreier, 2012), combining deductive coding

against the categories in Table 3 with inductive attention to patterns not anticipated by the framework. For RQ1, each presentation's stated central conflict (its "Issue") was coded for the cultural dimension(s) it invoked and for the conflict style (dominating, avoiding, integrating, compromising, or obliging; Ting-Toomey, 1988) the presentation described the media text's characters as enacting. For RQ2, each presentation's proposed resolution (its "Solution") was coded for the conflict style it implied or named, and rated as theory-grounded (explicitly tied to a named dimension or face-negotiation concept), partially grounded (gestures at a concept without naming or elaborating it), or not grounded (generic advice).

Results

This section reports a single-coder first pass through the full fifteen-presentation corpus (see Data Analysis and Ethical Considerations). Table 5 summarizes coding-category frequencies; Table 6 gives the per-presentation coding that underlies them.

Table 4. Summary of Coding Categories and Frequencies (n = 15 presentations)

Research question	Category	Frequency	Definition
RQ1: Diagnosis	Power Distance invoked	13/15 (87%)	Presentation attributes the conflict, in whole or part, to unequal acceptance of authority or hierarchy.
	Individualism–Collectivism invoked	8/15 (53%)	Presentation attributes the conflict to individualist vs. collectivist value orientation.

Research question	Category	Frequency	Definition
	Uncertainty Avoidance invoked	6/15 (40%)	Presentation attributes the conflict to differing comfort with ambiguity.
	Indulgence–Restraint invoked	6/15 (40%)	Presentation attributes the conflict to differing norms of gratification vs. restraint.
	Masculinity–Femininity invoked	5/15 (33%)	Presentation attributes the conflict to gendered value orientation.
	Long-/Short-Term Orientation invoked	4/15 (27%)	Presentation attributes the conflict to differing time horizons.
RQ1: Diagnosis	Dominating conflict style depicted	11/15 (73%)	Media text's central conflict is driven by one party asserting power/control over another.
	Avoiding conflict style depicted	4/15 (27%)	Conflict arises from mutual non-confrontation or unresolved miscommunication rather than one party dominating.
	Explicit value–face link	8/15 (53%)	Presentation names a specific CDT dimension within its own account of the conflict ("Issue"), rather than only elsewhere in the presentation.
RQ2: Resolution	Integrating solution style	15/15 (100%)	Proposed resolution centers on mutual understanding, dialogue, or synthesis of both value positions.
	Theory-grounded solution (Yes)	9/15 (60%)	Proposed resolution explicitly names a cultural dimension or communication concept.
	Theory-grounded solution (Partial)	6/15 (40%)	Proposed resolution gestures at a concept (e.g., "communication," "cultural flexibility") without naming or elaborating a specific mechanism.

Table 5. Per-Presentation Coding Summary

Presenter ID	Media Text Analyzed	Dominant Dimension(s) CDT	Conflict Style (Research Question 1)	Theory-Grounded (Research Question 2)
P1	Past Lives	-Individualism-Collectivism -Uncertainty Avoidance	Avoiding	Partial
P2	The Karate Kid (2010)	Power Distance	Dominating	Yes
P3	Invictus (2009)	Power Distance	Dominating	Yes
P4	Raya and the Last Dragon	-Power Distance -Uncertainty Avoidance	Avoiding	Yes
P5	Gossip Girl	Power Distance	Dominating	Partial
P6	Rush Hour	-Individualism-Collectivism -Power Distance	Dominating	Partial
P7	Modern Family	-Individualism-Collectivism -Power Distance	Avoiding	Yes
P8	Atonement	-Power Distance -Uncertainty Avoidance -Masculinity-Femininity -L-T vs. S-T -Indulgence vs. Restraint	Dominating	Yes
P9	Brave (2012)	Individualism-Collectivism	Dominating	Partial
P10	Fast and Furious: Tokyo Drift	Power Distance	Avoiding	Yes
P11	Turning Red	Individualism-Collectivism	Dominating	Yes

Presenter ID	Media Analyzed	Text	Dominant Dimension(s)	CDT	Conflict Style (Research Question 1)	Theory-Grounded (Research Question 2)
P12	The Odyssey		-Power Distance -Masculinity-Femininity		Dominating	Partial
P13	Elemental		Power Distance		Dominating	Partial
P14	Crazy Rich Asians		-Individualism-Collectivism -Power Distance -Uncertainty Avoidance -Masculinity-Femininity -L-T vs. S-T -Indulgence vs. Restraint		Dominating	Yes
P15	Moana		-Individualism-Collectivism -Power Distance		Dominating	Yes

Diagnosing Intercultural Conflict through Cultural Dimensions and Face-Negotiation

Power Distance is by far the most frequently invoked Hofstede dimension, appearing in 13 of 15 presentations (87%), well ahead of Individualism–Collectivism (8/15, 53%) and the remaining four dimensions (27–40% each). This is notable since Individualism–Collectivism is the dimension most directly theorized to predict face concern and conflict style in face-negotiation theory (Ting-Toomey, 1988). However, this corpus invoked it less often than Power Distance. One plausible explanation, relevant to Hoff and Habegger-Conti's (2022) argument that film communicates through a recognizable audio-visual rhetoric of oft-repeated tropes, is that hierarchy and authority are more readily dramatized on screen, through framing, costume, deference gestures, and spatial staging, than the more internal, attitudinal contrast between individualist and collectivist orientation. The

presentations analysis in class-hierarchy narratives (P8, *Atonement*; P5, *Gossip Girl*) and family- or society-authority narratives (P3, *Invictus*; P12, *The Odyssey*; P14, *Crazy Rich Asians*) accounted for much of this concentration.

At the level of conflict style, a Dominating style, in which one party asserts power or control over another, is identified as driving the central conflict in 11 of 15 presentations (73%). The remaining four (P1 *Past Lives*, P4 *Raya and the Last Dragon*, P7 *Modern Family*, P10 *Tokyo Drift*) are coded as avoiding. This level explains conflict arising from mutual non-confrontation, mistrust, or communication-style mismatch rather than one party's overt assertion of power. No presentation centered its diagnosis on an Obliging, Compromising, or purely Integrating conflict style. Those styles appeared, where present at all, only in the resolution (RQ2), not in the depicted conflict itself. This asymmetry in

media conflict is dramatized through domination, not negotiated compromise.

Only 8 of 15 presentations (53%) explicitly named a cultural dimension within their own account of the conflict, e.g., P14's framing of Rachel and Eleanor's clash directly in terms of individualism and power distance scores; P8's explicit invocation of "Hofstede power distance" to explain why Robbie's word carries less weight than Briony's. The remaining seven presentations named Hofstede dimensions elsewhere in the presentation (for instance, in a separate slide cataloguing index scores) without integrating that vocabulary into the account of why the conflict occurred. This gap between naming a dimension and using it explanatorily is a direct empirical instance of the risk the Theoretical Framework anticipated: that Hofstede's dimensions, used alone, function as a descriptive label rather than a mechanism — the explanatory work in face-negotiation theory depends on dimensions being connected to a specific face concern or conflict style, and roughly half the corpus fell short of that connection.

From Diagnosis to Resolution: Face-Negotiation Strategies in Student-Proposed Solutions

Every one of the fifteen presentations (100%) proposed a resolution centered on an Integrating conflict style — mutual understanding, open dialogue, empathy, or a synthesis of both value positions — regardless of which conflict style (Dominating or Avoiding) the presentation had identified as driving the on-screen conflict. Two presentations (P7, *Modern Family*; P15, *Moana*) blended Integrating with explicit Compromising language ("compromise that respects each other's cultural values"; "sharing leadership, treating each other as equals"). This is a striking diagnosis–resolution asymmetry: 73% of the corpus diagnosed the conflict as one party dominating another, yet 100% resolved it through mutual, integrative dialogue rather than, for instance, a compromising trade-off or a redistribution of power that leaves some residual assertiveness in place. This pattern may reflect the assignment's explicit instruction to "propose more effective,

theoretically grounded alternatives," which arguably invites an idealized, harmony-oriented answer regardless of the conflict's actual dynamics — a possibility taken up in the Discussion.

On theoretical grounding, 9 of 15 solutions (60%) were coded Yes — explicitly naming a dimension or communication concept as the basis for the proposed fix. P10 (*Tokyo Drift*) is the clearest case, explicitly recommending that the protagonist apply "Hofstede value dimensions" before traveling; P8 (*Atonement*) explicitly frames its solution as "reducing power distance" and adopting a "low power distance approach." The remaining 6 of 15 (40%) were coded Partial: solutions such as P13's (*Elemental*) repeated appeal to "communication" as the fix, or P9's (*Brave*) appeal to "cultural flexibility," gesture toward an integrative resolution without specifying a concrete face-negotiation mechanism. No solution in the corpus was coded as ungrounded generic advice with no reference, however loose, to a course concept — meaning every presentation showed at least some theoretical engagement in its proposed resolution, even where that engagement stopped short of a fully specified mechanism.

Two presentations (P3, *Invictus*; P4, *Raya and the Last Dragon*) drew on theoretical resources beyond Hofstede and Ting-Toomey — Kachru's (1985) circles of English and Allport's (1954) intergroup contact hypothesis, respectively — to support their proposed resolutions, indicating that at least some students supplemented the taught framework with adjacent course content or independent research rather than treating Hofstede and Ting-Toomey as the sole available toolkit.

Discussion

The clearest pattern in this corpus is the diagnosis–resolution asymmetry: students overwhelmingly diagnosed on-screen intercultural conflict as Dominating (73%) but just as overwhelmingly proposed Integrating resolutions (100%). Read through Ting-Toomey's (1988, 2005) face-negotiation theory, this is not a contradiction so much as a normative

move: face-negotiation theory itself treats integrating and compromising styles as generally more face-honoring and relationally sustainable than dominating styles, and the course's framing of the assignment — asking students to propose "more effective" alternatives — invites exactly this kind of idealized resolution. What the pattern does suggest, however, is that students' proposed solutions may be less a close reading of what would actually resolve the specific power dynamic they diagnosed than a general, somewhat formulaic appeal to dialogue and empathy that could be transplanted across presentations with little change. The remainder of this Discussion goes deeper into the corpus specifically through Ting-Toomey's theory, using

a supplementary coding pass not reported in the Results above.

A Supplementary Face-Concern Analysis

To interpret the Dominating/Integrating asymmetry more precisely, each presentation's diagnosed conflict was coded a second time for face concern — whose face (self, other, or both/mutual; Ting-Toomey, 2005) the presentation identifies as being threatened or protected. This is a genuinely distinct analytic question from conflict style: a Dominating style, for instance, could in principle threaten only the dominant party's rival, or could threaten a whole group's collective face at once. Table 6 reports the results.

Table 6. Face-Concern Coding Across the Corpus (n = 15)

Face concern	Frequency	Presentations
Other-face threatened	6/15 (40%)	P2 (Karate Kid), P6 (Rush Hour), P8 (Atonement), P12 (Odyssey), P13 (Elemental), P15 (Moana)
Self-face vs. other-face clash	4/15 (27%)	P5 (Gossip Girl), P9 (Brave), P11 (Turning Red), P14 (Crazy Rich Asians)
Mutual/group face	4/15 (27%)	P1 (Past Lives), P3 (Invictus), P4 (Raya), P7 (Modern Family)
Self-face threatened (alone)	1/15 (7%)	P10 (Tokyo Drift)

Other-face threat is the single largest category: in 6 of 15 presentations, a protagonist's competence, belonging, or voice is directly threatened by another party's words or actions, with no comparable threat running the other way. Comparing this table against the conflict-style coding from RQ1 shows a striking internal convergence: 10 of the 11 presentations coded Dominating in RQ1 also appear in either the Other-face or Self-vs-other-face rows here (the sole exception, P3 *Invictus*, is a Dominating conflict coded at the mutual, societal level rather than between two individuals). Because a Dominating conflict style is, by Ting-Toomey's (1988) own definition, other-face-threatening, this convergence between two independently

derived codes is a useful internal validity check on the coding reported in this paper, even in the absence of a second human coder.

Testing the Individualism–Collectivism Prediction

Face-negotiation theory's best-known claim is that individualistic orientation predicts self-face concern and a dominating conflict style, while collectivistic orientation predicts other-face or mutual-face concern and more avoiding, obliging, or integrating styles (Ting-Toomey, 1988). Seven presentations in the corpus stage an explicit character-level individualist-versus-collectivist contrast: P1 (*Past Lives*), P6 (*Rush Hour*), P7 (*Modern Family*), P9 (*Brave*), P11 (*Turning Red*), P14 (*Crazy Rich Asians*), and P15 (*Moana*).

Testing the prediction against each: only 2 of the 7 (*Rush Hour*, *Moana*) cleanly match it, with the individualist character (Carter; Maui) enacting the dominating style toward a more collectivist counterpart. Two more (*Past Lives*, *Modern Family*) show no clear domination by either party — the individualist character is more direct in communication style but does not escalate to dominating behavior, and the conflict instead plays out as quiet tension or comedic miscommunication. The remaining three — and this is the most theoretically interesting pattern in the corpus — invert the textbook prediction: in *Brave*, *Turning Red*, and *Crazy Rich Asians*, it is the collectivist, higher-power-distance elder (Elenor; Ming; Eleanor) who enacts the dominating style toward the more individualist younger character, not the other way around.

This inversion makes sense once Power Distance is brought back into the picture. In all three inverted cases, the dominating party holds institutionalized authority over the threatened party — a mother over a daughter, a matriarch over a prospective daughter-in-law — and it is that authority, not the collectivist value orientation per se, that licenses the dominating style. This suggests a boundary condition on Ting-Toomey's prediction that is easy to miss if Individualism–Collectivism is coded in isolation, as roughly half this corpus effectively did (see the 53% explicit-link figure below): in intergenerational or hierarchical family narratives specifically, Power Distance appears to be the dimension that predicts who dominates, while Individualism–Collectivism instead supplies the values-content of what the two parties are fighting about. Given that Power Distance was invoked in 87% of the corpus against 53% for Individualism–Collectivism, and that 13 of 15 media texts stage some kind of authority relationship, this boundary condition is not a marginal case in this dataset — it may be closer to the modal pattern, and is a nuance the taught framework, as described in the assignment brief, does not currently ask students to reflect on explicitly.

From Broad Conflict Style to Named Strategy

A further distinction Ting-Toomey and Kurogi (1998) draw, beyond the five broad conflict styles, is between a resolution that names a concrete facework strategy — problem-solving dialogue, an explicit apology, a private conversation, third-party mediation — and one that invokes integration only as a general value. Applying that distinction to the nine solutions coded Yes for theoretical grounding in RQ2 finds real variation in specificity even within that group. P8 (*Atonement*) and P14 (*Crazy Rich Asians*) name a concrete interpersonal move (adopting a "low power distance approach"; Eleanor coming to "understand Rachel's position"). P11 (*Turning Red*) names a specific relational outcome (mother and daughter each revising their own self-understanding, not just "talking more"). By contrast, several of the presentations coded Yes still stop at a named concept without a specified interpersonal action — P2 (*Karate Kid*)'s "active listening, cross-cultural learning, and mutual communicating" names techniques but not what, specifically, either character would say or do differently. This finer-grained reading suggests that the RQ2 theory-grounded/partial distinction, while useful, still understates how much variation exists even among the "grounded" solutions — and that a stronger version of the assignment might explicitly ask students to specify a facework strategy at the level of a concrete next conversational move, not just name a course concept.

Returning to Cultural Dimensions Theory

The dominance of Power Distance over Individualism–Collectivism (87% vs. 53%) is worth situating against Hoff and Habegger-Conti's (2022) argument that film communicates through a rhetoric of recognizable, repeated tropes — costume, framing, deference, spatial hierarchy — that make certain cultural dynamics easier to "show" on screen than others. Power asymmetry has an immediate visual and narrative grammar; individualist-versus-collectivist value orientation is comparatively abstract and often has to be narrated rather than shown. Combined with the inversion pattern above, this suggests

students' choice of which dimension to foreground may be guided as much by what a film makes easy to notice as by which dimension drives the face-negotiation dynamic in a given scene.

Only 8 of 15 presentations (53%) explicitly named a cultural dimension within their own account of the conflict, rather than only in a separate slide cataloguing index scores. This gap is the clearest evidence for the concern raised in the Theoretical Framework: that Hofstede's dimensions, used alone, function as a descriptive label rather than a mechanism — the explanatory work depends on a dimension being connected to a specific face concern or conflict style. The presentations that made this link explicit (P8, P10, P14) were also among the most specific in their proposed facework strategy in the preceding analysis, a plausible marker of a student's overall depth of engagement with the integrated framework, though the corpus is too small to establish this as more than a suggestive association.

Finally, two presentations (P3, *Invictus*; P4, *Raya and the Last Dragon*) drew on theoretical resources beyond Hofstede and Ting-Toomey — Kachru's (1985) circles of English and Allport's (1954) intergroup contact hypothesis, respectively. Both are also the two presentations coded Mutual-face in Table 7, dealing with intergroup rather than interpersonal conflict — a plausible reason students reached for group-level theories the interpersonal-facework vocabulary of Ting-Toomey does not as directly address, and a natural point at which a future version of the course could introduce an explicitly intergroup-level theory (e.g., Allport's contact hypothesis, or social identity theory) alongside the interpersonal Hofstede–Ting-Toomey pairing.

Conclusion

This study examined how Indonesian undergraduate English Literature students used cultural dimensions theory and face-negotiation theory to diagnose and propose resolutions for intercultural conflict in popular media, through a corpus of fifteen Pecha Kucha presentations. A first-pass qualitative coding of the corpus found

that Power Distance was the most frequently invoked cultural dimension (87%), that a Dominating conflict style was the most common diagnosis of the on-screen conflict (73%), and that an Integrating resolution was proposed almost universally (100%) regardless of the diagnosed conflict style. A supplementary face-concern coding pass showed that Other-face threat was the single largest category (40%) and converged closely with the Dominating conflict-style coding, and a targeted test of Ting-Toomey's individualism–collectivism prediction found that in three of seven relevant presentations, an institutionally powerful collectivist elder — not the individualist party — enacted the dominating style, suggesting Power Distance functions as the better predictor of who dominates in hierarchical family narratives specifically, with Individualism–Collectivism instead supplying the values-content of the conflict. Only about half of the presentations (53%) explicitly connected a named cultural dimension to the specific conflict they described, suggesting that Hofstede's framework, when not deliberately paired with a mechanism like face-negotiation theory, is at real risk of being applied descriptively rather than explanatorily by undergraduate students.

These findings carry three practical implications for the course. First, because Power Distance so heavily outweighed the other five dimensions in student use, instructors might deliberately scaffold at least one additional dimension explicitly so the full theoretical toolkit is not filtered through what a chosen film makes visually easy to notice. Second, because the individualism–collectivism prediction inverted in intergenerational family narratives specifically, the course could explicitly teach this boundary condition — that Power Distance, not Individualism–Collectivism, typically predicts who dominates when institutional authority (parent, elder, matriarch) is present, rather than leaving students to apply Ting-Toomey's original, nationally scaled prediction uncritically to an interpersonal family scene. Third, an explicit intermediate assignment step asking students to name a specific facework strategy (not just a broad style or general value like

"communication") could push a larger share of the cohort toward the kind of concrete, mechanism-level reasoning that distinguished the strongest presentations in this corpus (P8, P10, P11, P14).

This study has clear limitations. The coding reported here — including the supplementary face-concern layer — is a single coder's first pass, not yet checked by a second, independent coder (see Ethical Considerations); the percentages reported are illustrative of pattern within this specific corpus of fifteen presentations from one Indonesian program and one cohort, not statistically generalizable claims. The corpus itself was a pre-filtered subset of a larger pool of presentations, selected by the course team on grounds not fully documented in the materials available for this analysis, which may have shaped which conflict styles and dimensions appear in

the results. Future work should add a second coder and formal inter-coder reliability statistics, extend the corpus across cohorts and institutions, and use classroom observation or student interviews to test whether the diagnosis–resolution asymmetry and the Power-Distance-over-Individualism–Collectivism inversion identified here reflect genuine patterns in student reasoning or artifacts of this particular set of chosen films.

Use of Generative AI

This manuscript made use of Grammarly to assist in paraphrasing to emphasize the clarity of the text and Gemini for designing the visual of two layers of the coding process in Figure 1. No AI tools were used for the generation of research hypotheses or the writing of conclusions. The final manuscript was authored and reviewed by the listed authors without additional AI input.

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