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

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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

## Introduction

The aim of this paper is to present an overview of the state of the art and research on using songs and lyrics in teaching languages, their role as cultural reflections of language at all levels including culture in the traditional sense, and a study of culture-related aspects of language learning, such as pronunciation, accuracy, and confidence in the use of language at various levels.

Literature is useful in teaching English as a Second Language: it provides students examples of the language as it is used, increases vocabulary and knowledge of language rules and syntax, promotes knowledge of other cultures, gives examples of dialects and idioms, encourages reading proficiency and analytical tools, can help motivate students to read and learn, and, as Sandra McKay notes, citing Northrop Frye, it exercises the imagination (McKay 1982: 531). Furthermore, in order to speak a foreign language well, students need to move beyond the ability to translate words and phrases literally, and learn to use idioms correctly, which requires a thorough knowledge of the culture of the target language. Educators today have seen a movement away from passive toward active learning; many studies such as *Otrok v svetu glasbe, plesa in lutk* (Borota et al. 2006) show that students learn more effectively when their teachers use a combination of teaching methods. Language acquisition benefits from incorporating a variety of learning strategies, supplementing more traditional methods that use text and storybooks with a combination of songs, dance, even puppet theater. Many scholars advocate a “multimodal learning system” (Becerra Vera and Muñoz Luna 2013: 16) that takes into account the close connection between linguistic and musical centers in the brain, described by Sacks (2008) and Levitin (2007). Early learners in particular are able to benefit from combining modes of learning.

Using songs in the classroom to teach a foreign language is an effective way of improving pronunciation, vocabulary, linguistic competence and confidence, even grammar. Not only can students imitate singers to achieve native-like pronunciation, listening to songs can help in recognizing dialects. Also, at more advanced levels, popular songs illustrate important cultural layers of language.

Listening to familiar songs can help motivate students to learn; songs from other countries and cultures can help improve students’ awareness of different ways of thinking, while also helping them to understand and properly use diction and idioms in the target language; finally, and this is something that is often overlooked in language classrooms, song lyrics are works of literature, and learning about them will help students to understand literature and culture, and improve their analytical skills.

## **Pronunciation**

Most popular songs are lexically and semantically simple and easy to understand. Students can listen to songs over and over again, and can sing or speak along with them to improve their pronunciation. Using songs to improve pronunciation is a traditional technique in foreign language teaching; Elizabeth Eva Leach points out

that songs were used to teach French in 14<sup>th</sup>-century England (2005), and Signe Denbow shows how songs are used to teach French pronunciation and grammar to singers today (1994). Also, remembering new words in a foreign language can be difficult, and the melody, rhyme, and structure of a song are effective memory aids. Listening to the sounds of words in songs provides a model for improving pronunciation. Repeated listening to a song can help students become accustomed to unfamiliar language sounds like consonantal clusters, diphthongs and phrasal intonation.

Songs can be used to help familiarize students not only with standard pronunciation, but also with a variety of accents and regional dialects. Most modern English-language pop songs are sung in a standard mid-Atlantic accent, no matter where the song was recorded or the native language of the singer, but there are many exceptions: Londoner Mick Jagger sang “you cain’t always git what you wawnt” in an exaggerated American dialect (Jagger and Richards 1969). Bob Marley sang in a light Jamaican accent that was easily understood by most non-Jamaicans, and easily copied by Cockney Eric Clapton, whose cover of Marley’s “I Shot the Sheriff” (1973) was a big hit in 1974.

Rap and hip-hop songs, on the other hand, are often recorded in more or less authentic dialects, complete with idioms, colloquialisms and slang, sparking an interest in other cultures. Slovenian rap lyrics, for example, recorded mainly in Slovene, are sprinkled with English swear and curse words such as “Bitch,” “Nigga,” and “madafaka” (Šabec 2013: 94).

Tim Murphey notes that a common feature of pop recordings is that, for one reason or another, the pronunciation of some words and phrases is incomprehensible (1990: 25). This can be a challenge to students of a foreign language, as well as to native speakers. Hugo Keiper claims that this is not always a bad thing: mondegreens can be used creatively to help understand the distortion and the reasons for it (2008: 32).

## Vocabulary

Teachers can choose to use both current and older pop songs in the classroom. Students listen to current pop songs outside school, so discussing them in class has the benefit of not only using materials with which they are already familiar, but also by actively, rather than passively listening, working toward a deeper understanding of them. Listening to song lyrics carefully and learning the unfamiliar words in them can help students expand their vocabularies. Eleanor Barkhorn and Spencer Kornhaber claim that “Top 40 radio can make people smarter – by teaching them

new words” (2011). Similarly, Paula Chesley demonstrates how young adults acquire vocabulary by listening to hip-hop music (2011), and Barbara Majcenovič Kline shows how rap music can be used to teach English and American vocabulary and culture to European students (2013).

In addition to helping students expand their vocabularies of commonly used words and practice their conversational language skills, song lyrics can help students learn specialized vocabulary. In “Sing a Song of Science,” Jane Gaboury asserts that there is a place for song lyrics in science education (2001). Likewise, Gregory Crowther argues that songs can be used to teach science vocabulary and concepts in college classrooms in “Using Science Songs to Enhance Learning: An Interdisciplinary Approach” (2012). For example, in the 1960s, many songwriters were inspired by the space race to write songs about rockets and astronauts, such as David Bowie’s “Space Oddity” (1969) (including vocabulary items like “ground control,” “countdown,” “ignition,” “capsule,” “spaceship,” and “circuit”; for European students, the concept of “miles” in the line “Though I’m past one hundred thousand miles” could also be the starting point of a useful discussion). Similarly, in the 1970s, the Canadian band Rush had a major hit with the technically dense and scientifically correct ode to a black hole, “Cygnus X-1” (Peart 1977), which uses such words as “void,” “infinity,” “x-ray,” and constellation names including “Cygnus,” “Lyra,” “Pegasus,” “the Milky Way,” “the Northern Cross,” and star names like “Deneb”; the song could form the basis of an introductory astronomy class.

## Grammar and Accuracy

Pop songs may not be the first source most teachers approach when seeking good examples of grammar; the syntax and diction of song lyrics are, as in other forms of poetry, often different from that of spoken language in order to create effect or to fit the needs of rhythm and meter. Some songs, however, contain instances of difficult grammatical concepts that can be useful in the classroom. Tadej Braček makes a convincing argument for using pop lyrics to teach English grammar in “Pop Lyrics for Grammar Teaching in a Primary Classroom” (2013). Braček uses the songs “What If” (Mac and Hector 2001) sung by Kate Winslet and the hip-hop song “I Wish” by Skee-Lo (Khan 1995) to teach conditional verb forms; he also notes that songs are useful for familiarizing students with unusual verb tenses and archaic forms of English verbs and pronouns, such as “thee” and “thou,” in older folk songs and ballads.

## **Linguistic Competence and Confidence**

Confidence is needed in order to move from linguistic competence to communicative competence (Rivers 1973). Confidence comes through familiarity and practice, and learning and even performing song lyrics provides both. The melody and structure of songs aid memorization. Jalongo and Bromley show how very young children can acquire linguistic competence by singing along with song lyrics in “Developing Linguistic Competence through Song Picture Books” (1984). Strangely, most students hesitate, but eventually agree, to read a text passage or recite a poem in class, but in my experience, students are reluctant to sing a song in class, even one that they claim is a favorite. In the past, students remained quiet in class while the teacher lectured. When asked to recite a memorized poem or text passage, they rattle through it as quickly as possible to get it over with. Playing songs in class and then asking them to comment can help overcome students’ shyness and reluctance to expose themselves to criticism. Very few young adult students are eager to sing or recite in public, but they are willing to talk in English about familiar songs.

## **Motivation**

In 1960, Dorothea Blyler wrote about the difficulties of motivating students in English class and her successes in encouraging them to read and speak with contemporary music lyrics.<sup>1</sup> Helen English described a similar exercise in “The Song Choices of Children in the Elementary Grades” (1970). More recently, Tim Murphey (1990) cites three very good reasons why song lyrics are appropriate for teaching foreign languages to both adults and children: they tend to be simple in both grammar and vocabulary, conversational in style, and interesting in subject matter. People enjoy doing things they do well; popular songs are written to be clear, catchy, and memorable, so with a little practice they are easy to master, and the results are easy to hear.

Not only does listening to songs lyrics benefit students’ learning efforts, music itself has been shown to have a positive effect on learning. Although Joan Serrà and her colleagues have shown that popular music has become simpler in its structure over the years (2012), a series of papers by psychologist Frances Rauscher and her colleagues argued that listening to some kinds of classical music by itself could improve cognitive functioning (Rauscher, Shaw and Ky 1993, 1995); Norbert Jaušovec and Katarina Habe empirically established a link between auditory and

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<sup>1</sup> Blyler’s students were native English speakers.

visual functions (2004). Although the full implications of this topic are beyond the scope of this paper, the by-now well-established links between music, cognitive function, and language learning are important considerations supporting the use of songs and song lyrics in language class.

## Cultural Layers of Language

Going beyond aspects of basic language acquisition to the topics of cultural awareness and idiomatic language use, B. Lee Cooper argues that studying song lyrics can help American students' understanding of their own popular culture and history in "Learning from Popular Music" (1991). Song lyrics can be used as topics for discussion in advanced classes in language and literature at the secondary and university levels. For example, lyrics from folk songs of the 1960s criticized prevailing political and philosophical opinions and beliefs, such as Country Joe McDonald's satirical anti-Vietnam War protest song "I Feel Like I'm Fixin' to Die Rag" (1967) ("Well it's one-two-three what are we fighting for?/don't ask me, I don't give a damn/next stop is Vietnam/well it's five-six-seven open up the Pearly Gates/ain't no need to wonder why/Whoopee! We're all going to die"), while other songs were written in support of mainstream positions, such as Merle Haggard's country music hit "Okie from Muskogee" (Burris and Haggard 1969) ("I'm proud to be an Okie from Muskogee/a place where even squares can have a ball/they still fly Old Glory down by the courthouse/and white lightning's still the biggest thrill of all"), and Sgt. Barry Sadler's "Ballad of the Green Berets" (Moore and Sadler 1966) ("Silver wings upon their chest/These are men, America's best"), which ignored the political aspects of the war and focused instead on a "support our troops" theme.

Nursery rhymes such as "Little Red Riding Hood" and "Cinderella," like Biblical parables, inculcate in young children the mores and norms of society. For example, the theme of "Little Red Riding Hood" is that it is dangerous for young girls to go out into the woods (symbolizing the wide world) alone. If they do they are likely to run into danger, but if they are lucky, a strong man will come along to save them; similarly, in "Cinderella," a pretty young girl can only rise in society if she is able to attract a man from a higher class. However, this is so unusual, it requires some form of magic to work. These overt messages in stories from an older, patriarchal time still pervade the early conditioning of children. Commercial adaptations of these stories build on their basic mores and norms, using them implicitly to impart a different message. Sometimes, these mores and norms become items of propaganda in the culture wars, as in Disney movies and other Hollywood films such as Clint Eastwood westerns and the *Rambo* series. Discussion and analysis of the overt

and covert messages in such songs and films can help students develop both their understanding of their own and other cultures, and hone their analytical skills in identifying and decoding hidden messages and agendas. This kind of analysis is the basis of much of late twentieth century philosophical and literary scholarship, such as the deconstruction of Jacques Derrida and the cultural analysis of writers like Roland Barthes. Young children learn how to read the multiple meanings in commercial entertainment; class discussion can help them sharpen their critical skills, and avoid jumping to conclusions and mistaking opinion for fact.

In “A Conspicuous Gap in Cultural Studies: Popular Music in the English Studies Classroom”, Jim Knippling claims that “the key analytic question about a popular song is not ‘What does it mean?’ or ‘What hidden or coded meaning does it express?’ but ‘What does its popularity tell us about the cultural moment when it resonated with its public?’” (2013: 263). His students write essays about songs in an attempt to understand not just the words of the lyrics, but the things people were thinking about in the time and place in which they had been written.

Knippling writes about ways that his American students learn about their own history and culture by listening to and thinking about popular songs, but listening to song lyrics is also useful for learning about other cultures. In “Defining the ‘Self’ and the ‘Other’ in Disney Song Lyrics”, Souad Belkhyr (2013) shows how song lyrics can be used to teach awareness and appreciation of other cultures, both from the perspective of the culture that produced the song and from that of the culture receiving it. Belkhyr points out how the lyrics in songs from Disney’s films often ironically undercut the visual images and dialogue in the animated films (2013: 1377); for example, images of the idealized “Orient” in *Aladdin* (Clements and Musker 1992) contrast with the American accents and idioms of the soundtrack. Belkhyr also examines the soundtrack in the Disney films *Mulan* (Bancroft and Cook 1998) and *Pocahontas* (Gabriel and Goldberg 1995), which present an idealized, Americanized conception of historic Far Eastern and native American cultures, with spunky heroines anachronistically orating about life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.<sup>2</sup> For example, Belkhyr notes the racist cultural stereotypes presented in “Arabian Nights” (Menken and Ashman 1992), the theme song from *Aladdin*:

Oh, I come from a land, from a faraway place  
Where the caravan camels roam  
Where they cut off your ear  
If they don’t like your face  
It’s barbaric, but hey, it’s home

<sup>2</sup> See Roland Barthes’ *Mythologies* (1972) and Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) for a full account of the phenomenon.

Similarly, in Disney's *Brave* (Andrews and Chapman 2012), the medieval Scottish princess Merida, while speaking in an authentic but anachronistically modern Scots English accent (a real Merida would have spoken Gaelic), acts and speaks like a modern American girl; one of the songs she sings, "Into the Open Air" (Mandel 2012), is a modern love song, not exactly the kind of sentiment that would have been expressed or probably felt by a medieval Scottish princess in an atmosphere of dynastic succession. In real medieval Scotland, Merida would probably have whiled away her short life in a dungeon for resisting her parents' plans to marry her off to a political ally. In interpreting such texts, the listener makes an automatic shift towards the normative ideological situation of his or her own society; if it's normative, it's invisible. Therefore, ancient Scottish society is signified by a few carefully selected signifiers – red hair, kilts and claymores – and the viewer accepts the scheme. Disney's layering of modern American social norms onto the cultures of other times and places is heavy-handed, but given the commercial success of their products, it evidently works.

Kirsten Hempkin performs a similar analysis of comparative cultural stereotyping and awareness in "Scottish and Slovene Songs in the Intercultural Classroom," but using authentic Scottish and Slovenian folk songs, rather than commercial song lyrics (2013). Hempkin points out that although the language of Robert Burns is difficult for Slovene students at first, after a while the students come to appreciate the similarities between the two different cultures, and moreover, in the comparison they come to clearly understand how cultural stereotypes work. Quoting Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002), Hempkin states that this kind of intercultural competence is essential for learning a second language properly (2013: 175).

As I have pointed out elsewhere, traditional folk songs take on new meanings as they are adapted over time and performed in different places (Kennedy 2014). Even in basic language classes, students can discuss how songs can be interpreted and how the same lyrics can mean different things to different people.

## **Empathy and Objectivity**

Learning how to listen to songs carefully can improve the ability to discern levels of meaning from context. Just as students learn to differentiate between levels of ambiguity and irony, and perceive hidden meanings when analyzing poetry, careful attention to not just the lyrics but also the subtle cues in music can improve students' ability to appreciate nuance in texts. In "Children's Judgements of Emotion in Song", Bruce Morton and Sandra Trehub (2007) argue that children



learn to discern emotions by listening to cues in the performance of songs. Their study found that children depend more on the content of song lyrics to interpret the emotional content of the song, while adults can more easily distinguish emotional content from cues such as pitch level, tempo, and vocal tone. In a subsequent study, Trehub, Erin Hannon and Adina Schachner concluded, “Even in maturity, responses to music retain their basic social function of promoting emotional regulation, including self-regulation, and connections with others” (2010: 661).

Comparing songs and stories from other cultures to situations in one’s own life can also increase students’ understanding and empathy. Michelle Gadpaille asks her Slovenian students to read passages of West Indian literature, and then write an adaptation of their own. She concludes that doing this “triggers in students a realization about what deep cultural information must also lie behind their texts.” Their own stories “become examples of artificially created otherness and function as maps to the natural otherness of English language texts” thus creating “both empathy and understanding, while allowing self-expression to coexist with predetermined form” (Gadpaille 2006: 597–98).

## Literary Awareness

As a teacher of English literature, I try to persuade people of the benefits of studying literature: it is a reflection of the culture that produced it, it teaches vocabulary and idiom, and most importantly, it hones analytical skills and critical thinking. In the Canadian education system in which I grew up, literature has always been a regular part of the English school curriculum. When I came to Slovenia in 1996, I was surprised to discover that many students and their teachers thought that literature was a distraction from the real work of the English curriculum, which was memorizing rules of grammar. This idea appears to have changed in Central European schools and universities: in a recent article in *Libri & Liberi*, American scholar J. Cynthia McDermott argues that stories are useful for teaching abstract concepts of justice to elementary school students (2013), and several Croatian scholars have written about using modern and classic literature in EFL classes, integrating EFL classes with other subjects in the curriculum, the usefulness of multimodal texts such as picture-books, and the value of literary texts in promoting intercultural awareness in the language classroom (Cindrić 2005, Radišič 2001, Narančić Kovač and Likar 2001, Narančić Kovač 2001, 2006, Narančić Kovač and Kaltenbacher 2006).

Song lyrics can be used in the language classroom as valuable examples of literary texts. Song lyrics are poems set to music, and many of the canonical British

poets, such as Robert Burns, William Blake, and William Shakespeare, wrote songs; everyone who went to school in the English-speaking world has heard “My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose,” “Jerusalem,” and at least some of the songs from Shakespeare’s plays. Not all song lyrics are great poems, but all have the same elements as poems, such as rhythm, rhyme, imagery, symbolism, metaphor, and irony (Kennedy 2013).

Popular, as well as high culture abounds in song lyrics that can be considered poetry. Many simple folk and blues lyrics have profound poetic effects. J.N. Nodleman argues that blues lyrics can be analyzed like lyric poetry in “Rhetorical Sophistication in Robert Johnson’s ‘Terraplane Blues’” (2004). Similarly, Kristina Kočan treats blues lyrics as poetry in “Sadness, Superstition and Sexuality in Blues Poetry,” demonstrating how leading black American poets write poems based on, and incorporating many of the structures and themes of blues songs (2013).

Listening to songs and analyzing their lyrics and structure are useful, but there is nothing like learning to do it yourself to allow one to better appreciate and understand. Sometimes my students tell me they enjoy and admire literature, but say they could never write stories or poetry themselves. This is a widespread myth about what it takes to be a poet. However, teachers can start students off by writing parodies. Stacey Harwood demonstrates how learners can improve their language and literary abilities by writing parody song lyrics in “Fractured Song Lyrics” (2009). Michelle Gadpaille uses a similar technique to encourage students to write prose poems based on advertisements and asks the students to analyze their responses (Gadpaille 2011, 2005). In my writing courses, I use sample assignments from Campbell and Brody’s *Rock and Roll: An Introduction* (1999) to get students to write lyrics to simple blues songs, as well as well as other assignments to write haikus and even sonnets. Sharing the experience of creating literature and lyrics in a foreign language thus helps students better understand aspects of the culture of the language in question.

### **Example: Cultural and Literary Understanding of Songs**

I use popular songs along with more traditional literary texts in my university literature classes to help students grasp some of the principles of literary and cultural studies. For example, Wikipedia’s synopsis of Disney’s 2013 film *Frozen* at first glance looks like a parody of Disney’s commercial hit formula (Wikipedia contributors 2013):

*Frozen* tells the story of a fearless princess who sets off on an epic journey alongside a rugged iceman, his loyal pet reindeer, and a hapless snowman to find her estranged sister, whose icy powers have inadvertently trapped the kingdom in eternal winter.

On closer examination the film has many interesting features for class analysis. Disney capitalized on its popularity and released versions of the film around the world for theatrical performance with on-screen subtitles and a bouncing snowflake over the words so audiences could sing along, and made videos available on YouTube for promotional purposes. One song from the film, “Let It Go” by Robert and Kristen Anderson-Lopez (2013), is a good example of a song designed to appeal to both children and adults, and the commercial version is ideal for learning English, as well as the other languages into which it was dubbed.

In class discussion, the song can be used to illustrate many principles of language and literary analysis. “Let It Go” uses idiomatic American English syntax and diction for the most part, with a few advanced words thrown in, such as “fractals” and “crystallizes.”<sup>3</sup> The theme of the film, and the song, both contain obvious attempts to portray gender equality: “It’s time to see what I can do / To test the limits and break through / No right, no wrong, no rules for me, I’m free!”<sup>4</sup> Using some basic tools of poetic analysis reveals some of the song’s literary devices, such as irony: this is the Queen singing, so “no rules for me” is more of a rationalization for dictatorship; imagery: “The snow glows white on the mountain tonight” (and internal rhyme); metaphor: “let the storm rage on” for her emotional turmoil; analogy: “soul is spiraling in frozen fractals” (with alliteration); simile: “one thought crystallizes like an icy blast”; symbol: cold for heartless selfishness; style: in the film, the audience can listen to and compare two versions of the song, one sung by actress Idina Menzel during the film, and another by Demi Lovato over the final credits.

My students are undergraduates and postgraduates, many of whom are training to be English teachers. Especially in our Bologna second-cycle courses, exercises and class activities such as the one described above are structured so that they can be adapted into classroom exercises for when the students go on their teaching practice. Class discussion of a song like “Frozen” can cover topics as varied as basic diction and syntax, use of poetic devices, idiomatic use of language, regional variations in idiom, historical developments in language, comparison and contrast of different cover versions, reasons for those differences, and many more.

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<sup>3</sup> The songwriters were told by Disney to keep the language simple to avoid problems translating the lyrics into foreign languages.

<sup>4</sup> Although Mayim Bialik argues that the main theme of the movie is the hunt for a man/prince/love, and the gender equality in the film consists mainly of “man-bashing” (2014).

## Conclusion

In *The Idea of a University*, 1852, John Henry Newman distinguished between what he called mechanical and philosophical education (1960). Newman argued that while mechanical education merely provides its students with the tools of a trade, philosophical education provides intellectual tools that encourage students to think. Newman elsewhere calls the latter “liberal” education.

More than 160 years later, the distinction is still apt and the debate continues. Northrop Frye, in a series of talks entitled *The Educated Imagination*, discussed the value of teaching beyond the basic “3 Rs” (Reading, wRiting, and aRithmetic) (1964). Today, however, universities and schools around the world face “austerity measures” designed to cut costs, yet at the same time are required to increase enrolments. In Slovenia, a small European country whose economy is dependent on international trade and tourism, there is even pressure within the university to eliminate or drastically curtail instruction in foreign languages in the name of austerity and protection of the official language.<sup>5</sup>

In an educational institution focused mainly on teacher education, succumbing to such pressures does a disservice not only to students, but also to society at large. Acquiring the basic skills of language is essential, but it is not the only important aspect of language education. Focusing exclusively on the “3 Rs” may teach students how to write and how to speak, but it does not give them anything to say. At every level of education, we must encourage our students not only to read and write, but also to think. Students spend a large part of their lives sitting in classrooms, and unfortunately, they can get tired and bored. Giving them the tools and techniques to think critically about materials they already enjoy is one way to help keep them motivated, and those tools and techniques can be applied to their other texts and courses as well.

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<sup>5</sup> Educational and political authorities often attempt to protect against what they see as threats to their languages; Murphey points out the pressure exerted in Europe during the 1980s to limit the amount of English programming by French, German, and Italian public broadcasters (Murphey 1990: 9). Similarly, in Canada, The *Broadcasting Act* (Section 3.1 (d)(ii)) aims to protect Canadian culture from American mass market entertainment (Government of Canada 2014).

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### Kritički, kulturni i višemodalni pristupi pjesmi kao književnome tekstu u učenju jezika

U radu se donosi pregled novije znanstvene i stručne literature o uporabi književnosti u riječima pjesama kako bi se pomoglo učenicima engleskoga kao stranoga jezika da unaprijede svoj izgovor, rječnik, gramatičku točnost, jezičnu kompetenciju i samopouzdanje, motivaciju, poznavanje kulture, empatiju i objektivnost, kao i književnu svjesnost. Književni i višemodalni materijali mogu pomoći promicanju boljega razumijevanja kulturne podloge ciljnoga jezika, što također vodi boljemu razumijevanju konteksta, dijalekata i idioma u jezičnoj uporabi izvornih govornika. Uspješnost učenja jezika potencijalno je veća ako se učenicima ponude materijali u kojima nalaze zadovoljstvo i ako pritom iskuse neposrednu korist od učenja. Stoga se učiteljima preporuča poticanje primjene vještina usvojenih na nastavi jezika u drugim predmetima. Rad uključuje i analizu pojedinačnoga slučaja popularne pjesme „Let It Go“ iz nedavnoga Disneyeva filma *Frozen*, kojom se ilustriraju navedena načela.

**Ključne riječi:** engleski kao strani jezik, jezik i kultura, književnost i glazba, riječi pjesama

### Kritische, kulturelle und multimodale Zugangsweisen zur Verwendung von Songs als literarische Texte im Fremdsprachenlernen

Der Beitrag bietet einen Überblick über die Ergebnisse der wissenschaftlichen Forschung zur Verwendung von literarischen Texten bzw. Songs als Hilfe beim Erwerb der korrekten Aussprache, des Vokabulars, der Grammatik, der Sprachkompetenz und des Selbstvertrauens, der Motivation, der kulturellen Kompetenzen, der Empathie und der Objektivität sowie der Förderung von literarischen Kompetenzen im Rahmen des englischen FSU. Literarische und multimodale Unterrichtsmaterialien können zum besseren Verständnis des kulturellen Hintergrunds der Zielsprache beitragen, wodurch auch ein besseres Verständnis des Kontextes, der Mundart und der seitens der Muttersprachler verwendeten Idiome gefördert wird. Dabei ist der Erfolg beim Erlernen einer Fremdsprache potenziell größer, bietet man den Schülern Unterrichtsmaterialien an, an denen sie Gefallen finden und anhand deren der Lernnutzen unmittelbar erfahrbar ist. Deshalb wird den Lehrenden empfohlen, die in anderen Fremdsprachen erworbenen Fähigkeiten und Fertigkeiten der Lernenden aufzugreifen. Im Beitrag wird als Beispiel für die Anwendung der angeführten Grundsätze die Analyse der neuerdings durch den Disney-Film *Frozen* populär gewordene Song „Let It Go“ vorgelegt.

**Schlüsselwörter:** englischer FSU, Sprache und Kultur, Literatur und Musik, Songtexte