Critical, Cultural and Multimodal Approaches to Using Song as Literature in Language Learning

This paper provides an overview of recent scholarship on the value of using literature and song lyrics to help students of English as a Foreign Language improve their pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and accuracy, linguistic competence and confidence, motivation, cultural knowledge, empathy and objectivity, and literary awareness. Literature and multimodal materials can help to promote better understanding of the cultural background of the target language, resulting in improved comprehension of context, dialect, and idioms through the use of language as it is spoken by native speakers. Students are more likely to learn if they are given materials that they enjoy, and if they can see immediate benefits from studying, so teachers are encouraged to promote cross-curricular applications of the skills taught in language classes. The paper then provides a case study to illustrate these principles with an analysis of the popular song ‘Let It Go’ from the recent Disney film Frozen.

Keywords: EFL, language and culture, literature and music, song lyrics