

## Multimodal Writing: The Case of Graffiti

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### Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the effectiveness of utilizing graffiti as a pedagogical tool in English as a second language (ESL) classrooms to teach second language (L2) writing. Within the theoretical frameworks of the multimodal social semiotic theory and an arts-integrated language pedagogy, this paper examines how graffiti can be perceived as both a form of art and a multimodal mode of literacy. In order to argue for graffiti as a form of art that is multimodal, this article presents a review of recent studies and literature on multimodal literacy and art-based strategies to teach English. Findings of the study suggest that graffiti can be conceptualized as a form of art that represents a mixture of words and drawings as semiotic resources that can be used to reflect upon critical meanings, allowing students to link the two pathways of visual and linguistic, and gaining deep, structured knowledge in ways that are productive for students' achievement as writers. As a multimodal literacy, graffiti empowers second language (L2) learners to contribute as critical thinkers, transforming available semiotic resources to make meanings that reflect their interests and deep, transformative understandings of the world. Arguing for graffiti as a form of art that is multimodal, the author illustrates that graffiti can be used in (ESL) classrooms as a way to empower (L2) learners, strengthening their voices to express themselves creatively. The researcher suggests that further research is needed to assess the impact of utilizing graffiti in (ESL) classrooms to enhance (L2) writers' literacy skills. Implications for further research are also discussed.

**Keywords:** art, graffiti, meaningful literacy, meaning-making, multimodality

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